

# Parent Engagement Night Turns Out CPHS Parents

Our recent Parent Engagement Night was not only an excellent example of what we do, and how we do it, but also how well we do it. With attendance at over 30% of our parent population, it all started with a personal e-mail from our principal to all parents, follow-up phone calls home to each and every household, and well-organized, fully-supported, presentations from our staff, including a guest speaker who is a former Culver Park High School graduate herself. From Aeries use, to drug abuse, our topics proved to be timely, and of high interest to our parents.

The 11th and 12th grade students and parents here at Culver Park have had access to Aeries at least since they were in middle school. Checking grades regularly, questioning, and following up when assignments have been missed, is a simple secret to academic success. Since attendance at Culver Park usually implies lack thereof, we felt that bringing Aeries to the parents would be valuable, and it was. By the end of the evening, all parents who attended had g-mail addresses, and had accessed their child's record in Aeries, some for the first time ever.

In order to get to the point of being able to deliver such a workshop, Culver Park, too, had to change the way we do business significantly. In the past, every student in every class was working on individualized contracts at their own pace. Now, the

majority of our students are working together in common-paced classrooms which feature essential standards, designed for either credit recovery, or the acceleration needed to earn credits toward graduation.

In our second workshop, which was entitled, "Preventing Drug and Alcohol Abuse in Your Teens," lecturer Christie Holmes joined Principal Veronica Montes to deliver an informative, audience-participatory, session which updated our families on current trends in teen drug use. Christie stressed the importance of open communication lines between parents and children, and Ms. Montes stressed the value of sometimes demonstrating "tough love" rather than enabling your children. One of the most poignant moments was when Ms. Holmes shared how addictive behaviors "always start somewhere;" people don't set out to become drug and/or alcohol dependent. Usually there is a profound loss, or disappointment, that causes people to seek solace through temporary or artificial means, and then "use" turns to "abuse," and problems don't just disappear, they have to be dealt with by surrounding family members.

Our village grows, and our cup overflows, thanks to our community partners, volunteers, and parent involvement.