

**OUSD'S PARENTS RAISING THE B.A.R.  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING  
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

Fall 2013

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## Introduction to the Facilitator's Guide

**Welcome to the *Raising the BAR* Parent Leadership Training Series.**

In 2009, Oakland Unified School District set out to become a full service community school district. This means that at the center of the district's work are children and their families. As a district, we believe that parents are important because they are a child's first teacher. In order to serve children well, parents and teachers must be in partnership.

We believe that it is important to help parents build their skills and knowledge to be good partners with teachers for all children. This training series is designed to do just that by building your skills and capacity. You are the tool.

The partnership between parents/caregivers and teachers is based on our three important community-school engagement principles.

**Meaningful Community Engagement**

- o Learn and build together with stakeholders -- students, parents and teachers
- o Create trust, mutual accountability, and shared responsibility
- o Share leadership for full service community schools

**Shared Expectations for Family Engagement**

- o Create conditions for student and family access
- o Model transparency with power and decision-making
- o Provide opportunities for continued engagement and leadership

**Shared Commitment**

- o Building the District capacity and structures for on going student and parent voice

This training series is designed to support and empower you as a parent leader so that you can be actively engaged, so that you feel equipped to take leadership over what matters to you most as you support other parents through the process of becoming actively involved with their child's education.

*We thank you for your commitment to this work.*

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## The Power of Parent Involvement

Since the early 1990s, the idea of developing independent parent leadership has gathered strength with the growing education reform movement. Using the new accountability provisions, parents and community members have begun organizing outside of schools. They are pushing both for greater mutual accountability for student progress and to obtain more resources for student learning. These organizers contend that the forms of parent involvement practiced in most schools have not kept pace with increasing urbanization and diversity and that the relationship between schools and communities must be restructured dramatically.

### *More Powerful Roles for Parents*

According to the research, parent involvement takes many forms – from helping children with homework to organizing demonstrations at school board meetings.

Parents' activities tend to fall into four main roles.

*Parents as first teachers* – Parents establish a home environment that promotes learning, reinforces what is being taught at school, and develops the values and life skills children need to become responsible adults.

*Parents as supporters of education* – Parents contribute their knowledge and skills to the school, demonstrate the importance of education and hard work, and take part in school board elections and other activities that promote education.

*Parents as advocates for their own and for all children* – Parents guide their children's careers in school, plan for their future, resolve problems and disputes, work with other parents to press schools for better programs and higher achievement, and work to make the system more responsive to all families.

*Parents as decision-makers* – Parents serve on school governance councils, advisory committees and school improvement teams. They conduct action research, take part in decisions about programs and staffing, and contribute to joint problem-solving at every level.

Research has found that children do best when their parents are able to be involved in their children's learning in all four ways. The more schools are bound by views formed in years past, however, the more they are likely to limit the roles parents are welcome to play. In nearly all schools today, parents are encouraged to help their children at home and volunteer for specific tasks at school – to be teachers and supporters of education.

### ***The Need for Parent Leaders***

One of the main goals of parent leadership is to help other parents become actively involved in one or more of the areas above.

A parent leader is someone who is able to provide support and guidance to fellow parents as they connect with the school community. Parent leaders have the skills to establish effective partnerships with teachers and others in the school system so that together they can create more opportunities for other parents to become involved.

Parent leaders encourage other parents to take on leadership roles in their schools. The parent leader represents the needs and perspectives of all parents -- not just their own. Parent leaders become role models for parent engagement and advocacy for families.

## The *Raising the B.A.R.* Parent Leadership Training Series Overview

### Purpose and Goals

There are two main purposes for this training. First, it is designed to build your knowledge around three important topics that are critical to student success -- positive **behavior**, **attendance**, and proficient **reading**. In addition, the training is designed to support you in adding new skills to your leadership toolkit in order to empower you around the topics you are interested in.

While the main goal is to train you as a workshop leader for *Raising the B.A.R.* Parent Leadership workshops, we also want to help you think about those topics that you are passionate about within the *B.A.R.* framework.

Along with a focus on learning the content, we will also focus on building your skills as a facilitator and workshop leader. These are skills that you can use for a lifetime.

### Defining the *B.A.R.*

The term ***B.A.R.*** is shorthand for three key areas necessary for student school success: *Behavior*, *Attendance*, and *Reading*. Research and experience tell us that if we can turn things around in these areas, then we can see greater student success.

This leadership training program is designed to empower parents to address three big issues that are getting in the way of student success

- Negative student *behavior* in and out of class
- Chronic *absences* in the form of too much time out of school
- Low *reading* skills

### Topics Covered

There are eight sessions, covering topics related to our ***B.A.R.*** theme:

1. Orientation
2. Understanding School Data and the CSSSP
3. Parent-Teacher Academic Partnerships
4. Building the Team: Power of Relationships
5. Chronic Absence
6. School Culture/Behavior
7. Common Core and Reading
8. Facilitation and Action Planning



## **Structure of the Training**

Each training session starts with community building activities so that everyone gets to know each other.

After community building, the day's topic is introduced. Participants will engage in hands-on activities to learn the key skills and content.

Each session ends with a review of how participants can use the information when connecting with and organizing parents at your child's school.

## **After the Training: Putting It into Action**

Our work does not end after the 8 week training series! We will hold regional meetings to support the development and implementation of your Action Plans. This is critical to our success. We will use student data as well as surveys for all stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of our work.

We will also invite you to support and lead the planning of the 4 district wide parent conferences we offer each year as well as other district or regional opportunities for leadership.



## **Session 1: Introduction to *Raising the B.A.R.* Leadership Training**

### **Purpose**

This is the first workshop in the series. The purpose of this opening session to welcome participants and build a sense of community. In addition, its purpose is to give an overview of the whole training series and give participants an orientation.

### **Outcomes**

By the end of this session, participants will

- Begin to know the other participants
- Know what the training series is about
- Know what is expected of them as trainees
- Know what the term “Raising the B.A.R.” means
- Have a working understanding of the achievement data that makes this work necessary

### **Room Set Up**

***15-30 minutes before meeting***

- Create space for snacks/refreshments
- Arrange tables and chairs in the room
- Set up and check that technology works

### **Materials**

- Name Tags
- Sign In Sheets
- Handouts
- PowerPoint Slides
- Other

## Welcome

15 minutes

### Purpose

The purpose of this segment of the agenda is to bring order to the meeting and create the sense of community by having participants get to know each other.

### Materials

- Directions and materials for community building activity
- Participant Agenda Handout

### Talking Points

- Welcome parents and make brief remarks (2)
- Introduce short community building activity (10)
- Briefly review meeting agenda so participants know what is going to happen (3)

## The Name Game Community Builder

10 minutes

### Purpose

The purpose of the community building activity is begin the process of building a sense of community among participants.

### Outcome

- Participants will begin to know each other's name

### Materials

- Soft Balls (4)

### Activity:

1. Set up the activity: Each person when the ball is thrown to them will name a school supply that children and teachers might need as they go back to school.
2. If the group is large, break up into smaller groups no bigger than 10 people.
3. Throw the ball to the first participant. Have that person say his or her name and one item they would bring to school that begins with the first letter of their name. Then that person throws the ball to someone new.

#### **Trainer's Note: Select a Community Building Activity Ahead of Time**

Before the day of the meeting, select a fun community building activity to help folks get to know each other. It should be simple and focused only on getting people connected, not focused on teaching them anything. See the appendix for suggested activities.

## Ground Rules and Housekeeping

5 minutes

### Purpose

The purpose is to offer a set of ground rules to help make meeting time more enjoyable and productive.

Inform participants of basic “housekeeping” such as where bathrooms are, and other important information.

### Materials

- Ground Rules on Poster or Chart Paper
- Ground Rules Handout

### Talking Points

- In order to make sure we use our time well and that we all can participate, here are our ground rule or community agreements.
- Here is some basic housekeeping (location of bathrooms, etc.)

*(Share slide of Ground Rules and post them on a chart in the room)*

### Activity

1. Read through the Ground Rules
2. Once you are done, invite folks to turn and talk with a neighbor about the rules.
3. Ask folks for a show of hands from those who accept the ground rules.

## Overview of Parent Leadership Series

30 minutes

### Purpose

The purpose of this segment of the agenda is to introduce participants to the big picture of the *Raising the B.A.R.* Parent Leadership series: what to expect, the topics covered, and other important information.

### Outcomes

By the end of this segment, participants will:

- What the training series sessions are and how they are structured
- Logistics of the training sessions
- A better sense of the importance of parent leadership

### Activities

There is one 3-part activity in this segment.

Part 1. Why Parents are Important

Part 2: History of Family Engagement in OUSD

Part 3. Training Overview Review

## Overview of the 8-Part Parent Leadership Training Program

(5 minutes)

### Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to help parents understand their important role in the school improvement process. It is also to help parents see the benefits of being trained as a parent leader as well as understand how the training series is structured.

### Materials

- Quote or video clip
- Power Point slides
- Training Series Overview Handout

### Activity #1: Why Parents Are Important to the Process

1. **Open with a quote or video-clip** that underscores the power of parent engagement. Use this to set the emotional tone. Suggestion: Have a pair of parent read the quote - one in English, one in Spanish.
2. **Turn and Talk.** Ask participants to turn and talk to a neighbor about their reaction to the quote or video clip.
3. **Sharing.** Ask folks if anyone would like to share their reaction or connection to the quote or videoclip.
4. Introduce Purpose of the Training Series

### *Talking Points*

- Share the main goals of this training series and the core messages:
  - “We need parents to be full partnerships in education.”
  - “We are starting a network of support”
  - “We are trying to interrupt those actions that are leading to so many children not succeeding in school
- Help them think about themselves as parent leaders of strategic plan (which is designed to level playing field for flatland schools with hill schools)
- Connect this training series to the fact that the strategic plan was developed by community people, including parents. This just continues the tradition.



### **Activity 2: History of Family Engagement**

(10 minutes)

1. Ask participants to share how they came involved as parent leaders.
2. Share the history of Family Engagement graphic.
3. Share these talking points as you go through each ring of the slide:
  - Most of our partners in Oakland who do family engagement work are **ADVOCACY** based organizations, who have traditionally organized parents around parent issues and concerns and mobilized parents to create small schools, or to create site/district policy.
  - Thanks to these partners and policy wins, we have an opening at our school sites to engage and be in relationship in new ways for all of our children.
  - Our work in OUSD now is to focus our partnerships for the purpose of empowering families with academic information to impact their own child's academic success - resulting in transformed school cultures and better outcomes for all children.

### **Activity 3: Review Outcomes and Structure of Training**

(15 minutes)

1. Have everyone take out their Training Overview Handout.
2. Review the bullet points about the training on the slide from the front of the room while participants follow along on their handout.
3. Pair share: Have folks pair up and talk about these questions (from the slide)
  - What did you hear?
  - What questions do you have?
  - What are your hopes and fears?
4. Question and Answer. Take a few minutes to see if anyone has questions or concerns.

#### ***Trainer Tip: Create a Script***

Take the talking points and create a short script for yourself so you know what you want to say and how you want to say it.

## Raising the B.A.R.: The State of Achievement in Oakland

### Purpose

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the core frame, the B.A.R., to participants so they know what it means and how it will guide the content of the training.

It is also an opportunity to give them an experience with OUSD data reports and model how to analyze it and how to talk about it in productive ways.

### Outcomes

By the end of this segment, you want participants to:

- Share with each other what things they believe are necessary for student success
- Know what the concept *Raising the B.A.R.* stands for
- Understand the current student data and why we need parents and teachers to be in partnership to improve student achievement
- Know how issues of power, privilege, racism and oppression have contributed to low student achievement throughout history.

### Activities:

There are two activities in this segment:

- Living History Wall
- Data Dive Activity: Why We Need to Raise the B.A.R.

### Materials

Here are the materials needed for the activities in this segment:

- History Wall timeline photos
- Data Packet (Behavior, Attendance and Reading)
- 1 page overview of *Raising the Bar* (also on slide)
- Instructions for Data Dive activity

**Activity # 1: Living History Wall**

20 minutes

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to honor the historical struggles and accomplishments of people who have fought to improve children's lives and opportunities. The goal is to share personal histories of parents, grandparents and other allies in participants' lives who have fought to improve the quality of children's education.

## Materials

- Large roll of butcher paper (about 10 feet long)
- History Wall dates with pictures
- Large Post-It Notes
- Chart paper
- Markers

## Activity Set-Up

1. Draw a horizontal line from one end of the butcher paper to the other.
2. Mark off on the timeline key years:  
1800s, 1850, 1880, 1890, 1900s, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2013
3. Leave enough space for participants to add their own personal dates and events.
4. Create your own example in order to model the process.

## Activity

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1. *Opening Remarks*  
Explain the purpose of the Living History Wall activity. Briefly discuss the connection between parent leadership and social movements. (Be sure to define these terms for participants). Highlight the efforts throughout history of parents challenging inequitable and unfair practices in schools.
2. *Invite participants to select one of the history event pictures and post it on the timeline.*
3. *Gallery Walk.* Once all the pictures are mounted, invite participants to walk around (in groups of 3 or 4) and review the key events on the timeline.

4. *Add personal and/or community events.* Encourage participant to post additional facts and events from their own communities and personal experience. Discuss with others in your small group.
5. *Debrief.* Gather people around the Living History Wall for the debrief. Here are possible debrief questions:
  - What did you notice or learn?
  - What surprised you?
  - Where did you locate yourself?
  - Were there any historical events missing?
  - How did oppression play a part in the timeline of events

Take a few comments.

Ask for a few volunteers to share personal examples added.

6. *Close the activity.* Thank everyone and invite them back to their seats. Briefly summarize the connection between empowering parents and communities and social change in schools.

***Trainer Tip: Holding a Safe Space***

This activity can bring up strong feelings and emotions. Make sure you are aware of participants reactions and check in with participants who may be struggling. Always be aware of the emotional space for participants.

## **Activity #2: Data Dive to Understand Our Current Reality**

30minutes

### Purpose

The purpose of this segment is to help parents understand how data helps us know whether our children are on the pathway to being college/career ready.

### Materials

- Data Handouts
- Chart Paper
- List of questions for small group discussion

### Talking Points

- Transition Point: Historically education system wasn't set up for students of color. It's been almost 60 yrs. since Brown. How do we know we are making progress? What's of education for our children in schools. The data help answer that question.
- We know that somethings about what leads to graduation: read by third grade, consistency and positive attendance beginning in kindergarten ( miss 5 days), 2 or more off campus suspensions lead to higher expulsion. Kids who get expulsion. (Raquel)
- So where are we? The data helps us know.
- This is why we need to raise the B.A.R.

### Activity

- Whole group reviews power point slides that contain district wide data for:
  - 1.Graduation Rates and Matriculation to 2 and 4 year colleges
  - 2.Chronic Absenteeism Rates
  - 3.Reading Performance Rates
  - 4.Suspension Rates
- Each table will take one data set and answer the following questions:
  - 1.What is your understanding of this data? What is the data telling us?
  - 2.What feelings does the data bring up for you?
  - 3.Are enough of our students on the pathway to being college and career ready?
- Each small group will share out their reflections of the data to the large group

*Close the activity*

We know we have journey ahead of us to make sure **ALL** of Oaklands' students have the opportunities to be successful in life.

Parents can not leave it to the system to educate their child. It will take partnership to make this change a reality. The strongest partnership is between parents and teachers.

We have to take the initiative to build these partnerships.

## **Unpacking Leadership: What Does It Mean to Be a Leader?**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this segment on the agenda is to help participants identify their own leadership assets and qualities as well as those areas of their leadership they would like to development.

### **Outcomes**

By the end of this segment of the agenda, participants will:

- Have a clearer picture of themselves as leaders
- Understand their own individual areas for growth
- Know what the skills and competencies are for parent workshop leader

### **Activities**

There are 3 activities in this segment:

- Assest Bingo
- Leader Self-Assessment
- Commitment Ceremony

### **Materials**

Here are the materials you will need for the activities in this segment.

- Handouts: Asset Bingo Card, Leader Assessment Tool, and Commitment Agreement
- Yarn
- Scissors

## Activity #1: Asset Bingo

5 minutes

### Purpose

This is a warm up activity to get participants thinking about their own leadership skills.

### Materials

- Asset Bingo Card

### Activity

1. Give everyone an Asset Bingo card
2. Instruct them to mingle about the room for 2 minutes to find people who have accomplished many of the items on the card.
3. Have them get the person's initials next in the appropriate box.
4. Stop time after 2 minutes and announce "winners"
5. Share some examples of parents leadership skills from the asset bingo cards

#### ***Trainer Tip: Time Management and Participation***

It is very important to make sure you are keeping time for each activity and that participants are aware of how much time they have for each activity. Use a timer or music to help manage time. Make sure no one is standing on the sidelines and that there is full participation. Check in with participants who may be struggling with the activity.



## **Activity #2: Leader Self Assessment**

10 minutes

### **Purpose**

Participants will understand what skills are necessary to be a great leader.

### **Outcomes**

Participants will discover where their leadership strengths are and where there is room for growth

### **Materials**

- Leadership self-assessment tool

### **Activity**

1. Give every parent a Leadership Assessment tool
2. Have each parent do the assessment and add up their scores
3. Have parents share with a partner the outcomes of their assessment
4. Ask participants to turn in their assessments

#### ***Trainer Tip: Motivating Participants***

Remind participants that everyone has areas of strength and areas of growth. Leadership development is a continuous process.

**Activity # 3: Commitment Ceremony**

10 minutes