

## Parental Involvement

# Your Title I Dollars at Work

A Detroit Parent Network Report to the Community

## Helping Parents to Invest in their Kids

Detroit Parent Network's mission is to develop powerful parents and caregivers who are best equipped to make the best educational choices for their children. Since 2002, we have annually served over 10,000 parents each year. Support and service vary through what we call the 4Ps: Power Building, Parenting Better, Personal Development and Parent Involvement.



In February 2010, we began a performance-based contract with the Detroit Public Schools (DPS) to increase parental involvement between the school district and the 80,000 students in our community that they serve. The partnership also includes the establishment and management of eight Parent Resource Centers, where we offer a variety of services and resources modeled after some of Detroit Parent Network's successful core programming but rooted in academic supports.

We partnered with the district on a process to assist parents affected by school closures. Our biggest strategy was "Personalize the Process." This meant that every parent affected by school closures would receive a personal visit to ensure they knew their kids were not going to be lost in this process and to hear their concerns. Our Detroit Parent Network team, along with district parent volunteers, hit the pavement over a six-week period knocked on over 3,500 doors to speak with our parents. This was the first time the district undertook and successfully reached this many parents who were surprised. Our parents had

much to share: joy, frustration and tears. Many were happy to have someone there to listen.



We are very proud to have connected with so many and connected them to the appropriate support or resource beyond education. Simply put: We have a stake in our community. We are in control of our destiny. We are powerful parents.

Parent Resource Centers offer many valuable resources and services, including:

- ❖ Computer Skills / Internet and Email Access
- ❖ Academic Toolkits
- ❖ Grandparent Support Groups
- ❖ GED Classes
- ❖ English Language Development & Training
- ❖ Employment Opportunities

### Performance Objective 1: Contractor (DPN) will make a formal introduction to District Parent Leaders

As an introduction and an engagement opportunity for DPS parent leaders, DPN targeted all parent leaders in conjunction with the Office of Parent and Community Engagement, to introduce the new partnership between DPS and DPN.

The event commenced March 6th over a full hot breakfast with more than 150 parent leaders in attendance. The event offered a detailed

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presentation of the services to be provided on this performance-based contract preceded by Mr. Robert Bobb, Detroit Public Schools Emergency Financial Manager, on the expectations of this initiative. The event also provided an opportunity for parent leaders to meet their new parent organizers, provided opportunities for parents to set-up email accounts to become part of an e-group and receive email; and finally gave parent leaders the opportunity to help shape training and programming that parent leaders across the district wanted to see.

Parents left with a fact sheet on what they could expect and a promise to extend the surveying time-frame for parent leaders who were unable to attend but who wanted to weigh in on the programming and training that would later be offered.



## **Objective 2: Hire Staff- Internal and External Postings/Staff and Parent Leaders Training**

Detroit Parent Network developed and posted all job positions internally at DPN and DPS prior to releasing positions to be filled externally. None of the previous liaisons applied for positions. A few of the assistants with DPS applied. One was hired.

Within 30 days, DPN had assembled a powerful leadership team of staff who would lead the initiative with excitement and passion for working with our parents in our community.

After six months of on-the-ground, up-close-and-personal time on tasks, we eliminated some management and increased the number of organizers to ensure the best support and increase face time organizers could have with their schools reducing the number to 11 schools per organizer.

The organizers are present and working on supporting the existing parent organization of record; they are helping establish parent organizations where none exists; and they are helping to increase the



involvement of parents within these organizations and within the school working with parent leaders

Staff members have undergone ongoing training both by DPN and key staff members and/ or contractors within the district to ensure they are well equipped to provide excellent support. DPN has served 136 of 142 schools within the district. The remaining six schools are vocational/ alternative schools. Bates Academy is also not a Title I school.

Trainings included:

- ❖ Team Leader Camp
- ❖ Title I LSCO Training
- ❖ Student Code of Conduct
- ❖ Outreach and Organizing
- ❖ Customer Service and Phone Banking
- ❖ Making Referral and Connecting Parents to resources. We spend time on daily strategic direction, planning and intervention.



A total of 16 parent leaders were cleared and trained to work specifically in the Parent Resource Centers, which entailed basic customer service and helping parents. More have been trained since that time.

To date, we have serviced 100 percent of the schools via an assigned parent organizer making regular contact with their schools. Organizers average 39 visits per month to their schools. The visits include a combination of attending the formal LSCO meeting to showing up to support and engage parents in school functions, or bringing resources to the school. Much of the work has centered on building the relationship.



**DPN**



We expect a higher frequency this year with a lower number of schools to serve.

**Objective 3: Develop School Regions**

Detroit Parent Network took the district's current school regions and assigned Parent Organizers, along with aligning which schools fed into each of the Parent Resource Centers.

To ensure a smooth transition and minimal interruption in the middle of the school year, we hired staff based on what we knew of the schools within each community and the needs. This included being conscious of any unique needs of a community, such as offering bilingual assistance. We intentionally split the schools in Southwest Detroit between two bilingual staff to ensure strong support and engagement. We have since benefited from several bilingual parent volunteers who help run the centers.

**Objective: 4 Select sites for the seven Parent Resource Centers in conjunction with DPS Office of Parent and Community Engagement**

During two organized tours conducted by DPN, we jointly visited several schools after narrowing a list that began with a total of more than 20 identified schools by the school district, parents, and DPN. The criteria for selection included being central to a cluster of schools, space availability, handi-cap accessibility, parking, proximity to a bus line and several others factors that could best support parent accessing.





The final results were selected as followed:

1. Central High School
2. Cody High School
3. Brenda Scott Middle School (later moved to Osborn High School)
4. Garvey Academy
5. DPS Welcome Center
6. Priest Elementary School
7. Taft Middle School
8. Phoenix Academy (opened later)



The Welcome Center site is a continuum of services provided prior to this contract, however, DPN began servicing parents through the center immediately to eliminate any gap in service.

**Objective 5: Assist with Local School Parent Involvement Budget Planning:**

Simultaneous to opening centers, staff joining the team in February 2010 worked across schools to support parental involvement during the budget development for the 2010 / 2011 school year. Parent Leaders received information regarding the budget process and the parental involvement requirements and signoffs. Parent Organizers received additional training in this area over the summer during a training series developed to bridge the information gap in transitioning from its original model of Parent Liaisons to a partnership with DPN.

**Objective 6: Identify and create reporting document**

Numerous documents, processes, and procedures have

been created to manage, monitor, report, and assess project impact! All report formats can be viewed on Detroit Parent Network's Web site <http://www.detroitparentnetwork.org>. There are ongoing additions and adjustments as necessary.



Several reporting and monitoring tools that are being used:

- ❖ Parent Organizer Work Plan, which is used for monthly reporting
- ❖ Director's monthly report cover, which is used to submit all documentation from schools
- ❖ Parent Resource Centers Report-Detail Activities in Centers
- ❖ Incident form-for-Parent Organizers facing school issues and concerns
- ❖ Sign in sheets for Parent Resource Centers
- ❖ Workshop evaluation form-used to evaluate satisfaction at the end of each workshop/event
- ❖ School spreadsheet-Leader Contacts for each/ Staff Assigned
- ❖ Monthly deliverable spreadsheet- snap shot on documentation collected monthly
- ❖ Parent Resource Center Participation Count- Week-by-week snapshot of participation and engagement of parents
- ❖ Outreach form-used for door-to-door outreach
- ❖ Site Visits- Includes spot checks by Director and Executive Team to ensure staff are where they are suppose to be and service is being provided.

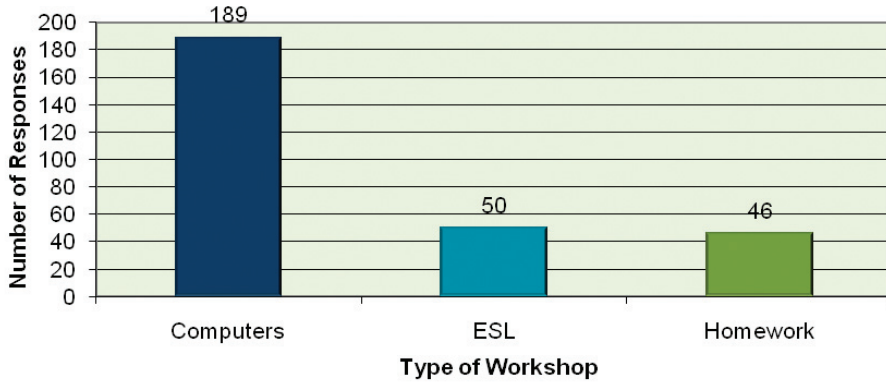
**Objective 7: Work with schools and parent involvement to establish baseline data to measure Parent Involvement**

As a strategy to determine the district's current level of parental involvement and set benchmarks for this performance-based contract with DPS and DPN, we engaged an outside evaluator to conduct a formal evaluation process, which asked parents and principals to weigh in.

*Key Findings*

The DPS parent involvement baseline assessment report results show that parents of children at Detroit Public Schools are generally happy with teachers and staff (36%)

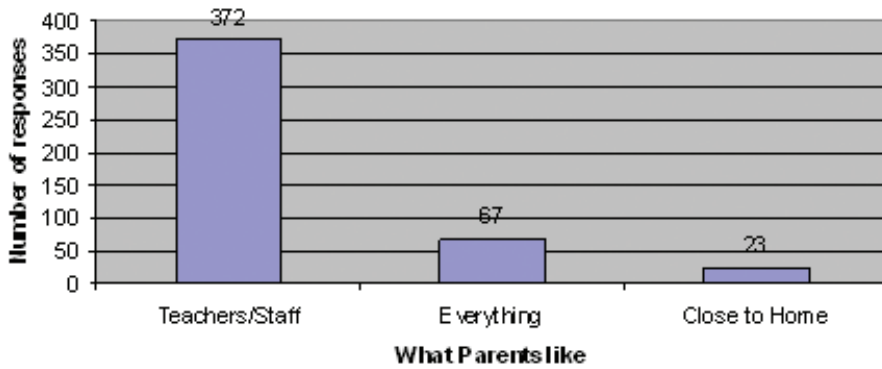
Workshops Requested



*"Teachers are willing to help you understand what your young adults are doing on a daily basis"*

- Parent of a child at the Detroit Transition Center

What Parents Like about DPS Schools



*"[We need] more conversations and meetings with children, parents and teachers... So the parent can have a better understanding with what is going on with their kids"*

- Parent of a child at Edmonson Elementary School

as reported by qualitative comments. Parents are very comfortable or comfortable with school leadership (85%) as well as participating in parent/teacher conferences (90%). Parents indicate a need for increased communication from schools (13%) and workshops that are geared toward their needs, like computer training (21%) and ESL classes (6%). Parent participants indicated that the majority of them attended between one and three meetings at the school this year (33%). Twenty percent of parents attended no meetings at all.

Camps (TLC) based on some parents feeling that "Boot Camp" had negative implications. The camp was also condensed to two-full day camps versus three based on parent feedback. The Team Leader Camp initially focused on the parent leaders at each school although no DPS parent was refused participation. A total of 58 parents were served in TLC through the three camp series. All parents were recognized at the first PRC launch at Central. The parents helped identify the toolkit they want to have in preparation for the next school year. They also expressed a desire to reconvene. The attached outline summarizes the content covered during the camps as well as copies of the evaluation that have been provided to the Office of Parent and Community Engagement.



**Objective 9: Assist parents with local school improvement planning:**

Parent Organizers assigned to each school made contact with their parent leaders to offer assistance. All parent organizations of record also received a Title I packet as well as information on the Title I dollars still left in their school budgets.

The survey was used to gather baseline data on the current parent involvement in schools from the parent's perspective. A separate survey was conducted for Principals. These two documents along with the physical documentation of parents involvement submitted by each school are what we are using to established the baseline data.

There are specific issues across some of the schools based on natural tensions between the Principals and parents regarding the Title I dollars and priorities. Some have stemmed from long-term issues, others based on clarity. We have listed those schools and issues in regular reports to the District.

**Objective 8: Host a Parent Involvement Boot Camp**

DPN changed the name of "Boot Camp" to Team Leader

We have learned and intervened in several situations. We



will continue to use what we are learning and the relationships being built to help support this key component around Title I spending and programming support.

### **Objective 10: Open 7 Parent Resource Centers:**



Detroit Parent Network opened and began operation of seven Parent Resource Centers (PRC) within 60 days of the project start and served 5,000 parents through the summer alone. The centers have been a very popular destination for parent resources for helping their kids academically and connecting to valuable resources such as employment preparation and opportunities, food resources, support groups and workshops that help parents help their children in school. The centers have been so popular that the announcement of an eighth center at Phoenix Academy gained much support and excitement for parents in the Southwest community.

In addition, Focus Hope stepped up to adopt a school for which they have designated space for DPN to create an additional Parent Resource Center. Similar resources in partnership with their team will be available through their Family Resource Center in the new year.

The following Centers were opened during this contract period:

- ❖ Central High School- April 13th
- ❖ Marcus Garvey- April 15th
- ❖ Brenda Scott- April 15th (later moved to Osborn High School)
- ❖ Cody High-May 5th
- ❖ Taft Middle - May 4th
- ❖ Priest-May 6th

All centers are staffed with full-time staff members and a team of 18 trained volunteer who float through the seven centers.

There are several intentional strategies to ensure parents are using the centers and the number of served are increasing. Staff is trained to be helpful but not intrusive and ensure each parent feels welcome. Parents receive phone calls to inform of upcoming activities, resources and support. Each center has weekly benchmarks and an evolving engagement plan that includes regular outreach in the community, at the schools, personal calls and networking with the surrounding schools.



All programming has a core academic support component or informational support component. For example, if a parent comes in to request information on housing, staff will address their immediate concerns and then ask the ages of their children. They will offer the Grade Level Expectations or offer them a reading list for the age group.

### **Door-to-door outreach campaign**

During the summer of 2010, Detroit Parent Network (DPN) helped to assist parents affected by Detroit



# Get Connected

Public Schools' building closures and mergers through its unprecedented door-knocking effort. The DPN team visited more than 3,500 homes this summer and attended major public activities and events, including several back-to-school rallies. In each case, the DPN team assisted parents and other caregivers with interpreting new school assignments and offered help in identifying school locations.

## Beyond "THE CONTRACT"

Based on our commitment and love for parents and our ability to quickly deliver and integrate disparate program opportunities, we have brought additional support, resources, and service to this partnership:

1. **Eight Million Five Hundred Seventeen Thousand (8,517,000)** in dollars that may have left the district were retained based on 1,092 parents who were reached during the door knocking campaign.
2. **Door to Door** outreach campaign throughout the community.
3. An Eighth (8th) Parent Resource Center was established with NO COST added to the current budget.
4. "I'm in" Cards promoting parents who support DPS, tracking their involvement, and providing them with discounts on uniforms and other costs related to rearing children was established for the **FIRST TIME EVER!**
5. ACADEMIC Toolkits for parents to check in and out across all grade levels and in concert with the state Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) was established and launched this year.
6. Assistance with district-wide parent elections and support for other district functions has been continuous and consistent.

## Testimonials from Parents, Principals

"The Parent Resource Center has been useful and offers parents helpful opportunities to take care of anything, especially the computer usage to do important paperwork."

*-Carolyn Smith, Parent Marcus Garvey Academy*

"I know that when I call you guys it is going to get resolved! You all do exactly what you say you are going to do, that doesn't always happen and it is nice. Parents are so luck to have you."

*-Tammie Dailey, Parent Osborn High School*

"The Parent Resource Center is a marvelous addition to both the Priest family and Detroit Public Schools in Southwest Detroit. All of the staff are very helpful and courteous to the parents, and they have also blended well with the Priest staff. During the summer with the Open Enrollment campaign, they were diligent in making sure all students were registered for the schools of their choice, and this was done in an efficient, timely manner. They were knowledgeable and assisted our staff with Priest's parents as well. The Center is working with Priest in regards to our family and community events, i.e. Title I Meeting, Open House, and LSCO. By collaborating and working together, a win-win situation is being created for the students, parents, and communities of Southwest Detroit."

*-Lisa Billops, Principal Priest Elementary and Middle School*

"It is a brightening feeling knowing we can help students in class and parents in the PRC. We look forward to making the 2010-2011 school year one of the best."

*- James Hearn, Principal Marcus Garvey Academy*



### Our Mission

To develop powerful parents (and primary caregivers) who are equipped to get the best education possible for their children.

DPN



**Detroit  
Parent  
Network**  
*get involved  
get connected  
get powerful*

# Get Powerful

**Detroit Parent Network** is a premier organization that transforms parents to make the Detroit area a better place to raise and **educate children**.

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