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## Parent Involvement Strategies in Urban Middle and High Schools in the Northeast and Islands Region

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While the benefits of parent involvement are documented across the K–12 years, less is known about what strategies schools are using to engage parents as their sons and daughters move from elementary to middle school and high school. Informed by a review of the literature on parent involvement strategies, this project developed and field-tested a protocol for documenting what parent involvement policies, programs, and practices states, districts and schools are implementing at the secondary level, and how they monitor or evaluate their efforts.

— GAIL AGRONICK, AMY CLARK, CARRIE GOLDEN, LYDIA O'DONNELL, ANN STUEVE, EDC, PROJECT TEAM

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### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Document parent involvement strategies being implemented in the Northeast and Islands Region.
- Develop a protocol for cataloging these programs moving forward.

### AUDIENCE & APPLICATION

- The region's education policymakers.
- The protocol will provide a tool for collecting information about policies, programs, and practices that promote parent involvement.

### METHODOLOGY

- Review literature on strategies to promote parent involvement from middle school to high school.
- Develop and field-test a protocol for collecting data about parent involvement strategies being implemented.
- Interview key informants from multiple levels of the education system in nine urban districts in our region.

### FINAL PRODUCTS

- Issues & Answers Report published by the Institute of Education Sciences, which may be found at:  
[http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL\\_2009069.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2009069.pdf)

### What Are Fast-Response Projects?

Fast-Response Projects are short-term projects that respond to regional and national needs and priorities and provide research-based knowledge to inform policy and practice. They use methods such as research syntheses, mining of existing data sets, and descriptive studies.



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The nine pilot districts that participated in this pilot project are implementing multiple types of practices that are supported by state- and district-level policies and are consistent with NCLB and Title I provisions. However, consistent with findings from the literature search, these practices are typically not organized into formal programs or articulated in ways that would support rigorous evaluation and identification of “what works.” Across the pilot districts, only a handful of identified programs have at least one of the following characteristics:

- parent involvement in children’s education and academic achievement as a primary goal;
- clearly articulated objectives, with specific activities to meet these objectives;
- sufficient descriptions of activities to support replication; and
- ongoing and coordinated implementation of one or more strategies.

Moreover, the programs are not necessarily targeted to parent populations who have been difficult to engage or whose children may be at higher academic risk. Beyond fulfilling requirements for monitoring and reporting on parents served, few formal evaluations of the programs are underway.

Taken together, findings from the literature review and pilot study highlight the need for:

- Development of more fully articulated programs that can be rigorously evaluated to determine what works and what does not.
- Ongoing, systematic data collection for the parent involvement strategies being used, in order to promote shared learning and to identify practices and programs that may merit further evaluation.
- More rigorous study designs that overcome the limitations of existing evaluations of parent involvement strategies and provide evidence of what works at the middle and high school levels, especially in districts serving large proportions of low-income, minority, and recent immigrant families.

### Contact Information

For more information about this project, e-mail Rebecca Carey ([rcarey@edc.org](mailto:rcarey@edc.org)) or visit REL-NEI online ([www.relnei.org](http://www.relnei.org)).

