

Name of Activity or Program: Individual Family Intake to High School

Grade Range: Grade 9 (but can be adapted for grade 6)

School District: Codman Academy Charter Public School

Type of Title I Program in the District: Schoolwide

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Type of Involvement: Communicating; Parenting; Community Involvement

Codman Academy Charter Public School, located in Dorchester, implements a home and school collaboration program that ensures family involvement with each incoming ninth grader.

Each student and guardian meets with the school social worker to establish shared goals and expectations. There is a protocol developed which includes time for individual meetings with parents during the interview. There is also a mental health screening provided by the school.

Communication is most important in collaboration. Students are divided into groups of ten called Advisories, each led by a faculty advisor. The advisor then gathers information weekly from the advisories and updates parents and guardians.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Empower the teachers and staff with as much information about the family units entering the school community and begin bridging the gap between home and school.
2. Empower parents to take a more active role in their child's education and help families gain access to community agencies that will help service their needs.
3. Create trust and cohesive messages among those in the learning community about topics such as achievement, work ethics, discipline, attendance, etc.

MAIN PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- **Family Intake Meetings:** Prior to starting school, the staff meets with each individual student and guardian to familiarize the teacher with the academic, cultural, and familial background.
- **Welcome Dinner:** Over 100 people attend the dinner, which allows families to become part of the school right in the beginning. Grandparents, siblings, cousins, and parents are invited.
- **Parent Meetings and Conferences:** Once a month, parents are invited to discuss their child's education and other issues such as different policies, nutrition, and managing money. Progress report meetings happen twice a year to review individual student's academic performance.
- **Additional Outreach for Families:** "Open-Door Policy" is available throughout the school year and summer; parents are encouraged to stop by and participate in school-wide events.

- **Web site and Two-Way Communication:** Parents have access to the school's Web site in addition to phone calls, e-mail, and standard mail.

NECESSARY ELEMENTS

1. Full administration and staff commitment
2. Group committed to doing the work
3. Funding
4. Partnership

For more information, go to www.codmanacademy.org, "Best Practices."

FAMILY INTAKE MEETING

Questions for Student:

1. What are your goals as a student at Codman?
2. What are your goals for being a leader at Codman?
3. What are your goals for contributing to the community while at Codman?
4. What do you consider your greatest strength?
5. How would you like most to improve?
6. Is there anything special we should know about you (hobbies, interests, etc.)?
7. What questions do you have about Codman?

Student Writing Sample:

(Choose one and write at least four paragraphs.)

1. Why do you want to attend and graduate from Codman?
2. What is your "grand passion" in life?
3. What is your greatest fear?

Question for Parents and Guardians:

1. What do you consider to be your child's strengths?
2. Areas for improvement?
3. What special interests or hobbies does your child have that you would like to see encouraged? discouraged?
4. How would you describe your child socially?
5. Are there any special needs or services your child has? (Glasses, medical conditions, IEPs?)
6. What interests, talents, or hobbies of yours would you be willing to share at Codman?
7. Questions and Comments

Family Routines Questionnaire:

1. What is your current school day routine?
2. Morning (When do you wake up? How do you get to school?)
3. Daytime (What is the school day like? What do you do at lunch? What do you enjoy and dislike about school?)
4. After-school (What do you do when school finishes? How do you get home? When do other family members get home? What happens at dinner? Where and when do you do home-work?)
5. What is your current weekend routine (friends, family, activities, homework)?
6. What did you do last summer?

7. How do you expect your current routine to change now that you are a student at Codman Academy?

8. Do you have any additional questions or concerns?

Discussion of Codman routine:

- ▶ Classes and electives
- ▶ Code of conduct
- ▶ Dress code

"I know it's a big investment of time in the beginning but it's just such important relationship building," said Head of School Meg Campbell. "It's very expensive, but we are lamenting the lack of parental involvement; if you want to increase parental involvement, you need to build relationships."

Information Survey for Parents

Student Name: _____ Date: _____ Parent/Guardian Name: _____

We have prepared the following survey to collect information about Codman Academy students and their families. Our aim is to evaluate how the school can best meet the needs of the children and families we serve. Any information you offer will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL** and will **NOT** be used to assess your student's performance. Thank you for your honesty in answering the following questions.

Does your family currently have a library card? Yes No If Yes, to which library? _____

How many visits has your family made to the library in the past year? (Check One)

- ___ None ___ Once a month ___ 1 to 2 times a month
___ Once every week ___ 3 to 5 times a week ___ Once every day

Does your family currently subscribe to any periodicals? (magazines, journals, or newspapers?) Yes No

If yes, please list: _____

On average, how many hours per week does your family spend reading books, magazines, or newspapers? _____ hours per week

On average, how many hours per week is the TV on in your home? _____ hours per week

On average, how many hours per week does your student watch TV? _____ hours per week

Do you currently have a computer at home? Yes No Do you have Internet access at home? Yes No

On average, how many hours per week is the computer used in your home? _____ hours per week

How many people use the computer in your home? _____ people out of _____ members of your household.

How is your home computer used? To play computer games, to do work, to browse the Web? _____

Does your family have a fitness center membership? Yes No If yes, to which fitness center? _____

How many visits has your family made to the fitness center in the past year?

- ___ None ___ Once every month ___ 1 to 2 times a month
___ Once every week ___ 3 to 5 times a week ___ Once every day

Does your family have a membership to any museums or educational or cultural institutions? Yes No

Has anyone in your family attended or contributed to a community event or project over the past year? Yes No

If yes, please describe event or project, such as community dinner, fund drive, workshop, lecture? _____

Did you or another parents or guardian visit your student's school this year (during 8th grade)? If yes, how many times? _____

If yes, what was the nature of the visit? (parent conference, student performance, parent's night?) _____

If no, do you have any suggestions for how Codman Academy could better involve you in your student's educational experience? _____

How many children in your family currently receive free or reduced lunch? _____

Is there any additional information about your student or family that would be helpful for Codman Academy to know? _____