

Stronger Together: Partnering with Families: Family Engagement Now

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Presenters

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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>



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 Board Roles for Family Partnerships
- ❖ Covid and Community Adaptations

Gathering Activity

As a student (or as a parent) what were you most excited about during the start of the school year?



Family Partnership: The Opportunity



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Key Research

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.

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

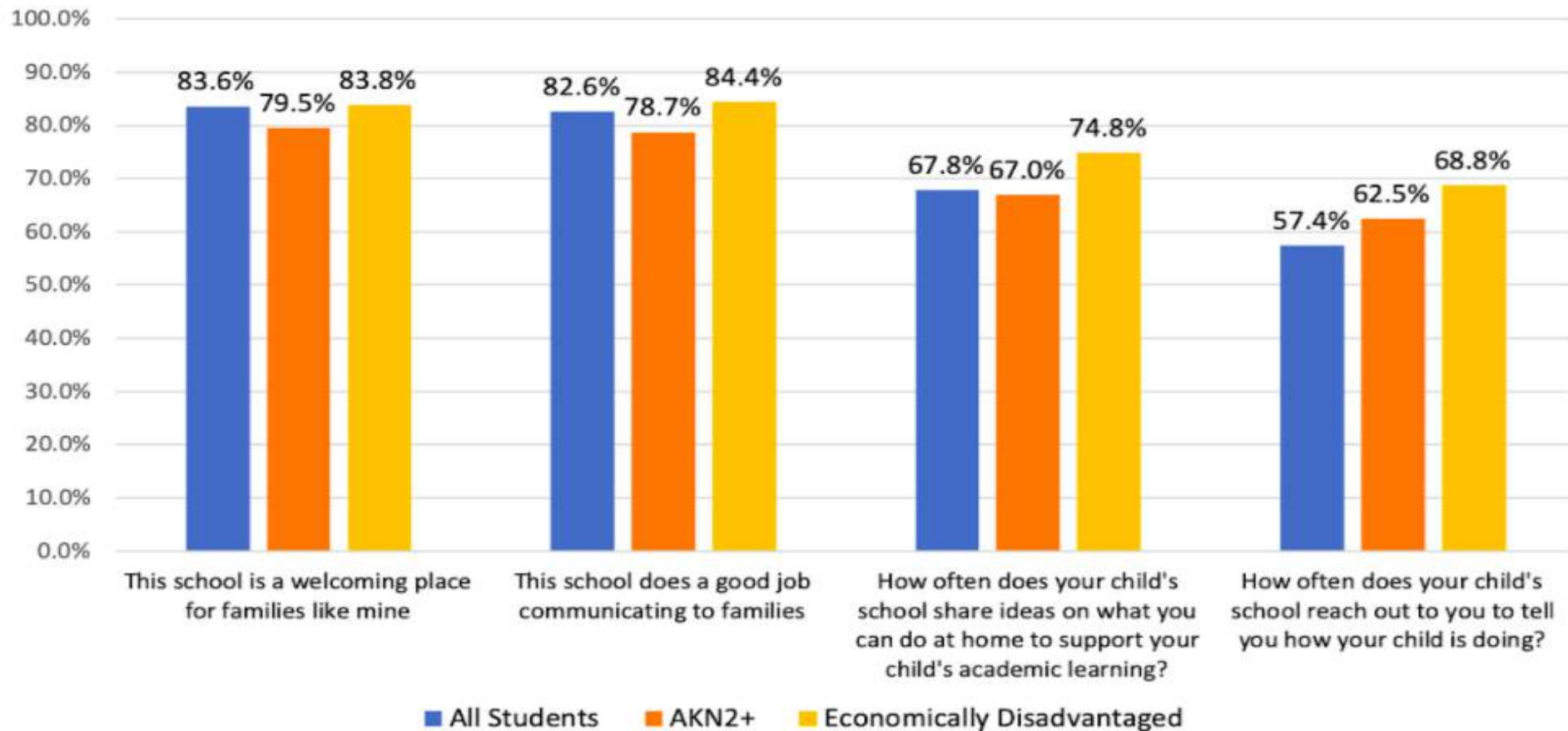
Nationally, fewer than 10% of school staff had family partnership training in their Pedagogy and fewer than 25% attended family partnership training.

Wood, L., and Bauman, E. (2017). **How Family, School and Community Engagement Can Improve Student Achievement and Influence School Reform: Literature Review**, American Institutes for Research for Nellie Mae Education Foundation.



How are our Alaska districts doing?

School/ Family Partnership Indicators from SCCS (all participating districts)
% of family members with favorable responses, by demographic group

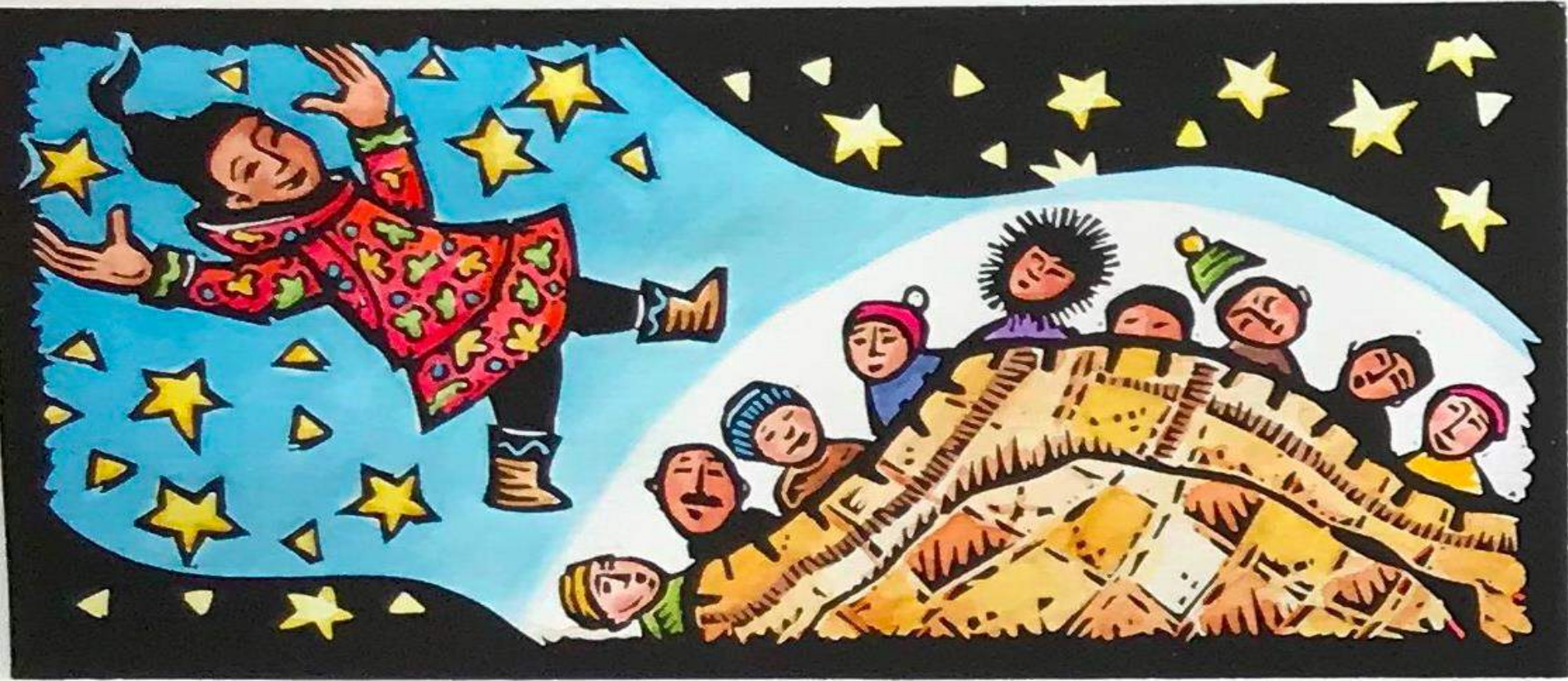


What has worked...

- ❑ District leadership - strategic goals, policy and resource allocation
- ❑ 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

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.



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



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Moving Forward Individual Reflection

- **As School board members, what are some common supports you hear your families ask for?**
- **What is your district's message on family partnership?**



Covid taught us a lot about how to best partner with families. What are successes/lessons we want to carry forward?

What systems do you have in place to bring families in as partners in to support their children's learning? What supports do school leadership and staff have to grow their understanding of how to partner with families?

How might the district help measure and track how well your schools are connecting and supporting families as partners?

Covid Recommendations

- **Partnerships:** Partner with community to connect and support families (and to meet basic needs)
- **Vision/Working together:** Shifting our practices takes time and dedication across our districts. We are in it together with our school staff, leadership and families. Give this work the time, resources and buy in it needs.
- **Focus on relationships:** Relationships are key to making it through together. They are particularly important during transition times and for vulnerable families and students.
- **Communication:** Clear communication and transparency. Reaching out to families and asking for input, as well as providing explanations for decisions. Send updates to families and receive communications through multiple channels.
- **Growing capacity of school staff and families:** Staff need time and space to adapt their resources, as well as professional development to learn and use new skills.
- **Technology:** Use technology to enhance relationships and help meet needs. Give families and staff resources and space to grow their skills for using technology. Assess who is connected and who needs more support.



Share your harvest



Additional Resources



Stronger Together: A framework for Partnering with Alaska Families

AASB family partnership page: <https://aasb.org/family-school-partnerships/>

Scripts and call log: Use this for systematic family partnerships



Resources for Family Engagement

- ❑ Trainings and resources specific to principals and teachers
- ❑ School climate and Connectedness- Family, Student and Staff Surveys
- ❑ Collaborate with community partners for outreach and hosting family events, conversations

AASB services

- ❑ In service trainings for school and district staff
- ❑ Facilitated planning for family engagement
- ❑ Workshops for school boards, families and communities

Gunalchéesh - Haw'aa - Thank you!

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