



Learning Dreams

Creating a Culture of Learning

A new approach to parent involvement

Parent involvement is the single most important factor leading to success in school for children. The traditional way to generate parent involvement is to seek parent support for their child's learning. We have learned that it is more effective to appeal to the parents as deeply curious people with their own needs to dream, grow and learn.

In Learning Dreams, parents of students who are struggling in school identify and pursue their own learning dreams. Once the parents are making progress on their own learning, they are helped to support their children's education and learning.

Learning Dreams starts from the premise that actively supporting a culture of learning in homes and communities creates a foundation for educational success. It focuses initially on families in their homes and communities, but in so doing it also provides an innovative approach to close the educational gap for students in school.



Families are the center of a Learning Dreams community.

Learning Dreams was successfully implemented as a three-year pilot project in a Minneapolis, Minnesota public housing community. It led to outstanding family and community participation in learning as well as school success for children most in need.

At the conclusion of the pilot project the truancy rate had fallen to zero, and the parents participated in the school at the remarkable rate of 100%. The correlations of positive outcomes at the school with this project generated significant interest in testing the applicability of the model in other communities.

Learning Dreams is presently being replicated in Minneapolis and Worthington.



Learning Dreams participants prepare a feast for a community celebration.

Attitudes and behavior that parents and students bring to the educational process are more deeply affected by strength of community and family bonds than by the ... socioeconomic or racial character of their communities.

Robert Putnam quoted in "Nothing New Under the Sun: A Century of Thought About Out of School Time and Social Capital" by Dr. Jerry Stein, *The Center*, Summer 2002

Origins of Learning Dreams

Learning Dreams was designed to help narrow the achievement and learning gap. It was developed by Dr. Jerry Stein, now at the University of Minnesota's School of Social Work in the College of Education and Human Development.

Premises

A new approach to parent involvement that creates a culture of learning:

- Is the foundation for educational success
- Needs to be family & community centered
- Builds strong relationships between families and community institutions
- Leads to improved learning and school outcomes

Program Activities

A community-based educator:

- Advocates for parents' learning dreams
- Follows-up with support for children's learning
- Builds relationships with community institutions
- Acts as a bridge between families and schools

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased parent & child participation in learning
- Better school outcomes
- Increased social capital
- Increased community capacity to support learning
- Increased participation in learning by other members of the community

Contact Information

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