

# Path 3: Comprehensive Parent Involvement Model

## SOLID FOUNDATION®



Reading • Studying • Respect • Responsibility

Student success within a strong school community.



# A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



## SOLID FOUNDATION

A school community's strength lies in the relationships among its constituents. A child's success takes root at home and blooms at school.

**SOLID FOUNDATION®**  
Student success within a strong school community.

**Solid Foundation's goal** is to improve students' learning and school success by informing, equipping, and empowering parents to enhance their children's learning at home, support their children's learning at school, participate in improving their children's schools, and make decisions about their children's learning and schooling.

## WHAT IS SOLID FOUNDATION®?

Solid Foundation® is an evidence-based process designed to:

- strengthen family-school connections,
- engage parents in children's learning, and
- improve student academic and social learning.

A school, working with an External Partner, adopts one of three Solid Foundation® paths.

### **Path 1 – Assess/Plan/Implement**

Path 1 is a web-based process that guides a school team through 10 efficient and effective steps to:

- assess the school community's strengths and areas for improvement,
- develop a 2-year plan, and
- implement the plan with abundant resources.

### **Path 2 - School Community Index**

The School Community Index adds to Path 1 a powerful tool for a more thorough self-assessment by surveying parents, teachers (and students in high schools). A 90-page report, based on the surveys, gathers important information about parents' involvement with the school and engagement with their children at home.

### **Path 3 - Comprehensive Model**

The Solid Foundation® model enables the school to put in place a first-class parental involvement program, with all the evidence-based components of a strong school community.

A School Community Council, comprised of the principal, teachers, and parents, is responsible for implementing model, meeting twice each month and following the field-tested, well-structured agendas in the SCC Planning Guide.

The Solid Foundation® computerized data and documentation system provides careful tracking of progress and generates progress reports useful in school improvement plans and proposals for funding.





## THE COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

A study of 129 schools implementing ADI's Solid Foundation program for building a school community, published by the Harvard Family Research Project, found that the gain on state assessment tests demonstrated by these schools over a two year period was nearly double that of a control group of schools with identical beginning scores.

*Solid Foundation's school-family partnership efforts represent the finest work being carried out around the country.*

Dr. Roger Weissberg  
University of Illinois at Chicago



## RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS

Ask any teacher. Ask a parent. Ask a student. What do you like best about your school? The answer is most likely to be “the people.” Not the textbooks. Not the desks. Not the computers. Simply, the people.

A strong, successful school is one that takes seriously the relationships among people. The connections among people—how they relate to one another—are one of the school’s greatest assets. Social capital, the value found in trusting relationships, contributes to a student’s opportunities for success.

A school functions as a community when those intimately attached to it—students, teachers, parents, personnel, volunteers—are in close association with one another, communicate with one another, and work together toward the common end of each child’s academic and personal development. A school community’s strength lies in the relationships among its constituents. The primary relationship is that between the teacher, student, and parents.

*I am very happy our school is in the Solid Foundation program because it has given me more opportunities to work with my daughters on reading at home. I am encouraging more parents to participate in the home visits and parent courses.*

Felipa Mena  
Chicago parent



PARENTS AND LEARNING

## PARENTS AND LEARNING

Ask any teacher what accounts for students' success in school, apart from the quality of instruction, and they will invariably say that parents matter most. They are right. Research also tells us that the relationships between parents and children, the encouragement and discipline students receive at home, powerfully affect school learning.

In Solid Foundation schools, the connection between parents and their children's learning is not left to chance.

*Solid Foundation goes beyond the familiar “window dressing” of parental involvement activities and grapples with the hard reality of families of children who are struggling for academic achievement.*

Kate Gill Kressley  
Parent Involvement Expert



THE ONGOING CONVERSATION



## THE ONGOING CONVERSATION

With Solid Foundation, schools use every opportunity for parents, teachers, and students to talk about their mutual roles in students' learning. The Compact, learning standards, and homework policy are good tools for discussion. The open house agenda and parent-teacher-student conference procedures ensure that parents, teachers, and students have opportunities for focused conversation.

Parents appreciate knowing:

- how their children are doing,
- what the school is doing,
- what the school expects of parents, and
- how parents may contribute to the improvement of the school.

Most important of all is the conversation between the teacher, the parents, and the student. This conversation is an opportunity to consistently reinforce the school's goals for students, and its expectations of students, parents, and teachers. Frank conversation, encouragement, and practical suggestions help engage parents from the early grades on up, and also establish the relationship between parents and teachers.



SOLID FOUNDATION

## SOLID FOUNDATION

Solid Foundation is a process for building community in schools and engaging parents in their children’s learning. Solid Foundation is the way connections are made that enhance students’ learning.

Solid Foundation builds community and engages parents around four goals:

- **Reading.** Every student will learn to read well, read often, and enjoy reading through a focused alliance of family support and powerful classroom instruction.
- **Studying.** Every student will become a self-directed learner through teaching that incorporates study skills, homework practices that build study habits, and parental guidance.
- **Respect & Responsibility.** Every student will develop a sense of responsibility and respect for self and others through consistent direction and support from the family and the school.
- **Community.** The school will function as a community of its constituents—parents, students, teachers, and other school personnel.

These four goals establish common ground. All students, regardless of age or interest, benefit from good reading skills and habits, good study skills and habits, and an engrained sense of respect and responsibility. The school and all its constituents benefit when the school functions as a community.



## Building Block:

### SHARED LEADERSHIP

The School Community Council (SCC) includes the principal; parent education facilitator; a counselor, social worker, or another teacher; and four parents. Schools with pre-schools add a pre-school teacher and parent. The SCC meets twice each month, following agendas in the SCC Planning Guide, and guides the construction of a strong school community. The SCC develops a constitution to establish itself within the governance structure of the school.

- **School Community Council**
- **SCC Planning Guide**
- **Constitution**

*Parents want the best for their children, and schools want the best for their students. Solid Foundation helps parents and schools work together to achieve what is best for all children.*

Astrid Spraggins  
Parent Education Specialist



GOALS AND ROLES

## Building Block:

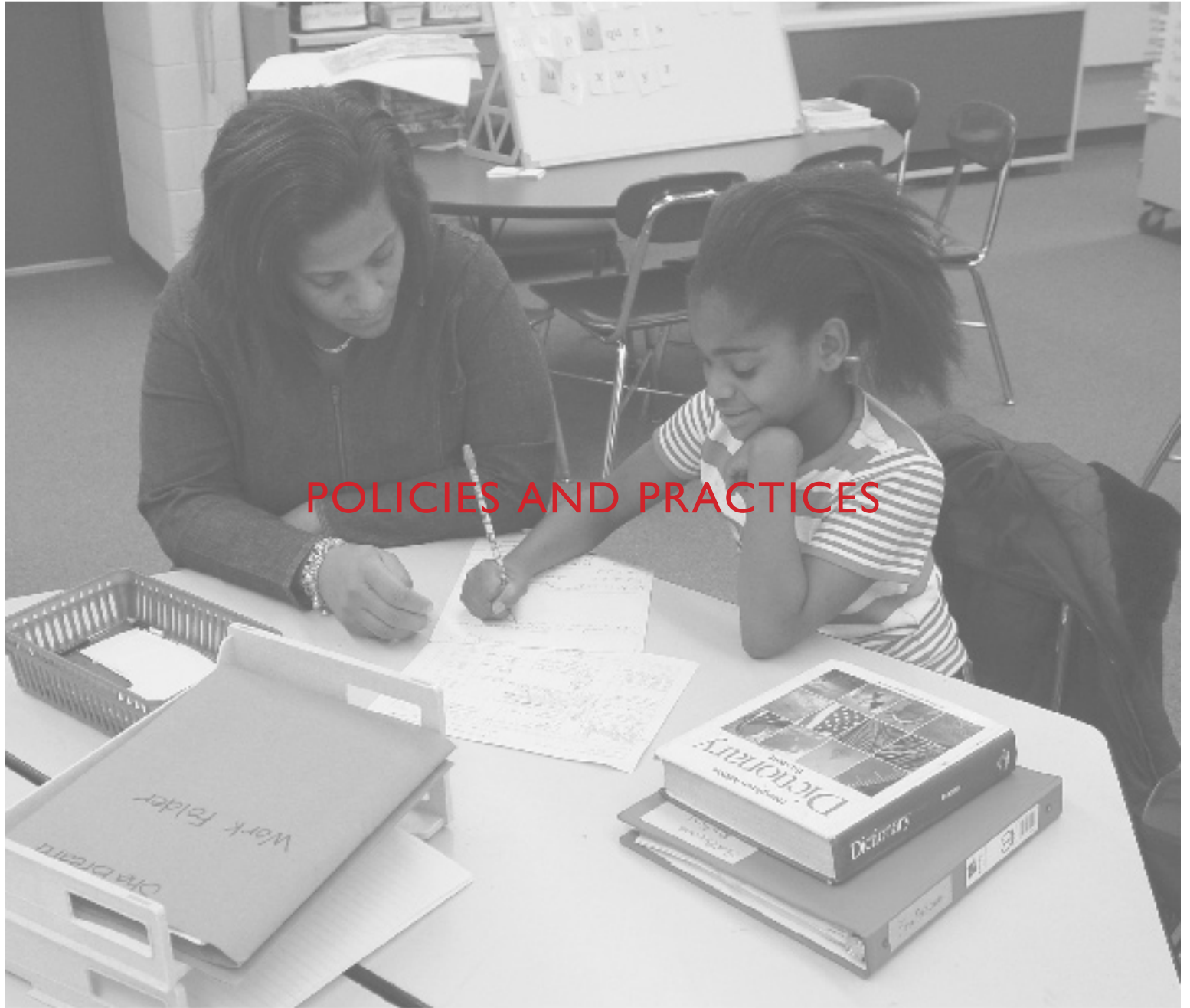
### GOALS AND ROLES

Everyone has a role in building a strong school community. They work together to see that all students exceed learning standards, and meet the four Solid Foundation goals. A school's Compact outlines the roles of teachers, parents, and students and becomes a living document. The SCC helps parents understand learning standards and assessments and assists them with their role in their children's mastery of the standards.

- **School Community Compact**
- **Learning Standards**

*I have looked at the connection between parents and schools from every angle—parent educator, teacher, volunteer, program director, and mom. When we get it right, every child benefits. My goal is for us to always get it right.*

Reatha Owen  
Director of Solid Foundation



POLICIES AND PRACTICES



## Building Block:

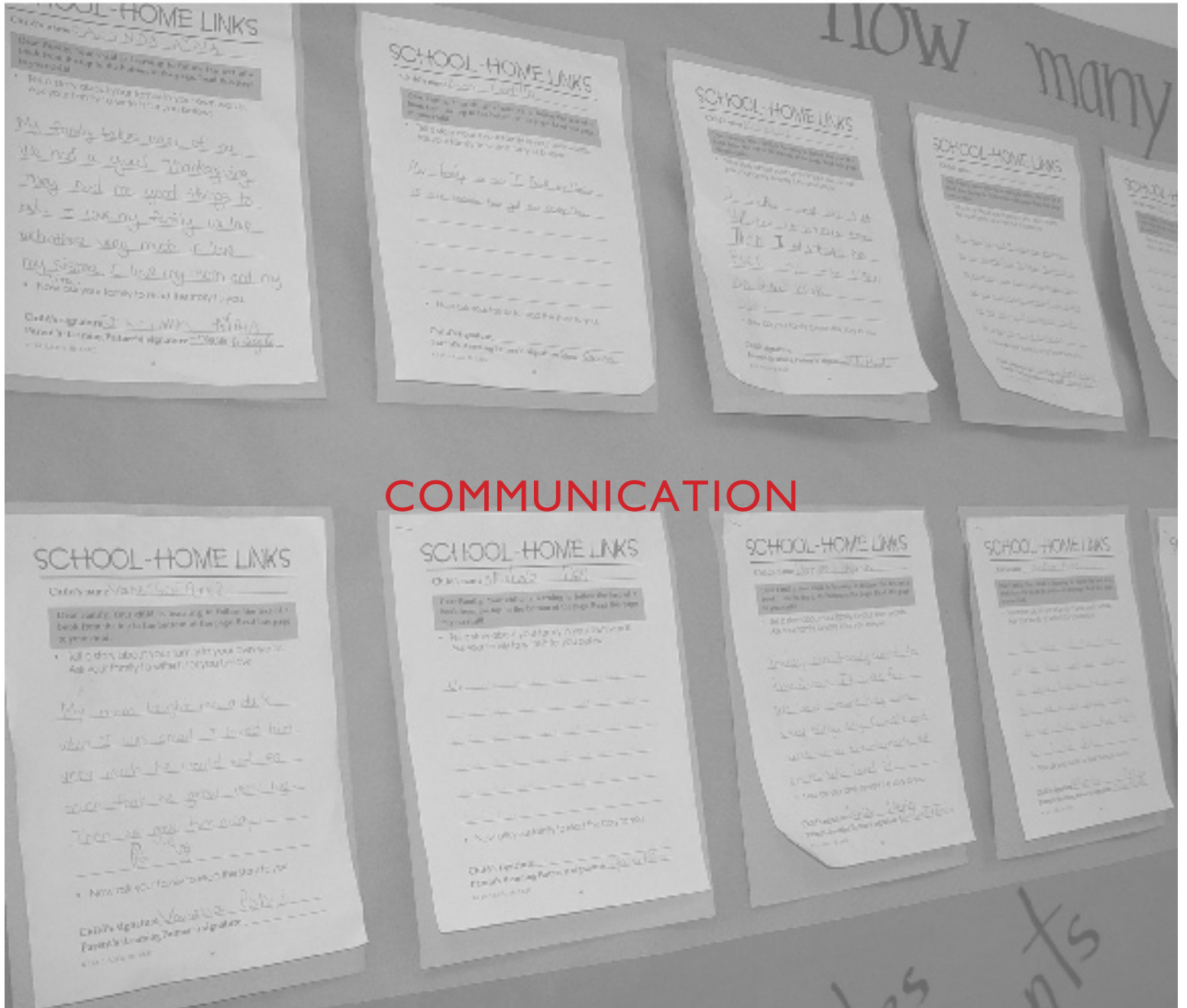
# POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The SCC reviews the school's policies and practices, especially as they relate to parents, and recommends improvements in light of research. The homework policy, agendas for parent-student-teacher conferences, the open house agenda, report cards, and making the schoolhouse a welcoming place for parents are all topics covered by the SCC.

- **Homework Policy**
- **Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences**
- **Open House**
- **Report Cards**
- **A Welcoming Place**

*The Solid Foundation program is helping to rebuild hope and a sense of belonging among families. This has been without question the most effective “parent involvement” effort we have seen.*

**Dr. Andrea Brown**  
Regional Superintendent of Education



## COMMUNICATION



## Building Block:

# COMMUNICATION

The ongoing conversation requires two-way communication between home and school about the student's learning. The SCC looks at ways to let parents know what their children are learning at school so they can talk about it at home. Parent-child interaction about learning, prompted by communication from school, is a key task of the SCC. The SCC also organizes home visits and home gatherings. Home visits are sometimes made by teachers and sometimes by other staff or volunteers, specially trained for the job. The visitors meet with parents and give them information to help them support their children's school success. Home gatherings are groups of parents who meet in a home, with a teacher in attendance. Home gatherings are a nice way for parents to get to know each other, and for parents and teachers to talk about their roles in student's learning.

- **Parent-Child Interaction**
- **School-Home Links**
- **Home Visits**
- **Home Gatherings**



EDUCATION



## Building Block:

## EDUCATION

A school community is a learning community. For students to do their best, teachers and parents must also do their best, and that means they are always learning too. The SCC plans a workshop for teachers to review the research on parents' influence on learning and to develop tools for communicating with parents. The SCC plans a second workshop, this one for teachers and parents, to see how parents and teachers work together for students' success. The SCC selects from several parent course curricula provided in the Solid Foundation program to offer courses in small-group settings. The SCC develops a Family Resource Library with materials for parents to check out. During Interactive Reading Workshops, groups of parents and teachers make materials to place in the library.

- **Parents & Learning Workshop**
- **Working Together for Student Success**
- **Courses for Parents**
- **Family Resource Library**
- **Interactive Reading**



## Building Block:

## CONNECTION

The ultimate “connection” is when members of the school community get together. Face-to-face association with one another provides opportunities to get to know each other while also learning how to help all students succeed. Family Nights are one kind of connection, and they provide a common experience for parents, teachers, and students. The SCC plans Family Nights focused on learning activities.

- **Family Nights**

*I was a group leader for one of Solid Foundation’s parent courses in my daughter’s school when she was in first grade. Shortly after that, I began working for ADI. My daughter is now a college graduate, and I have worked with parents in more than 200 schools.*

Herlinda Macias  
Parent Education Specialist



## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Every day in every way, the school community gets better and better. But how do we know? How do we measure our progress so we can make the right decisions and stay on a track to success? Built into the SCC's Planning Guide are several methods for measuring progress and effectiveness. A Degree of Implementation is completed annually by the SCC. Parents, teachers, and students complete self-rating forms to check their own progress with the responsibilities included in the Compact. One month a year, the SCC asks teachers to monitor their homework assignments, so the SCC can see how well students are doing in completing their work. A school community survey is administered to parents and teachers at the beginning of the SCC's two-year implementation period and again at the end; the results are tallied and included in a School Community Index report.

When all the components of Solid Foundation are firmly in place, a process that takes about two years, the SCC completes an application to become a Certified School Community. That is just the beginning of a continuous process of building a strong school community devoted to each student's success.

- **Effectiveness Matrix**
- **Degree of Implementation**
- **Self-Rating Forms**
- **Homework Monitoring**
- **School Community Index**
- **Certified School Community**