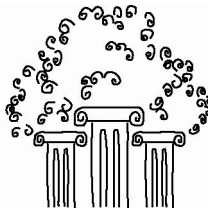


Chicago Appleseed

FUND FOR JUSTICE



Background

Cultivating parent leadership is a key component of parental involvement in schools. Informed, active, and partnering parents are essential in building strong schools and communities. Chicago Appleseed views building parent leadership as a way to develop school/family partnerships. Thus, parents must be seen as equal partners in the education of their child. Chicago Appleseed works with schools to develop parent leadership specifically in the areas of advocacy, collaboration, and personal development.

In its entirety, parental involvement is a cornerstone of numerous provisions of The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which often stipulates that education officials must involve parents in the policy making process for developing programs in order to request funding. In this sense, Chicago Appleseed views the mandates of Section 1118 as a mere starting point to including parents in the decision making process of their child's education. As a result, leadership of parents, teachers, administrators and community representatives must have PIR: Parity, Inclusion & Representation.

What specific understandings about parents are desired?

- That, NCLB not only requires parental involvement in the traditional sense, but it also allows for parent to be involved in the policy-making process of their child's education.
- That, given the right tools, advocacy is not only for professionals, but it also acts as a means to actively engage and give voice to parents, students and community concerns about how local schools are run.
- That, coalition building is needed if advocacy is to be more than simply a personal critique of the schools.

Research focused on parental involvement points towards the relationship between school-related parental involvement behaviors fostered by community organizing that requires the capacity to advocate and the increased likelihood of students' academic success. This model for community organizing achieves success by enlisting and building upon the capacity of families to help their children perform better in schools and to help the schools identify and meet students' needs (Comer 1988; Epstein 1987; Henderson & Mapp 2002). The Annenberg Institute for School Reform presents evidence that school-level capacity is expanded and helped by community organizing. Areas of demonstrable improvements include: school-community relationships, parent involvement and engagement, sense of school community and trust, teacher collegiality, and teacher morale. Evidence also suggests an increase in student attendance, improvement in standardized-test-scores performance, and higher graduation rates and college-going aspirations (*Organized Communities, Stronger Schools: A preview of Research Findings*, March 2008).

What misunderstandings are predictable?

- The meaning and intent of advocacy.
- That advocacy is only for professionals or middle class parents.
- That advocacy is a way for personal critique of schools to be voiced.
- That coalition building is only communication and collaboration.
- That government research tools are too difficult to be used by average parents.

Anne T. Henderson et al. in her *Book Beyond the Bake Sale*, specifically addresses the need to help families understand and use advocacy.

“Being a capable advocate requires a special set of skills. You have to know how the system works, how to be polite and persistent, and how to hold your ground. Many parents don't know how to play this role or how to play it in the school system. Many schools don't encourage parents to be advocates, perhaps fearing an onslaught of 'pushy parents.'”

Although Henderson focuses on the need to build parents' capacity to be effective advocates, Chicago Appleseed would claim in its advocacy and learning rationale that educators are also in need of this paradigm shift. "It's important to keep in mind that an advocate is not an adversary" (Henderson, et al. 2007).

Essential Questions

- What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?
- What is advocacy?
- What is the difference between micro-advocacy v. macro-advocacy?
- What are some examples of both micro and macro advocacy?
- How can one tell the difference?
- What are some local advocacy needs?
- How can one prioritize advocacy needs?
- What is coalition building?
- How does it differ from communication and/or collaboration?
- How can one use coalition building to advocate for the prioritized advocacy needs of the school community?

It is from this foundation and within this perspective that Chicago Appleseed constructs the following theoretical framework:

William Pinar's work on *Currere* is the reconceptualization of curriculum as the educational experience of the individual, as reported by the individual.

- *Currere*, rather than working to quantify behaviors or to establish causality, describes what the individual learner makes. *Currere* offers the opportunity to study both the individual's lived experience and the impact of the social milieu upon the experience. This non-scripted, fluid method of creating curriculum in the moment allows for participant centered challenges and possibilities to arise. Specifically, the tensions that exist between parents and educators.
- By allowing this tension to rise and give voice, *currere* provides a learning space to address the tension as opposed to avoiding it.

Paulo Freire's work allows for the issues to be addressed, such as tension, from an ownership point of view, as opposed to an objective neutral manner, which takes the issues outside of the learning environment. This is done through:

- Critical Praxis- Paulo Freire's theory on popular education is the unity of inquiry and action. Praxis integrates political action with intellectual inquiry in search of understanding and justice.
{ Action and Reflection } word=work=praxis.
- *Conscientizaçāo*- Freire's term refers to learning how to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.

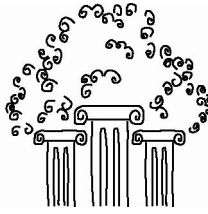
Albert Bandura's work on the following allows for modeling of possibility, efficacy, production of ideas and possibilities, including an opportunity to see the potential for change from others in the community and educators:

- Social Learning Theory -- Imitation, identification and modeling as concepts of teaching.
- Social Cognitive Theory -- Self observation, judgmental process, self-reaction.
- Self-efficacy Theory -- Formulation, strength and enactment of future intentions.

Joseph Schwab's work allows for learning objectives to be tailored individually, by using a Francis Bacon Matrix one is able to create a three-dimensional view of the learning environment:

- Practical Inquiry- The continuous interaction between educators, learners, subject matter and milieu, creating an ecological web of mutual influences. The Francis Bacon Matrix can be used as an intake form, a needs assessment. To pose questions (rather than asserting answers) is consistent with the practical paradigm, giving precedence to situational specific as opposed to highly generalized substantive knowledge.
- Milieu- An environment that strengthens and establishes new relationships between associates and acquaintances.

A resource list is provided for further reading and understanding of the theoretical framework described above.



Parental Involvement Advocacy Curriculum Module

Goals:

This session will introduce the school community to advocacy. Specifically, the school team will identify the advocacy needs of the school, home, community and students. Participants will follow a process of categorizing advocacy issues, and prioritizing their relationship to the school community.

Learning Objectives:

1. To identify advocacy needs for the school community
- 2A. To define advocacy
- 2B. To identify the difference between micro v. macro advocacy needs
3. To prioritize advocacy needs as relevant to the school community
4. To learn how to build coalitions to address the school community’s prioritized needs

Objective 1: To identify advocacy needs for the school community

Time: 30 Minutes

10 Minutes - Ice-breaker activity – Business card exercise.

Hand out business size cards. Ask participants to create their personalized business cards. We usually think of only professionals as having business cards, but parents bring important credentials to the table that need to be stated, recognized and validated as on par with the other credentials that may be present in other people’s business cards. Have participants share their business cards and quickly debrief.

20 Minutes- Review where the school is with regard to parental involvement

	Teachers	Parents (Learners)	Subject Matter	Milieu
Teachers				
Learners				
Subject Matter				
Milieu				

Attachment #1 Baconian Table

Baconian Table

The usage of the Francis Bacon Matrix can be used as an intake form, a needs assessment. To pose questions (rather than asserting answers) is consistent with the practical paradigm, giving precedence to situational specific as opposed to highly generalized substantive knowledge. From left to right (row to column), ask the question: what is a teacher's effect on other teachers with regard to parental involvement? Next cell across, then the next row and continue across, etc.... The Baconian table is provided as a handout to be filled out by participants, individually. It is fine not to have all of the boxes filled out. Remember, this is an intake form that will be continuously referenced throughout the curriculum for further assessment and reflection.

Guiding Questions For Facilitator *(Note: Guiding questions are provided as a tool to prepare and facilitate the session. They are not meant to be used as a checklist. Facilitators should be three or four steps ahead of the dialogue, sorting questions touched by participants without being prompted, as well as composing new questions based on participants' contributions and dialogue of the salient issues.)*

Who are we?

You may return to these kinds of questions throughout your strategy development. Consider:

- Who are we? What perspectives and identities do we bring to our work?
- Do we represent someone besides ourselves? If so, what is our accountability to these people?
- What are our sources of power?
- What are our sources of legitimacy and credibility? From the perspective of those we represent? From the decision makers' perspective?
- What risks do we face? What are we afraid of? What might happen if we take action?
- What are our values? Why are we engaged in advocacy? How do we want to work together as a group?

What is the problem?

To better understand the school's parental involvement situation, create as full a picture as possible. Share stories, experiences, and information with others. You might ask yourselves:

- Who does the school's parental involvement situation affect? How? Be as concrete as possible. For example, how large is the affected group relative to the total population? How intensely does the situation affect people's lives? Does the situation affect different groups differently?
- What causes the situation?
- Who is responsible for addressing the situation?
- What are possible solutions?

- What will the impact of these different solutions be on the entire affected group? Subgroups?

Guiding question, what, if any of these are advocacy needs? Why?

Objective 2A: What is advocacy?

Time: 20 minutes

5 minutes - Have participants create their own definition of what advocacy is.

5 minutes - Divide participants into small groups and have them discuss and combine their definitions.

5 minutes - Have participants share as a group what their definition of advocacy is and why.

5 minutes, Share your definition of advocacy, have a small discussion addressing the question “what are some key elements of advocacy?” and identify what advocacy is not and how the term is misused or misunderstood.

Advocacy is a set of hands-on technical skills and practices needed to effectively press for change. It is also the foundation of active citizenship, a process through which ordinary people learn to participate in decision making at all levels. Identifying priorities, crafting a strategy, stepping forward, taking action, and achieving results are critical steps to finding one's voice, making oneself heard, and shaping one's future.

The Advocacy and Leadership Center

http://www.iscvt.org/what_we_do/advocacy_and_leadership_center/

Objective 2B: To identify the difference between micro v. macro advocacy needs.

Time: 30 Minutes

10 minutes - Have participants create a list of the different scenarios in which they have been advocates for either themselves, someone else or a group of people.

1. Things to identify- what motivated you to be an advocate?
2. What specific issue(s) were you trying to address?
3. What methods did you employ to advocate?
4. Were there new skills/knowledge that you had to learn to be an advocate?
5. Were you successful? Define success-

10 minutes - Divide individuals into small groups and have them discuss the above exercise.

5 minutes - Discuss specific issues

5 minutes - Ask the groups to begin to categorize their advocacy experience into two categories: micro and macro.

10 minutes

1. Discuss as a group how the categories were defined.

2. Were there overarching questions, issues, or traits that determine where each issue fits?
3. Identify any tension that resulted from the group exercise. Why is this important?
4. Discuss and relate to the definition presented at the beginning of the exercise between micro v. macro advocacy.
5. Discuss the idea of transcending individual needs and wants in order to be a community advocate.

15 Minute Break

Objective 3: To prioritize advocacy needs as relevant to the school community Time: 60 Minutes

Guiding Questions

What is our vision of change?

Some advocacy efforts do not begin with a vision. It is possible to create a strategy and engage in advocacy without one. However, experience shows that creating a vision - whether at the beginning of an effort or mid-course - can be a significant sustaining force for those working for long-term, transformative change.

With a vision, a group can: Focus and make strategic decisions when faced with turning points or setbacks.

- Identify common ground and build cohesion
- Motivate people who do not yet believe change is possible
- Evaluate alternative solutions
- Identify practices and behaviors that can be enacted in the present
- Imagine a future world that is different for their children and grandchildren
- Call members to action now to build toward changes that may not be realized in their lifetimes
- Bring forth a sense of purpose as a significant sustaining force

What objectives -or piece of our vision- will we focus on?

You may be able to see what you want to create, but your vision may seem so big, so complex - how could one possibly do it all? The key is to focus on one piece of one's vision, one set of objectives.

As you focus, remember that objectives have [multiple dimensions](#): short-term and long-term, outward and inward, and multi-level.

Exercise:

15 minutes -

1. Divide the whole group into smaller groups and hand out flip charts divided into three columns:
Advocacy issues/micro or macro/ why a need?
2. Ask participants to think about the identified school community issues, developed mission statement and set team goals reviewed in objective #1, and how this session has defined advocacy for them.
3. Ask participants to complete worksheet #2 [checklist](#) individually.
4. After completing worksheet #2, ask participants as a group to complete worksheet #2 (flipchart-Attachment #3).
5. Guiding directions, be specific about the advocacy issue, how it is a policy/program need and if it is micro or macro and why.

5 minutes -

1. Have participants switch their worksheet with a different group.
2. Ask new groups to comment on the worksheet given to them and to re-prioritize the worksheet, commenting on the appropriateness of the label of an issue and whether it is an advocacy need as understood by the new group.

5 minutes -

1. Have workgroups switch worksheet again. The new group should comment on the previous group's prioritization and their comments.
2. Again, instruct group to be as specific as possible in why they agree or disagree and to adjust any prioritizations as they see fit.

(Note- This exercise is specifically designed to mock how a bill becomes a law. This allows for a facilitated and short discussion around the political process and how to compromise. The process of prioritizing, having someone else reprioritize your issues and arriving to a compromise and consensus is similar to how a bill goes through the different committees before it arrives to the floor for a debate and a vote).

20 minutes -

Have the groups come together with all the worksheets.
Instruct participants to create a master prioritized list of advocacy needs, with specific information as to why they have prioritized the issues as such and if they are micro or macro.

20 minutes -

Have the group present their master list and why and how they came to the conclusion.
Facilitator leads a discussion on the identified priorities, how they relate to the session, how the process worked for individuals, etc...

Objective 4. To learn how to build coalitions to address the school community's prioritized needs and begin next steps (action plan). Time: 70 Minutes

Introduction - 5 minutes

Guiding Questions:

To choose a set of objectives, think about which piece of your vision is:

Important enough?

- To build the support and/or active involvement of those affected by the issue? Of potential allies? (For example, is it a priority issue for them? If not, will they at least support your efforts?)
- To engage the general public/community?
- To build toward your vision?

Small enough to achieve in the short-term (six months to two years)?

Many steps, and people's sustained involvement, will be needed to reach your long-term objectives. A small, achievable step that leads to visible, concrete results will give your group a sense of progress and momentum while you build confidence, skills, and support.

An opportunity to build skills and facilitate grassroots empowerment?

Inward objectives are incredibly valuable. By drawing people in and creating opportunities for people to “learn by doing,” an advocacy effort can build its long-term capacity and strengthen and sustain itself in the long run. By investing in “hands-on training” for those directly affected by the issue, advocacy efforts can also begin to shift the power of who can be an “advocate” and who can participate in public debate and problem solving.

Inward objectives also link to outward objectives. By drawing people into the effort, especially those affected by the problem, an advocacy effort broadens its grassroots base and increases its credibility and legitimacy, both to the affected groups and key decision makers.

Define the following terms: 5 minutes

Coalition-

Networks-

Collaboration-

(Note: Definitions are intentionally left for participants to define in order to allow praxis to happen, upon their reflection of the words.)

Diagram/Flow chart of exercise

(Flow Chart Outline Attachment # 4)

Exercise: 40 minutes.

Directions: Divide the group into 3 smaller groups: A, B, C.

Distribute prioritized worksheets from the previous exercise.

Give each group an assign advocacy priority.

Step One: 5 minutes - Have each group address the introductory questions and objectives. Have them develop an issue brief, including who else they need in order to support and achieve their goals.

Step Two: 5 minutes - Have one member from each group rotate. They are charged with communicating, listening and engaging the next group into their priority and vice versa. Have them come up with a course of action and compromises.

Step Three: 5 minutes - Have one more rotation of the original member plus an addition member go to separate groups. They are charged with communicating, listening and engaging the next group into their priority and vice versa. Have them come up with a course of action and compromises. Have the original groups reconvene when done.

Step Four: 15 minutes - Have groups discuss what the members were able to receive from the other groups as far as resources and collaboration as well as what they have promised the other groups to reciprocate. Groups are to discuss their plan of action and write down what they plan to present to the entire group.

20 minutes - Reconvene groups to present their draft coalition plan, facilitate discussion of the process, priorities and actions to next steps.

Evaluation and Close Time: 10 Minutes

5 Minutes: Evaluate the session and learning experience.

5 Minutes: Close up session.

Some of the guiding questions came from the Institute for Sustainable Communities, adopted from *Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide*, by Kumarian Press.

Bookmarks:

- *Currere*, rather than working to quantify behaviors or to establish causality, describes what the individual learner makes. *Currere* offers the opportunity to study both the individual's lived experience and the impact of the social milieu upon the experience. This non-scripted, fluid method of creating curriculum in the moment allows for participant centered challenges and possibilities to arise. Specifically, the tensions that exist between parents and educators.
- By allowing this tension to rise and give voice, *currere* provides a learning space to address the tension as opposed to being the big elephant in the room that no one is addressing.
- Critical Praxis- Paulo Freire's theory on popular education is the unity of inquiry and action. Praxis integrates political action with intellectual inquiry in search of understanding and justice.
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- Social Cognitive Theory -- Self observation, judgmental process, self-reaction.
- Self-efficacy Theory -- Formulation, strength and enactment of future intentions.
- Practical Inquiry- The continuous interaction between educators, learners, subject matter and milieu, creating an ecological web of mutual influences. The usage of the Francis Bacon Matrix can be used as an intake form, a needs assessment. To pose questions (rather than asserting answers) is consistent with the practical paradigm, giving precedence to situational specific as opposed to highly generalized substantive knowledge.
- Milieu- An environment that strengthens and establishes new relationships between associates and acquaintances.
- **Advocacy is a set of hands-on technical skills and practices needed to effectively press for change. It is also the foundation of active citizenship, a process through which ordinary people learn to participate in decision making at all levels. Identifying priorities, crafting a strategy, stepping forward, taking action, and achieving results are critical steps to finding one's voice, making oneself heard, and shaping one's future.**

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http://www.iscvt.org/what_we_do/advocacy_and_leadership_center/

Resources

- Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. *Organized Communities, Stronger Schools: A Preview of Research Findings*. March 2008.
- Cohen, David, et al. (2001). Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
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- Schwab, Joseph J. (1978). Science, Curriculum, and Liberal Education: Selected Essays. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wenger, Etienne. Communities of Practice: <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>

Websites:

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-freir.htm> : "Perhaps the most influential thinker about education in the late twentieth century, Paulo Freire has been particularly popular with informal educators with his emphasis on dialogue and his concern for the oppressed."

<http://www.paulofreireinstitute.org/> : "Our mission is to work inside and outside the university to build networks of scholars, teachers, activists, artists, and community members dedicated to social justice and using education as a vehicle to empower oppressed and subjugated population

across the globe. We are working on a number of fronts to maintain and expand Paulo Freire's teachings, through teacher training programs that introduce and augment social justice themes, through interaction with communities across the Americas, through a growing series of publications and presentation spreading the Freirian message..."

http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/freire/freirebooks.html

: "This website, dedicated to Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997), consists of a collection of reviews of his books and links to other pages on his life and work."

<http://www.freire.net/> : "The Freire Institute is an organization for community-based learning. In our programs your own knowledge and life experience becomes the raw material for education. We are named after the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire whose work has inspired many social movements and educational programs around the world."

<http://www.paulofreire.org.br/asp/index.asp> : "The Paulo Freire Center for Study and Research is a private, not-for-profit organization with educational and cultural goals dedicated to keep alive the ideas of Paulo Freire, Pernambucan educator and a reference point for education in Brazil and in the world. The Paulo Freire International Colloquium is a synthesizing activity of the Center which broadens the horizons of the Center, to create a time and space for presentations of studies, research projects, and reports of educational experiences developed both within and outside of the formal school system."

The Advocacy and Leadership Center: <http://tools.iscvt.org/advocacy/start>

Advocacy Resources

"The materials on these pages are maintained by the Advocacy and Leadership Center at the Institute for Sustainable Communities. They are a supplement to the materials and resources made available in our training and fellows programs. These are also available for free to anyone who can make use of them in their work. Everything is licensed with a [Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 United States license](#)."