Family Engagement and Empowerment in Texas

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Part 1: Past, Present, and Future
Making the Case: Why Invest in State Systems for Family Engagement?
A positive and convincing relationship exists between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, and for students at all ages.

Impact of Family Engagement

When parents and school staff work together to support learning, students... 

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in higher level programs
- Are promoted more and earn more credits
- Adapt better to school and attend more regularly
- Have better social skills and behavior
- Graduate and go on to higher education

Family Engagement

Family engagement has a protective effect.

The more families can be advocates for children and support their progress...

- The better their children do in school
- The longer they stay in school

Family engagement is an integral part of education reform efforts.
Family Engagement as a Key Element of Education Reform

Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago (2010)
Family Engagement as a Key Element of Education Reform

Programs need to move beyond random acts of family engagement so that professional development supports a series of connected activities that, as a whole, can positively affect student learning.
How Family and Community Engagement Can Improve Student Achievement and Influence School Reform

**Findings:**
- Social Networks
- Parent Leadership
- Parent Classes
- Family Engagement at Home
- Family Engagement at School
- School-Family Outreach
- Family-School Relationships
- Family Educational Goals and Values
- Perceived Parental Support
- School-Family-Community Partnerships
- Strategies for Increasing Family Engagement
What Works?

- Programs that engage families in supporting their children’s learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.

- Family engagement at home appears to have the greatest effect on student achievement.
Impact of Family Engagement: Early Childhood

- Children whose parents read to them at home recognize letters of the alphabet and write sooner than those whose parents do not.

- Children whose parents help them learn how to write can identify letters and connect them to verbal sounds.

- Children’s development is boosted by parents’ support in play and a cognitive and literacy-oriented environment at home.

Impact of Family Engagement: Elementary

- Children in Grades K–3 whose parents participate in school activities have good work habits and stay on task.

- Parents who provide homework support have children who often perform better in the classroom.

- Children whose parents explain educational tasks are more likely to participate in class, seek help from the teacher, and monitor their own work.

Impact of Family Engagement: Secondary

• Youth whose parents monitor their academic and social activities have lower rates of delinquency and higher rates of social competence and academic growth.

• Youth whose parents are familiar with college preparation requirements and are engaged in the application process are most likely to graduate from high school and attend college.

• Youth whose parents have high academic expectations and offer consistent encouragement for college have positive student outcomes.

Middle School Family Engagement

**Academic Socialization** has the greatest impact.

- Communicating expectations for education
- Linking schoolwork to current events
- Fostering educational aspirations
- Discussing learning strategies
- Making plans for the future

Secondary School Family Engagement

Strategies that foster a broader set of outcomes:

1. Communicating expectations
2. Actively planning for the future
3. Scaffolding independence around school work
4. Providing additional school work

Secondary School Family Engagement Outcomes

- Internalized value of education
- Motivation for learning
- Work ethic
- Academic engagement
- Self-regulation
- Self-efficacy for help seeking
- Academic self-concept

Effective family engagement programs build the self-confidence of families and can create a groundswell of support to meet student needs.
Purposeful Family Engagement

• Shared responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth . . .

• Fostered through a deliberate process . . .

• Empowers adults to jointly support student growth, address any barriers to learning, and ensure college and career readiness
Reframing Family Engagement

From an individual parent’s or teacher’s “job” • To a shared responsibility

From random acts • To systemic approaches

From events-driven • To results-driven

From add-on services • To purposeful connections to learning

From compliance • To focus on learning, improvement, accountability, and innovation

From one-time • To sustained

Affecting Student Achievement

- Student performances
- Back-to-school night
- Supports for learning at home
- Newsletters
- Personalized communication
- Home visits
- Family volunteers
- Family trainings
- Partners in programming
Supporting School Improvement

- Solicit input from families
- Empower parents to be involved in the decision-making process
- Jointly develop and review programming
- Include families in the continuous improvement process
Building Relationships

- Reach out to families
- Create welcoming environment
- Respond to student and family needs
- Acknowledge shared responsibility
- Develop relational trust
Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships
Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

THE CHALLENGE

Lack of opportunities for **School/Program Staff** to build the capacity for partnerships

Ineffective Family–School Partnerships

Lack of opportunities for **Families** to build the capacity for partnerships

Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

OPPORTUNITY CONDITIONS

Process Conditions
• Linked to learning
• Relational
• Development vs. service orientation
• Collaborative
• Interactive

Organizational Conditions
• Systemic: across the organization
• Integrated: embedded in all programs
• Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS

To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the “4 C” areas:

- **Capabilities** (skills and knowledge)
- **Connections** (networks)
- **Cognition** (beliefs, values)
- **Confidence** (self-efficacy)

PTA’s National Standards for Family–School Partnerships

- Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school
- Standard 2: Communicating effectively
- Standard 3: Supporting student success
- Standard 4: Speaking up for every child
- Standard 5: Sharing power
- Standard 6: Collaborating with the community

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Welcoming All Families
Standard 1

Communicating Effectively
Standard 2

Supporting Student Success
Standard 3

Sharing Power
Standard 5

Speaking Up for Every Child
Standard 4

Collaborating with Community
Standard 6

PTA.org/excellence
Leveraging Family Engagement to Support Texas Education Agency Priorities

- **Priority 1**: Recruit, Support, and Retain Teachers and Principals
- **Priority 2**: Build a Foundation of Reading and Math
- **Priority 3**: Connect High School to Career and College
- **Priority 4**: Improve Low-Performing Schools
Defining Family Engagement
Defining Family Engagement

- Parent
- Guardian
- Caregiver
- Advocate

Family
Defining Community Engagement

Students
Parents
Business Leaders
Faith-Based Leaders
Neighborhood Leaders
Post-Secondary Education
Community
Developing State-Level Infrastructure for Family Engagement
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Focuses on a vision for whole-child education
- Incorporates ongoing stakeholder engagement
- Emphasizes evidence-based practices and classification of interventions and strategies within four tiers of evidence
- Promotes a broader vision of school success
Family engagement initiatives are more likely to succeed if they have buy-in, training, and policy support at the state and district levels.
Key Supports for Systemic, Integrated, and Sustained Family Engagement Initiatives

- Provide training and supports for both educators and families.
- Integrate family engagement standards and measures into educator evaluation systems.
- Leverage funds and resources from multiple sources.
Key Supports for Systemic, Integrated, and Sustained Family Engagement Initiatives

- Create staff positions dedicated to family engagement.
- Focus on school improvement instead of procedural compliance.
- Make student and school data accessible and meaningful to families.
Rethinking Family Engagement

Goal

Strategy

Essential Component

Area of Practice
Texas Context: What Does Family Engagement Look Like in Texas?
Exploring the Texas Context

What is the history of state support for family engagement in Texas?

What are the current Texas priorities and highest needs in the state?

How can we align this work to those priorities and needs?
Region 16: Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Initiative

- Annual parent involvement conference
- Annual spring summit
- Statewide newsletter
- Compliance support
- Resources and tools
Region 16: Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Initiative Publications

Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement Handbook

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS FOR DEVELOPING SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACTS

An Administrator's Guide To ESSA - Every Student Succeeds Act - Parent and Family Engagement
Examples of Statewide Family Engagement Systems
Family Engagement State Leaders Network

A leadership collaborative whose purpose is to build capacity of the SEAs to implement, support, scale-up, and sustain initiatives in family and community engagement that support student success.
Building and Implementing Statewide Family Engagement Frameworks, Policies, and Structures

1. California
2. Connecticut
3. Colorado
4. Georgia
5. Illinois
6. Nevada
7. Wisconsin
Family Engagement in California

First state to develop a family engagement framework

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

Focus on equity and continuous quality improvement
Connecticut School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Led by the State Department of Education, State Education Resource Center, and the Capitol Regional Education Council, this project has been working to increase family and community involvement since 1995.
Connecticut School, Family, and Community Partnerships

• Commissioner’s Roundtable on Family and Community Engagement in Education
• Transformed Title I School-Parent Compacts into Effective Action Plans
• Friday Café
• Focus on equity and dual capacity-building
Nevada’s Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

Pursuant to NRS 385.630 the Nevada Department of Education Office of Parent involvement and Family Engagement was established in 2012 to actively promote and support the participation and engagement of families and communities.
Nevada’s Office of Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

• Works with school districts to share family engagement best practices and grants

• Collaborates with the Advisory Council on Parental Involvement & Family Engagement to create and evaluate statewide policies

• Teams with the Steering committee for Nevada's Family Engagement in Education Summit

• Provides reports to the Nevada Legislature

• Works with family engagement liaisons appointed to each division at the state department
Nevada’s Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

Beginning in 2015, licensees require at least 3 semester hours regarding parental involvement and family engagement that include an emphasis on:

- building relationships,
- outreach to families, and
- developing an appreciation and understanding of families from diverse backgrounds.

Nevada has vetted and approved courses from 11 colleges and universities.

Approved Courses: http://www.doe.nv.gov/FamilyEngagement/ApprovedCourses/
Colorado’s Family Engagement Support Structure

Family-School-Community Partnering for Student Learning

- Implementing the Framework of National Standards for Family-School Partnerships
- Distributing Leadership
- Action Planning
- Evaluating
Colorado’s Family Engagement Support Structure

Three-Pronged Support Structure

• CDE – 193: State legislation that increased parent engagement and created SACPIE

• State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE)

• Family School Community Partnerships Community of Practice (FSCP COP)
Colorado’s Family School Community Partnerships Community of Practice

- Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Colorado State Library
- District and School Performance
- Dropout Prevention and Student Engagement
- Early Learning and School Readiness
- Exceptional Student Services, Office of Gifted Education
- Exceptional Student Services, Office of Special Education
- Federal Programs
- Health and Wellness
- Improvement Planning
- Learning Supports
- Migrant Education
- Standards and Instructional Support
Georgia’s Family-School Partnership Program

- State School Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council
- Capacity Building Programs
  - Georgia Family Engagement Partner (FEP) Network
  - Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT)
  - Building Capacity of Parents
  - Building Capacity of School Staff
  - Parent Services Unit
  - Parent Mentors
- Integral part of Georgia’s School Improvement System
Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement

Retrieved from: http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/School-Improvement-Services/Pages/Georgia%20-%20System%20of%20Continuous%20Improvement.aspx
Illinois State Board of Education Family Engagement Framework

Components

• Family Engagement Framework Overview

• Research Review

• Family Engagement Standards

• Integrating Family Engagement Matrix

• Legislative Requirements
Illinois State Board of Education’s Family Engagement Initiative

- Framework vetting and statewide awareness campaign
- Priority and focus services
- Foundational trainings and regional content specialists to provide targeted supports for school and district teams
- Core trainings and focused topic webinars
Illinois State Board of Education’s Family Engagement Initiative

Illinois Framework for Building Parent Capacities

- Supporting Child Development
- Educational Partnership and Leadership
- Self-Sufficiency
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

State Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council

• State Superintendent meets with parents four times a year

• Parents are nominated by their school district officials

• Parents are given a project (charge) each year to provide a family lens and feedback.
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Family Engagement Efforts

State Superintendent
Tony Evers

Every Student a Graduate, College and Career Ready

Title I Family Engagement, Academic Parent-Teacher Teams

Promoting Excellence for All

State Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council

Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework

Academic and Career Planning

Wisconsin RTI Center

Wisconsin PBIS Network

Wisconsin Public Library Youth and Inclusive Services

Wisconsin Early Childhood Initiatives

Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI)

Families and Students: Health and Safety

Content and Learning Family Resources
Measuring Family Engagement
Measuring Family Engagement

**Measuring Classroom Interventions**
Practitioners work in contained environment.
They can more easily measure, test fidelity of implementation, and control outcomes.

**Measuring Family Engagement**
The work crosses different entities such as schools, families, communities, partners, and districts.
Mix of environments makes it difficult to control or ensure that expected outcomes are achieved.
Strategies for Measuring Family Engagement

**Align work** with clear, achievable, and measurable outcomes.

Consider using alternative, **proximal outcomes** such as:

- Attendance
- Behavior
- Course passing
- Graduation rates

**Design data collection** efforts, surveys, and other feedback to demonstrate value.
State Role: Measuring Family Engagement

Model for districts and schools the importance of measuring family engagement initiatives.

Create policies that encourage and facilitate measurement.

Provide professional development and capacity building supports.

Provide data measurement tools.
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Part 2: A Focus on the Future
Identifying Strategies and Looking Ahead

- What resources does the state currently have?
- What is the state already doing?
- What do we need and what will we need to do in the next 3–5 years to make our vision a reality?
- What is our message?
- How do we describe the ideal family engagement scenario?
Goal Setting

• Where do you want to be in 3 years? In 5 years? In 10 years? In 2030?

• What changes do you expect to see?
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