

Alabama Parent Information Resource Center
Family Friendly Walk Through with ALPIRC and AZPIRC

August 2010

- Sherri Wilson: Hi, I'm Sherri Wilson with the Alabama PIRC.
- Jenni Brasington: And I'm Jenni Brasington with the Arizona PIRC.
- Narrator: Thank you both for joining us today to share a bit about the Family Friendly Walk Through process that you both do within your states. Can you start off by just sharing a bit about what that process looks like?
- Jenni Brasington: Absolutely. It's like a 360 evaluation for schools. We try to assess the climate and culture of the schools so we survey the principal, all educators, a portion of the parents at that school, we do a walk-through of the physical environment, review the website, review documents, and we do some sharp phone calls to assess the customer service at that school.
- Sherri Wilson: Right, cause what we find is that every school wants students to be successful and every teacher wants families to be engaged in what the students are learning, but sometimes schools have placed unintentional barriers that prevent families from being fully engaged in what their students are doing in school. So when we come in, we bring fresh eyes and a new perspective to look at what's going on in the school and what are some barriers that might be there and what are some concrete strategies that we can give schools to remove those barriers and get more families engaged in what their students are learning.
- Jenni Brasington: And I think you hit the nail on the head with the fresh eyes because school personnel, that's their home away from home and so they're immersed in that environment and so they sometimes don't see what their families or visitors see when they come on campus. Is it difficult to park? Do they know where that front door is?
- Sherri Wilson: Right, that's a challenge.

Jenni Brasington: Is it a challenge to read the documents that come home? Do I know where to find stuff on the website? And so someone who isn't part of that culture at that school can really give a new perspective on what's going on.

Sherri Wilson: When we give the schools the report at the end, after we do the walk-through and look at all of the data we collect, we highlight the things that they're doing really well because we start with the positives and then we also give them the recommendations that are based on what we know from the national standards are going to help families become more engaged in their students' learning.

Jenni Brasington: And I think that's critical because we know all schools are doing things well and so we celebrate their successes and then we tell them some things that they could really improve on to really kick it up a level. And as you said, all those strategies are based on national standards so we give them scores in: communication, welcoming, information sharing, and participation.

Sherri Wilson: Exactly.

Jenni Brasington: And so it's our hope that they take this report and share it back to those stakeholders that participated so share it back to their parent groups, and back to their staff, and the community.

Narrator: These sound wonderful. If I was a school, where can I go to get some information?

Sherri Wilson: You can look on our website at www.alabamaparentcenter.com.

Jenni Brasington: Or www.azpirc.com.

Narrator: Thank you.

Jenni Brasington and Sherri Wilson: Thank you.

- End of video -

Video participants:

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