

# THE KENTUCKY FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

A Complete Resource Guide for Strengthening Family, School and Community Partnerships to Support Student Success



**The Prichard Committee**

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

*Tools are applicable early education through high school*

Dear Families, Educators and Community Partners,

We are proud of our Kentucky history and accomplishments in education and parent leadership. Provisions in Kentucky law ensure families and community members have a powerful voice in our public schools which have been a wellspring for success. This resource was originally created in 2006 and revised in 2021 and will be updated annually by the Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools. This Collaborative is a network of families, schools, districts and community partners who are focused on increasing open communication, learning opportunities and shared decision-making power across the Kentucky education system. The Collaborative believes while high-quality, equitable and inclusive education is dependent upon the partnership of families, schools and communities, the responsibility to systematize family engagement best practices into education falls on the school system and its staff.

We hope this resource helps school and district groups work together more effectively so our state can rise to proficiency in the practice of family and community engagement. The goal is to help Kentucky schools and districts realize an equitable and excellent education for every Kentuckian.

In Partnership,

*Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools*



KY Collaborative Advisory Council Last update Jan. 2023



**Commonwealth Institute  
for Parent Leadership**  
The Prichard Committee



National Center for  
Families Learning



learning grove



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**EDUCATION**

# Dual Capacity-Building Framework

## INTRODUCTION

Family Engagement as an educational strategy to promote strong academic outcomes requires intentionality, planning and support. To be fully effective, it necessitates being embedded in the family and staff experience from early education through college and career transition.

Historically, Family Engagement has been an after-thought in an increasingly demanding educational structure. Rarely is Family Engagement included in teacher training programs or considered as an executive plan towards strategic academic success. Often, schools consider themselves lucky to be able to create a successful Open House, or partner with parents on student behavioral or academic issues.

Research continues to show that a strong partnership between families and schools can be foundational to both student and school success. When we consider best practices, such as, [Dr. Karen Mapp's Dual Capacity Building Framework](#), we notice that openly acknowledging challenges, then working toward alleviating those barriers, and then intentionally building ongoing and learning focused relationships (that is, relationship-building work on the front end of the school experience, as opposed to a reactive-based relationship model) – leads to more positive outcome. At the base of this work is building trust.

## 6 ESSENTIAL PROCESS CONDITIONS:

When planning a Family Engagement event, program or initiative consider these:

### 1. Relational

- Are we helping to build authentic trusting relationships between families and the school?
- How is the school/school-staff seeking input from all families? (Respect)
- Do school/school-staff honor the expertise of families in their role as caretaker? (Competence)
- How can school/school-staff consistently show families that they are interested and invested in the core roles that families hold at their school? How do schools ensure that they clearly com-

municate and then follow through on what they say they will do? (Integrity)

- Does the school seek out ways to show families that they value and care about them as people and stakeholders? (Personal Regard)

### 2. Linked to Learning

- Are families taking home new ideas that they can use to support their child's academic and development needs in the classroom and at home?
- Does the experience provide a concrete way for a family to support their child's learning at home either through conversation starters or activity materials?
- Does the experience provide a way for families to share their understanding of their child's learning with educators?
- Is school staff acknowledging families as capable of learning and as part of the teaching team for their child?

### 3. Asset-Based (Strengths-Based)

- How are we drawing on each families' funds-of-knowledge about their child? Funds of knowledge: The idea that families have explicit and important knowledge about their child and their community that is extremely valuable for a teacher (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez, 2005).
- How are we providing opportunities for families to shine and tell us what they are good at and what they can offer as part of the school family?
- Is the school staff open to the variety of roles families can play based on their strengths, unique interests and personality type?

### 4. Culturally responsive and respectful (Equitable Practices)

- How do we celebrate differences among our students and families?
- Are we providing opportunities for Families to Engage in Diverse Roles? Families can be Co-creators, Supporters, Encouragers, Monitors, Advocates, and/or Models



- Do we make it a priority to address language barriers in all school communications? Do staff know family members' level of literacy?
- How do we connect family cultures to what students are learning? Personally invite families to come to class and teach about their different cultures and traditions
- Do we know what cultures and countries our students come from? Do we know why this is important?
- Do we know why we make it a point to consult various representative groups of parents, not only those who attend PTA/PTO, etc.?
- How do we highlight the various ways parents are supporting their kids in atypical ways such as clever homework strategies, extracurricular experiences and talking to their child about college and career goals?

## **5. Collaborative**

- Are we intentional in helping families be friends with other families? Are we creating activities and experiences that help these real connections happen?
- How do we work with families to identify their role and build a "job description" as a parent in the school?
- Do we survey families about how they want to connect with other families, teachers and school staff?
- Do we have a school policy that ensures each family can name at least one person in the school they can call if they need something?
- How could we utilize all staff in the building to make personal contact with every family at least twice a year?
- Do we ensure students have a voice in their education plan as part of the parent and teacher collaborative team?

## **6. Interactive**

- How can we enhance our usual events so families and students can interact with the information being shared?
- When planning events for families do we consider the Principles of Adult Learning?

1. Adults must want to learn
2. Adults will learn only when they feel they need to learn
3. Adults learn by doing.
4. Adults learning focuses on problems, and the problems must be realistic
5. Experience affects adult learning
6. Adults learn best in an informal situation
7. Adults want guidance

[Click here to view the Essential Conditions in Action Examples](#)

## **4C AREAS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS:**

**When evaluating event and activities. Consider if they if the program is:**

### **1. Building Capabilities?**

- Do participants have an opportunity to put new knowledge into practice?
- Did participants gain a new skill they now use to support student achievement or family-school partnership?

### **2. Making new Connections?**

- Did participants make new connections and expand their network?
- Were lasting relationships formed as a result of their involvement?

### **3. Changing Cognition?**

- Did participants have a positive shift in beliefs and values related to equity and excellence in education?
- Were participants encouraged to take on a more active role in the family-school partnership team?

### **4. Building Confidence?**

- Do families have more confidence about supporting their child's academic and developmental needs because of this activity?
- Do teachers feel more equipped to engage and welcome families as partners?

**Family engagement strategies anchored in the 5 Essential Process Conditions and 4C Policy and Program Areas lead to more effective partnerships that support student achievement. Learn more here: [www.dualcapacity.org](http://www.dualcapacity.org)**

### **Expert Contributors for this section:**

*Introduction by Grace McKenzie and Becca Parrish, Partners for Education*

*Reflective Questions from: Beyond the Bake Sale, Henderson (2007) and Powerful Partnerships, Mapp (2017)*

*Reflections and tools by Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership*

