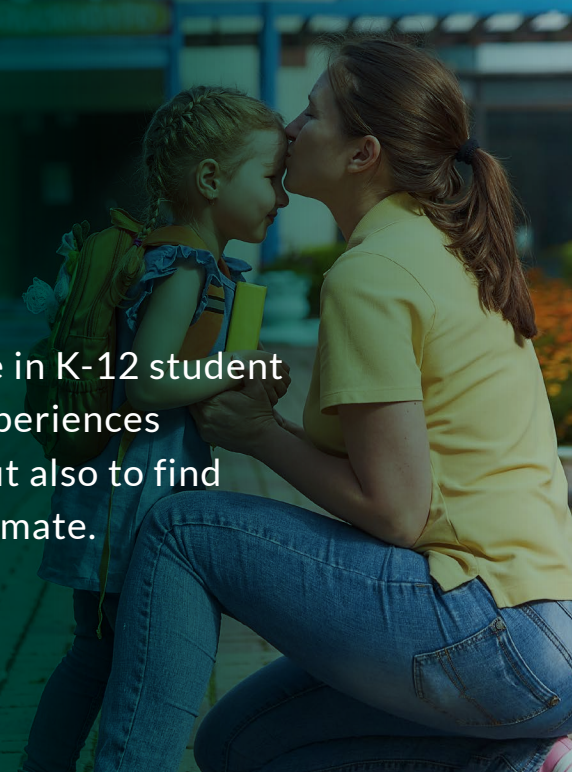




ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN K-12 EDUCATION

Strong relationships between schools, families, and communities play a critical role in K-12 student achievement and outcomes. Engaging family and community members in school experiences allows education leaders to not only support student learning and development, but also to find opportunities to improve their own operational practices and strengthen school climate.

Use this infographic to identify new opportunities for increasing engagement and partnerships within your K-12 district or school community.



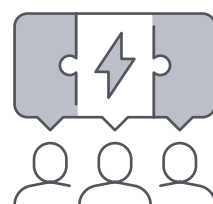
BENEFITS OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Increased student achievement, across all student demographics



Improved attendance and behavior



Enhanced staff understanding of family and community needs



Stronger school reputation

10 TIPS TO ENGAGE FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The notion of family involvement in schools often conjures images of parents or caregivers volunteering in a classroom or attending a parent-teacher conference. In reality, family-school connections are created in a variety of ways at school, at home, and in the community. How many of the following methods does your district use to promote more family and community engagement?

01 Build **online social communities** or networks for families and community members to interact and learn about district events

06 Provide an **interpreter** if there are specific language needs in the community

02 Empower families with **leadership opportunities** (e.g., serving in the PTA, chaperoning field trips, leading committees)

07 Offer **classes** — such as ESL, homework support, parenting, etc. — for families and community members

03 Encourage families to **assist with homework** by providing helpful resources (e.g., Parent and Caregiver Education Nights, a tutoring center for families to learn about the curriculum, homework answer keys)

08 Form **partnerships** with local organizations, such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club, as well as religious, cultural, political, civic, and social organizations that work with nearby residents

04 Create **volunteer opportunities** for families and community members

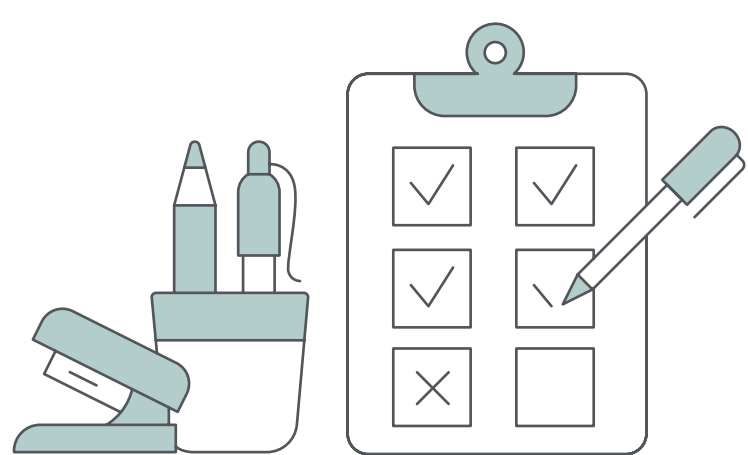
09 Conduct frequent **outreach** via email, phone, newsletters, or social media

05 Use multiple communication methods to **invite families and community members** to school events

10 Make **data accessible**. Families can advocate for their children more effectively when they have access to and understand district data

HOW TO MEASURE PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Engagement improves even more when districts regularly collect data on family and community members' needs, perceptions, and priorities. Most commonly, districts use surveys and focus groups to measure how well these parties feel welcomed, engaged, and prepared to support their students. Each data collection method has a specific purpose and may involve different questions and audiences, depending on local needs or challenges.



SURVEYS

Reach many participants at once

- Design survey questions** to solicit accurate feedback on family and community perspectives and priorities
(e.g., Are parents and caregivers aware of opportunities to get involved? Do they know where to go for different resources?)
- Use **inclusive terminology** in directions and questions
(e.g., "families" instead of "parents")
- Schedule surveys to **avoid conflicts in your district** to ensure **the intended audience** will be able to respond
(e.g., holidays, start/end of school year)
- Offer surveys in **multiple languages spoken in your district** and on **multiple platforms**
(e.g., online, paper)
- Advertise surveys through **multiple communication channels**
(e.g., online, mail, community partners)



FOCUS GROUPS

Dive deeper into family/community feedback

- Design questions** to solicit deeper insights on family and community perspectives and priorities
- Send invitations** to potential participants at least four weeks before scheduled sessions
- Schedule multiple sessions** at convenient times to minimize potential conflicts
- Provide transportation, childcare, food, and translation services to **minimize logistical barriers** and/or create opportunities to host events in the local community
- Incentivize participation** in focus groups via meaningful rewards
(e.g., gift cards)



Find out how a school climate survey can help you improve the experiences of students, families, and community members. Download **The Why and How of a Positive School Climate**.

Sources: <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/reports-and-briefs/current-state-of-school-climate-in-public-schools> | https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/f_fam_engagement.pdf | <https://nmefoundation.org/how-family-school-and-community-engagement-can-improve-student-achievement-and-influence-school-reform/> | https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/10/equitable_family_engag_508.pdf | <https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/resources/> | <https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/10-ideas-engaging-parents> | <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0042085912445643> | <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Family-and-Community-Engagement/Getting-Parents-Involved/Sample-Best-Practices-for-Parent-Involvement-in-School> | www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/critical-practices-for-social-justice-education/family-and-community | <https://hanoverresearch.my.salesforce-sites.com/customerportal/reportDetail?Redirect=Research&documentId=a0r1T00000q9o59QAAS&active=Research>