Ten Lessons Learned on Engaging Parents at a Mandarin Immersion School

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The Beginning......
Case Study: HudsonWay Immersion School

- NYC/NJ’s first full day immersion school
- Independent, private day school
- Serves 200+ students in Preschool to 5th grade
- Full immersion model: 90:10 in pre-K, 60:40 in Grade 4/5
- Two campuses - New York City and Summit, NJ (relocating to Stirling)
- Languages – Mandarin, Spanish
- Programs – summer camp, after school, summer abroad
- Tuition range – $20K (NJ) to $36K (NY)
- Competition – NJ -franchise preschool
  
  NY – highly capitalized independent schools
#1: Educate and engage parents to develop the market

1. Host Info Sessions
2. Write articles
3. Bring in guest speakers
4. Show videos
5. Present data
6. Involve parents
7. Create marketing materials

Bilingual students become BRILLIANT ADULTS

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HudsonWay IMMERSION SCHOOL
249 Bebout Ave
Stirling, NJ 07980
(908) 598-0888

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#2: Admit parents that fit your school culture

- Listen Actively
- Be Genuine
- Set Expectations
- Commitment
- Read cues
#3: Understand that immersion may be a “Black Box”

After school tutoring

More frequent updates

Bilingual Programs for Performances
#4: Over-Communicate

• Frequent
• Different modes (e-mail, newsletter, parent coffee, website mobility etc.)
• Double check for accuracy!
#5: Don’t take issues personally

- Listen without judgment
- Consider their perspective first
- Neutralize negative situations
- Maintain professional relationship
#6: Support your Staff

Training on Working with Parents

Enforce Chain of Command

Present a United Front
#7: Develop community by recognizing parents that support the school

Officers, Class parents, committee chairs

Parent Referral Program

New Parent Welcome

Parent Appreciation Happy Hour

Buddy Parent

Parent Panelists
#8: Turn weakness to strength

Examples:

- Class size
- School size
- Can’t help w/homework
#9: Be Consistent on Policy

Communicate Parent Code of Conduct

Enforce your Rules
#10: Provide insight into your challenges

Example:

Retention of Teachers

NJ Tuition increase