

Improved Parent Connection to Schools	

Parents report a more positive connection to their child's school and to the school district.

Vision Statement

Newburyport parents are involved with their schools at two levels. First, parents are in regular communication with their children's teachers to understand their student's progress, identify issues that need improvement, and celebrate successes. These communications support a very coordinated, coherent and consistent learning environment for each child. Second, parents work regularly to support their school and Newburyport Public Schools in general. All parents participate in their own unique way, and at their own unique level, depending on their individual circumstances. Newburyport Public Schools welcomes and encourages parent participation at whatever level and in whatever position they feel comfortable.

Opportunity for Improvement

Research has clearly demonstrated the positive relationship between parent involvement in the school and student achievement. Strengthening the school-parent connection for parents who are already engaged, and establishing a connection for parents not currently engaged, will support student achievement and improved school climate. The recent school reconfiguration presented the new challenge of developing essentially new school communities. During the 2007-2008 school year, students, staff, administration, and parents have all stepped up to this challenge, but more work remains, especially in improving parent-school connection. Parents have had challenges, especially in the blending of three elementary school parent communities into one. Schools have the continual challenge to provide parents with timely, accurate and useful information, including information about each student's progress, and to provide mechanisms for taking advantage of the huge range of talents offered by our parent community.

Root Cause: Loss of parent-school connections

Some negative history and the grade reconfiguration of 2007-2008 resulted in less than optimal levels of parent-school connections.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Develop more opportunities for parents to connect with others parents in classroom and school volunteer programs.	Continue support for VOICES program and parent volunteer programs at all levels. Continue to identify ways in which parents can contribute skills and knowledge for the benefit of the school, provide opportunities for such and recognize volunteer efforts continuously.
Have more Literacy and Math Nights at the elementary level and more curriculum/instruction sessions for parents at the Middle School and High School.	
Develop communication strategies for FY10-FY14 School Improvement Plans (SIPs)	
Improve teacher-parent communications. Find ways to make progress reporting more accurate and more timely and find opportunities for teachers and parents to communicate about subjects other than student progress.	<p>Have each school council as part of their School Improvement Plan (SIP) assess the percentage of parent participation at their school and characterize the group of non-participating parents. Central Office should design these assessments to include both student-specific and non-student-specific interactions.</p> <p>FY10 and beyond: Have each school council as part of their School Improvement Plan (SIP) assess ways to assist teachers in providing regular and timely communication of each student's progress to their parents, grades PK-12. Example progress reporting systems include SnapGrades, which provides both grade and narrative reporting tools. Where possible, consider the integration of this system with a full student information system.</p>
<p>Support development of strong PTOs at all levels.</p> <p>Host and encourage school events that provide connection opportunities for parents and teachers.</p>	

Root Cause: No clear data baseline

No clear baseline exists to measure parents' perception of their connection to school

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Establish a data baseline for the Parent-School connection.	Analyze parent surveys from FY08, and redesign surveys for FY09 that focus on the data areas that support the strategic plan and questions that can be repeated annually. Extract data from ASSETS Survey on <u>Parent Involvement in Schools</u> and chart it.