

Principals are Key Ingredient to Success!

Lisa Vaughn, a seasoned Georgia Parent Mentor in Liberty County, is focusing on increasing parent engagement in the school district's achievement efforts through the GaDOE Parent Satisfaction surveys. While parent satisfaction rates for this county have ranked in the 26-28 percent range, the return rate went up appreciably from 8.6 percent in 2007-08 to 60.2 percent in 2008-09 and 47.1 percent in 2009-10.

Vaughn credits the dramatic increase in return rates to the involvement of the district's principals (Liberty County School District). She points to a recent December event when Chris Anderson, principal of Liberty County Elementary School, offered a dialogue with families and educators to review the survey questions and explain the process.

"He went over the questions on the survey," Vaughn said. "He explained what each question meant.



Such as in #2 I - special assistance (child care for IEP meetings): Anderson explained that the school does not offer child care but the school does offer phone conferences so that parents can participate in the IEP.

Parents indicated that they understood this question better after he explained it."

According to Vaughn, the goal is not merely to increase the return data but to take a good look at the data and take action to improve parent satisfaction.

Anderson and his fellow principals also provided the support to Ms. Vaughn - to create a survey team at each school to strategize on ways to impact parent satisfaction on each survey question.

The Liberty County Division for Exceptional Students created a Parent Concern Form to address parental concerns before the survey goes out. The Parent Concern Form is sent with the IEP notification giving parents and team members an opportunity to look specifically at parent involvement. Questions include: Does your child complete homework at night? Does your child discuss school concerns with you? Do you have any concerns about your child's performance (academically, behaviorally, and developmentally?)

She also created a parent resource guide which is presented to parents along with Parental Rights.

Vaughn also worked with her survey teams to create email data bases and other events to provide online survey access and other important information about the parent satisfaction survey and, specific information about the Liberty County School District.