

**EXTENSION CENTER FOR FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

Partnering for School Success – Children, Youth and Families at Risk Faribault and Triton Middle Schools Grant 2012-2017

Partnering for School Success (PSS) is based on a model that recognizes that student success in school is impacted by multiple factors in the family and community. PSS CYFAR (Children, Youth and Families at Risk) is a partnership of University of Minnesota Extension, Triton (Dodge Center) and Faribault Middle Schools focusing on two of the major factors related to academic achievement for Latino students - family and school environments - and what each can do to improve school success.

THREE INTER-RELATED COMPONENTS

Three cohorts of Latino families will participate at each middle school and will remain in the program for three years.

1. **Family School Partnership:** A group of school staff and parents will participate in a facilitated dialogue and planning process to strengthen positive family and school relationships. This program starts with the basics of parent-school communication through facilitated dialogue using the Family School Partnership facilitation model.

This process provides a space for schools and parents to discuss what is going well, what could be improved upon and to jointly identify strategies that foster positive family/school relationships for Latino families. This group will set goals, develop action plans and continue to meet throughout the project period, creating a plan where schools and parents create an environment where communication between school staff, parents and students is encouraged. Parents and schools need to engage with each other as well as students to effectively improve school success of students of color and understand that cultural factors impact parent involvement with schools.

2. **Family Strengthening Education:** Parent sessions will help parents understand their role in their child's education, inform parents about how schools work in their communities and, share with parents their expected and welcome role as a partner in their child's success in school. In addition, parents will be given the opportunity to learn how to use and access technology to monitor their children's progress and communicate with schools. Students who have parents in the cohort will receive after school programming, focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
 - a. **Year 1:** Parent education, *Educación: Nuestra Mejor Herencia (Education: Our Best Legacy*, in English - 7 week session).





- b. **Year 2:** Booster sessions incorporating technology skills and reinforce previously learned skills (4-6 sessions), 4-6 sessions after school with youth.
- c. **Year 3:** *Abriendo puertas con educación superior (Open Doors with Higher Education*, in English; navigate post-secondary enrollment and finances - 6 week session), 4-6 sessions after school with youth.

Participants will include at least 15 Latino families, starting a new group year 1, 2, and 3; each cohort will participate for 3 years (year 3 cohort will condense into 2 years).

Parents will learn the important role they play in both their child's life at home and their important role as a connection between school and their child. Communication is a key concept discussed for both home and school, including how to communicate with their child's teacher. Their child's academic achievement and using supportive communication techniques increases their child's sense of importance and understanding of the significance of being successful in school. Pilot tests show that parents and children develop better, positive communication skills and trust as parents develop self-efficacy in monitoring school performance, supporting their children's school success, and interacting with school staff.

- 3. **School Navigators:** The Navigator serves as a liaison, building positive connections between parents, students and the school. A member of the Latino community fluent in Spanish works closely with the school staff and parents, to provide ongoing interaction with families, connects them to resources, and guides parents as they navigate the school system. The navigator acts as a reference and guide to increase awareness of cultural differences or school expectations and policies to both parents and school staff to ensure success in the classroom for Latino students.

IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The three components of the program are proven to create system changes in schools, families and the Latino community resulting in improved parent-school and parent-child interactions and improved educational outcomes for at-risk children. There is a great need for this model in Minnesota. Minnesota is long known as a leader in education, yet it has a persistent and large (22%) gap between the high school graduation rates of students of color and the overall student populations. The Latino community is the fastest growing community of color in the state and its youth are at-risk due to low high school graduation rates and low rates of participation in post-secondary education.

FOR QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT

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