OBJECTIVES

ATTENDEES WILL:

- Identify barriers to family engagement

- Share general resources, strategies and promising practices of family and community engagement

- Explore what authentic engagement looks like when including parents, family, and community in planning and implementing programs
“FAMILY ENGAGEMENT” DEFINED

“Family engagement refers to the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including in the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems.”

U.S. Dept. of Education, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
Policy Statement On Family Engagement From The Early Years To The Early Grades, 2016
“PARENT” TO “FAMILY”

Inclusive and respective of all adults who raise and care for children, to include biological, adoptive, and foster parents; grandparents; legal and informal guardians; and adult siblings.
“IN INVOLVEMENT” TO “EN ENGAGEMENT”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Responsibility</th>
<th>Shared Responsibility in Partnership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deficit-Based/Adversarial</td>
<td>Strength-Based and Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Random Acts</td>
<td>Systemic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add-on and one-time project</td>
<td>Integrated and Sustained with Purposeful Connections to Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events Driven</td>
<td>Learning and Outcomes Driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Ownership and Continuous Improvement</td>
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</table>
IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Strong family engagement is central in promoting children's healthy development and wellness, including:

• social-emotional and behavioral development;
• preparing children for school;
• seamlessly transitioning them to kindergarten; and
• supporting academic achievement in elementary school and beyond.

Source: ED/HHS Joint Policy Statement On Family Engagement From The Early Years To The Early Grades, 2016
IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

When families and the institutions where children learn partner in meaningful ways, children:

• have more positive attitudes toward school
• stay in school longer
• have better attendance
• experience more school success

Source: ED/HHS Joint Policy Statement On Family Engagement From The Early Years To The Early Grades, 2016
In order to establish and foster sustained, trusting relationships it is important to:

- Always provide information within the context of why family engagement is important for the child and how it will help him/her.
- Identify and address needs of the school, the students, and the families.
- Think of engagement as an opportunity to build relationships and partnerships, not an isolated event.
- Listen to parents and families and incorporate feedback.
EDUCATION STARTS AT HOME

EMPHASIZE HOW PARENTS CAN PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN EDUCATION

- Understand brain development activities from birth to early years
- Encourage early language development
- Talk about the value of education with children; including plans for college and/or in a career after high school
- Plan for regular school attendance
- Support reading & math development at all age levels; include cultural materials & family interests
- Support learning through family activities – cultural & religious events, trips, organizations
Engaging a Diverse Representation of Families & Community
ENGAGING DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS

REPRESENTATION OF FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

Parents of students from geographically diverse areas
Parents of students from socioeconomically diverse backgrounds
Parents of students with disabilities
Parents of migrant and immigrant families
Parents of English learners
Community based and civil rights organizations
Employers and business organizations

Dear Colleague letter – ESSA Stakeholder engagement, June 2016
WHY DON’T FAMILIES PARTICIPATE?
UNDERSTAND THE BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT

- don’t understand usefulness of participation
- busy with family, work, kids
- don’t see themselves reflected in leadership
- cultural background
- uncomfortable with format, language, rules
- don’t know purpose of the program
- ineffective outreach strategies
- don’t have transportation
- inconvenient meetings times
- don’t speak English

From 5 Steps to Getting Parents to Meetings – MCPS Study Circles
Discussion: Where do you see opportunities in your family engagement work to lead to improved outcomes for students?
Family Engagement Frameworks
DUAL CAPACITY-BUILDING FRAMEWORK

THE CHALLENGE
Lack of opportunities for school/program staff to build the capacity for partnerships
Lack of opportunities for families to build the capacity for 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

POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS
To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the “4 C” areas:
- Capacities (skills and knowledge)
- Connections (networks)
- Cognition (beliefs, values)
- Confidence (self-efficacy)

FAMILY AND STAFF CAPACITY OUTCOMES
- School and Program Staff who can
  - Honor and recognize families’ funds of knowledge
  - Connect family engagement to student learning
  - Create welcoming, inviting cultures
- Families who can negotiate multiple roles
  - Supporters
  - Encouragers
  - Monitors
  - Advocates
  - Decision Makers
  - Collaborators

Effective Family-School Partnerships
Supporting Student Achievement & School Improvement
ED–HHS POLICY ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- Plan for & prioritize family engagement
- Communicate consistent messages supporting strong family engagement
- Invest and allocate adequate resources to support engagement
- Establish policies, procedures & practices that support engagement
  - Examples: promote use of recommended practices, create staff positions dedicated to engagement, provide professional development
- Establish workforce capacity building
- Develop and integrate engagement data for continuous improvement
National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Welcoming All Families
Standard 1

Communicating Effectively
Standard 2

Supporting Student Success
Standard 3

Speaking Up for Every Child
Standard 4

Sharing Power
Standard 5

Collaborating with Community
Standard 6

PTA.org/excellence
HEAD START

PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Positive & Goal-Oriented Relationships

Program Leadership
- Program Environment
- Family Partnerships

Continuous Program Improvement
- Teaching and Learning
- Community Partnerships

Professional Development

Family Well-being
- Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators

Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community

Families as Advocates and Leaders

Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade

PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS

PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

CHILD OUTCOMES
PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

- Welcoming all families
- Empowers families
- Builds capacity of school staff and families
- Effective Communication
- Links to student achievement and development
- Builds community
WHY ARE YOU INCLUDING FAMILIES?

- Clarify your goals
  - What are you trying to accomplish?
  - Who would benefit most from the proposed activity or is most impacted by the proposed policy?
  - Are there any racial/economic disparities being addressed?

- Identify and engage stakeholders
  - What families should be involved? Why would they want to be involved?
  - Reach out to diverse groups
  - Consider community demographics – race, economics, language, neighborhood
  - Go outside of the normal participants
WELCOMES ALL FAMILIES

SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

- Create an inviting physical environment
- Hire friendly staff (or train appropriately)
- Be respectful of the diversity in your community
- Meet people where they are (literally)
- Remember the dads & male guardians
## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Communication Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get information to audience using different methods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs, social media, webinars, forums, focus groups, texts, flyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell stakeholders why they should participate / attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translate materials &amp; provide interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make information understandable to all stakeholders – use plain language, no jargon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare materials to be culturally responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for 2-way communication</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**LINK TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

**SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support student learning, wellness &amp; development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build capacity of parents to help child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunity for families to learn together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate parents on how students learn, how school operates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform parents about achievement in school as a whole (not only individual child)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BUILDS COMMUNITY

Connect families & teachers to community resources

Make connections between families & teachers

Build social capital & networks in community

Encourage all stakeholders to work together to develop solutions & ideas

Include faith-based organizations, businesses, local agencies in supporting schools and families

SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN
**BUILDS CAPACITY OF STAFF & FAMILIES**

**SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop confidence to engage w</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emphasize importance &amp; value of</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>others about concerns, questions &amp;</strong></td>
<td><strong>family engagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ideas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educate families on community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop skills and knowledge to</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>structure (schools, civic, political)</strong></td>
<td><strong>engage with each other, support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>children</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**EMPOWERS FAMILIES**

**SUPPORTS EQUITY TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ask for input in defining issues &amp; developing solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Include families as a decision maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Demonstrate authentic plan to use input</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop families’ knowledge &amp; confidence to support children’s education</td>
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FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Small Group Discussion:** Discuss one engagement strategy or best practice utilized by your school/program to meaningfully engage with parents and families.
School & Program Events
**Discussion**: You will discuss the following examples of school activities and how you can improve the family engagement in each.
EXAMPLE: FAMILY MATH NIGHT

- Families are invited to come out to Family Math Night at the elementary school, 6:30 p.m. on a weeknight.
- Stations are set-up around the school where teachers lead math projects:
  - Station 1: Trail Mix – Children are given a recipe for trail mix, and go through the line, scooping up the ingredients in the amount listed in the recipe: chocolate chips, mini graham crackers, raisins, nuts, marshmallows.
  - Station 2: Shapes – Children select paper cut-outs in various shapes and glue them down to create a picture.
- Students get a stamp for each station they complete.
- When all stations are complete, families get a packet about the activities completed during the evening as they leave.
PLANNING FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Consider these questions in planning your selected school activity.

- Why are we doing this?
- Who should be included?
- When will it be done (day, time, season)?
- Where will we meet?
- What will we do?
- How will we engage families? How will we...
  - Welcome all families
  - Communicate effectively
  - Link this to student achievement & development
  - Build community
  - Build capacity of school staff & families
  - Empower families
SCHOOL EVENTS & ISSUES

In small groups, select one of the following school activities.

- Special family event (International Night, Family Picnic)
- Back to School Night
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- School registration or course selection (kindergarten, high school, magnet program, choice option, etc.)
- Change in school uniform policy
- Sports team try-outs
- Implementing a new after-school program
- School budget presentation
- School improvement plan
Questions?
ED RESOURCES

- Family and School Partnership
- Dual Capacity-Building Framework
- ED – HHS Policy Statement On Family Engagement From The Early Years To The Early Grades, 2016
  - [http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/families.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/families.html)
- Let’s Get This Conversation Started
- Stakeholder Communications and Engagement Publications (RSN Strategic Communications Resources)
  - [http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/resources.html#sce](http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/resources.html#sce)
- Dear Colleague Letter on Stakeholder Engagement
HOW TO STAY IN CONTACT/INFORMED

FRANCES FROST, FAMILY AMBASSADOR

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U.S. Department of Education

- Email: frances.frost@ed.gov
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- Department of Education website
  - Family & Community Engagement Page
  - Homeroom blog: http://blog.ed.gov/
  - Engaging Families & Touching Base Newsletters: