Research exercise: Research on Roles and Practices that Engage Multiple Stakeholders in p-12 Schools

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Challenges Facing Stakeholders in Schools:
• A school psychologist must deal with conflicting expectations of his or her role.
• Administration may hold preconceived notions that school psychologists should work primarily with special education programs.
• Parents can be sensitive about their children so if a school psychologist identifies academic, mental, or emotional disabilities in a student, he or she is not always received by parents warmly.
• Parents feel barriers to becoming involved in their child’s education due to a lack of or negative connotation of communication from the school.
• Differing perspectives and socio-economic positions can cause tensions when parents attempt to become involved in their child’s education.
• Parents of older children often believe they are inadequately prepared to assist their child with schoolwork.
• Parent’s busy schedules hinder their ability to participate with their child and child’s teacher.

Ways in Which these Challenges are Overcome:
• In order to accommodate to his or her many roles, a school psychologist must consult with other stakeholders, including administration and parents of the student.
• A school psychologist must get parent support and work with administration in order to provide programs that support the needs of special education students.
• School psychologists must put themselves in parents’ shoes in order to understand the difficulties of accepting and addressing their child’s disability. It is key that the parents are involved throughout the whole process.
• Teachers can communicate with the parents frequently, in various forms, and in a positive manner to establish a good relationship.
• Establishing a good relationship with parents from the beginning allows teachers to recognize and account for differing perspective and economic situations. Home visits and phone calls endorse these relationships.
• Assigning activities which enhance life skills creates an educational activity that parents can assist older students with completing.
• Providing workshops, adult classes and childcare can create new situations in which parents can become involved with the secondary school. Multiple opportunities for involvement may accommodate the parent’s schedule.