

Back-to-School night is an opportunity to promote your school and reach out to your parents. This is especially true as we are now competing for students.

1) Give an Enthusiastic Welcome to your school to set the tone for the evening. In addition to welcoming parents and others, thank them for choosing your school. Today 's parents have more options than ever, and an acknowledgement that you are pleased to have their children and that you will do all you can to make it a great year for them will start the year off on one good note –THE major objective for the evening.

2) Give 'Em Something To Brag About--Just about every parent would love to have some great facts to gloat about when talking about their kids school and especially when they are chatting with parents who are sending their kids elsewhere. Academic achievements, depth and range of classes offered, credential and accolades of staff and success stories of past students all fit into this important category. Remember, if you don't give them this information, who else will?

Do the following:

a) Greet parents right outside the classroom door. Make eye-contact, shake hands, welcome and thank parents for coming. Make it a "quickie" so parents can get to their seats. Teachers who've used sign up sheets outside the door find lines formed and some parents miss half of the teacher's presentation.

b) Plan, time and practice presentation. Make sure that important facts can be covered in the time provided. If a teacher says "If you have questions, contact me" be sure you tell them HOW to make the contact.

c) This is a great time for teachers to share their enthusiasm for students and subjects.

Most parents have an image of their greatest teacher and the image will include a caring attitude, love for the subject and ability to make the subject connect with the student. Work to make sure this is the image projected.

d) Give a handout--the disclosure document. Check it over and make sure it is student friendly and welcoming. A list of strict rules and expectations can be intimidating. It is great to have expectations and rules, just balance the tone so the student and parents feel welcomed.

e) Make sure parents know how to contact you and your preferred times and methods of communication. This is a great opportunity to develop the parent/teacher team.