

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund  
Fall, 2009**

**St. Louis Home and School Association**

**President: Patricia (Tishie) Shea**

**Principal: Monique Doucette**

**Name of Project: Meet the Teacher BBQ**

**Goal(s):**

- To provide an opportunity for parents to see the school and meet the teachers and staff.
- To make parents aware of what their child will be learning in this school year..

**Description:**

We sent a note home from school announcing the date and time of the Meet the Teacher BBQ. We served a lunch that had quite a variety of food items, including the usual hot dogs and hamburgers and also chili and corn chowder. As with previous school events, we had good participation from the parents.

**Did you achieve your goal?**

Yes, everyone had a great time! Everyone got to meet the teachers and staff and meet their Home and School members. Hopefully, this will result in more interest and more volunteers.

**Who did the project benefit?**

Everyone! We had a great evening and everyone got to see our great school and loving staff.

**What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?**

Our challenge is to get more people to help us out at Home and School. We did tell people how important it is for us to have volunteers to run our programs and this resulted in more parents volunteering for the school breakfast program.

**Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners):**

Meet the Teacher nights can be stressful for both parents and teachers. Teachers are meeting a large number of parents they do not know and their personal knowledge of the child is only being formed. Parents are anxious to hear that their child is fitting in well and is succeeding at school. The time to meet is short and it is frustrating for both parents and teachers not to have time for mutual sharing.

Having a barbeque is a low key, informal way to "break the ice." Parents, teachers--and sometimes children--can gather, paper plate in hand, to talk about a wide range of topics that go beyond discussions about one child. Each group sees the other in a different light so that when school meetings take place everyone is more relaxed because they already know each other.