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Improving School-Community Relationships

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Capstone Project: A School Improvement Plan

Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa

Abstract

This School Improvement Plan responds to the challenge that schools alone cannot address the many obstacles students face. Research has shown that when schools develop positive and supportive partnerships with parents and the community, the overall benefits for students are overwhelming. Rather than three separate entities guiding students, the combination of the school, parental, and community support systems satisfy the critical role of positive school and community relationships in nurturing students' development and meeting diverse learning needs. As revealed by the 2021 Conditions for Learning Family Survey in the Clayton Ridge School District, the school-community relationship has been damaged by unknown factors. This School Improvement Plan aims to provide insights and guidance on developing a positive school-community partnership, contributing to the overall goal of enhancing students' well-being through improved relationships between all stakeholders.

Keywords: school-community relationships, parent engagement, community partnerships, partnership, stakeholders

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Improving School-Community Relationships

According to a 2019 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) (2023b), 1 in 5 high school students reported being bullied at school and more than 1 in 6 reported being bullied electronically. In addition, the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) (2022) indicated that the percentage of students that reported substance abuse, including the misuse of prescription drugs, use of illicit drugs and injection drugs is a significant cause of concern. The CDC (2022) explains that the prevention of such behaviors begins with parent and family support and school connectedness “When schools engage families in meaningful ways to improve student health and learning, families can support and reinforce healthy behaviors in multiple settings – at home, in school, in out-of-school programs, and in the community” (Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, 2023a). Promoting strong connections between students, their schools, and their families is a significant protective factor that can help reduce the risk of various negative behaviors and increase student achievement.

In the most recent Conditions for Learning Family Survey, 58 high school parents from the Clayton Ridge School District responded to questions about adult-student relationships, boundaries and expectations of the school, emotional and physical safety of the students, and student-student relationships (Iowa Department of Education, 2023a). According to the survey results, 28% of the parents responding felt that adults that work with their child are not willing to listen to what students have to say and 26% felt that their child did not have a trusting adult to talk to their problems about (Iowa Department of Education, 2023a). Additionally, 31% of parents felt that the school does not do an adequate job of informing them if their students are doing well in school, which emphasizes the need for improved communication channels and a more transparent feedback system to bridge the gap between the school and parents (Iowa

Department of Education, 2023a). The survey results reveal a particularly concerning finding: a significant 13% decrease in the score representing adult-student relationships from the prior year (Iowa Department of Education, 2023a). This decrease signals a perception among parents that their students may not be experiencing the desired level of connection and support from the adults within the school. Addressing this disconnect is not only important for the school's mission but also for fostering a more cohesive and supportive educational environment for the entire community. The problem is that in today's evolving educational setting, the critical role of positive and supportive school and community relationships is paramount to nurturing students' development and addressing the various needs of learners.

Research has consistently shown that collaboration among school staff, students, families, and community members plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of every student within the school (Haines et al., 2015). Additionally, Rollison et al. (2015) asserted that “Schools alone do not have the capacity to plan and implement the wide range of interventions needed to ensure a safe school environment for students” (p. 445). The purpose of this school improvement plan is to bridge this gap and unlock the potential of collaborative efforts between school administration and staff, students, parents, and community organizations to actively support students and have a significant impact on student achievement, health, behavior, and attendance. The perceived lack of a strong adult-student relationship within a school underscores a challenge that would benefit from our dedicated efforts to develop a plan that improves the relationships between stakeholders.

Research for this School Improvement Plan utilized Google Scholar, the DeWitt Library at Northwestern College, and government run websites to collect data and scholarly journals. All the scholarly journals included in this School Improvement Plan were published within the past

fifteen years. I focused on finding articles related to the necessary steps to develop relationships between schools and the community and the effects of positive school relationships on student achievement. I focused primarily on finding research that included secondary schools because Clayton Ridge High School serves students in grades 9-12. The scope of research included studies involving strategies, and collaborative efforts necessary to create a more cohesive and supportive school environment, emphasizing the significance of developing and maintaining positive school-community relationships.

At Clayton Ridge High School, our students are the heart of our mission, and their success is our priority, therefore, it is imperative that we address the challenges in our school-community relationship. Maintaining a positive and supportive relationship between adults and students within the school develops a sense of belonging and encouragement, which plays a fundamental role in their educational journey. I believe that to build a strong relationship between the school and the community, it is crucial to understand how to develop the qualities needed to start and keep a partnership strong, how the school contributes to this partnership, to recognize the positive effects of working together with communities, and appreciate the role of parents in maintaining a positive connection. This will help us achieve our common goal of improving the overall well-being of our students by developing a positive school-community partnership.

The primary focus of this literature review is to explore the essential elements required for establishing and nurturing a robust relationship between the school and the community. This involves an in-depth examination of the qualities crucial for initiating and sustaining a successful partnership. Additionally, the review will explore the active contribution of the school to this partnership while recognizing the positive outcomes that emerge from collaborative efforts

between educational institutions and communities. Moreover, the role of parents will be emphasized, highlighting their crucial involvement in maintaining a positive connection between the school and the community. By thoroughly examining these components, the literature review aims to provide insights and guidance on fostering a positive school-community partnership, ultimately contributing to the primary objective of enhancing the overall well-being of students through positive school-community relationships.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The importance of fostering effective school-community partnerships has become increasingly apparent in modern education. Educational institutions no longer stand as isolated entities but rather as integral components of the broader community. This transformation recognizes the needs of students and acknowledges that academic success is linked to their overall well-being. As a result, schools have evolved to embrace their roles as a bridge with the community, offering crucial support systems that extend beyond the traditional classroom. This literature review explores the contributions of schools in the development and maintenance of impactful school-community partnerships. It investigates the vital role that schools play in enhancing student well-being, improving academic performance, and addressing non-academic challenges through collaborations with community organizations, families, and students. With a focus on research findings and insights from various scholars, this review discusses the elements that shape these partnerships, the positive outcomes they yield, and the potential barriers they face.

School Contribution in Fostering Effective School-Community Partnerships

Effective school-community partnerships have emerged as a crucial avenue for providing comprehensive support and enhancing student well-being. This section explores the significant contributions of schools to developing such partnerships. Schools are acknowledging the importance of providing support for non-academic challenges in the educational setting (Bates et al., 2019). It is increasingly evident that there is no single intervention program, community partnership, or individual school-based professional capable of comprehensively addressing the diverse and complex needs of today's students (Bates et al., 2019; Rollison et al., 2013; Keller et al., 2021). A study conducted by Bates et al. (2019) examined the relationship between interprofessional team collaboration and academic performance. In the four schools that participated in the research, CARE (Consultation, Assessment, Referral, and Education) teams were established two years before the study began. Researchers noted that these teams comprised professionals, including principals, school psychologists, social workers, community school coordinators, intervention specialists, and community mental health professionals. Data was collected through qualitative interviews with 27 CARE team members from four Title I schools. Quantitative data were gathered from records of absenteeism, office disciplinary referrals, literacy skills, and behavioral health for 340 students in the same schools. After the study concluded, the qualitative data indicated that interprofessional team collaborations cultivate the sharing of ideas, knowledge, resources, and support for students, with the team's process and structure serving as the framework for coordinating services across various systems. Additionally, the data demonstrated that experts felt capable of accelerating access to resources addressing the non-academic needs of students. Therefore, the findings from the study by Bates et al. (2019) emphasize the significance of interprofessional team collaboration in improving academic performance and addressing diverse student needs.

Thomas et al. (2010) supported the claim by Bates et al. (2019), Rollison et al. (2013), and Keller et al. (2021) that “Schools alone do not often have the capacity to solve and unravel the diverse health risk behaviors of students without the aid of other organizations and members of the wider community” (p. 428). They went on to express the importance of valuing the school setting as a central location to reach a wide audience for important programs targeting student and family health and well-being. In their research, Thomas et al. (2010) collected data from semi-structured interviews with 16 participants significantly involved in the 'Logan Healthy Schools Project' in Logan, Australia. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the elements that define successful school-community collaborations contributing to the long-term viability of school programs. The results indicated that there are four key elements that define successful school-community collaborations: an emphasis on building strong relationships, the combination of complementary abilities, a shared purpose, and a high level of competence in implementation. Thomas et al. (2010) also emphasized the importance of open communication, which they claimed, “increases trust and allows individuals to share resources” (p. 432). This aligns with Gross et al.'s (2015) findings, which further substantiated the significance of these factors in effective school-community partnerships. Gross et al. (2015) identified that strong school leadership, an inviting school culture, teacher commitment to student success, and collaboration and communication among partners are among the key factors that significantly contribute to the promotion of effective community partnerships. These consistent findings highlight the importance of collaborative, relationship-focused, and communicative approaches in strengthening school-community partnerships and improving student well-being and academic success.

Positive Effects of School-Community Partnerships on Students

Thapa et al. (2013) conducted a study focusing on the impact of a positive school climate on students' mental and physical well-being and academic success. They reviewed 206 studies, emphasizing five key dimensions of school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, institutional environment, and the school improvement process. Thapa and colleagues concluded that school climate significantly influences students' social-emotional health, academic performance, and attendance. Subsequent research (Bates, Mellin, et al., 2019; Gross, J. M. S., et al., 2015; González, C., Bacon, V., and Kearney, C. A., 2023) reaffirms the crucial role of school climate in students' well-being and academic success. In contrast, a study conducted by Hands (2005) highlighted that insufficient attention and support from adults in students' lives are viewed as significant obstacles to achieving educational success. However, Gross et al. (2015) observed that schools with strong community partnerships experience positive outcomes, including higher student performance, improved test scores, increased attendance rates, and enhanced learning opportunities beyond the classroom. In summary, together, these findings demonstrate that school-community partnerships contribute to a positive school climate and, consequently, promote student success.

Rollison et al. (2013) investigated the influence of school connections with out-of-school agencies on student behavior. Researchers analyzed data reported by recipients of the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) grant through site visits, interviews, and web-based surveys. The results of this research highlighted the importance of cooperation, coordination, and integration of programs and activities through the collaborative efforts of school and interdisciplinary agencies such as mental health providers, public health officials, juvenile courts, and local law enforcement. Furthermore, collaborative efforts between the school and above-mentioned agencies indicated a reduction in school suspensions and delinquency and

better access to mentoring and mental health services. Studies have demonstrated that the school climate significantly affects the mental and physical well-being of students (Thapa et al., 2013; Elrod, B.G. et al., 2022; González, C. et al., 2023). Therefore, the findings by Rollinson et al. (2013) would support the notion that fostering effective school-community partnerships not only improves student behavior and access to critical services but also positively influences the overall well-being of students.

A literature review that aimed to develop a typology of school-community partnerships as an initial step in evaluating the success of partnership implementation was conducted by Vali, Stefanski, and Jacobson (2014). This research identified four distinct categories of school-community partnerships: family and interagency collaboration, full-service schools, full-service community schools, and a community development model. According to Vali, Stefanski, and Jacobson (2014), having this knowledge in advance can assist those interested in establishing school-community partnerships in making informed decisions. The family and interagency collaboration model, as described by researchers, serves as a framework that encourages parental engagement. It involves schools and agencies collaborating to extend their roles beyond traditional education. This collaborative approach includes coordinating the provision of additional services, such as healthcare, social support, or further educational resources, to benefit students and their families. The review also included an examination of Community in School (CIS) schools, encompassing 20 program evaluations. The findings from this part of the study indicated that increased teacher and parent satisfaction with the school (indicating a positive school environment), greater community use of school facilities (for community-based programs), enhanced safety perceptions in the area (attributed to an effective school-safety plan), and heightened community pride and engagement (demonstrating a positive school-community

relationship) were associated with positive student outcomes. These outcomes included improvements in student attendance, graduation rates, educational aspirations, cooperative behavior, and homework completion.

Research by Vali, Stefanski, and Jacobson (2014) claim that school-community partnerships, when well-structured and inclusive of family and community collaboration, have the potential to foster an environment conducive to student success and well-being. As witnessed in the case of Community in School (CIS) schools, when teachers, parents, and the broader community are highly satisfied with the school, when the facilities are actively used for community-based programs, when students and community members feel safe, and when there's a sense of pride and engagement in the school-community relationship, a range of positive outcomes for students emerges. These outcomes include better attendance, higher graduation rates, elevated educational aspirations, increased cooperative behavior, and enhanced homework completion. Therefore, the evidence suggests that developing such school-community partnerships is not only beneficial for educational institutions and their communities but, most importantly, for the students themselves.

Importance of Parental Involvement in an Effective School-Community Partnership

Stefanski, Valli, and Jacobson (2016) conducted a follow-up literature review building on their prior research mentioned earlier. In this subsequent study, the authors examined the literature with a specific focus on the roles of families within the partnership models previously mentioned: family and interagency collaboration, full-service schools, full-service community schools, and a community development model. This updated review highlighted a key distinction between parental involvement and parental engagement in the school community. The researchers claim that schools emphasizing parental involvement typically take the lead in

improvement initiatives and inform parents about how they can contribute (2016). On the other hand, parental engagement refers to a deeper level of involvement where parents have an active voice in the school's activities, and they become valuable resources and collaborators. Therefore, as suggested by Stefanski, Valli, and Jacobson (2016), schools dedicated to promoting parental engagement can establish supportive partnerships that enable families to take on multiple roles, including providing support, offering encouragement, monitoring progress, advocating for their children, participating in decision-making processes, and collaborating with the school community. The conclusion drawn from research conducted by Stefanski, Valli, and Jacobson (2016) portrays a shift in the role of parents and family members, evolving from being passive recipients of services to becoming empowered participants in students' education. This transformation fosters a heightened sense of belonging within the school system.

Heifets and Blank (2004) emphasize the significance of a community school, highlighting its focus on the community as a means to empower families and enhance their capacity to contribute more effectively to student learning and development. Developing a sense of community within the school through family and community partnerships creates mutual respect between all stakeholders and promotes a supportive school environment. This approach aligns with the findings from the prior study conducted by Valli, Stefanski, and Jacobson (2014), where they examined four different sets of studies to assess parental satisfaction with their involvement in the school. The results indicated that parents who actively engaged with the school "reported a decrease in depression over time, an increased sense of family cohesion, greater consistency in parenting practices..." (p. 732). These positive outcomes emphasize the significance of meaningful parental involvement in the educational process.

Haines et al. (2015) reported findings from two studies that investigated the perspectives of family members and community partners regarding their partnerships with school staff across various sites in the United States. These studies identified several key themes, including a school culture of inclusion, the role of administrative leadership, partnership attributes, family involvement opportunities, and positive outcomes for all students. The researchers concluded that to foster partnerships with families, school leaders should prioritize the themes uncovered in their analysis. Haines and colleagues (2015) also stressed the importance of engaging families in establishing a shared vision for student success, emphasizing the need for open lines of communication and the cultivation of a positive, welcoming, and inclusive school culture. To achieve this inclusive culture, the researchers recommended that schools offer meaningful opportunities for family involvement, including the chance for families to take on leadership roles and actively contribute to the day-to-day functioning and improvement of the school. Furthermore, research by Stefanski, Valli, and Jacobson (2016) emphasizes the benefits of partnerships between schools and neighborhood communities, which include enhancing student learning, school improvement, and the strengthening of families and neighborhoods.

Desired Qualities to Develop and Maintain an Effective School-Community Partnership

Research has consistently demonstrated that cultivating positive school-family-community partnerships, which grant access to diverse out-of-school resources, plays a pivotal role in enhancing student well-being and academic accomplishments (Gross et al., 2015; Rollison et al., 2013; Casto, 2016; Haines et al., 2015). Gross et al. (2015) investigated these partnerships across six schools that effectively implemented elements of the SWIFT (Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation) framework. Their study aimed to examine the dynamics of these partnerships and to pinpoint the crucial factors fostering their strength. Gross

et al. (2015) identified four key elements contributing to the formation of school-community partnerships: effective school leadership, an inclusive and welcoming school culture, a strong commitment among teachers to students' success, and open collaboration and communication among all partners. Parallel to Gross et al. (2015), research by Sanders (2014) reinforced the significance of effective school leadership, underscoring that "Principals are also critical for the successful implementation of school reforms" (p. 233). In contrast, Bryan and Henry (2012) claim that a lack of positive attitudes among school personnel can hinder the establishment of strong school-family-community relationships (p. 411). They also stress the importance of self-reflecting on one's attitudes and beliefs regarding the students, families, and the community they serve. These findings collectively highlight the role of school leadership and attitudes in developing successful school-family-community partnerships, which then contributes to the well-being and academic achievements of students.

Researcher Hands (2005) conducted qualitative research aimed at clarifying the establishment of school-community partnerships. The study involved two secondary schools in southern Ontario that had established several partnerships. Data collection involved document analysis, observations, and 25 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including principals, teachers, office managers, and community partners, to gain insights into the partnership formation process. Hands (2005) indicated the importance of establishing the need for student support in the initial contact with prospective partners and then, after initial contact, focusing on what the school and community could do for each other. Furthermore, Hands (2005) asserted that several aspects should be taken into consideration when developing a school-community partnership. For example, the researcher indicated the importance of developing a clear and concise plan for partnership while presenting a case of reciprocity between the school

and community partner. Other crucial factors mentioned in the research include flexibility to compromise, using personal connections to develop networks, and creating a valuable connection in the partnership through a clearly established vision.

Many researchers have identified critical barriers that can impede the development and sustainability of successful school-community partnerships. Time constraints can pose challenges, as initiating and maintaining partnerships requires dedicated time to meet with and engage community members effectively (Hands, 2005; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Casto, 2016). Additionally, a lack of teacher participation due to burnout (Sanders & Harvey, 2002) and inadequate transportation options can also limit the potential for collaboration (Hands, 2005). Furthermore, the digital divide, characterized by insufficient access to technology for both the school and community partners, can hinder communication and coordination (Bates, Mellin, et al., 2019). Moreover, negative attitudes, power struggles, or resistance towards partnerships, as highlighted by Bryan & Henry (2011) and Sanders & Harvey (2002), can create friction, and undermine collaborative efforts. Finally, a lack of trust is an essential barrier, as the establishment and growth of successful partnerships heavily rely on fostering trusting relationships (Banwo et al., 2022). These barriers underscore the complexity of building effective school-community partnerships, emphasizing the need for proactive strategies to address and overcome these challenges.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the critical role of school-family-community partnerships in enhancing student well-being and academic achievements. As shown by the consistent findings of the studies mentioned, effective leadership within schools, along with positive attitudes and attitudes of reciprocity among all stakeholders, play a fundamental

role in establishing and sustaining these partnerships. The barriers identified indicate the challenges that schools and communities face, emphasizing the need for proactive strategies to overcome time constraints, transportation limitations, the digital divide, resistance to partnerships, and the paramount importance of trust. By addressing these challenges and fostering collaborative relationships, educational institutions and communities can utilize the full potential of such partnerships to promote student success and well-being.

School Profile & Baseline

Community Characteristics

Clayton Ridge middle and high schools are in Guttenberg, Iowa, which had a population of 2,955 people reported in the 2020 census; 95.8% of the population was white, 2.2% was of two or more races, 0.9% was of other races, 0.4% was Black or African American, 1.0% was Hispanic, and 0.7% was a combination of American Indian, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). The elementary school and home base for the Iowa Virtual Academy are located in Garnavillo, Iowa, with a population of 763 from the 2020 census; 94.4% of the population was white, 2.0% were of two or more races, .03% were of other races, 0.9% were Black or African American, 0.9% were Hispanic, and 0.2% were a combination of American Indian, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

The city of Guttenberg has 1,332 total households with a median household income of \$52,250 leaving 9.7% below the poverty level. A total of 18.4% of the adult population have a bachelor's degree or higher. The city of Garnavillo has 327 total households with a median household income of \$74,191 leaving 8.7% below the poverty level. A total of 18.5% of the adult population have a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

The community of Guttenberg offers various recreational and family-oriented activities. These include two parks, two campgrounds, a golf course, public ball fields, a walking and biking trail along the Mississippi River, a public library, and a river museum. Situated along the Mississippi River, the city provides opportunities for boating and water-related activities. The surrounding wooded areas offer additional recreational options such as mushroom hunting, deer and pheasant hunting, hiking, and birdwatching. The town is home to both Catholic and Lutheran churches. Up until the 2022-23 school year, a small private Catholic school connected to the church also existed. Notably, Guttenberg is a popular tourist destination, attracting summer vacationers and fall foliage enthusiasts.

District Characteristics

Clayton Ridge High school is part of the Clayton Ridge Community School District in Northeastern Iowa. This district consists of four schools: the elementary school (grades PK-5), and the Iowa Virtual Academy (K-12), both located in Garnavillo, Iowa, and the High School (grades 9-12) and Middle School (grades 6-8) within the same building that is in Guttenberg, Iowa. The Clayton Ridge Community School District school's student population is composed of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 87.8% of students who identify as White, while 4.3% identify as Black or African American descent. There are also smaller percentages of Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander students at 0.3%, Hispanic or Latino students at 5.9%, and American Indian or Alaska Native students at 0.5%. A minimal 0.1% of students are identified as Native Hawaiian or belonging to other Pacific Islander groups. Additionally, 1.1% of students belong to two or more racial categories, while 0% have not specified their race or ethnicity (U.S. News & World Report, 2023). Furthermore, the student population identifies as 54% being female and 46% being male. Within the Clayton Ridge Community School District, 30.4% of

students qualify for participation in the federal free and reduced-price meal program, and 1.7% of students are considered English language learners (U.S. News & World Report, 2023).

School Mission and Vision

The Clayton Ridge Community School District's mission statement focuses on providing equal and quality educational opportunities for all students in preparation for their role in our changing democratic society and changing world. This district believes that "All people have infinite worth. A quality education evolves from a partnership of students, staff, family, and community that is equal and active. Seldom is anything ever accomplished without risk. K-12 education is the foundation of the lifelong learning process. The higher the expectation, the greater the achievement. Growth occurs as a result of changes and challenges. Each person is accountable for his or her actions. The family is the primary influence in the child's development. Diversity enriches both the individual and society" (Clayton Ridge Community School District, 2023). The school has a vision that it shall provide a safe learning environment, be student-centered where individual needs are met, seek community involvement, and pursue and examine educational trends as they affect the instructional program (Clayton Ridge Community School District, 2023).

Current Student Learning Goals

Students are assessed through bi-annual FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) and yearly ISASP (Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress) testing. The goals of these tests are to assess and track individual student progress in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science over the course of the school year. Another goal of these tests is to fulfill state and federal accountability requirements by participating in standardized testing and aid in the development of individualized educational plans for students based on their

performance and needs identified through assessments. The results of these assessments are used to monitor student progress and identify students who do not demonstrate proficiency and may benefit from placement in enrichment English Language Arts and Mathematics classes. Teachers also review the results to provide them with insights that enable them to make data-driven decisions by analyzing the results and adjusting teaching methods to better meet the needs of students.

In preparation for the ISASP or FAST testing, students in grades 6-12 engage in a process aimed at developing self-awareness and goal setting. Each student creates S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals (see Appendix A), providing a clear path for academic achievement. Prior to the assessments, advisory teachers hold one-on-one conferences with students, exploring their past ISASP scores and collaboratively setting achievable goals for the upcoming assessments. During these conferences, teachers encourage students to reflect on their testing experiences, discussing their emotions, identifying challenges encountered, and exploring potential strategies to overcome barriers to success. After the test results have been distributed, teachers continue their supportive role by engaging students in post-assessment discussions. These conversations are an opportunity for students to share their feelings about the test day, articulate challenges faced during testing, and brainstorm effective tools to overcome obstacles hindering goal attainment. Importantly, teachers take this opportunity to celebrate students' efforts, offering praise that recognizes the difficulty of the assessments.

School Characteristics

In the 2023-2024 school year, 192 students are enrolled in high school (Iowa Department of Education, 2023b). The students are 90.1% white students, 5.7% Hispanic, 1.0% Native

American, 2.6% multi-racial, and 0.5% Black/African American students (Iowa Department of Education, 2023b). 53.6% of the student population are male and 46.4% are female (Iowa Department of Education, 2023b). At Clayton Ridge High School, students are offered a variety of courses ranging from required core classes to a variety of Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes. Students also can take dual enrollment or college courses through Northeast Iowa Community College in Peosta, Iowa. According to the Iowa School Performance report, the 2023 report indicated that Clayton Ridge High School (9-12) is rated as “commendable” in overall performance and placed 59.2% out of 100. The average achievement in mathematics score was 49.52/100 and the average school achievement in English Language Arts was 51.91/100 (Iowa Department of Education, 2023b).

Parent Involvement

In the Clayton Ridge CSD, parents have access to important school information through JMC, the student grading system, Google Classroom, a learning management platform. All-important school-related information is published in a monthly electronic newsletter sent via parent emails provided at registration. The school also employs a student to manage the school Facebook and Instagram pages, where class pictures, news and other school-related notices are posted. Parents are invited to attend parent-teacher conferences one time each semester, which provides them the opportunity to visit one-on-one with teachers about student academic progress and behavior.

Another parent involvement opportunity includes being a member of the SIAC (School Improvement Advisory Committee), a group of school administration, the school counselor and social worker, teachers, students, and parents. This group meets monthly to discuss school programs and listen to concerns and ideas for the district. Parents are also given the opportunity

to chaperone school related activities and field trips, participate in the athletic booster club or gridiron club (supports football only), participate in high school career day as presenters, and may be invited to be on the school board.

Teacher Work

Clayton Ridge CSD employees underwent PLC (Professional Learning Communities) training beginning in 2019, and as a result, the district instituted a recurring weekly early dismissal for students (Cano, personal communication, May, 2019). This adjustment was designed to provide teachers with a dedicated 90-minute block of uninterrupted time for collaboration. During the implementation of the PLC framework, teachers were organized into content groups, defined essential standards, and attempted to develop common assessments as the PLC framework asks for. However, the small size and the presence of numerous singleton teachers posed considerable challenges in meeting all the expectations of the PLC process. Presently, the PLC process is used with four goals in mind; addressing student academic, behavior, or attendance concerns, providing time to collaborate with like-content or other content teachers, and a time to celebrate and focus on school culture or team building activities. When PLC groups focus on student academics, behaviors, or other concerns, they use one hour to discuss and at the end of that hour, teachers come together as a whole group to discuss overall concerns throughout the entire high school. Teachers create a dialogue about what strategies may have helped them with students in the past and if there is a need for referral for further interventions.

Curriculum Initiatives

All 6-12 teachers in the district have successfully completed the five levels of Kagan Cooperative Learning training. Cooperative learning is typically described as an instructional

approach where small, diverse student groups collaborate toward a shared objective (Dotson, 2021). Within these groups, students provide motivation and assistance to each other, take ownership of their individual and collective learning, apply social skills relevant to teamwork, and assess the group's advancement. This method encompasses key components such as fostering positive interdependence, ensuring equal participation, and emphasizing individual responsibility (Dotson, 2021). Teachers who use Kagan structures build a welcoming classroom environment where students support each other in a positive manner and foster a sense of shared learning and mutual respect, contributing to an engaging and encouraging educational atmosphere (Dotson, 2021). Therefore, there is a requirement that all 6-12 incorporate Kagan structures into their classroom instruction. Each month, teachers invite the instructional coach that has spearheaded the Kagan initiative into their classroom to watch the structure and provide positive and constructive feedback.

Instructional Strategies

At present, Clayton Ridge High School places a strong emphasis on the incorporation of Kagan structures into the classroom environment, requiring teachers to implement these strategies at least once a month, as detailed earlier. Beyond this mandatory technique, our educators are given the flexibility to select instructional methods that best align with their teaching style and the unique needs of their students. Consequently, our teaching staff employs a diverse range of teaching techniques and utilizes formative assessments to continually gauge and enhance student progress. These approaches contribute to a dynamic and responsive learning environment that caters to the diverse learning styles and needs of our student body.

Assessment Practices

At Clayton Ridge High School, our educators use a well-rounded assessment approach that includes both formative and summative assessments to effectively monitor and evaluate student progress. Formative assessments are used throughout the learning process to provide continuous feedback, identify areas of improvement, and adapt instruction accordingly. These assessments can take various forms, such as exit tickets, small quizzes, class discussions, peer evaluations, and written reflections. To gauge the comprehensive understanding of standards and learning objectives, our teachers also utilize summative assessments. These assessments serve as culminating evaluations of student knowledge and may include tools like traditional exams, research projects, oral presentations, and technology-based projects. For instance, students may complete a research paper to demonstrate their in-depth understanding of a specific subject, or they might participate in an oral presentation to present their mastery of critical concepts. These summative assessments offer a view of student comprehension and proficiency in meeting educational standards.

Professional Development

At Clayton Ridge High School, the professional development priority has been placed on Kagan strategies, which stems from the research-based evidence highlighting the benefits of cooperative learning. Implementing these strategies creates a more engaging and dynamic school environment and develops stronger connections among students. Through cooperative learning with Kagan strategies, students are provided with a unique opportunity to engage with their peers in a collaborative and supportive manner, which significantly enhances their social and emotional well-being. This commitment to cooperative learning aligns with the school's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) support system, reinforcing the belief that students thrive when they work together in a positive and inclusive atmosphere.

Another key aspect of our professional development efforts centers around strengthening the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) to ensure comprehensive student assistance. To facilitate this, we have implemented targeted interventions within a dedicated 30-minute daily advisory period. During this time, students can request additional support from specific teachers, complete missed assessments or homework, or engage with interventionists to address their individual needs. Alongside these initiatives, we place a strong emphasis on fostering a culture of collaboration among teachers, interventionists, and support staff within the PLC framework. Through regular team meetings, educators share insights, discuss best practices, and collaboratively problem-solve to address individual student needs. This collaborative approach ensures that our interventions are aligned with our students' needs.

Needs Assessment

In recent years, Clayton Ridge CSD has experienced a noticeable strain in the relationship between the school and the community, particularly with parents. Instances of frustration expressed on social media have highlighted the need to repair this divide and create a more positive and collaborative environment. In this needs assessment, I explore the potential factors contributing to this strained relationship and identify opportunities for improvement. This assessment will also provide a foundation for our School Improvement Plan, which will focus on enhancing the school climate and culture and increasing family and community engagement.

As previously mentioned, the relationship between the school and the community in the Clayton Ridge CSD has been strained for some time. It is unclear when and where the relationship was damaged, but it is important that there be a focus on repairing the divide between the school and the community. There have been instances where parents take to social media to express their frustrations or point of view about school-related situations and other

parents are brought into the drama and left with a bad taste in their mouths about the school. The strained relationship between the school and parents in the community can be caused by various factors, and effective communication is the key to a harmonious school-parent relationship.

When there is a lack of transparent, timely, and constructive communication, misunderstandings and frustration can develop (Gwernan-Jones, R., et al., 2015). Parents may feel left in the dark about their child's progress, school policies, or upcoming events, leading to resentment.

Moreover, when parents and schools have differing expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities, conflicts can emerge. For example, parents might expect extensive teacher involvement in their child's learning, while teachers might anticipate parents to be more actively engaged in their child's education (Gwernan-Jones, R., et al., 2015; Zaretsky, 2004). These unmet expectations can lead to tension.

Differences in cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds between teachers and parents can also result in misunderstandings. Teachers may unintentionally overlook the unique challenges faced by students from diverse backgrounds, which can fuel resentment among parents who feel their children are not adequately supported. Negative stereotypes and preconceived notions about each other can breed negativity (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002). For instance, teachers may unfairly assume that parents are disinterested or uninvolved, while parents may think that teachers are unsympathetic to their concerns. These misunderstandings, when not constructively addressed, can lead to dissatisfaction and strained relationships (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002).

Negative past experiences, such as perceived unfair treatment, can linger in the minds of parents and color their perception of the school as well. These experiences can make parents reluctant to engage or trust the school. Moreover, parents who feel excluded from school activities, decision-making processes, or parent-teacher organizations may become disengaged

and resentful. When parents believe there is a lack of opportunities for meaningful involvement, they are less likely to support the school positively.

Addressing the strained relationship between the school and the community (including parents) requires a comprehensive approach. This includes improving communication, clarifying roles and expectations, promoting socioeconomic awareness and sensitivity, and actively involving parents in school activities and decision-making processes. Creating a collaborative environment where both parties work together in the best interests of the students is essential for creating a positive, productive relationship that benefits everyone involved. Therefore, this School Improvement Plan will focus on improving the school climate and culture and creating more opportunities for family and community engagement.

School Data & Analysis

How do we know?

During the 2022-23 school year, Clayton Ridge Middle School had a total of 80 behavior referrals and 93% attendance rate (Thompson, 2023). For the same year, the high school had 110 behavior referrals and 92.5% attendance rate (Thompson, 2023). For the current school year (2023-24), which includes August-November 1st, there have been a total of 50 behavior referrals in the middle school with an average of 93% attendance and 99 behavior referrals in the high school and an average of 93% attendance rate (Thompson, 2023). As you can see in Table 1 (below), the attendance rates for both the middle school and high school are above 90% in both school years, which, according to the Iowa Department of Education (2023c), aligns with the generally accepted benchmark for satisfactory attendance. However, it is important to note that the current attendance rate of 93% falls slightly below the Clayton Ridge district goal of 95% attendance (Thompson, 2023). While the schools in Iowa have maintained attendance rates

above the 90% benchmark, we recognize the correlation between attendance and academic success. Therefore, this school improvement plan will address the discrepancy and outline specific actions to achieve the district’s attendance goal.

Table 1

2022-23 and 2023-24 Attendance Rates from August – November in Middle and High Schools

Month	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24
	Middle School	Middle School	High School	High School
August	94%	93%	96%	94%
September	95%	95%	94%	93%
October	95%	93%	92%	91%
November	94%	91%	91%	94%
Total	94.5%	93%	93.2%	93%

The data presented in Table 2 (below) reveals a mixed trend in behavior referrals between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, demonstrating a reduction of 8 referrals in the middle school but a significant increase in the high school. Upon further investigation, a substantial portion of the high school referrals, approximately 14 out of 99, are attributed to vaping and code of conduct violations, often stemming from out-of-school, no-tolerance alcohol-related citations (Thompson, 2023). This alarming revelation underscores the need for targeted interventions to address illegal substance use among high school students both in and out of school.

Table 2

2022-23 and 2023-24 Behavior Referral Rates: August – November in Middle and High Schools

Month	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24
	Middle School	Middle School	High School	High School
August	2	2	1	4
September	14	18	16	26
October	22	14	16	34
November	20	16	17	35
Total	58	50	50	99

In response to this data, the school improvement plan will include comprehensive strategies aimed at curbing substance-related behavior referrals. Through the incorporation of specific educational programs on the risks and consequences of substance use, collaboration with community resources to provide support for affected students, and the implementation of preventive measures to create a safer and healthier school environment, the school aims to not only reduce behavior referrals but also create an environment that promotes the overall well-being of its students.

Table 3 (below) shows the comparison of parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences between Spring conferences in the 2022-23 school year and the Fall conferences in the 2023-24 school year. It can be observed that the middle school maintained its 58% parent attendance rate in both years, while the high school had 0.8% increase in attendance. Unfortunately, there is a lack of available data to establish a clear benchmark or optimal attendance rate for parent-teacher conferences. Nevertheless, parent-teacher conferences represent a crucial opportunity for parents to actively engage in their child's education, developing a positive relationship with teachers. When parents choose not to attend, they miss a valuable chance to discuss their child's progress, gain insights into academic strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies for better support at

home. Furthermore, these conferences provide a platform for parents to address concerns, ask questions, and work collaboratively with teachers to ensure the overall well-being and success of their students, which, would decrease the possibility of miscommunications.

Table 3

2022-23 and 2023-24 Conference Attendance Rates

Season	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24
	Middle School	Middle School	High School	High School
Fall	N/A	58%	N/A	37.3%
Spring	58%	N/A	36.5%	N/A

Strengths

The attendance rates for both Clayton Ridge Middle School and High School during the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years are commendable, consistently surpassing the 90% average set by the Iowa Department of Education (2023c). This reflects a positive trend in maintaining satisfactory attendance, which correlates with academic success. The reduction of behavior referrals in the middle school by 8 signifies the school's ability to address and mitigate behavioral issues. Moreover, the slight increase in parent attendance at high school conferences is a positive development, indicating a potential upward trajectory in parent-teacher engagement. In terms of student behavior, the schools have made substantial progress, particularly in the middle school, where behavior referrals have decreased. The overall high attendance rates suggest a positive school culture and a conducive learning environment. Additionally, the increase in parent attendance at high school conferences, while modest, demonstrates an encouraging shift towards greater parental involvement, highlighting an improved connection between parents and the school community.

Weaknesses

Despite the strengths outlined, there are areas that demand attention and improvement. While the overall attendance rates remain above the 90% benchmark, the current rate of 93% falls slightly below the district goal of 95%, signaling a need for targeted strategies to bridge this gap (Thompson, 2023). The significant increase in behavior referrals at the high school, particularly those related to substance use, indicates a pressing issue that requires urgent intervention. The rise in these referrals highlights the need for comprehensive programs to address substance-related behavior among high school students both in and out of school.

Assessment Needs

The focus of this School Improvement plan is to initiate changes within Clayton Ridge High School that will improve school climate, increase parent involvement, and develop positive relationships with community resources to enhance the school-community relationship. Ferguson (2005) emphasizes that “One of the first steps in this process is to develop purposeful relationships between family members and school staff” (p. 1). To understand the dynamics of the relationship between the school and the community, it is imperative to collect data directly from parents through a detailed perception survey. This survey should encompass a range of questions aimed at gauging parental opinions, concerns, and overall satisfaction with the school. Specific questions should explore areas such as communication effectiveness and satisfaction with the level of parental involvement. Questions could be asked about the clarity of information provided, the accessibility of teachers and school staff, and the extent to which parents feel their input is valued. Additionally, the survey should seek insights into any past negative experiences, instances of perceived unfair treatment, and reasons behind low participation in school-related activities. By collecting data directly from parents, the school can gain valuable perspectives that

will inform targeted strategies to address concerns, foster a more positive relationship, and develop respect by demonstrating that parents' thoughts are being considered for improvement. Haines et al. (2015) explained that when parents feel respected, they are more inclined to actively participate and form connections with the school.

Understanding the perceptions of parents and the community regarding the school's utilization and support of community resources is also an important part to creating a collaborative environment within the school. Studies indicate that preventive initiatives have better results when there is collaborative action among schools, families, and community organizations to implement programs and activities supporting students (Rollison et al., 2013). Effective coordination between schools and community groups plays a crucial role in connecting students, families, and the necessary resources for their success. This additional survey section should inquire about the awareness and utilization of available community resources, such as local organizations, support services, and extracurricular activities. Questions could explore whether parents feel adequately informed about these resources, whether they believe that the school is effectively using community partnerships, and if there are specific areas where additional support is desired. Additionally, the survey should assess the perceived impact of community resources on student success and well-being. Open-ended questions can encourage respondents to express their thoughts on how the school-community relationship can be strengthened through better incorporation of available resources. By gathering insights on community engagement and support, the school can identify areas for improvement and establish strategies to enhance collaboration between the school and the broader community.

In addition to parental perspectives, it will be valuable to gather data on the effectiveness of behavior management strategies within the school. Survey questions should be included to

capture insights from students because they can provide valuable input on their experiences with behavior management practices and indicate on whether these strategies resonate with them and contribute to a positive learning environment. This includes exploring any misconceptions students may have about the fairness of behavior consequences, as these misconceptions can lead to frustrations and, consequently, contribute to hard feelings toward the school. Identifying and addressing misconceptions about the fairness of behavior consequences will be crucial in fostering a school environment where students, parents, and staff feel a sense of fairness and equity.

Action Plan

Introduction

Clayton Ridge High School recognizes the role that a strong school-community partnership plays in creating a thriving academic environment. As mentioned previously, our school has faced challenges in maintaining a positive connection with our community, particularly among parents. The resulting damaged relationship has given rise to numerous misconceptions about the school and has unfortunately created a noticeable divide between the school and the community it serves. It is important to attempt to rectify these issues to build a foundation of trust, collaboration, and mutual understanding between the school and community. This action plan will detail the plan of rebuilding the relationship between Clayton Ridge High School and the community. One component of this plan involves the establishment of a core team consisting of dedicated administrators and teachers, parents, and community members. This collaborative team will serve as the driving force behind our efforts, working together to identify and implement strategies aimed at creating a more collaborative and positive relationship.

The initial focus of the team will be to gain valuable information from parents, asking their perspectives to determine the underlying causes of the divide. This will ensure that our plan is informed by the experiences and concerns of those directly affected, which allows the initiative to focus on the unique needs of our community and students. Moreover, this action plan will address the significance of leadership and effective communication skills in successfully building and maintaining a positive school-community partnership. This plan outlines the way to increase parent engagement, improve school climate, and establish and grow relationships with community resources.

Create a Core Team

Bates et al. (2019) asserted that there has been no independent intervention program, community partnership, or school-based professional that has successfully addressed all the complex needs of today's students on its own. Instead, schools must collaboratively leverage and coordinate the diverse knowledge, expertise, and resources of multiple professionals to address nonacademic barriers to learning and enhance student outcomes (Bates et al., 2019). Therefore, developing a dedicated team is crucial for the successful implementation of the school improvement plan for enhancing school-community relationships at Clayton Ridge High School. Bates et al. (2019) describe the importance of coordinating “the diverse knowledge, expertise, and resources of multiple professionals to mitigate nonacademic barriers to learning and improve student outcomes” (p. 111). Therefore, the team should consist of teachers and other school staff from various grade levels and departments, administrators including the principal and dean of students, the school counselor and social worker, community representatives, and parents who will be actively involved and are willing to contribute to the improvement process. Important community representatives should include the director of the Guttenberg Family Resource

Center, a representative from the local hospital, and a representative from the local law enforcement. Administrative input will be crucial for aligning the school improvement plan with school policies and ensuring its integration into the school's overall mission.

Survey Development and Implementation

The first task of the team will be to collaborate on the development of survey questions, ensuring they capture a wide range of perspectives and concerns. They will have to develop a perception survey that covers topics such as current communication efforts (including clarity and effectiveness of methods), cultural sensitivity, parental involvement opportunities, value of parental input, accessibility of administrators, teachers, and staff, and overall satisfaction with the school. It would be valuable to explore past negative experiences, instances of perceived unfair treatment, and reasons behind low participation in school-related activities in an open-ended section on the survey as well. The reason for the questions should be stated clearly so parents understand the purpose of the survey is to improve the relationship between the school and the community in the best interest of the students. It would be extremely valuable for the team to develop a section within the survey that focuses on the school's use and support of community resources. This section should inquire about parents' awareness and utilization of available community resources, such as local organizations, support services, and extracurricular activities. This section should also assess whether parents feel adequately informed about these resources and whether they believe there is effective utilization of community partnerships by the school. The survey should have questions about what parents believe the impact of community resources has on student success and well-being.

Additionally, the team will work on developing a behavior management survey aimed at gathering insights from students. This survey will explore the effectiveness of current behavior

management strategies, providing students the opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives. This survey will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the overall school climate and help determine where improvements should be made to the process. The team should administer the survey through accessible platforms, ensuring anonymity to encourage honest responses.

Data Analysis and Review

After completing the surveys, the team will engage in a thorough analysis of the collected data, using methods to identify not only key themes and patterns but also insights that may be crucial to understanding the results. This comprehensive analysis will serve as the foundation for the following stages of the improvement plan, providing an understanding of the current concerns within the parent, student, and teacher communities. Additionally, the team will consider the perspectives of various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and administrators, to ensure an understanding of the data and use these points as reference for the focus on the rest of the plan.

Following the administration of the survey, the team will commence a careful analysis of the collected data. This analysis will not only identify key themes and patterns but will also uncover important insights to comprehending the results. This in-depth analysis stands as a foundational step for the subsequent stages of the school improvement plan, offering an understanding of prevalent concerns within the parent, student, and teacher communities. These varied viewpoints will serve as valuable references, ensuring a thorough comprehension of the data and guiding the focus for the remainder of the improvement plan.

Principal and Administration as Leaders for the Plan

Principal and administrative leadership plays a crucial role in the effective execution of school improvement plans. The absence of such leadership, particularly in the context of plans that will challenge conventional school practices, is likely to hinder successful and sustained implementation (Sanders, 2014). To navigate the complexities of school improvement and foster positive relationships between the school, parents, and community leaders, a proactive and strategic approach to leadership is essential. This involves deliberate steps aimed at cultivating trust, open communication, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Researchers Sanders (2014) and Óskarsdóttir et al. (2020) have established through their research that specific leadership traits are instrumental in building and maintaining a positive school-community partnership. Therefore, leaders and administrators at Clayton Ridge CSD should:

- maintain a clear and consistent vision for the team in regard to the school improvement plan.
- remain goal focused.
- build positive relationships with all stakeholders.
- establish consistent and open lines of communication.
- be flexible and willing to listen and work with the team collaboratively.
- be committed to the plan in the best interest of students, families and the community we serve.
- recognize and use the skills each stakeholder brings to the team by delegating tasks to appropriate members.
- provide a sense of excitement and eagerness to make changes to benefit all.

- promote and participate in learning opportunities for school staff, students and parents, and key community leaders.
- recognize and celebrate success.

Effective leadership is the foundation of successful school improvement plans, and the role of leaders and administrators at Clayton Ridge CSD is key in developing a positive school-community partnership. By committing to the principles listed above, the administration team can manage the school improvement while cultivating an environment of trust, collaboration, and shared success. As we continue with the School Improvement Plan, acknowledging and celebrating accomplishments will strengthen our teamwork, ensuring that everyone in the school community is actively involved in the process of making positive changes and improvements.

Improve School Climate

As previously mentioned in this School Improvement Plan, the recent Conditions for Learning Family Survey has brought to light critical insights into the school climate at Clayton Ridge High School. The responses from high school parents within the Clayton Ridge School District illuminated significant concerns regarding adult-student relationships, school expectations, student safety, and communication. These findings propel our focus on improving the school climate as a part of the School Improvement Plan, recognizing that “Creating a positive school climate is widely recognized as an essential part of promoting an effective learning environment” (Elrod, B. G., et al., 2022, p. 377).

González et al. (2022) conducted research that significantly contributes to our understanding of school climate by identifying four principal domains critical to assessing and enhancing the overall educational environment. The first domain, relationships, includes various social connections within the school community, including the quality of student-student,

student-teacher, and teacher-parent relationships. Additionally, the research indicates the concept of school connectedness, leadership dynamics, and the prevailing school culture as important components of relationships affecting school climate.

The second domain, environment, explores the physical aspects of the school setting, exploring the impact of school facilities, physical comfort, and cleanliness on the overall climate. Safety & discipline constitute the third domain, exploring the various dimensions that directly influence the perception of safety within the school community. This includes assessments of school safety, fairness of rules, prevalence of bullying and aggression, disciplinary approaches, and the general presence of drug use. By comprehensively examining these factors, González et al.'s (2022) research provides a view of safety and discipline dynamics within the school climate. The fourth domain, academic, is also important in the evaluation of school climate. Understanding how these elements interplay is crucial for promoting a positive learning environment that supports academic success, fosters equity, and encourages student engagement and cohesion within the educational community.

There are several crucial steps that Clayton Ridge High School can take to cultivate a more positive school climate. Research conducted by Thapa et al. (2013) emphasizes the impact of teacher support and positive interactions on student engagement and behavior. Consequently, it is imperative to ensure that all staff, including administrators, teachers, and support personnel, receive appropriate professional development to equip them with the skills needed to understand and work with the whole student. In addition to professional development, implementing targeted programs aimed at enhancing social connections is vital. Focusing on improving the quality of student-student, student-teacher, and teacher-parent relationships is crucial for creating a cohesive school community. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, after-school character

and relationship-building programs, diversity workshops, and events that foster positive interactions among stakeholders can contribute to developing an environment where a sense of connectedness prevails. As Thapa et al. (2013) emphasized, “One of the most important aspects of relationships in schools is how connected people feel to one another” (p. 363). This emphasizes the significance of creating meaningful connections as a foundational element in fostering a positive school climate.

The core team should conduct a thorough assessment of school facilities, addressing issues related to physical comfort and cleanliness. The team will need to collaborate with the head custodian and administration to implement necessary improvements or modifications to create a more conducive and comfortable learning environment. This assessment should include current measures that ensure the safety of students and staff within the building and rely on community relationships including law-enforcement and mental health specialists to discuss safety with students. Furthermore, through the community connections at the Family Resource Center, local law enforcement, and local hospital, safety and anti-bullying programs must be planned to address concerns related to school safety, bullying, aggression, and drug use. These programs will emphasize creating a secure and inclusive environment for all students.

An annual review of disciplinary approaches should be conducted, led by the Dean of Students, principal, and a diverse group of teachers, to ensure fairness and consistency. Understanding the importance of teacher input as key witnesses to student behaviors is a major step in the behavior plan development. Furthermore, the prioritization of ongoing professional development for staff to understand the discipline plan should be considered. This not only provides an opportunity to ensure fidelity in implementation but also establishes a chance for open discussions, allowing teachers to express concerns about disciplinary approaches.

The school district actively cultivates a positive school culture and student engagement by the implementation of Kagan strategies in all classrooms. The use of these strategies supports the goal of a welcome and supportive culture in all classrooms because students collaborate, communicate, and actively participate in their learning. The implementation of Kagan strategies fosters an environment where cooperative learning, peer interaction, and shared responsibilities become integral components of the classroom experience. Furthermore, the use of Kagan strategies exposes students to situations where they not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop essential social and interpersonal skills. Kagan structures contribute to a welcoming and supportive culture that extends beyond academic achievement, nurturing well-rounded individuals prepared for a collaborative and dynamic future. Clayton Ridge High School should continue the use of Kagan Structures to promote a positive school culture.

Finally, to strengthen the commitment to a positive and supportive school climate, Clayton Ridge High School should incorporate regular climate assessments into its framework. These assessments, which should include the perspectives of students, parents, and staff, will serve as valuable tools for monitoring progress and identifying areas that need attention and improvement. The implementation of these assessments ensures an ongoing commitment to the principles outlined in the school improvement plan. Through these comprehensive measures, Clayton Ridge High School can proactively address emerging challenges and align with established research findings but also actively contribute to the creation of an effective and nurturing learning environment for all stakeholders involved in the educational journey.

Enhance Communication

Haines et al. (2015) highlighted the fundamental role of trust as the foundation for successful school partnerships. Beyond trust, the researchers indicated several critical factors that

contribute to developing partnerships, including communication, commitment, respect, equality, and professional competence (Haines et al., 2015). Establishing mutual respect and fostering collaboration between families and school staff emerges as an important condition for a thriving school environment, underscoring the importance of effective communication in developing positive relationships. Families who perceive themselves as valued contributors to a collaborative relationship are more likely to actively participate in their children's school experiences. Effective communication among all stakeholders, including students, school personnel, families, and the broader community, not only enhances student success but also cultivates a positive culture and nurtures a higher level of trust among all stakeholders.

To improve communication, Clayton Ridge High School must create transparent and consistent communication channels that provide timely and accurate information to all stakeholders. All communication between parents, students, and the school is done through email, and, while technology is a wonderful and money-saving technique, not all parents or community members are equally adept at maneuvering technology. To effectively reach all parents and community members, there should be an option to receive communication in a written form at registration or on the school website. The school can also continue to utilize mediums such as virtual newsletters, emails, and provide regular updates on the school.

To establish open lines of communication between educators, students, and parents, teachers will implement a system of bi-weekly updates detailing the ongoing activities in the classroom. These updates will include essential information such as significant project dates and upcoming assessments. By providing transparent and regular communication, the school will aim to address any potential claims of students or parents being unaware of crucial developments in the classroom. This proactive approach ensures all stakeholders are well-informed and creates

opportunities for parents to engage with their children's educational experiences. By staying up to date on classroom activities, parents can initiate positive dialogues with their students, fostering a collaborative environment that supports student success and strengthens the overall school-community relationship.

Effective communication between the school and parents is particularly crucial when addressing behavior issues to ensure a collaborative approach in supporting students. The school will implement a plan to enhance communication in these instances. First, when a behavior issue arises, teachers and administrators will promptly communicate with parents by means of a phone call home, providing clear and detailed information about the incident. This includes a description of the behavior, any consequences applied, and potential interventions to address the issue. The communication will be respectful and non-judgmental, focusing on finding solutions and fostering a partnership between the school and parents. Moreover, depending on the gravity of the behavior problem, an in-person follow-up meeting will be scheduled between the school and parents to discuss the behavior issue in more depth. During this meeting, both parties will have the opportunity to share perspectives, concerns, and insights. The goal is to collaboratively develop strategies to support the student's behavioral growth and academic success. The school will also provide resources and information on available support services, both within the school and in the community, to assist parents in addressing underlying issues that may contribute to the behavior concerns.

This proactive and transparent communication plan aims to build trust, involve parents in the resolution process, and create a supportive network for students. By developing an open dialogue, the school not only seeks to address behavior issues effectively, but also endeavors to establish a collaborative partnership with parents. This collaboration goes beyond conflict

resolution, extending to a shared commitment to the overall well-being and success of every student. By involving parents in the decision-making process and encouraging their active participation, the school aims to forge stronger connections between home and school, creating a seamless support system for students. This comprehensive approach contributes to the cultivation of a positive and inclusive learning environment where the collective efforts of educators and parents converge to nurture the academic, social, and emotional development of all students.

Increasing Parental Involvement

To enhance parent engagement in the school community, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive approach based on the six forms of parental involvement identified by Stefanski et al. (2016): parents as bystanders, decision-makers, classroom volunteers, paid paraprofessionals, learners, and teachers at home. By using the previously mentioned monthly classroom updates for better communication, teachers and administrators can encourage parents to actively participate in school events and extracurricular activities creating a sense of belonging. Parents may forget that they have the chance to serve as paraprofessionals or contribute to specific school programs and many parents may not be aware of the school SIAC (School Improvement Advisory Committee) and the opportunity for parental input on curriculum, policies, and school initiatives. Providing consistent and clear information about this opportunity will promote parents' role as decision-makers.

Welcoming parents as volunteers in various school activities and creating structured volunteer programs taps into their skills and strengthens their connection to the community. One barrier often impeding parental volunteerism at school is time, (Keller et al., 2021), therefore, it will be important for the district to remember that many parents have jobs that will conflict with regular school hours. A variety of times should be considered for the various workshops and

relationship building activities planned while maintaining the open invitation for parent volunteers. Keller et al. (2021) explained that many parents expressed “disappointment that there were not many opportunities to help or that they were not aware of how to volunteer at events or did not feel encouraged to do so” (p. 154), which reinforces the other sections of this school improvement plan like maintaining consistent and open lines of communication through multiple mediums.

Given that only 18.5% of the adult population in Guttenberg, the community where Clayton Ridge is located, possesses a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023), it is evident that a significant majority, constituting 81.5% of the population, lacks a college education. This demographic emphasizes the importance of recognizing potential barriers to parental education within the community affecting the ability to assist students in the home. The school has a crucial role to play in addressing this disparity by extending support to community members. This is an opportunity for the school to empower parents with the knowledge and skills needed to actively contribute to their children's educational journey at home, through outreach programs and resources aimed at providing valuable tools and information. This proactive approach not only strengthens the school-community partnership but also creates a more inclusive educational ecosystem where everyone is equipped to play a role in supporting student success.

Encouraging collaboration between parents and teachers will be important in enhancing parental involvement. As previously mentioned, teachers will provide parents with an update about classroom information, and through regular contact with parents, the teachers can ensure that parents feel welcome and a part of their child's educational process. This communication channel facilitates sharing classroom updates and allows parents to provide valuable insights,

concerns, and feedback about their child's educational experience. If teachers provide monthly satisfaction surveys, it will serve as a platform for parents to express their honest opinions and contribute ideas for continuous improvement.

Regular parent-teacher conferences provide a valuable opportunity for teachers to engage in more in-depth discussions, gaining insights into each student's unique needs and creating a collaborative approach to address challenges and celebrate successes on an academic level. However, recognizing the importance of increasing parent attendance at these conferences is important for the strategy's success. The school can use several approaches to enhance attendance, such as implementing flexible scheduling to accommodate various parent work hours, providing translation services for non-native English speakers, and offering virtual conference options for those unable to attend in person. Additionally, promoting the conferences well in advance through multiple channels, including newsletters, social media, and personalized invitations, can help build anticipation and emphasize the significance of parent-teacher collaboration. Considering the diverse needs of our parent community, the school should consider the possibility of incorporating additional offerings such as on-site day-care services or parent education workshops during conferences to further accommodate and support parents in their engagement with their child's education. By implementing these measures, the school can not only strengthen parental involvement but also establish a foundation for a harmonious and cooperative partnership between parents and teachers, benefiting the overall educational journey of the students.

Developing Community Connections

Building on the information gathered from the survey regarding community programs, the core team will purposefully take steps to cultivate meaningful connections and partnerships

with necessary local programs. These partnerships should be designed not only to fortify existing community ties but also to explore innovative ways in which external resources can be utilized to build support for students and their families. Educators should approach potential community partners with a shared vision to support students while also focusing on reciprocal benefits of the partnership (Haines et al, 2015). The focus should extend beyond a limited support system, aiming to establish mutually beneficial relationships that serve the interests of both the educational institution and its community collaborators. To accomplish this, individuals engaged in these partnerships should embrace a collaborative spirit, demonstrating a willingness to compromise with flexibility and adaptability to meet the ever-changing needs of students (Casto, 2016).

Recognizing the issue of behavior referrals in the high school, particularly those related to vaping and out-of-school alcohol-related incidents, there is a critical need to establish connections with substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. By creating alliances with organizations specializing in substance abuse, the school can proactively address these challenges and implement targeted strategies to promote a healthier and safer environment for students. Additionally, this outreach presents an opportunity to reinforce the importance of parental engagement, as collaboration with substance abuse prevention programs can involve parents in awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and discussions to address these behavioral concerns collectively.

Exploring partnerships with local businesses and families also presents a significant avenue for enhancing student learning, specifically 21st-century and employability skills. By establishing collaborations with local businesses, schools can create mentorship programs and internship opportunities that expose students to real-world applications of academic knowledge.

This hands-on experience not only cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving skills but also teaches adaptability and a practical understanding of industry expectations in the real world. Mentorship programs can provide students with insights into professional networks and workplace dynamics, promoting interpersonal and communication skills crucial for success in any career. Additionally, engaging families in collaborative initiatives enhances home-school connections, creating a supportive environment for students. This involvement not only positively impacts students' emotional well-being but also encourages a collaborative approach to education. The exchange of ideas and resources between schools, local businesses, and families collectively contributes to a comprehensive educational experience that provides students with the skills necessary for success in their post-secondary school lives.

To ensure the success of these collaborations, maintaining open lines of communication is imperative. Establishing regular, face-to-face meetings at a time convenient for all parties involved will create a culture of transparency and inclusivity. These meetings serve as a platform for dialogue to exchange ideas, address challenges, and refine collaborative efforts to ensure they align with the evolving needs of students and the community. Through such community relationships, educators can create a partnership where the shared goal of student success becomes a collective responsibility embraced by the entire community.

Implementation of the School Improvement Plan

Timeline

Clayton Ridge High School recognizes the critical role that a strong school-community partnership plays in a thriving academic environment. Acknowledging past challenges in maintaining positive connections with the community, this school improvement plan outlines a roadmap for rebuilding trust, collaboration, and mutual understanding for all stakeholders. Over

the course of the next two years, the timeline below (Table 4) will guide the implementation of key steps, ranging from the formation of a dedicated core team to the enhancement of communication channels, improvement of school climate, and the cultivation of meaningful community connections. Each phase of this timeline is designed to address specific aspects of the school-community relationship, ensuring a rounded and collaborative approach to promoting student success. Throughout the implementation of this plan, the commitment of administrators, teachers, parents, and community members is crucial. Most importantly, the principal and other administrators must maintain a goal-focused approach, emphasize collaboration and open communication, develop a positive relationship with all stakeholders, and consistently implement strategies to promote a positive school culture. Together, we aim to create a positive, inclusive, and supportive school that reflects the values and aspirations of the Clayton Ridge High School community.

Table 4

Clayton Ridge High School Improvement Plan Timeline

Month / School Year	Steps to School Improvement Plan
Sept. - Oct. / 2023-24	<p>Develop Core Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders reach out to other administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. • Define roles and responsibilities within the group. • Determine meeting time and place that fits the needs of all members of the team. • Establish a schedule for bi-monthly meetings. <p>Provide continued Professional Development on Kagan Strategies:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Kagan strategies for positive school culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to monitor teacher use of Kagan strategies each month.
<p>Oct.- Nov. / 2023-24</p>	<p>Survey Development and Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate on the development of perception surveys for parents and behavior management surveys for students. • Ensure questions capture a wide range of perspectives. • Implement surveys through accessible platforms with anonymity assurance. • Communicate the purpose of the survey clearly to parents and students.
<p>Dec. / 2023-24</p>	<p>Data Analysis and Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core team will analyze collected data, identifying key themes and patterns. • Use insights to inform subsequent stages of the improvement plan.
<p>Jan. - Feb. / 2023-24</p>	<p>Begin focus on School Climate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and address physical aspects of school facilities for comfort and cleanliness. <p>Evaluate core team connections with the community and determine the best form of communication.</p>
<p>Mar. - April / 2023-24</p>	<p>Continue focus on School Climate:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with community resources that focus on safety and anti-bullying programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make a connection with Family Resource Center for community resources. ○ Make a connection with Keystone AEA to receive guidance for anti-bullying programs to use during advisory time. • Develop a schedule of advisory lesson topics to be included one day per week beginning the 2024-25 school year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include character, anti-bullying, and substance abuse lessons to meet student needs. <p>Have team connect with their community connections and inquire about a partnership with the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team should determine the best way to approach the relationship reciprocally that will benefit the community and school. • The communication should be done in the same manner, using a guide determined by the whole team. • Cultivate connections and partnerships with local programs. • Establish collaborative relationships with local businesses with a focus on supporting students and families.
<p>May – June / 2023-24</p>	<p>Continue focus on School Climate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of disciplinary approaches.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a team consisting of administrators including the Dean of Students and teachers. ○ Open discussion for how to adjust the Discipline Plan ● Provide end-of-year Professional Development to discuss the Discipline Plan and rules of enforcement with all staff, including support staff. <p>Evaluate Communication and ways to enhance for 2024-25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine transparent and consistent communication mediums. ● Decide how regular updates on school activities will be provided and through what mediums. ● Implement a proactive and transparent communication plan for behavior issues. ● Require bi-weekly updates from teachers to parents in the end-of-year Professional Development.
<p>Aug. - Sept. / 2024-25</p>	<p>Increase Parental Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decide a plan to address increasing parental involvement. ● Encourage parental involvement in various roles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicate these opportunities by providing handouts at school registration, parent-teacher conferences, school athletic events, and all school social media platforms.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute information about the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC). • Consider barriers to parental involvement and be flexible scheduling workshops or other relationship-building programs. • Launch outreach programs to support parents with lower educational backgrounds. <p>Team members will re-visit the community connections to discuss how each partnership can help and where their services best fit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with community partners to develop mentorship programs and internship opportunities. • Explore partnerships with substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schedule speakers or lessons dealing with substance abuse prevention and intervention.
<p>Oct. - Nov. / 2024-25</p>	<p>Parent-Teacher Conferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote conferences well in advance through multiple channels. • Implement flexible scheduling and translation services for diverse parent needs. • Explore options for on-site day-care services using National Honor Society students or another volunteer-based service.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore parent education workshops to hold during conferences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on topics from surveys.
Dec. / 2024-25	<p>Progress Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate communication methods. • Evaluate school climate updates. • School behavior plan revision and implementation. • Community relationships and support. • Parent-teacher conference attendance. • Progress of advisory lessons. • Professional development plans
Jan. - Feb. / 2024-25	<p>Ongoing Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess climate concerns with students. • Reassess behavior management concerns with teachers and students.
Mar. - April / 2024-25	<p>Conditions for Learning Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate current data from Conditions for Learning and adjust the School Improvement plan as necessary.
May 2024-25	<p>Continue to use data from subsequent surveys to adjust as necessary.</p>

Resources

To successfully implement the school improvement plan for Clayton Ridge High School, it is important to use a variety of resources. The success of each initiative outlined in the plan

relies on a combination of technological tools, educational materials, and collaborative partnerships. The core team members should consist of dedicated administrators, teachers, counselors, support staff parents, and community members including members of the local law enforcement and hospital. The team's first task is to brainstorm and develop a perceptions survey, which will require design software such as SurveyMonkey or Google Forms. The team must determine if experts need to be involved in survey development and analysis.

Keystone AEA will be a valuable community partner to meet professional development training needs. Through their skilled professionals, the core team can decide the appropriate professional development topics and needs and schedule them throughout the school year. Through the relationship with Keystone AEA, the school will also have an asset to gather information about mentoring programs to improve the school climate. Another important community partner is the Family Resource Center, in collaboration with the local hospital. This community resource supports local residents with health and safety needs, food insecurities, housing, mental health, and substance abuse (Family Resource Center). The Family Resource Center will be the key to finding workshops and training for parent education, mental health, and substance abuse programs. The local community college has many opportunities for programs to explore internship opportunities, 21st century skills and employability training. Through the relationship with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), the school can have access to many resources to explore internship opportunities and training. This partnership offers valuable insights into aligning educational programs with real-world expectations, enhancing students' preparedness for their future careers. Overall, these strategic partnerships with Keystone AEA, the Family Resource Center, and NICC emphasize the school's commitment to addressing

diverse needs within the school community and fostering a comprehensive educational experience for students.

In implementing the school improvement plan, technology will play an important role in enhancing communication with parents and the community. The use of digital platforms will ensure efficient and immediate communication, allowing for quick updates of important and announcements. With the widespread use of smartphones and digital devices, technology platforms for communication will offer accessibility and convenience, ensuring that parents and community members can easily access information at their convenience. Virtual meetings and conferencing tools will overcome barriers, enabling active participation from community leaders who may face time constraints to attend meetings. Overall, technology will be instrumental in creating a communication system that strengthens connections and creates a collaborative and supportive educational environment.

The core team can utilize school resources, including the school conference room to hold meetings or school materials to create flyers and brochures that will play an important role in raising awareness about parent-teacher conferences as well as any workshops or events the school plans. Additionally, school clubs and athletic teams can offer childcare services during parent-teacher conferences, creating a supportive environment for parents to attend these crucial meetings. Moreover, a collaborative effort with school groups can involve organizing engaging activities such as craft events or literacy nights, enriching the school-community interaction. This initiative not only fosters a positive school culture but also enhances community engagement. By encouraging school clubs and teams to spearhead such events, the school not only promotes a sense of unity but also provides parents with opportunities to participate in enjoyable, cost-effective activities with their children. These initiatives aim to strengthen the connection between

the school and the community, emphasizing a shared commitment to the overall well-being and development of the students.

Implementation Responsibilities

It is crucial to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in the school improvement plan. The graph below (Table 5) illustrates a breakdown of tasks related to the implementation of the School Improvement Plan. Recognizing that successful execution requires a collaborative effort, I have designated specific responsibilities to various individuals and groups to maintain transparency, accountability, and effective communication throughout the implementation process. This collaborative approach ensures that each member contributes their unique skills and expertise, working collectively towards our shared goal of building a stronger, more supportive educational environment.

Table 5

Clayton Ridge High School Roles of Implementation

Person/Group Responsible	Action
Principal / Administration	Develop Core Team
Core Team	Define roles and responsibilities within the group.
Core Team	Determine meeting time and place that fits the needs of all members of the team. Establish a schedule for bi-monthly meetings.
Principal / Administration	Provide continued Professional Development on Kagan Strategies.
Teachers	Implement Kagan strategies for positive school culture.
Core Team	Survey Development and Implementation.

Technology Coach / Administration	Implement surveys through accessible platforms with anonymity assurance.
Parents	Take the survey and answer questions honestly.
	Analyze collected data, identifying key themes and patterns.
Core Team	Use insights to inform subsequent stages of the improvement plan.
Principal / Administration & Head Custodian	Assess and address physical aspects of school facilities for comfort and cleanliness.
Core Team	Evaluate connections with the community and determine the best form of communication.
Core Team	Decide a plan to address increasing parental involvement.
Principal / Administration, Teacher, Support Staff	Encourage parental involvement in various roles. Communicate these opportunities by providing handouts at school registration, parent-teacher conferences, school athletic events, and all school social media platforms, distribute information about the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC), Launch outreach programs to support parents with lower educational backgrounds.
Core Team, Principal/Administration	Work collaboratively with community partners to develop mentorship programs and internship opportunities.
Core Team, Principal/Administration	Explore partnerships with substance abuse prevention and intervention programs.

Principal, School Social Worker and Counselor	Schedule speakers or lessons dealing with substance abuse prevention and intervention.
Core Team	Promote conferences well in advance through multiple channels.
School group	Explore options for on-site day-care services using National Honor Society students or another volunteer-based service.
Core Team	Explore parent education workshops to hold during conferences.
Principal / Administration, Core Team, Community Leaders	<p>Progress Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate communication methods. • Evaluate school climate updates. • School behavior plan revision and implementation. • Community relationships and support. • Parent-teacher conference attendance. • Progress of advisory lessons. • Professional development plans
Principal / Administration, Core Team	<p>Reassess climate concerns with students.</p> <p>Reassess behavior management concerns with teachers and students.</p>
Core Team	Evaluate current data from Conditions for Learning and adjust the School Improvement Plan as necessary.

Barriers

The implementation of a school improvement plan is a complex undertaking that may encounter various challenges. One significant barrier is the resistance to change, where stakeholders, including teachers and administrators, may be hesitant to embrace new practices or modifications to existing structures. Effective communication is paramount, as inadequate communication can lead to misunderstandings or misinformation, hindering the successful execution of the plan. Resource limitations, including financial constraints, staffing shortages, or time constraints, pose additional challenges, potentially impeding the realization of certain initiatives within the improvement plan. Another critical factor is obtaining buy-in from key stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and community members, as their support is essential for the plan's success. Inadequate professional development for staff may result in difficulties implementing new strategies effectively. Balancing the demands of regular academic responsibilities with the additional tasks associated with the improvement plan can create time constraints in addition to increased burnout rates for educators and administrators. External factors, including changes in leadership, shifts in community demographics, or unexpected events, may impact the plan's implementation.

Additionally, the lack of active participation from parents may present another barrier, as their engagement is integral to the collaborative efforts in the improvement plan. Parental involvement is crucial to ensuring the plan's effectiveness and promoting a shared commitment to the educational journey of the students. Lack of participation will, therefore, hinder the ability to make informed decisions about adjustments to the plan. Lastly, unforeseen circumstances, such as public health crises or natural disasters, can disrupt the implementation timeline, emphasizing the importance of adaptability in any situation that may be encountered.

Monitor for Success

As part of the commitment to ongoing improvement, Clayton Ridge will need to recognize the importance of regularly assessing the perceptions and experiences of parents within the school community. To gauge the effectiveness of the School Improvement Plan for Clayton Ridge High School, the school will implement a continuous survey system that focuses on key aspects such as school climate, behavior plans, communication strategies, and overall feelings toward the school. These surveys serve as valuable tools for capturing real-time feedback, allowing the school to promptly address concerns, celebrate successes, and adapt approaches based on the evolving needs of stakeholders. The data collected through these surveys will continuously be evaluated by the core team to develop a culture of transparency and collaboration, ensuring that the voices of parents, students, and community members are an ongoing improvement of our educational environment.

Conclusion

Gross et al. (2015) highlighted the many advantages of strong school-community partnerships, including improved academic performance, increased parental involvement, support for school reform, elevated test scores, higher attendance rates, and expanded learning opportunities for students beyond the school premises (p. 10). Aligning with these findings, this School Improvement Plan for Clayton Ridge High School focuses on the importance of a positive and supportive relationship between the school, students, parents, and community. As mentioned in the beginning of this plan, the problem is that in today's evolving educational setting, the critical role of positive and supportive school and community relationships is paramount to nurturing students' development and addressing the various needs of learners. This plan highlighted key themes focused on restoring the strained relationship between the school and community. The themes discussed in this plan include the implementation of clear and

consistent methods of communication to eliminate misunderstandings, modifications implemented to support parents and to increase parental involvement while encouraging collaboration, the establishment of community partnerships for mutual benefit of the school and community, and the cultivation of an enhanced school culture through a focus on building positive relationships.

Moving forward, the success of this School Improvement Plan hinges on the commitment of the school administration, educators, parents, students, and the community. It is imperative to faithfully support the action plan, ensuring that communication channels are not just established but consistently nurtured, modifications to support parents are not just proposed but actively integrated, community partnerships are not just envisioned but actively pursued, and the cultivation of an enhanced school culture is not just discussed but actively developed through ongoing positive relationship-building efforts. As we progress, regular assessments and feedback will be vital to gauge the effectiveness of the plan, allowing for adjustments and refinements as needed. This School Improvement Plan calls for sustained engagement and a shared commitment to create an educational environment where every student at Clayton Ridge High School can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally. Through the execution of this plan, we hope to establish a foundation for continued growth, success, and positive engagement within our school community.

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Appendix

Smart Goals Template

SMART Goals Template

ONE=SENTENCE GOAL:	
How my Goal is Specific	
How my Goal is Measurable	
How my Goal is Attainable	
How my Goal is Relevant	
How my Goal is Time-Bound	