

Dissemination

Lawrence Family Development Charter School's launching of Phase I of its new website (www.lfdcs.org) during the 2004-2005 school year was made possible through a technology grant from Massachusetts Department of Education. It establishes a professional, engaging, and easy-to-navigate website that addresses the interests of the school community, including staff and parents, and external visitors looking for information about our school. Internally-developed information related to parent involvement best practices, including our 120-page manual "The Many Faces of Family Development," is currently available on the site. This manual provides detailed information about parent involvement activities in use at six Massachusetts charter schools that can be easily replicated at other schools looking for ways to enhance their programs.

The 2005-2006 school year will see the completion of pages currently under construction and the addition of other content designed to make the site more dynamic. For example, student homework assignments may be posted so parents can track what is required of their children. Additionally, links will be established that will allow visitors to effortlessly connect to other sites featuring educational topics and information.

Pathways to Family Success Program

With funding support provided by Greater Lawrence Community Action Council through their Pathways to Family Success Grant, Lawrence Family Development Charter School implemented a family literacy program based on the "Reading Party" model. Seventy-one (71) parents of students enrolled at our school participated with their children in this program. Through their participation, parents became more aware of their influence and responsibility towards their children's development.

During the school year a total of eight (8) Reading Parties were held, four (4) in our school library and four (4) hosted by parents in their homes. At these events, parents demonstrated and practiced read-aloud skills, participated in discussions revolving around parenting or educational topics, and learned activities they could replicate in their homes with their children. Parents were provided free copies of the books that were read at the parties and packets containing projects for home activities with their children. They also worked together to build cohorts of parent-neighbors who would support each other and act as leaders in increasing literacy in the broader community.

This program disseminated best practices information to parents about the importance of family literacy and the role families play in the education of their children. Plans are currently being made to replicate this program in the 2005-2006 school year.