

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LIFE

- **Affirmation** from you is essential to your child's success and well-being. Knowing that you are interested in the school's extra-curricular offerings will go a long way in motivating your child to participate. ex. Review the school calendar together and select a few school events that you can attend as a family as well as some student-only events.
- **Self-Awareness** and **identity development** are important byproducts of participation in extra-curricular activities. By talking to your child about why he/she is interested in certain school groups, you can get a window into his/her sense of self. Support your child's evolution as he/she seeks to explore new dimensions of self through extra-curricular programs.
- **Academic goals** can be complemented by well-chosen school activities. Activities can serve as incentives, provide opportunities for applying knowledge, expand lessons beyond the classroom, and offer a vehicle for advocating for social change. In many schools, activities are an extension of academic coursework. It is very important for students to find at least one non-curricular outlet that serves academic and/or character-building purposes.
- **Immersion** in school life enhances students' overall experience of the school by giving them multiple contexts through which they may engage with the school community—interacting with teachers as club advisors, using classrooms to host student-led meetings, or spending time with peers working toward common goals (planning a dance, for example) helps students to feel a deeper connection to the school.
- **Home culture** can be an important consideration in your child's school engagement. Bridging school and home helps students to seamlessly transition between both worlds. When possible, show your children ways that the activities they enjoy **honor your family, culture, or reflect your home values**. Encourage kids to bring what they've learned home to the family and to likewise, bring family home/community values to school. ex. Your child can start a club about your family's culture heritage.

- **“Keeping it Real”** - Remind your children that getting involved in new activities at school does not mean that they have to give up who they are. They are incorporating new elements not renouncing old ones necessarily. Getting involved in school life does not mean “selling out”.
- **Hidden Costs** - Be honest with children about financial responsibilities that may come with getting more involved. Help them seek out creative ways to fund their activities and enlist the help of the school. Consult with school leaders about supplemental budgets for this purpose.
- **Scheduling** - Come up with a plan as a family that enables kids to make time for these important extra-curricular experiences amidst other obligations. Helping kids balance their schedules promotes a healthy well-being.

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