



# VIBES CHECK:

**CREATING & SUSTAINING POSITIVE,  
INVITING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS**



# Developing an Ecosystem for Authentic Family & Community Engagement

# Introductions



Carl Felton, III

Policy Analyst, P-12  
Ed Trust

# The Aha Moment!





# What is family & community engagement?

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The National Association for Family School and Community Engagement defines family and community engagement as:

"a shared responsibility involving schools and other community agencies engaging families in meaningful ways to support the learning and development of children."





# Our Family Engagement Tools

## Engaging First: SUPPORTING YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



edtrust.org



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## HOW STUDENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPACTS STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEAD)

By Blair Wriston, Senior Government Affairs Manager, And Nancy Duchesneau, Senior P-12 Research Manager

### What Is Student, Family, and Community Engagement?

To create emotionally supportive and culturally affirming environments for all students, schools must adopt policies that support student, family, and community engagement. Authentic student, family, and community engagement helps to create safe and inclusive learning environments in schools that support students' long-term social, emotional, and academic development. The National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement *defines* family and community engagement as "a shared responsibility involving schools and other community agencies engaging families in meaningful ways to support the learning and development of children."<sup>1</sup>

A child's education extends far beyond the classroom, and family and community engagement is crucial to ensuring a student's growth and development. While there are many ways schools can ensure that students, families, and communities remain engaged, including home visits or community walks, systemic professional development opportunities, culturally infused classroom curriculums, and more, meaningful engagement, at its core, is about building personal relationships, trust, and mutual respect between students, educators, families, and communities.

### The Impact of Student, Family, and Community Engagement

When families and communities are engaged and invested in a student's social, emotional, and academic success, the impacts are powerful. Extensive research demonstrates that when families are engaged in their children's academic growth and development, students are more likely to succeed academically. Students not only *perform better academically*, but are more likely to graduate and pursue a postsecondary education when there is a shared sense of responsibility in which educators meaningfully listen to families and collaborate with them, and families commit to prioritizing their child's education.<sup>2</sup> For example, *research shows* that students of involved parents score better on standardized tests and have better *attendance records* and higher career aspirations.<sup>3</sup> In fact, family engagement in early grades is a *stronger indicator* for literacy development than family income, maternal level of education, and ethnicity.<sup>4</sup> Research also *demonstrates* that when schools employ strong engagement practices, all students have higher academic outcomes across the board.<sup>5</sup>

## Making Assessment Reports More Meaningful for Students & Families

By Shayna Levitan, Policy Analyst, and Nicholas Munyan-Penney, Assistant Director, P-12 Policy

**TO THE POINT**

- Students and their families have a right to know how their schools are serving them.
- Although assessment results offer a valuable signal about a student's academic performance and progress, individual score reports are largely underutilized, and seldom considered as a primary resource for families.<sup>1</sup>
- Reporting must be clear, actionable, adaptive to the feedback from communities, and framed in a way that recognizes students' assets and aspirations.
- Improvement efforts must go beyond enhancing the reports themselves: Individual reports of results must be situated within the broader systems and engagement opportunities that parents depend on for trusted communication about their child's academic performance and progress.
- To effectively integrate individual score reports into broader conversations about a student's academic progress, teachers, school leaders, and community groups must receive support to incorporate these results into asset-based family engagement opportunities.

### Introduction

At their core, statewide annual assessments are designed to help guide educational decisions by evaluating student growth and learning, so resources can be equitably distributed. Statewide annual assessments also provide valuable individual results that summarize how each student is progressing against grade-level academic standards, identify additional ways their school system can support their academic success, and allow families to demand appropriate actions from their education leaders.

# Today's Panelists



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**Kwesi  
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SVP, Leadership and  
Engagement

Institute for Educational  
Leadership  
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**Tracy  
Teater**

National Director,  
Community Impact

National Center for Families  
Learning  
—

# Question 1

How do we build and maintain authentic, trusting relationships between families and educational institutions?

What needs to happen from the beginning to set the stage for success?



## Question 2

How can school and district leaders work together to ensure sustainable family engagement in schools and communities?

# Question 3

How can we assess family engagement in schools and communities, and why is it important to do so? How can the data collected from it be used to inform strategies which cultivate a supportive ecosystem in the future?

# Question 4

How can schools, community members, and advocates ensure that districts and schools are centering the voices and experiences of families, particularly families of underserved students such as students of color and students with disabilities, in their family engagement efforts?

# Question 5

What does evidence + research suggest about the importance of building authentic relationships and trust between families and schools? And how do these factors motivate families to actively engage in their children's education?

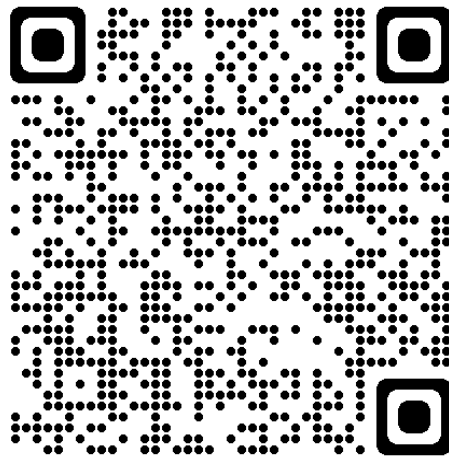
# Policy Recommendations

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## The Federal Government's Role in Student, Family, and Community Engagement

While federal, state, district, school, and classroom policies all impact student, family, and community engagement, the federal government plays a key role in supporting the social, emotional, and academic needs of our nation's students. Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, and other federal entities can help state and district leaders to meaningfully and equitably engage students, families, and communities in a variety of ways:

1. Support and expand programs that equip and train educators with the tools necessary to build upon student and family strengths and address communication barriers between educators, students, and families.
  - Programs, such as those under Title II Part A (II-A) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provide important professional development and training opportunities for educators to address implicit biases, increase cultural competency, overcome language barriers, and enhance educator capacity to effectively engage with students and their families.
  - ESSA can further fund efforts to help train educators on how to implement evidence-based practices to address student mental health challenges and support relationship-building, such as culturally responsive teaching, restorative justice interventions, and more.
2. Prioritize and invest in programs, like those below, that are designed to help create a racially and culturally diverse teacher workforce, which would be a powerful tool to strengthen student, family, and community engagement within schools and help students of color perform better academically and feel more connected.



ence were established under the Higher Education Act (HEA) to improve ally by strengthening programs at Historically Black Colleges and s, and other minority-serving institutions.

stered Teacher Apprenticeship (RTAP) programs, both community-based communities, can be effective ways to increase the racial and cultural diversity can be eligible for federal funding, including through programs authorized by itatives administered by the Department of Labor.

streams and programs below, which are designed to support family and

nclude in their education plan a written parent and family engagement policy i families, schools, and the community to improve student outcomes; schools and, if necessary, revise the content and effectiveness of these policies. igation agencies (LEAs) whose total Title I allocation exceeds \$500,000 are ition for school activities designed to engage parents and families. Not only I funding overall, but it should also increase this specific percentage during the

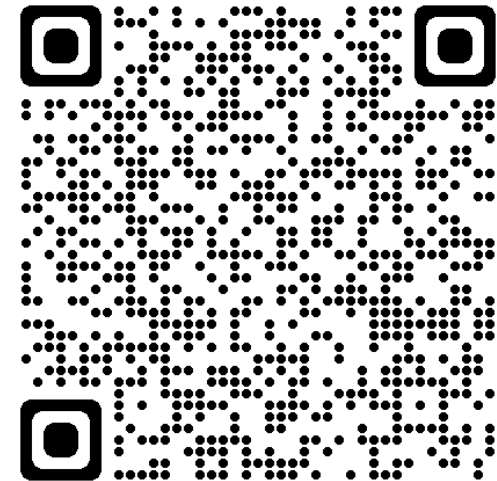
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## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT State Policy Recommendations

WHILE FEDERAL, STATE, DISTRICT, SCHOOL, AND CLASSROOM POLICIES ALL IMPACT STUDENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, STATE LEADERS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SUPPORTING DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS IN ENGAGING FAMILIES IN THEIR WORK TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS. State legislatures, state school boards, and state education agencies must provide adequate resources to help district and school leaders to meaningfully and equitably engage students, families, and communities to improve student outcomes.

The following are state policy recommendations to support family engagement and ultimately improve school climate, statewide assessments, and early childhood development.

1. **Collect and regularly review data to understand the needs of families and educators and publicly report information about family engagement, disaggregated by demographics**
  - States should provide evidence-based guidance : families in school and collect and publicly report many publicly available examples of family enga better understand the needs of families and educ
    - The U.S. Department of Education has a for parents. That [survey](#) includes questic and linguistic competence, connections
    - The [5Essentials](#) survey, developed by [UJ](#) engagement, including questions on sch belonging, and barriers to engagement.
    - [Panorama Education](#) has developed a : includes questions about family engag opportunities to say exactly what they questions asked.
    - [DC Public Schools](#) conducts a family an evaluate their progress, set goals, and d social emotional learning.





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Join us for the next two  
weeks!



**"Keeping Kids Safe  
with Positive School  
Discipline"**

Wednesday, October 2nd  
2:00-3:00pm ET



**"Using Resource Equity  
to Address Chronic  
Absenteeism"**

Wednesday, October 9th  
2:00-3:00pm ET

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