

Stronger Together: Building bridges between families and schools to help students succeed

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Presenter

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Session Flow

- ❖ Welcome and Agreements
- ❖ Gathering Activity
- ❖ Reflect on meaningful family engagement during pandemic
- ❖ Review tools and resources that could help connect with families now
- ❖ Small group discussion on Establish - Maintain - Restore (EMR)
- ❖ Covid and Community Adaptations

Gathering Activity

*What helped you succeed in
school or life?*

Our Agreements

- In every chair, a leader
- Speak to be understood; Listen to understand
- Value our time together
- Challenges → Solutions
- Our value of humor helps us
- Take care of yourself; Take care of each other

First Alaskans Institute

PDF of FAI Dialogue Agreements: <https://firstalaskans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FAI-AGREEMENTS-POSTER.pdf>





Family Partnership: The Opportunity



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THE RESEARCH SUPPORTS:

Regardless of income or educational background, if a family participates in their students education and school-based learning students will have better academic outcomes (academic scores) and social/emotional outcomes.

Most families know a lot about their child's interests, skills, and motivational levers and a resource to school staff

Most families do not feel confident and clear about how to support their child in school

All families have hopes and dreams for their students

Only some school staff feel confident supporting families to participate meaningfully in play and learning (social/emotional, cultural, academic)

Nationally, fewer than 10% of school staff had family partnership training in their Pedagogy and fewer than 25% attended family partnership training.

While families are often children's first teachers, many families do not feel confident supporting their child in play and learning

Relationships between school staff and families are determinants of family participation in school.

Board Roles

VISION: The board creates a shared vision to enhance student achievement.

STRUCTURE: The board provides a structure that supports the vision. This includes policies, strategic plans, budgets, etc.

ACCOUNTABILITY: The board measures district performance toward accomplishing the vision, and reports the results to the public.

ADVOCACY: The board champions the vision.

CONDUCT-ETHICS: The board and its individual members conduct the business of the district in a fair, respectful and responsible manner.



**What have been your
biggest challenges and
successes in partnering
with families during Covid?**

What has worked...

Employ multiple strategies- accounting for different student populations

Meaningful and systematic relationships being built

Get school administrators, staff, community partners and families on the same page (Clear, concise and purposeful communication)

Work on increasing the capacity of staff and parents, and have students help

Linking to learning, bridging the gap



Resources for Family Engagement

Stronger Together (resource coming out soon)

Resources specific to principals and teachers

AASB services

In service trainings for school and district staff

Facilitated planning for family engagement

Workshops for school boards, families and communities

Student and staff SCCS



Stronger Together: The Power of Family and School Partnerships (6 Building Blocks)



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FAMILY PARTNERSHIP BUILDING BLOCKS (During Covid-19)

- *Embedding a Mindset*
- *Building Relationships*
- *Culturally Responsive Partnerships*
- *Links to Learning*
- *Building Confidence and Skills*
- *Co-Regulation (Regulating Emotions Together)*



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Relationships as the Foundation

**Trauma
Engaged
Schools**

**Partnering
with Families**

**Positive
School
Climate**



**Culturally
Responsive
Education**

**Student
Performance
and Wellbeing**

"A few years into teaching it became very clear to me that those teachers who were really effective at establishing, maintaining, and restoring relationships had just as much time as everyone else. I realized that they were really good at making time for being intentional with what they were doing related to relationships, that they could improve outcomes for students as well as decrease problem behaviors in their classroom."

Equitable Relationship Building

Alaska high school students who believe **teachers care about them** and that their **schools have clear rules** have better grades and participate less often in a host of dangerous activities.

Family involvement in a child's education is **strongly correlated** with **improved student learning, attendance and behavior.**

EMR (Establish, Maintain, Restore)

Small Group Discussion: discuss each question for 3 minutes

How do you **Establish** relationships with families?

How do you **Maintain** relationships with families?

How do you **Restore** relationships with families?

How could you adapt the strategies above for struggling students and families?

What are ways to connect to our most struggling families?





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Examples of Covid Family Engagement Adaptations



Relationship Building Examples

- Home visiting prompts
- Feedback from families on relationship building
- Covid Communication strategies

Linking to Learning

- Facebook live – weekly mini lesson (Jessica Solano)
- example lessons designed for student and family
- google site
- recording of zoom classroom

Building Family Skills and Confidence:

- Routines and shared expectations (family driven)
- Tools and solutions
 - Do families need tutorials, information, tangible supplies to carry out the assignments. Do the requests align with a families style of teaching and cultural ways of knowing.

Place-based examples

- Alaska outdoor scavenger hunt
- Yakutat identification booklets

Co-regulation resources:

- There are a lot of resources on line for families to cope with Covid. These tools range from how to talk about Covid to daily relaxation strategies each day to fun activities to access online.
 - Example Mat-Su School District Online Body and Anxiety Reduction Workshops

Stronger Together A Tool for Partnerships

Survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CJYYXK2>

