

A Model for Creating Meaningful and Diverse Parent Involvement at Your School

“PTA’s School Smarts program has been a key to achieving our district’s aim of increased family involvement and community engagement. Parents across the district report they now know how to better access and navigate their school system, and this has resulted in new leadership opportunities for parents and staff alike. School Smarts has also developed a new generation of diverse parents who helped us realize our goal of greater parent input to our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) committees.”

*Sean McPhetridge,
Interim Superintendent
Alameda USD*

School Smarts is an award-winning, research-based program that is proven to:

- Foster parent engagement in schools
- Support parents as their children’s first teachers
- Develop future parent leaders
- Encourage parents to advocate for a complete education that includes the arts





The School Smarts Model

School Smarts is an inclusive parent engagement program that brings parents together in support of their common interest: Helping their children and schools succeed.

Launched as a pilot program in 2010 with support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, School Smarts now operates in schools and school districts across the state.

The Program Includes:

A campus-wide engagement night

A school-wide event is designed to attract parents from all sectors of the school community to enjoy a social and educational evening and learn more about the School Smarts program. Each event is planned and customized by a local site Steering Committee with the goal of informing parents about their own school and how to maximize success for their children, plus get a chance to meet each other and school leaders, and take part in an interactive arts activity with their children that introduces them to the power of arts learning and further builds community.

Parent Academy

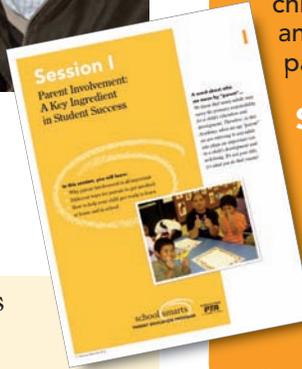
Trained facilitators lead seven interactive sessions that are two hours in length. Class size typically ranges from 25-30 parent participants. The course includes a professionally-developed curriculum, multimedia presentations, individual and group activities, art instructional activities, homework assignments, and discussions. Childcare and refreshments are provided.

Celebrating leadership and next-level engagement

The Parent Academy culminates with a graduation celebration – many parent graduates then go on to serve on school and district committees, PTA boards and in other ways; plus seek additional training to strengthen their overall engagement and their advocacy skills.

School Smarts materials are currently available in Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.





What Parents Learn

Session 1: Parent involvement

Parents' role as their child's first teacher and the types of parent involvement

Session 2: Preparing for a lifetime of learning

How children learn and the basics of college readiness

Session 3: Understanding our education system

The structure of California's public school system, including academic standards, testing and local school funding

Session 4: Understanding our school

How schools are governed and decisions are made

Session 5: Becoming an effective communicator

The importance of communication between families, schools and other audiences

Session 6: Standing up for quality education

Becoming a leader and advocate on behalf of your child and all children

Session 7: Taking action/Celebrating commitment

Creating personal and group action plans

What Parents Say:

“I definitely liked that I learned the key roles of some of the staff members in the district. I feel more confident and able to communicate better.”

“The academy has made me excited about becoming more involved at school. I am looking forward to possibly working on one if not more projects to help both the school and the students. The academy has given me the confidence to believe that I can make a difference.”

“School Smarts was very helpful to understand the American school system because I'm an immigrant and in the country where I came from things were different. This program encourages me to participate and share ideas on behalf of the kids.”

“This academy has not only provided me good parenting information at home but also to support my child in school. The information received has been invaluable.”

“School Smarts allowed me to reflect on my role as a parent and as a big part of my child's education. It also gave me the tools to become more involved and help bring change to our school.”

What Principals and PTA Leaders Say:

“As an elementary school principal for over three decades, I feel that the School Smarts program has been the most successful parent engagement programs that I have ever used. PTA has created a program that is an awesome forum to help our parents navigate the public school landscape. Each year our program is growing larger and our parent involvement is becoming stronger. The program also has created a positive and open line of communication between my parents and myself.”

*Rod Federwisch, Principal
Butterfield Ranch Elementary School, Chino Valley Unified School District*

“Our council and school district's investment in funding the School Smarts program underscores our commitment to the kind of meaningful parent engagement that truly makes a difference for our students.”

*Rochelle Fanali, President
Santa Monica-Malibu PTA Council*

What School District Leaders Say:

“The format of the program provided opportunities for collaboration among parents as adult learners. The fact that most parents attended every session says a lot about the program.”

*Parvin Ahmadi, Superintendent
Pleasanton USD*

“School Smarts successfully enriches, empowers and engages parents and caregivers to be active partners in educating and developing the minds of our children.”

*Richard Martinez, Superintendent
Pomona USD*

“The School Smarts program has had a profound impact on our district. We have seen new energy, commitment and involvement from our parents and families who have previously stayed on the outskirts. These parents and families now have a deeper understanding of not only how schools operate, but now they see the big picture of how the district is part of the entire system.”

*Dr. David Lorden, Superintendent
Lakeside USD*

**Want to bring
School Smarts
to your school?**

We're ready to help.

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PARENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

**Contact us at
(916) 440-1985
capta.org/schoolsmarts**

School Smarts Makes a Positive Impact

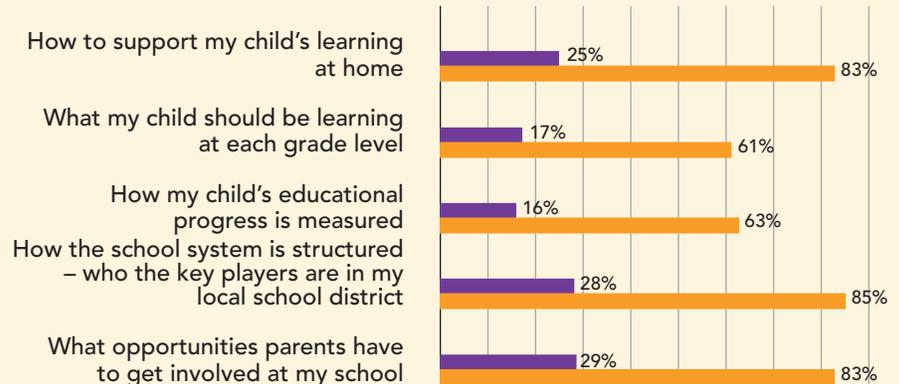
Proven program results for parents include:

- Improved understanding among parents from all backgrounds of the K-12 school system
- Increased knowledge by parents of how to support their child's learning at home
- Greater parent confidence in effectively communicating with other parents and school staff to build a positive school community
- Expanded number of diverse parents participating in school-wide decision-making and leadership roles, including through PTAs, School Site Councils, English Learner Advisory Committees and LCAP committees.

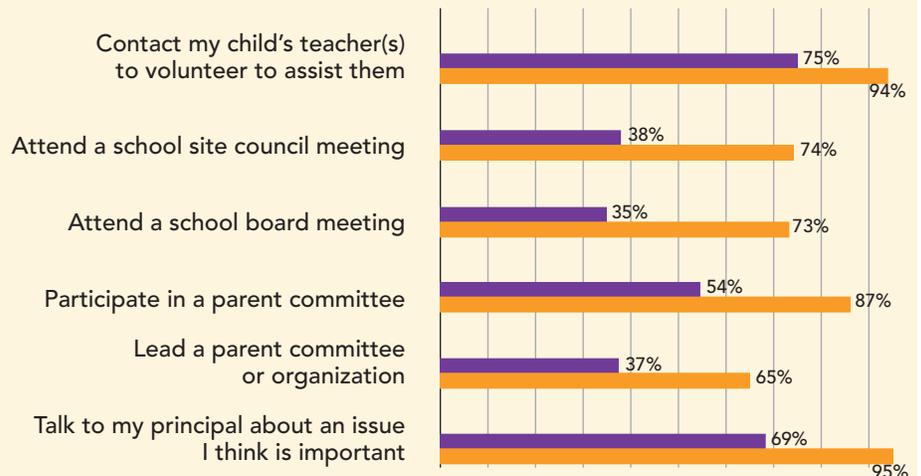
Pre- and post-questionnaires show parents feel more informed and more likely to be involved than before participating in the School Smarts program.

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“I feel very well informed” about...



“I am definitely or very likely” to...



*Results from 2013-14 academy sessions. ■ = pre-academy ■ = post-academy