

The work to improve “parental involvement” in our schools can’t be done in isolation. The following are some core issues that will be part of this discussion and I welcome experiences and comments from all participants on current issues and effective practices that may be of importance to this area of work.

(Disclaimer: These ideas are field-base experiences relating to the work challenges regarding school parental involvement in RMI.)

1. The need for improved quality of school leadership
2. The need for improved quality of instruction in all classrooms
3. The need for improved quality of parental involvement
4. The need for improved quality of stakeholder/community involvement in education

Expectations of PI in our schools: PI is an essential element of school improvement. Some realities we face in this work

Are Schools clear on this aspect of parents’ role in the schools?	Current Situation in schools / Norms (concrete examples of the issues)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NO ✓ Schools use PI as a forum for their own cause or as they see fit. ✓ Adaptation of western school system practice ✓ Parent Involvement is School-wide PTA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parent Meetings on school issues (Agenda belongs to the school, parents not involved in setting the agenda) ○ Report Cards ✓ PTA Meetings are expected quarterly but not regulated ✓ Teachers rarely work side-by-side with parents on instructional issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current engagement activities are those that show and tell or awareness / inform type activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership skills required to carry out work in this area are limited / low (low self-esteem) ▪ PTA is a forum for the Principal or Head Teacher ▪ The School Principal / Head Teacher facilitator. ▪ Teachers or the “Learning & Teaching” work in the classrooms seldom makes it to PTA agenda. ▪ Teachers rarely participate in PTA meetings/ poor attendance at PTA meetings. (reportedly) ▪ PTA is a parent forum for administrative issues and has little/ no connection to the instructional process in the classroom of which PI should focus on. ▪ The measurement of levels of PI (strong or weak) is determined by the number of attendance at PTA meetings, school events, etc. ▪ PTA =stand alone group – no link to MOE SIP process. ▪ School PTA attendance is low & mostly women ▪ PTA is not representative of all Stakeholders in the community. Mostly parents (guardians, car-givers) of students attending school are PTA members.

Challenge w/the work in the schools.

1. There are very limited / lack of efforts on parts of schools to create their own initiatives to work with parents to improve **student learning**.
2. What teachers need (Parental Involvement in schools)
 - a. Teachers PD & training needs (learn & grow by doing or engaging in PI activities)
 - i. In most Public schools, this aspect of work is not an integral part of what teachers do as support for students.
 - b. School teachers & home teachers **must become partners** for learning to be efficient at school & home/community.
3. What parents need
 - a. Parenting Skills (level educational background & teen parents)
 - b. Access to information education : (Oral vs. written & English vs. Marshallese)
 - c. Literacy levels (same as b. above)
 - d. Service available to parents / Accessibility to these programs

Realities in our school communities

<p>1. Outer island communities are;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Different levels (PI is not a one size fit all type of work) ✓ Population (generally) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small & scattered (extended # of schools in most Atolls) ○ Extended family (# of children exceed adults) ✓ Age distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The very old / don't want to live elsewhere ○ Out of school youth – w/families ✓ Accessibility to services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isolation (2 visits a year if lucky) ○ Distance from Central Government (limit type of services available) ✓ Subsistent economy ✓ Focus on Church activities
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The Cluster Model & how it is addressing “Issues & GAPS” of Parental Involvement in RMI schools.

Cluster Model: Creating a System-wide Support System (A vehicle for school improvement support)	
<p>Structural Organization Tool for PD support at all levels.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborative leadership support for school improvement 2. Instructional Improvement / Professional Development 3. Parent Teacher Partnerships 4. Quarterly Cluster PTA (Culturally non-threatening parent teacher discussions about student progress and learning activities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Improvement Team (Bringing together all stakeholders in the community – led by Principal) - Teacher Grade Clusters (Standards learning / application) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o K-3, 4-6 & 7-8 - Cluster PTA (the association) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication forum for student learning growth and challenges for collaboration & improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Teachers lead discussions (engagement PD) o Quarterly face to face information dissemination about Standards & learning progress of students. o Parenting Skills sharing (Child Dev. Needs)

** The educated population lived in the Center Atolls (\$ economy).