

How to Host Virtual Community and Parent Coffee Meetings

At Rocketship, Parent Power is a key pillar of our model. One of the first touchpoints teachers and leaders have with families is our annual home visit. Home visits allow us to forge deep and meaningful partnerships with all of our families that last a lifetime. Distance learning and social distancing restrictions certainly make it more difficult to nurture the relationships we have built with our families. However, they are vitally important to the strength of our school community and our students' growth. This resource guide shares more about how we are creating opportunities for our community to come together regularly via Virtual Community and Parent Coffees (Cafecitos).

Why Do It?

Community and Parent Coffees (Cafecitos) can allow school leaders to gather parent input, feedback, and serve as a critical touchpoint to further build and reinforce community. Community and Parent Coffees also give families an opportunity to build relationships with one another and access information that is relevant to the community and academics.

Key Considerations:

Core Tenets: We believe that families are a student's first teacher, and partnering with our families allows us to work in collaboration to ensure every child achieves his or her dreams. In designing Community and Parent Coffees, we seek to ensure there is care, collaboration, and consistency for families and students.

Day/Time: First, identify the day/time of the week that would work best for families. You can send out a Facebook Poll that provides families with both morning and evening options. Hosting a morning coffee and an evening tea is highly encouraged so that you can reach all of your families.

Platform: Put an extension on Zoom that allows you to broadcast live on Facebook. This way, all hosts can use PowerPoints or Google Slides (or other mediums) to broadcast visuals to families. As families enter the meeting, they type their names in the comment section. To build community during the virtual meeting, families are encouraged to use the comment feature to share stories and celebrate their teachers and other families and students. Families can share questions in the private Zoom chat



feature so school leaders can categorize and respond during Q & A time. We also strongly encourage recording on Facebook Live, so that the recording can be posted and made available for families who are unable to attend.

Roles & Responsibilities: All school leaders (Principal, Assistant Principals, Office Manager) should attend every community meeting. One representative from each grade level should also attend. The Principal leads the meeting and all materials are prepared in advance by the entire school leadership team. Assign an Assistant Principal to capture and categorize the questions from families, removing duplicate questions. Assign a second team member to answer questions in the chat feature (in multiple languages if your community requires), so there is a transcript of the meeting. One person from every grade should be available to answer any questions that families may have specific to their grade.

Time Allocations: We recommend hosting two virtual Community/ Parent Coffees each week, ideally one in the morning and one in the evening. We recommend dedicating one hour for each meeting to keep families informed and involved. See the sample schedule:

Sample Virtual Community Meeting Agenda	
8:00-8:05 AM:	Relevant Topics: Families share feedback and ask questions, using the Facebook comment section.
8:05-8:15 AM:	Discussion: School leaders answer questions that families surfaced in the first five minutes.
8:15-8:25 AM:	Announcements: Principal shares critical updates.
8:25-8:45 AM:	Focus Topic of the Day: We've found that most of our initial topics were focused on how to access technology and check to see if a student is meeting his/her goals.
8:45-8:55 AM:	Q&A: School leaders answer any additional questions that may have been surfaced during the Coffee.
8:55-9:00 AM:	Raffle & Close-Out: Families who participate in the Virtual Coffee are entered into a raffle. The drawing takes place at the end of the meeting, and families and students receive shout-outs.