

Natural Leaders are warm, caring social persons who serve as multi-cultural bridges between students, families, communities and schools.

- ♥ Research has consistently shown students' success to be highly correlated with the level of their parent engagement. (Jeynes, Education and Urban Society, 2003).
- ♥ Personal growth and transformation is an important outcome that leads to stronger communities and academic success for children (Warren and Mapp, 2011, A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing and School Reform).
- ♥ It is very powerful when adults engage in education themselves because actions speak louder than words. Children view them as role models and aspire to be like them.
- ♥ When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.
- ♥ Presently, there are many parent engagement projects. They all start with the same objective – helping all children succeed in schools. But most are top-down – they are school-directed training programs teaching parents how to help their kids succeed. While unintended, this sends the message that parents need to learn how to help their kids. The focus is on each parent helping their own child(ren).
- ♥ **The Natural Leader project is different.**
- ♥ Parents take on a leadership role.
- ♥ They build relationships with families in their community, identify what helps these families be successful with education and then implement these ideas.
- ♥ A driving focus is collaborative community organizing where parents are equal partners with schools and community organizations sharing a common goal of both adults and children achieving success in education.

NATURAL LEADERS FACTS

- ♥ The WABS Natural Leader Project has been growing for over ten years.
- ♥ There are over 250 active Natural Leaders at this time, and each year 100-150 parents are trained in 7 school districts.
- ♥ The Natural Leaders Program was developed by WABS in 2003 with parents in Shoreline, Everett, Edmonds, Mukilteo and Northshore schools with funding from OSPI, Readiness to Learn grant and in 2011 with Marysville and Monroe schools with support from the Discuren Foundation.
- ♥ The WABS Natural Leaders program was developed by WABS and has been made possible by the generous support of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Discuren Foundation, Gates Foundation, Tulalip Tribes Charitable Trust, United Way of Snohomish County, a private donor through Seattle Foundation and in partnership with participating school districts.

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