



Teachers and Parents as Partners

Battle Rock Charter School, Montezuma-Cortez School District

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Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP) is a research-based approach that builds relationships between parents and teachers to help students succeed. Typically used for students who are struggling with social, behavioral or academic challenges, it gives parents voice and promotes goal attainment through meaningful home-school partnerships. Battle Rock Charter School in Montezuma-Cortez has enjoyed a long-standing tradition guided by principles of relationships, safety, inclusion, holistic and authentic education, and high expectations. TAPP complements these principles through its emphasis on strengths, partnerships, capacity-building, and individualized experiences.



A lead teacher and a member of the school's leadership team was instrumental in bringing TAPP to Battle Rock. She learned of the program through collaborators at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, who also worked with members of CDE's Family, School, Community Partnerships office.

TAPP actively invites and reinforces parents' perspectives, values, and wishes into educational decision making. Through proactive invitations to engage, requests for information and expertise, use of open-ended questions, ongoing two-way communication, and other partnership-building strategies, educators set the stage for and promote parents' roles as essential collaborators. Structurally, TAPP augments systems already in place for students and families, such as PBIS and MTSS. In particular, as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 approach, TAPP supports individual students' unique and individualized needs.

To use TAPP at Battle Rock, the lead teacher first participated in a self-paced, virtual TAPP training program. The program included a personal coach who helped her hone her delivery of TAPP, introduce it to other teachers and parents at the school, and support its implementation. For each student identified for TAPP, the lead teacher met with the student's parent(s) and teacher three times over approximately eight weeks to identify as a team what they could do together to support student success. The first meeting involved identifying the student's strengths, needs and goals. The second meeting involved understanding students' skills and behaviors, and co-creating collaborative home-school plans for helping students' achieve their goals. Parents and teachers implemented the plans over a few weeks, continuing to communicate regularly with one another. They also continued to monitor students' progress using simple tools and procedures. During the final meeting, the lead teacher reviewed the home-school data, discussed whether goals were met, helped modify plans to support continued progress, and recommended methods for parents and teachers to continue their partnership.

As a data-driven approach, teams determine a practical approach to monitor students' performance or behaviors, and their progress toward mutually-determined goals. They collect information daily to assess students' current skills, and new skills that develop as a result of the partnership. Some of the student goals established at Battle Rock included reducing the number of times a student left their assigned seat at school,

and the number of times they got out of bed at home. Others were reducing meltdowns or tantrums occurring both at home and at school, and increasing the student's ability to follow directions. Parents reported that they have seen significant improvements in their children's behavior and overall self-awareness. The parents felt like they learned more about their student's behaviors and what their students needed during hard moments.

Relative to before they started TAPP, students showed an increase in social skills, building self-awareness, and learning to take feedback. Parents also reported improvements in their parenting skills by understanding the function of their child's behaviors and becoming more intentional in communications with their child. According to one parent, "I noticed a change in [my child] and her being able to take feedback with a more positive response and not turning everything into a huge meltdown. She was able to recover at home and even apologized for her behavior."

According to the lead teacher, "The TAPP program has been a wonderful complement to our school. Through it, I have built valuable skills that have allowed me to mediate conversations and foster positive and productive relationships between families and teachers."