



PARENTNET®

Sample Mid-Year Newsletter Article

Topics Include:

- Shaping School Culture through ParentNet
- Summaries available

(Feel free to copy and use any portion of this article, changing the names, dates, etc. to reflect the needs of your particular school.)

“... the promise of ParentNet is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Shaping School Culture Through Communication

By the time this letter reaches you, almost all grade levels will have held their fall ParentNet meetings. We hope you had the opportunity to attend your child's grade level meeting(s) and experience, firsthand, what ParentNet is all about. However, if you were unable to go, you can still get an idea of the flavor of these meetings via the meeting summaries that are emailed to each parent and faculty advisors for that grade level, as well as a few key administrators. Look for these emailed summaries about two weeks after the grade level meeting. At the same time, the summaries also will be posted to our school website at _____ and may be found along with two previous years of summaries of ParentNet meetings.

At _____, the bottom line for the ParentNet program is to foster a strong parent-student-school community. Because communities are built upon communication, the heart of ParentNet is a set of well-defined rules for communicating during meetings. Clear boundaries for discussion, are specified in the 'parent contract', that is an integral part of every meeting. In effect, the 'contract' outlines for parents a way of communicating that is always positive, respectful, non-judgmental, and constructive. As we internalize this way of communicating, we begin to practice it with other parents (even our spouses!), our students, and faculty and staff, outside ParentNet meetings. Over time, as more members of the community know and practice this positive, constructive and respectful style of communication, the 'rules' for ParentNet discussions become those for our school community. The result is a school culture characterized by mutual respect and trust, greater openness, and higher morale that fosters the strongest kind of community!

This is why the promise of ParentNet is greater than the sum of its parts. Since its inception 5 years ago, about 100 _____ parents have been trained to facilitate ParentNet meetings, and currently over 87 of them are still at _____. Hundreds more parents have attended grade level meetings during this time. As participants in ParentNet, these individuals have to some extent, made the _____ School culture what it is today, and what it can be in the future.