Leveraging Family Engagement for Equity & Achievement

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Transformative Solutions in Education
AGENDA

• Defining Family Engagement
• The Impact of Research on Policy and Practice
• Engagement Frameworks
• Reflection & Planning
LEARNING AGREEMENTS

**BE PRESENT**
Eliminate distractions (Devices, sidebars, etc.)
Commit to giving your undivided attention

**BE OPEN**
Allow yourself to explore new ideas and different approaches

**BE RESPECTFUL**
Acknowledge different experiences and opinions
Agree to disagree – respectfully

**BE ENGAGED**
Commit to fully participating; asking questions and sharing experiences
Defining Family Engagement

Broad Definition:
Any action by a parent, guardian or other caring adult in the life of a child or youth that supports their healthy development and well-being; physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated acts</td>
<td>Systemic: Relevant to our academic needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance driven Service</td>
<td>Linked to Learning Developmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-time project Select group of parents</td>
<td>Sustained Equitable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Only in some schools</td>
<td>To Scale</td>
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Family Engagement in Education

Conditions for Engagement
- Leadership that models and articulates core values regarding the engagement of families
- Expectations, Support & Accountability
- Clearly defined norms & rituals
- Time & resource allocation
Impact of Research on Policy & Practice
Organizing Schools for Improvement
Lessons from Chicago (2010)

Identified 5 essential supports for improving and sustaining school improvement
Factors for School Improvement

Does Family Engagement Matter?
Family Engagement Frameworks
Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]

- Biggest shift - from Parent Involvement to Parent/Family Engagement
- Acknowledging the dual-capacity building component
- Parent engagement in school improvement with educators
- Professional Development for educators
- Compacts and policies must accessible to families and must be living documents
- Meeting the needs of the families that need support the most
2012- Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

- Released by the U.S. Department of Education in 2012
- Grounded in research and best practice from the field
- Serves as a “compass” to guide the development of effective practice at both the school & district level
The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

(Version 2)

The Challenge

Educators
- Have not been exposed to strong examples of family engagement
- Have received minimal training
- May not see partnership as an essential practice
- May have developed deficit mindsets

Families
- Have not been exposed to strong examples of family engagement
- Have had negative past experiences with schools and educators
- May not feel invited to contribute to their children’s education
- May feel disrespected, unheard, and unvalued

Essential Conditions

Process conditions
- Relational: built on mutual trust
- Linked to learning and development
- Asset-based
- Culturally responsive and respectful
- Collaborative
- Interactive

Organizational conditions
- Systemic: embraced by leadership across the organization
- Integrated: embedded in all strategies
- Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

Policy and Program Goals

Build and enhance the capacity of educators and families in the "4 C" areas:
- Capabilities (skills + knowledge)
- Connections (networks)
- Cognition (shifts in beliefs and values)
- Confidence (self-efficacy)

Capacity Outcomes

Educators are empowered to:
- Connect family engagement to learning and development
- Engage families as co-creators
- Honor family funds of knowledge
- Create welcoming cultures

Families engage in diverse roles:
- Co-creators
- Supporters
- Encouragers
- Monitors
- Advocates
- Models

Effective partnerships that support student and school improvement
EDUCATORS:
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FAMILIES:
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- May feel disrespected, unheard, and unvalued
Elements of relational trust

Respect

Competence

Integrity

Personal regard

Relational Trust - how do you know?

**Am I showing trustworthiness to this parent?**

Am I seeking input and listening carefully to what this parent has to say? (Respect)

Am I showing this parent that I think they are doing a good job as a parent? (Competence)

Do I always keep my word with this parent? (Integrity)

Do I show this parent that I care about them as a person? (Personal regard)

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- Competence
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  - **Cognition/Consciousness** (shifts in beliefs and values)
  - **Confidence** (self-efficacy)
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Effective partnerships that support student and school improvement
Family Engagement Practice
Building Relationships of Trust
Every parent wants the best for their child

Parents have the capacity to help their children regardless to immigration status, socioeconomic status or education level (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler)

Parents are their child’s first teacher and are experts on their children
Beliefs about who our families/students are and what they value

Failure to acknowledge the experiences of our families and the impact of historical disregard for their values and culture.

Unclear expectations and misaligned supports to build capacity for effective engagement practice
WHO ARE OUR FAMILIES? Use ONE word to describe your families
CHECKING OUR ASSUMPTIONS

**Assumptions**: a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof.

**Bias**: cause to feel or show inclination or prejudice for or against someone or something.

*How can our assumptions get in the way of our efforts to make change?*
OUR ASSUMPTIONS & BIASES ARE WIRED IN OUR BRAIN

• For socialization
• For protection
• For learning

*Our experiences impact how our brain is wired and responds to situations*
Families often resist our efforts to engage them because it is one thing they feel they can control.
How do our families experience us?

At your tables, discuss the following:

• How would we describe our families’ experiences in our schools?
• What does that experience look like for our most marginalized families?
• What are we doing well? What are our challenges?
Systemic Engagement
Implications for Policy and Practice
Strengthening and Sustaining Family Engagement through Integrated, Systemic Practice
Leadership Drives Systemic Engagement

- Vision & Goals
- Systems & Structures of Support & Accountability
- Policies & Expectations

- Strategy Alignment
- Cross-Departmental Collaboration
- Equity & Engagement as Levers
- Measurable Impacts
- Improved Outcomes
Key Elements of Systemic Engagement

- District leadership champions and deeply values engagement, which is evident in how families and community are leveraged as assets.
- Policies, plans, and protocols contain clearly-defined expectations and accountability for engagement across all levels of the district.
- Systems of support are in place to build capacity for district and school leaders and staff to meet expectations.
Key Elements of Systemic Engagement

- Systems connected to the district’s overarching goals and targets monitor engagement practice, measure outcomes, and assess impact.

- Engagement practices are integrated across departments, and there are structures to support collaborative efforts to ensure long-term sustainability.
Key Elements of Systemic Engagement

- Engagement structures, goals, and practices are aligned to the district’s strategic vision, goals, and targets.
- Time and resources allocated for engagement are aligned to provide sustainable support and coherence.
Challenges to Systemic Engagement

- **Leadership Mindset and Capacity**: Greatest threat or asset for systemic engagement
- **Leadership Shifts**: New leaders with an agenda that doesn’t value or include family engagement
- **Accountability**: No clear measures of accountability for implementing effective practices
- **Capacity**: No clear processes for building staff capacity or establishing data collection for continuous improvement
- **Relevance**: Marginalization of family engagement within the district
Reflection and Planning
Complete the Reflection Tool individually, once everyone is done discuss your reflections

What common themes arise? List them on Post-it Notes
Assessing Readiness for Engagement Practice

Inventory

• What engagement practice currently exist in your school/district?

Capacity [Capabilities, Connections, Cognition & Confidence]

• What do you do well? (Knowledge & Skills)
• Who has an engagement mindset (Beliefs & Values) and/or implements effective practice (Self-efficacy)?
• What resources exist to support the planning and implementation of effective engagement practice (Networks)?
MTSS MODEL OF SUPPORT

- **FEW** – Intense supports
- **SOME** – Targeted supports/strategies
- **ALL** – Universal supports/strategies
Family engagement is grounded in relationships of trust, which requires:
- Respect for the human dignity of ALL people
- A heightened level of self-awareness
- A shift from a deficit mindset to an asset-based mindset
Engagement as a Lever for Equity
What happens when we move FROM providing accommodations to overcome barriers and disparities TO eliminating the source of the barriers and disparities?