

Sample Pledges, Compacts, or Contracts

Pledges, compacts, or contracts are symbolic agreements that formally recognize that students, families, teachers, and administrators must work together to help all students succeed each year in school. The form, content, and wording of pledges will vary depending on whether the students are at the elementary, middle, or high school level. The items should reflect the developmental stages of the students, the organizational characteristics of the schools, and the situations of families.

Pledges, compacts, or contracts should include parallel forms for parents, students, teachers, and administrators. By signing parallel pledges, all signers become aware of their common goals, shared responsibilities, and personal commitments.

It helps to do the following:

- Use the term *pledge* instead of *compact* or *contract* to recognize the voluntary, good-faith nature of these commitments.
- Keep the list of commitments short and clear, including 5 to 10 items.
- Include a short cover letter signed by the principal that explains to students, families, and teachers that pledges are *part of* a comprehensive program of school, family, and community partnerships.
- Provide partners with copies of the pledges they signed.
- Implement school practices that enable parents, students, teachers, and administrators to fulfill the commitments in the pledges. For example, if parents are asked to communicate with teachers or others at the school, then parents must have clear information and easy avenues for contacting teachers, counselors, or administrators. If parents are asked to volunteer, then there must be a well-planned program and a leader or committee to recruit, welcome, and train volunteers; match volunteers with teachers or with school programs and locations; and monitor patterns of participation by volunteers and the intended results.
- Include an “open” item for students, parents, teachers, or administrators to insert to tailor the pledge to their own situations, interests, and needs. The open item may answer a question such as: *What else would you like to do this year as a partner for student success in school?*
- Discuss the content of pledges annually with students, families, teachers, and others; obtain input; and revise as needed.
- Develop a full program of partnerships including the six types of involvement. Pledges are one of many Type 2—Communicating activities that strengthen school, family, and community connections.

The sample pledges in this section may be tailored to match your school’s policies and goals for students and for partnerships. Topics for parallel pledges include student effort, behavior, attendance, communications from school to home and home to school, parent-teacher conferences, volunteers, homework, study habits, appropriate dress, and other school improvement goals.