



The ASPIRA Association APEX Internal Implementation Guide

Background of the APEX Program

A six-month planning grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund in 1991 enabled the ASPIRA National Office to develop and test a parent involvement initiative entitled **ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX)**. In 1992, ASPIRA received a three-year implementation grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund to conduct **the APEX Program** at the ASPIRA Associate Offices in Philadelphia and Chicago. The second-level grant provides another three years of the APEX Program was expanded to all of the ASPIRA sites.

Goals and Objectives

The main goal of the APEX Program is to improve the educational experience of Hispanic youth by increasing Hispanic parents' involvement in their children's education. The APEX Program works under the assumption that the best way to do this is by training and providing support for parents to open lines of communication within their families and with the schools.

The APEX Model

Parents participating in the Program -- "APEX Parents" -- attend a series of ten workshops addressing parent involvement issues. After graduating from the program, parents will apply what they have learned in the APEX Program by communicating the needs of their children more effectively with school personnel, starting or joining already existing community parent groups, and becoming more involved with their children's school work and activities at home. The ten workshops in the curriculum are:

- 1) Self Esteem
- 2) Why is Education Important?
- 3) The Home Connection
- 4) School Structure

- 5) What Does Parent Involvement Really Mean?
- 6) The Importance of Communication
- 7) Involvement With Schools
- 8) Organizing Parent Networks
- 9) Group Dynamics
- 10) An Effective Facilitator

APEX Parents can receive further training through the APEX Program to become "APEX Parent Trainers." Pairs of Parent Trainers facilitate the APEX Workshop Series for parents they have recruited from their community.

Components of the APEX Program

The following steps are necessary for implementation of the APEX Model at your site:

- Recruit parents to participate in the APEX Workshop Series (each parent trainer is encouraged to recruit five parents)
- Conduct APEX Workshop Series for all parents
- Project Coordinator participates in different workshops and provides technical assistance to parent trainer teams as needed
- Project coordinator and all Parent Trainers meet on a regular basis to share their experiences and discuss ways to improve workshop delivery
- Conduct end of year graduation/recognition ceremony
- Recruit parent trainers
- Provide training to all parent trainers on workshop facilitation techniques, issues covered in the workshop series, and issues affecting your site/school district
- Team the parent trainers into six pairs

The People Involved

Local APEX Coordinator

The APEX Coordinator is an ASPIRA staff member who is responsible for overseeing program implementation, providing technical assistance to parents involved in the program, and meeting local goals.

Coordinators conduct parent trainer recruitment and training, assist parent trainers with recruitment of program participants and development of workshop schedules, monitor

workshop implementation, and plan APEX-related activities.

In addition, the APEX Coordinator is responsible for preparation, collection, and submission of program documentation to the National Office. He/she completes monthly program reports and ensures that appropriate information is collected from all teams for each workshop.

The APEX Coordinator is expected to sit in on at least one workshop (preferably at the beginning of the series) of each parent team and coordinate/facilitate regular group meetings with the parent trainers throughout the period that workshops are being conducted. At new sites, the Coordinator will lead the Workshop Series, keeping in mind potential Parent Trainers.

APEX Parent Participant

The APEX Parent commits to attending all workshops of the APEX Workshop Series and completing pre and post surveys regarding themselves and the APEX Program. Each parent will participate fully in the sessions, sharing their own experiences and valuing those of the others involved.

The APEX Program makes parents aware that they have a responsibility to be actively involved in their child's education at various levels. After completion of the workshop series, parents realize that there are many ways to become involved. While parts of the workshop series focus on more "visible" activities such as organizing parent groups in the community and becoming group facilitators, it is important not to forget the less visible but equally as important activities such as maintaining healthy communication in the home, with the child's teacher, and with other school personnel.

Parent participants need to sign a Parent Contract confirming their participation, complete an Intake Form, and the Pre- and Post-Surveys. For each workshop they attend, parents will need to complete a Workshop Evaluation Form.

Parent Trainer/Parent Team

By signing the Parent Trainer Agreement, the Parent Trainer makes a commitment to receive facilitator training and actively recruit parents to attend the APEX Workshop Series. Parent Trainers work in teams of two to facilitate the Workshop Series and are responsible for collecting appropriate program documentation for each workshop and submitting it to the APEX Coordinator. These include sign-in sheets, an evaluation form for each participant, an invoice from the child care provider, and their own parent trainer

invoice for each workshop. Before the workshop series starts, parent trainers should submit a roster of the names of parents who will be attending their workshop series and the name of the child care provider.

Parent Trainers should feel free to ask for technical assistance from the APEX Coordinator whether it be directly related to facilitating the workshops or just moral support. Parent Trainers should also realize that they themselves may receive requests for advice or support from the parents they are training. Parent Trainers are expected to attend the regular meetings for trainers; these meetings will provide them with even more support and ideas for improving their workshops.