



# Community relations and community engagement

## *Action steps*

To solve problems and make choices for the public good, district leaders should do more than talk. They need to understand the community's aspirations for public schools. Use the action steps below to help develop a community engagement process.

### **Community engagement action steps**

#### **First, develop a solid communication plan**

- Develop a strategic communications plan that includes media relations, one-to-one communication, and the creation of a common message to build support for efforts to advance student achievement.
- Establish a key communicators program to ensure effective two-way communication between the school district and community at-large — including distribution of accurate information from the school district to the community and provision of critical feedback from the community to the school district.
- Develop discussion points for use by school officials and education advocates to make the community aware of the needs of all students, including those who are struggling, and to elicit support for district efforts to advance student achievement.

#### **Collaborate with community partners**

- Establish collaborative relationships with local/municipal government through efforts such as regularly scheduled meetings between school and municipal officials and the appointment of liaisons between the school board and governing body. The goal of such collaboration should be to support programs that advance student achievement, healthy decision-making, and a safe and secure school environment.
- Involve the municipal government, faith-based community, service organizations, local industry and small businesses, as well youth-service organizations, in a comprehensive plan to promote student achievement and healthy decision-making.

#### **Community and parental involvement**

- Conduct a needs assessment or asset map to provide information on the current status of community and neighborhood involvement. Seek the observations and advice of teachers, who are in continuous contact with students.

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1. New Jersey School Boards Association (Ed.). (2017). *The Task Force on Student Achievement* (pp. 70-71, Rep.). Trenton, NJ: New Jersey School Boards Association.

