



# Helping Students Succeed and Graduate From High School

## *Strategies for Families*

### What Can Families Do to Support Their Children?

Families play an important role in making sure their son or daughter graduates from high school. In fact, when families are involved:

- Students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level (Antunez, 2000)
- Students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently, and go on to postsecondary education (National Parent Teacher Association, 2009)

What can families do to ensure that their son/daughter graduates? Stay involved regardless of how old your son/daughter is! Ways families can be involved go beyond attending school events. As a family member, you can:

- Support your son's/daughter's learning by providing time and space at home to complete assignments
- Monitor your son's/daughter's time, attendance, behavior, grades, boundaries, and resources
- Encourage a positive self-image and a "can do" spirit

- Model lifelong learning and enthusiasm for education
- Advocate for improved learning opportunities
- Consider joining your local family organization to take an active role in school matters
- Collaborate with school staff and members of the community to identify possible work experiences for your son/daughter (Mapp & Kutner, 2013)

### How Are We Supporting Our Students with Disabilities to Graduate from High School?

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education (BSE) is partnering with our school and a number of other schools throughout the state to implement a plan to improve graduation rates of students



with disabilities. This means that we will be identifying students that are off-track for graduation and implementing evidence-based practices that lead to higher graduation rates. We will be working with families to develop plans to meet the individual needs of students that are identified as off-track for graduation.

### How Will We Know if Students Are Off-Track for Graduation?

Identifying students that are off-track for graduation is a complex task. To assist with this process, our school will be using an Early Warning System (EWS). We will use available student information to alert school staff of students that are off-track for graduation. We will closely monitor student attendance, behavior, and course performance. If students are identified as off-track, we will engage in a problem-solving process to help students stay in school and graduate. For example, if a student is struggling to attend school regularly, interventions will be based around attendance. If a student is failing English or math, interventions will aim to improve his/her grades. Early Warning Systems are also used to monitor student progress once interventions are identified and in place. Families will be key team members in our problem-solving process and will provide input on how the interventions are working for their son/daughter.

## How Can Families Support Student Success?

Here are some proven strategies that will increase students' chances of graduating from high school:

ATTENDANCE	BEHAVIOR	COURSE PERFORMANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure your son/daughter arrives on time each day for school.</li><li>• Inform the school immediately if there are matters that may arise that may affect the attendance of your son/daughter.</li><li>• Check-in with your student's teachers about your son's/daughter's attendance for each class.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider how your son/daughter interacts with others in the school environment.</li><li>• Be alert to any signs that may indicate bullying.</li><li>• Share your concerns with the school – both the negative and positive. Open communication is the key.</li><li>• Share with the school if there are changes or problems at home that might affect the student's behavior in school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review your son's/daughter's progress reports, report card, and progress on Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. Is she or he passing all courses? If not, do you know who to speak with and how to seek help for your son/daughter?</li><li>• Know the graduation requirements for your son/daughter. Ask about credits and how many are needed for graduation.</li><li>• Regularly attend conferences and IEP meetings.</li></ul>

### Resources for Families

**Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN),**  
[www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

Select Increasing Graduation Rates and Decreasing Dropout Rates under the Educational Initiatives Tab to find information regarding the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and links to resources to support graduation.

Select Parent Information under the Educational Initiatives Tab to find links to publications, tip sheets, webinars, and links to other parent resources across the state.

Select PaTTAN Publications under the Resources Tab to find a library of family focused publications under the Parents – Informed. Involved. Inspired. link.

**National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD),**  
[www.ndpc-sd.org/](http://www.ndpc-sd.org/)

Select Resources for Parents under the Resources tab to find parent publications, presentations, and information on evidence-based dropout prevention programs.

**Philadelphia HUNE, Inc.,**  
[www.huneinc.org/](http://www.huneinc.org/)

This website contains information for families about free bilingual English and Spanish training and technical assistance and individual assistance to families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

**Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL),**  
[www.pealcenter.org](http://www.pealcenter.org)

This website contains resources for families and schools on topics such as Assistive Technology and Healthcare. Family trainings and events, print publications, and a lending library are also available.

**Mission Empower,**  
[www.missionempower.org](http://www.missionempower.org)

This website contains tips and activities to assist families and schools in their journeys of promoting inclusion.

### References:

Antunez, B. (2000). When everyone is involved: Parents and communities in school reform. In *Framing effective practice: Topics and issues in the education of English language learners* (pp. 53–59). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, K. L. (2013). *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*. Austin: SEDL.

National Parent Teacher Association. (2009). *Family-school partnerships*. Retrieved January 13, 2016 from [http://www.pta.org/family\\_school\\_partnerships.asp](http://www.pta.org/family_school_partnerships.asp).

**Do you know a student who is considering dropping out of school?  
Contact your school!**



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Bureau of Special Education*  
*Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network*