

10 Things Parents Would Like Schools to Know

- ✓ Parents value **authenticity**. Be a person first and an educator second.
- ✓ **Shaming and blaming** is a sure fire way to keep us from coming back.
- ✓ Please **don't judge us**. Things are not always as they appear.
- ✓ Raising a family is fun but also stressful. **We don't need to be pitied or saved**. It's about relationships. It is not your job to solve our problems, please just listen and be supportive.
- ✓ Don't assume that what **you think** we need to know is what **we think** we need to know.
- ✓ Instead of telling us you want us to be involved, why don't you **ask us** how we would like to and are able to be involved.
- ✓ **"Our babies don't keep"** – Please understand our emotional reactions. We only get one chance with our kids. We worry and often feel powerless and inadequate. Please know that under the anger is intense fear.
- ✓ If you want us to work within your system, **be a buddy and show us the ropes**. You know the culture of the way you do business. We're not talking about the "Parent Handbook," we're talking about the unspoken rules and the way school business is conducted.
- ✓ If you survey us about what we think about a particular topic, let us know **what you did with the information** and how it improved what you are doing for our kids.
- ✓ We don't want to tell you how to run your school. Rather **we desire a leader** who can communicate effectively and are decisive about what is in the best interest of our kids.

Barb Flis, Founder of Parent Action for Healthy Kids insists that every parent has the power to make a difference. Barb cites her grass-roots PTA experiences as the first step on her journey in connecting families, schools and communities on children's social, emotional and physical health. In 2005 she was appointed by Michigan's Governor Jennifer Granholm to coordinate the **Talk Early & Talk Often** initiative which is designed to help parents gain knowledge and skills to talk to their middle school children about abstinence and sexuality. In 2010 she was invited to Washington D.C. to provide expertise on engaging parents in the First Lady's *Let's Move* initiative. Barb's "parent-to-parent" style in communicating has won her great praise. She brings to educators and other key stakeholders, a unique parent perspective which has broadened collaboration between parents, communities and schools.