



Building a Strong Parent Base: Taking a Positive Approach

NEGATIVE

*When there is low attendance,
Instead of saying:*

“We have 500 students in this school and only 10 parents are here. There should be at least 100.”

“Parents just don’t care.”

“Parents are too busy to come.”

“We can’t get the Spanish speaking parents here.”

“Teachers don’t come to our meetings.”

If you don’t know the answer to questions:

Don’t make up an answer because you think you might look bad if you don’t know it.

If there is a disruptive parent and you can’t get through the agenda, instead of saying nothing and letting them dominate or arguing with that person...

POSITIVE

You can say:

“It’s so great that you are all here. Let’s brainstorm together how to bring one more person each for our next meeting.”

“Most parents do care. Let’s see if we can figure out what they care the most about and try to get them into the school. What are your ideas for that?”

“Can we figure out different times to do meetings?”
“Can we brainstorm some ways we can ask people to get involved if they can’t come to meetings?”

“Can we identify a bilingual parent or teacher to help with outreach? Can we get materials translated for the meeting and for reports afterwards? Can we use headsets at the meeting for translation?”

“Can someone reach out to their teacher and get their ideas? Can we hold a meeting after school once a month so it’s better for staff? Can we talk to the UFT chapter leader about a meeting with teachers?”

Instead say:

“That is a great question. I am sorry I don’t know the answer to that. Does anyone else know the answer?”
If not, “I will find out and get back to you.”

Say:

“Let me see a show of hands, how many people are ready to move on to the next item and table further discussion for now” or ask that person to form a sub-committee to address their issue, or if you know ahead of time there will be problems, ask them to do a job at the meeting so that they will be involved and engaged.