

Quick Tips: Practices for Speaking Up for Every Child



- Recognize that parents have the right to influence what happens to their children in school. Treat parent concerns, suggestions and ideas with respect and demonstrate genuine interest in developing solutions. Create and adhere to a policy to always follow up with families in a timely manner (within 24 hours).
- Set up a clear process for collaborating with families to monitor student progress, address their difficulties, and plan for their future. The goal is to avoid a situation in which some families seem to have more information and influence while others seem to have little or none.
- Review the Reflection Rubric for Speaking Up for Every Child included in the Framework with a team to review strengths and needs. <http://nmengaged.com/step-3/>
- Visit key websites included in the Framework for Parents and Family Members such as: Pull Together.org <http://nmengaged.com/tools-for-student-success/>
- Review the resources and tools for Speaking Up for Every Child in the Framework at <http://nmengaged.com/step-4/>
- Review your school website and consider ways to improve and update with useful resources.
- Work with families, teachers, and other staff so they can understand what it means to be an advocate, develop and use their advocacy skills, and practice how to resolve problems.
- Give families and students the information and support they need to make smooth transitions to kinder, middle school, high school, and beyond.
- Help families be actively involved in setting goals for their children's future, steering them toward appropriate programs and planning for postsecondary steps.
- Share information about the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) and other information about state and federal programs and what they mean for the school community.
- Give parents strategies to help their children through the school website resources, newsletters, family events, sports events, parent-teacher-student conferences, etc.
- Include parents in identifying and helping solve problems that affect many or all students.



- Be sensitive to parents who do not understand the system. Give them opportunities to learn and be involved. Principals, have a desk near the school entrance, and remember to not always seem too busy for parents.
- Include in your school policy practices that allow for steady intentional face-to-face meetings, phone calls, notes, and emails with families – and not just when there are problems. Outreach to families to share positive news on a regular basis.
- Actively recruit and engage parents in developing and supporting district and school wide policies and improvement plans such as the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS), parent advisory committees, Title I, Bilingual Education, and Indian Education parental involvement requirements, and on staff hiring committees.
- Share the school and district annual reports of overall student and school achievement, school programs, and other initiatives with families. Use open meetings, events, sporting events, Web sites and newsletters, etc. to create safe opportunities for families to ask questions and provide input.
- Include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups on advisory councils, action teams, and committees. Include student representatives in elementary, middle, and high schools along with parents, school staff, and administrators on committees.
- Encourage and facilitate parent participation in PTA or other parent organizations, advisory councils or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- Provide parents with user-friendly information for voting in local, state, and federal elections on officials and issues that affect education.
- Engage in professional development opportunities focused on building sustainable initiatives that build capacity among bilingual educators and families to collaborate around student success.