



Academy for Urban School Leadership
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Family and Community Engagement

AUSL's family and community engagement is carried out through a multitude of avenues, including a Parent Ambassador Academy, a highly dedicated and trained Community Engagement Team, additional in-school resources and supports, and maximizing the involvement of school leaders with families and the communities their school serves. AUSL has accumulated experience engaging with parents and the local community through its management of Chicago public schools located in various communities in the south and west sides of Chicago. In all of our experiences, initial objections by parents and community members to the turnaround of their school did not persist after the new school opened. Parents from each of these communities have volunteered to speak in public about their appreciation of what AUSL management has meant for them and for their children, and these testimonials have been helpful in forums with parents of prospective new Turnaround schools. In the course of engaging the community in a new district, AUSL would expect to bring some of these voices from Chicago to key share their experiences with non-Chicago community audiences, if the district thinks this would be helpful.

AUSL employees two full time Community Engagement staff members. The two Community Engagement team members help build, manage, and lead numerous parent school-based councils such as the Bilingual Advisory Council (BAC), Local School Council (LSC), and the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Working with these councils ensures compliance with district and state mandates, as well as creates the capacity to maximize resources (such as funding allocations for parent trainings and workshops). The 2014-2015 school year brought upon the first year of Parent Ambassador Academy, a "parent university" that meets four times throughout the year to engage parents of happenings throughout the network, provide a platform for parent voices, bring a level of understanding for the high school and college acceptance and enrollment process, along with other topics of interest throughout the school year. For parents that cannot attend the Parent Ambassador Academy, the Community Engagement team utilizes social media to keep parents connected and informed of happenings throughout the network and essential, timely information.

Within AUSL schools, partner organizations such as City Year, Citizen Schools, UCAN, LAMP, and SGA work with school leaders, teachers, and coaches to provide supports such as additional tutoring and social/emotional support. These external resources work with schools and families to understand the specific needs of individual students, creating a network of support that exists beyond academic help.

Additionally, a school's principal has a key leadership role to play in engaging the community, and AUSL puts our principals in front of community and parent audiences as soon as the school's turnaround is approved. AUSL also works closely with district central office communications and community relations staff, communicating very frequently at critical points in the calendar to coordinate public announcements about Turnaround schools. For example, in a new district, AUSL would work with local school district staff to plan for the announcement of the SIG grant, strategize about who would attend public hearings and meetings, etc.

Reference: North Chicago Community High School
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