



New Jersey
Special Education

ANNUAL SUMMIT

Family Engagement



Schools that communicate bad news about student performance more often than recognizing students' excellence will discourage parent involvement by making parents feel they cannot effectively help their children.





Educators, authorities and experts claim that our public education system is in the midst of a crisis.



New Jersey
Special Education

ANNUAL SUMMIT

Educators...only option?

- Teachers feel the only option available to them is to refer students to special education programs.
- Children will benefit from receiving special education services, it may not be the most appropriate option for some of them.
- Initiating the special education referral process prematurely adds to disproportionality in special education.



Why is disproportionality a concern?

- Once students are receiving special education services, they tend to remain in special education classes (Harry & Klingner, 2006)
- Students are likely to encounter a limited, less rigorous curriculum (Harry & Klingner, 2006)
- Lower expectations can lead to diminished academic and post-secondary opportunities (National Research Council, 2002; Harry & Klingner, 2006)

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/EW-TruthInLabeling.pdf>



Why is disproportionality a concern?

- Students in special education programs can have less access to academically able peers (Donovan & Cross, 2002).
- Disabled students are often stigmatized socially (National Research Council, 2002)
- Disproportionality can contribute to significant racial separation (Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002)

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/EW-TruthInLabeling.pdf>



Developing Positive Relationships with Parents

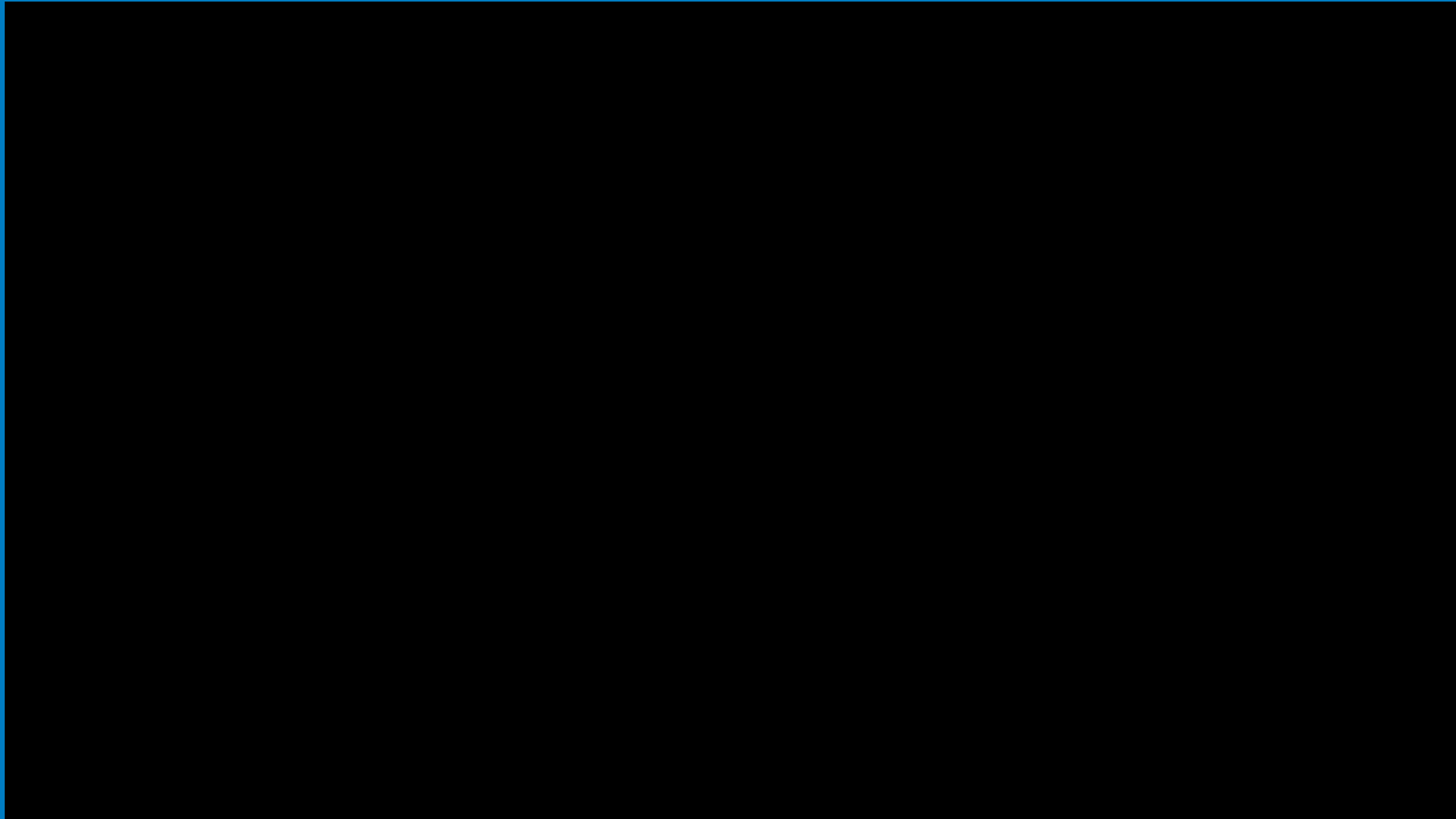
- Smile When You See Parents
- Communicate Often and in Various Forms
- Listen to Understand, not to just respond
- Make a Positive Phone Call Home
- Invite Parents to Share



Developing Positive Relationships with Parents

- Let Parents Know How They Can Help
- Be a Broker of Resources
- Explain Your Instructional Decisions
- Invite Parents in Making Decisions
- Thank Parents





New Jersey
Special Education

ANNUAL SUMMIT

Developing Positive Relationships with Teachers

Approach this relationship with respect

- Treat the teacher relationship the way you would any really important one in your life.
- Create a problem-solving partnership, instead of confronting a teacher immediately with what's wrong.

Let your child develop his/her own relationship with the teacher

- This is one of the first relationships with an adult your child may have outside the family unit.
- If you take a back seat and let the relationship develop without much interference, a special bond may develop.



Developing Positive Relationships with Teachers

Remember how you liked (or disliked) your teachers

Your experience at school is likely to affect your attitude toward your child's teacher.

- Try not to brag
- You don't need to sell your child to the teacher
- You have to trust that your teacher will come to know what's important about your child.



Two-Way Communication

- Good two-way communication between families and schools is necessary for your students' success.
- Research shows that the more parents and teachers share relevant information with each other about a student, the better equipped both will be to help that student achieve academically.



Communication Strategies

Some strategies to consider include:

- Parent newsletters
- Annual open houses
- Curriculum nights
- Home visits
- Phone calls
- Email
- Video Conferences
- Workshops for parents
- Communications that are focused on fathers as well as mothers



Communication Process

Initiation:

Teachers should initiate contact as soon as they know which students will be in their classroom for the school year.

Timeliness:

Adults should make contact soon after a problem has been identified, so a timely solution can be found.

Consistency and frequency:

Parents want frequent, ongoing feedback about how their children are performing with homework.

Follow-through:

Parents and teachers each want to see that the other will actually do what they say they will do.

Clarity and usefulness of communication: Parents and teachers should have the information they need to help students.



Transparency



Communication Strategies

- Parents benefit from being involved in their children's education by getting ideas from school on how to help and support their children
- Learning more about the school's academic program and how it works.
- Parents are more confident about the value of their school involvement.
- Develop a greater appreciation for the important role they play in their children's education.



Teacher Benefits

- Parental involvement can free teachers to focus more on the task of teaching children
- Teachers learn more about students' needs and home environment
- More positive view of teachers
- Improved teacher morale
- Easier to speak with parent(s)



Student Benefits

- Raising their academic achievement
- Increased motivation for learning
- Improved behavior
- More regular attendance
- Develop positive attitude about homework and school





First Day of School

- Greet parent(s)
- Introduce staff
- Invite parent to classroom
- Communicate with parent during the day



First Two Weeks of School

- Communicate therapist(s) name and contact information
- CST contact information
- Send home class/therapy schedules
- Schedule individual parent trainings
- Updates on student's acclimation to the classroom



Month of School

- Parent concerns and expectations
- Provide resources
- Meet to review IEP, goals, and assessments



School Year

- Daily Communication
- Parent Training
- Meet to educate parents on their rights
- Understand their child
- Provide resources
- School Events



Final Thoughts

- Respect each other
- Be sensitive
- Be transparent
- Maintain open communication
- Understand the importance of the teacher/parent role



Contact Information

Mark Mautone

Hoboken Public School District

Coordinator of ABA Program and Paraprofessionals

2015 NJ State Teacher of the Year

Practitioner's Board Member at CCSSO

Teacher Advisory Board Member at Education.com

Mark.Mautone@hoboken.k12.nj.us



New Jersey
Special Education

ANNUAL SUMMIT



#njspecialsummit

Proudly Sponsored by:

