Important Educational Attainment Topics for Engaging Clients

Below are recommended topics by grade level that public health staff might use to engage clients in conversations around educational attainment.

**PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN READINESS (AGES 2-5)**

* Parent plan, readiness to enroll child in preschool
* How child speech, alphabet recognition, and counting abilities can be enhanced through parental engagement with child—utilizing books, activities, community resources. (Examples of important skills: child can count to 10, identify alphabet letters, talk in 5-6 word sentences, understand the concept of time of day, etc., among other skills and checklists that can be referenced)

**KINDERGARTEN**

* Importance of child attending school regularly, addressing any issues that might be leading to frequent child absences
* Parental monitoring of child’s reading proficiency according to grade level and passing of teacher assessments as well as parental plan to support child’s literacy and development. (In K-2nd grade most schools administer an assessment like the DIBELS which offers information on whether students are on track to be proficient readers)
* Healthy habits concerning sufficient exercise (or playtimes) and balanced meals

**2nd GRADE**

* Parental monitoring of child’s proficiency on school administered standardized tests (e.g. The California Standards Test—CST –begins in the 2nd grade and is taken in the spring)
* Free or reduced priced meals at school
* Importance of child attending school regularly, addressing any issues that might be leading to frequent child absences

**ELEMENTARY (3-8)**

* Parental monitoring of child’s proficiency on school administered standardized tests
* Keeping child on track to take Algebra I by the 8th or 9th grade and planning to support child’s Math skill development
* Healthy habits concerning sufficient exercise and balanced meals
* Parental monitoring of any child disciplinary problems at school (expulsion, suspension, etc.)
* Parental involvement in student’s education (help with homework, teacher conferences, volunteering at school, visiting the school, observing classes/learning, talking with teachers about scores and grades)
* Child’s school connectedness (i.e. feels safe, has friends, involved in activities)

**HIGH SCHOOL (9-12) FOR YOUTH (OR PARENTS)**
* Parental engagement in youth education (prompts: parental knowledge of youth classes; awareness of homework, assignments, projects, exams and deadlines; parental support in youth process of applying to college; parental attendance of events and teacher conferences at school; parental monitoring of youth school attendance)
* Level of youth engagement in school
* Youth access to college counseling and support
* Youth plans for college and for life after high school
* Importance of youth scoring Advanced or Proficient on the California Standards Test (CST) (administered each spring in a variety of subject areas)
* Successful passage of Algebra I by 9th grade
* Passage of the CAHSEE (California High School Exit Examination). Appropriate academic support in the case youth has not passed.
* Importance of “a-g” requirements, which qualify youth to apply to CSU or UC (e.g. 4 years of English, 2 lab sciences, etc.)
* Participation in the Early Assessment Program (EAP) for youth considering attending a CSU (11th grade)
* Sequenced and meaningful coursework with a career track for youth enrolled in career and technical programs
* Healthy habits concerning balanced meals and daily physical activity
* Importance of school attendance, addressing reasons for absenteeism or truancy
* Knowledge of any youth suspensions, expulsions, their frequency, and reasons why (including in-school suspensions)
* Importance of parental completion of the Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) for college bound youth (Grades 11-12)
TOPICS TO RAISE CONCERNING THE SCHOOL

* Is the school implementing the Common Core? (As evidenced by instruction, homework, and assignments being aligned with the Common Core standards?)

* Are there opportunities in the curriculum for students to be challenged? At the middle school level, is Algebra or perhaps even Geometry an option by 8th grade?

* How often are teachers absent, and how often does the typical classroom have a substitute?

* How stable is the staff, in terms of year-to-year turnover?

* Are there opportunities for parent engagement, including: parent/teacher conferences, opportunities to observe classroom and learning, volunteer opportunities, events that parents are invited to attend, parent educational offerings/workshops, a school site council?

* Are there counselors, nurses, and/or other mental health and health professionals at the school? And, is there a guidance counselor assigned to each student for assuring graduation requirements and/or college readiness?

* Does the school offer PE, breaks/recess, and other opportunities for physical activity?

RESOURCES


- “A-G” graduation requirements as defined by the California Department of Education - http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgrtable.asp

- Information regarding the CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam) - http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hc/efcahsee.asp

- Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) - http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/