

**SCHOOL AND HOME PARTNERSHIP: BUILDING PARENT ENGAGEMENT VIA
ZOOM, TELEGRAM, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

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Abstract: At the Presidential School in Nurafshon (PSN), a residential institution serving gifted students from across Uzbekistan, fostering strong home-school partnerships has been both a strategic priority and a practical challenge. Recognizing that academic excellence must be complemented by holistic development—encompassing spiritual growth, well-being, and character education—the school has actively worked to bridge the gap between family expectations and its educational vision. Initial feedback revealed that many parents, particularly those from rural communities, perceived PSN as overly academic and disconnected from their children’s daily emotional and social experiences.

Keywords: Parent engagement, home-school partnership, digital communication, Zoom, Telegram, cultural events, holistic education, boarding school, Uzbekistan, Presidential School, spiritual development, parental involvement, community building, family-school collaboration, student well-being.

In our opinion, educators, as well as students, have a shared responsibility in education through Nurafshon Presidential School (PSN) since 2021 when PSN began to operate, providing training to future leaders of Uzbekistan through a mixture of academic excellence, ethical background, and global citizenship. But, as we soon realized, with the best curriculum and novel pedagogy, the partnership of parents and guardians is crucial. A critical lesson was also learned from our initial feedback from our school community: although parents valued the academic offerings that PSN offered, many also felt isolated in the school’s holistic approach to children’s education—specifically when it came to spiritual growth, well-being, and character.

This perception gap caused a strategic pivot: to pursue transformational engagement, beyond transactional communication (e.g., grade reports), that invites families into the full developmental trajectory of their child’s education and the maturity of their own growth, as well as their child’s development. This article investigates how PSN has restructured home-school partnership based on three interrelated pillars: digital communication mechanisms (Zoom and

Telegram), interactive parent education activities, and community-based cultural events. Collectively, such projects create a vibrant ecosystem of engagement which has built trust, fostered greater engagement from parents, and strengthened school culture.

Being a residential school educating students from across the Tashkent region—in many cases far from provincial areas such as Fergana and Surkhandarya—PSN is presented with a particular set of challenges in maintaining regular, meaningful interactions with families. A substantial share of parents are not able to travel long distances to in-person meetings. Understanding this, we took advantage of readily accessible digital resources so that no family was excluded from their child’s school life. In 2023–2024, when our class started using Zoom, class teachers began holding monthly Zoom meetings with the parents. This is not just another status update, but rather a preamble organized by a framework of structured dialogues that address:

- Themes of future learning and academic progress.
- Social and emotional life; social well-being;
- Future extra-curricular or residential interests.
- A little support in their home to support learning.

For example, Grade 5 parents are given tips on easing their child transitioning to boarding life, and Grade 10 families are given an introduction to SAT and IELTS preparation, as well as time-management and relaxation strategies. Importantly these sessions are audio-taped and shared with parents who cannot access the sessions live, giving everyone a voice. Teachers have said that Zoom meetings have enhanced relational trust considerably. One parent said, “Previously, I was only informed from the school when there was an issue. Now I feel like a partner in my child’s journey.” At the same time we opened weekly Telegram broadcasts—from Grade 5 to start a pilot group. Below are messages, in very short, visually appealing sentences:

- Highlights of projects from the classroom (e.g., prototypes in robotics, presentations on Global Perspectives)
- Photos related to cultural events such as Navruz or International Women’s Day
- Health checks reminders, dormitory events, or parent workshops
- Quote extracts from the graduate profile or mission statement of the school to drive home common values

The ubiquity of Telegram in Uzbekistan makes it an ideal channel—more than 95% of our parents use the app regularly in this country’s schools and are also actively using Telegram, according to the report. This informal but informative tone creates a sense of belonging—parents frequently respond with questions, praise, or offers of volunteer work. This is an important channel, and the Deputy Director for Spirituality monitors the channel and responds personally within it, making a mass communication tool into a space for genuine dialogue.

More Than just Information: Interactive Parent Education. Digital tools don't work in isolation to create deep partnerships. We noticed that many parents, particularly those living in rural areas, did not understand the pedagogical theories motivating PSN's blended curriculum (Uzbek national + Cambridge CAIE) or the reasoning for social-emotional learning (SEL) and global citizenship. We implemented the parent education sessions as interactive events at quarterly parent meetings to overcome this obstacle. These are not lectures; they are participatory workshops to:

- Understand your assessment practices (e.g., explain the model for a final exam of a 60 per cent carry-mark/40 per cent final exam).
- Student exhibitions demonstrate project-based learning (PBL) at work.
- Find out what High-Quality Learning and Teaching (HQLT) means for the school.
- Talk about adolescent development, digital safety, and mental health.

In one particularly powerful session, we learned about “Understanding the Hidden Curriculum”—the values, habits, and life skills that are embedded in PSN's upbringing program. Parents made their way through stations that had student-led clubs (Eco Club, Coding Club, Zakovat), dormitory routines, and service-learning projects involving trips to schools for children with disabilities. Many departed with a renewed respect for how PSN fosters compassion, responsibility, and leadership—not just academic success. The feedback was universally positive. One father from Chirchik reflected, “My belief was that the boarding school was all about studying. Now I'm seeing my son learning how to be a good human being.”

Celebrating Culture, Building Community. At PSN, cultural identity is an integral part and not an afterthought. Our campus incorporates traditional Uzbek relics, music, and Uzbek national philosophy into the daily lives of students, and we want to bring that idea to the parent by taking on cultural occasions for people like us and their children to participate in events based on the celebration of both their country heritage and the world view.

“Healthy Lifestyle Is the Lifeblood Of Our Family” Sports Day. In 2024, for an original sports event, we staged our first-ever special sports competition, where we put a relay race, tug of war, and traditional games both amongst Grade 5 students and their fathers and parents. The theme of the event— “Healthy lifestyle is the support of our family”—made wellness a shared family value. For many rural families, the experience was their first time to spend time on campus and engage informally with teachers and leaders. The Deputy Director for Spirituality opened the event with a reflection on mehmondo'stlik (Uzbek hospitality) and oilaviy qadriyatlar (family values), framing physical activity as an expression of care for oneself and loved ones. The joy and laughter that day soon became a powerful symbol of unity.

Our “Open Doors Day”: When we have *Open Doors Day,* parents are ushered into classrooms to observe lessons, review student portfolios, and speak with subject teachers. With this transparency, we increase trust in our teaching and offer parents the possibility to see firsthand

how we incorporate global citizenship and digital literacy into subjects such as Physics or Literature.

Likewise, our «International Women’s Day» was represented by performances from female students, talks around gender equality, and a panel with alumnae and mothers in STEM, education, and public service. Because of PSN’s long-standing gender imbalance (only ~25% girls), such events leave a strong message: “your daughters belong here, and we will support their success”. These events are more than entertainment—they are shared memories, affirmation of cultural pride, and modeling of what we hope the students would emulate as values to embody.

While technology and events can be powerful tools, long-lasting sustainable change can only happen when systems come together to support them. PSN has embedded parent engagement in the operational DNA via a number of fundamental structures:

1. Parent Comment Boxes

Handled by the Deputy Director for Spirituality, the physical and electronic boxes invite anonymous or signed comments at any moment. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) reviews these suggestions weekly and publishes responses in the next Telegram update.

2. Parent Survey and Data-Driven Improvement

The Academic Director runs an annual «Parent Survey» on communication, curriculum understanding, and well-being support. Results directly inform our School Improvement Plan. For example, 2023 feedback led to the creation of the Grade 5 Telegram pilot, clearer explanations of the HQLT framework, and more frequent policy updates.

3. Parent Council (In Development)

Based on positive survey responses, we’re building a formal «Parent Council» to advise on school policies, event planning, and student well-being initiatives. Members will be elected by their peers to represent a diverse regional and grade-level population.

4. Alignment with CIS Standards

Support for «CIS Standard H1» is our goal, emphasizing communication that enhances learning and well-being, systematically seeks feedback, and actively engages parents in school life. This alignment is reflected in our 94% parent satisfaction rate in the latest CIS survey.

We've had our rough times along the road. Some challenges include:

- «Digital literacy gaps»: Some older parents have trouble using Zoom or Telegram. Now, we hold optional “tech orientation” sessions during in-person meetings.

- «Cultural hesitancy»: In conservative communities, some families initially questioned the value of non-academic activities. Persistent storytelling—via photos, student testimonials, and alumni

success stories—has slowly shifted perceptions.

- «Staff capacity»: Organizing high-quality engagement requires time. We have integrated these duties into the Deputy Director for Spirituality’s KPIs and provided HR support for event logistics.

The biggest lesson? «Engagement must be reciprocal». When parents feel heard, respected, and valued—not just informed—they become advocates, collaborators, and co-educators.

As we move into 2025 and beyond, PSN aims to deepen parent partnership through:

- «Parent-led workshops»: *Inviting parents with expertise (e.g., engineers, doctors, artisans) to co-teach in clubs or career days*

- «Online student portfolios»: *Allowing parents to view their child’s academic and extracurricular achievements in real time*

- «Regional parent meetups»: *Organizing gatherings in Tashkent, Chirchik, and other hubs to build peer support networks*

- «Expanded Parent Council»: *With subcommittees on wellness, curriculum, and boarding life*

Ultimately, we aim to establish a «learning community» where home and school are seamlessly linked—not just to the benefit of individual children but also to the collective flourishing of Uzbekistan’s next generation.

From the top down, PSN’s vision of a cohesive partnership is driven by the central idea of the Five Pillars principle:

At Presidential School in Nurafshon, we do not view parents as external stakeholders, but as critical partners on the journey. By carefully employing digital tools, thoughtful educational activities, and vibrant cultural events, we are moving the home-school relationship from one of distance to dialogue, from information to understanding, and from administration to alliance. One Grade 7 student told us, so movingly, “When my mom came to Sports Day and saw me leading my team, she finally understood why I love this school.” That moment—shared pride, mutual understanding, and common purpose—is what true partnership looks like. And it’s exactly this foundation we will keep working on.

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