

**West Junior High School
Belleville, Illinois
Grades 7–8**

Pastries for Parents

West Junior High School sponsors an annual Pastries for Parents breakfast. One of the school improvement initiatives is to increase parental involvement and to help parents feel welcome in the school. The character education committee invited parents and their students to breakfast together, reasoning it was a more convenient time of day for parents. Invitations went home with students in weekly Wednesday envelopes. Staff members were encouraged to attend and talk with parents. The school decorates the library for the event with tablecloths, centerpieces, and chocolate flowers; local businesses donate food. One year, each table had "Heart to Heart" questions written on cut-out hearts, along the lines of *What is your biggest fear?* and *How would your life be different if you overcame it?* and *What is the most difficult thing about growing up?* Students and their parents were encouraged to choose a question and talk. Another year, the committee created a brochure with character questions such as *Why is respect important?* Parents, students, and staff have all given positive responses about the event and the opportunity to increase communication between students and their parents.

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