

TALKING POINTS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To persuade stakeholders to invest money and human resources into home visits using the PTHV model and to raise the profile of PTHV along the way.

GENERAL ADVICE

- Use simple, conversational language anyone can understand, avoiding jargon and acronyms.
- Focus on two or three talking points only.
- Talk about how this benefits kids.
- Tailor your answers to your audience.

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

Under the Parent Teacher Home Visits model, teachers visit students' families in pairs. The visits are voluntary for both educators and families. The purpose of the visits is to establish a relationship, and this is an important distinction from other home visit programs, which may focus on identifying a child's needs or providing training to parents.

Teachers receive training before visiting with families. When PTHV launches in a community, it forms a partnership with the school/district, teachers, and a community group.

The visits are built around five "non-negotiable" core practices.

The Core Practices:

1. Visits are voluntary for families and educators.
2. Educators are trained and paid.
3. We share hopes dreams and goals and focus on building relationships.
4. We don't target students so there is no stigma.
5. Educators visit in pairs and reflect.

pthvp.org/PTHVworks

KEY MESSAGES & TALKING POINTS

1 Parent Teacher Home Visits improve teaching and learning.

Home visits that follow the PTHV model build understanding and trust in both directions by breaking down barriers of language, race, culture, and economic status. These mindset shifts are seen in all kinds of schools, with students from very different backgrounds. It works everywhere.

Home visits change teachers' mindsets – their assumptions about students and families.

- ▶ Educators routinely find their assumptions about students and families were wrong. Home visits break down barriers of language, race, culture, and economic status.
- ▶ Even educators with similar backgrounds to the school community reported changes in mindsets.
- ▶ Teachers use what they learn to improve student engagement and motivation. They incorporate students' interests and culture and information obtained from the home visits to improve student engagement and motivation, and show more empathy.
- ▶ These mindset shifts and changes in practice benefit all students in a school, not just the ones whose families participated in a home visit.

Families and teachers are more likely to reach out to each other to communicate about their students' needs.

2 Students do better in schools where teachers visit students' families at home.

After their family is visited by their teachers, students are less likely to be chronically absent and more likely to do well on reading and writing tests. Even students whose families don't participate in the home visits show improvements, if the school they attend is implementing the program.

- ▶ Chronic absenteeism goes down.
 - 21% lower odds for students whose families participate, compared to their peers
 - 22% lower for all students in schools where teachers visit student families – even if their own family did not receive a visit.
- ▶ Scores go up.
 - 35% higher odds of scoring proficient for all students in schools where teachers visit student families.
- ▶ It works everywhere, it works for all students.
 - The practice works in multiple varied settings – rural, urban, more and less diverse, in elementary school and secondary school.

3 The Parent Teacher Home Visits model is backed by research and evidence.

Research shows that the unique PTHV model is highly effective and well-aligned to research-backed best practices in family engagement.

PTHV is the national expert in relational home visits.

- ▶ A nonprofit, PTHV is the only organization providing training and guidance nationally. In 2020, PTHV engaged with 662 communities in 19 states and Washington, DC. We trained 6,250 educators, and nationwide educators conducted 45,130 home visits.

4 Relational home visits should become the norm for every school and district.

With a modest investment of time and money, there is a significant return – both quantifiably, in terms of student outcomes, and in goodwill, engagement, professional satisfaction, and family attitudes toward school.

A home visit typically costs around \$70.

The program's modest cost can often be paid for in part or whole by Title I and other funds.

MESSAGES TAILORED TO KEY AUDIENCES

District and school leaders

- ▶ Home visits open teachers' eyes in ways they never expected, shining a light on issues of equity and implicit bias that stifle students' potential. Home-visiting leads to more empathic and less punitive approaches to discipline and other issues and greater individual attention.
- ▶ Parent teacher home visits engender considerable goodwill with families, which translates into positive attitudes about the teacher and the school, which leads to more likelihood that parents will seek teacher assistance in addressing student needs.
- ▶ Many districts use Title I funds to pay for the visits, though it is critically important to the success of the program that the visits are distributed equitably within the district.

Teachers and other educators

- ▶ Teachers like the experience and want to expand it in their schools. Teachers have found that home visits open their eyes to their students' families' background and experiences and give them information they can use to better empathize with and support their students.
- ▶ The visits create positive relationships with families and make it easier to support students and to communicate with families about barriers to student success with less tension, and as partners.
- ▶ With teachers' unions: We have had very positive relationships with teachers' unions in many school districts and find that a strong collaboration among a community group, the teachers' union, and a school district is especially effective for students, families, and teachers.

Parents

- ▶ Parents like the experience and quickly overcome their fears that they will be judged or blamed. They are surprised to find how much their children's teachers care, and appreciate being asked

Policymakers

- ▶ Home visits can be paid for with Title I funds, and are a clearly effective uses of limited funds.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Q: Won't teachers be too nervous to do it on a wide scale?

A: Educator fears about safety and about "doing it right" are alleviated by pairing educators with another who has done home visits before. Educators quickly find that visiting unfamiliar neighborhoods is not nearly as intimidating as they initially thought.

Q: Is there enough will or money or time to reach all students' families?

A: Even when only some teachers and some families in a school choose to participate, results are positive for all students in the school. The program's success is not threatened by partial participation.

Q: Can we afford it?

A: The program's modest cost can often be paid for in part or whole by Title I and other funds. It is a proven-to-be-effective application of Title I's set-aside for family engagement. A typical teacher visit costs only around \$70.

Q: The studies say students did better on ELA tests, but no better on math. If it's so effective, why did it only help with one and not the other?

A: We have some ideas, but we're honestly not sure, and we hope to research that in the future.