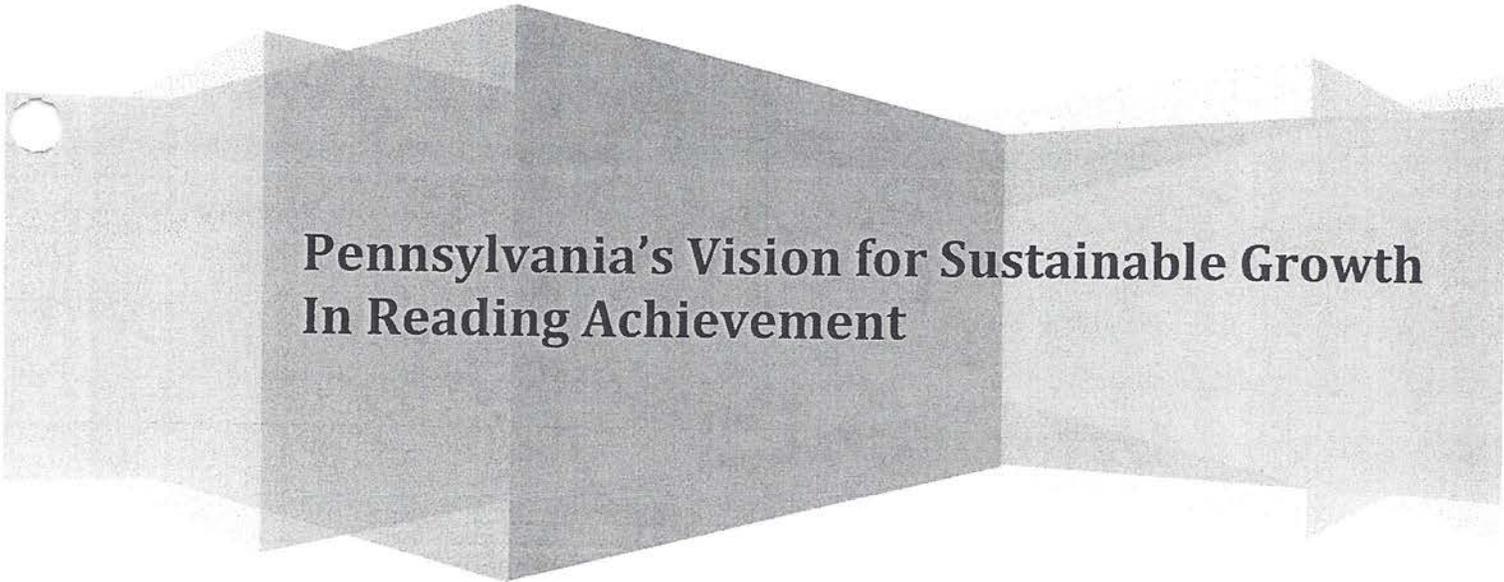


7/16/13

# **Family Engagement and Family Literacy**

**Participant's Guide  
Keystones to Opportunity**



**Pennsylvania's Vision for Sustainable Growth  
In Reading Achievement**

<b>Family Engagement and Family Literacy</b>	<i>Family engagement can play a powerful role in children's literacy development and benefits schools, families, and the community. Districts can encourage family engagement by supporting self-efficacy and implementing appropriate models of family engagement that enhance their comprehensive literacy plan.</i>	
<b>Participants will know and be able to do:</b>		<b>Evidence:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize the research on the impact of family engagement on children's literacy development and how it benefits children, adults, families, schools, and the community. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of partnerships among these entities for an integrated, holistic approach to improved literacy learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a summary of the research that describes the multiple benefits of family engagement; describe personal examples that support the research, identify community partners (educational and service) that can contribute to the overall and educational growth of families.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate an understanding of the impact assumptions made about diversity (families of different cultures, ethnicities, religions, native languages; families with socio-economic needs; families with educational needs) can have on family engagement, staff behaviors, and student performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the checklist "How well is your school bridging racial, class, and cultural differences?" Write a reflection on, "in which areas are you doing well and how do you know?"</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate the role that teachers can play in impacting children's and parents' self-efficacy beliefs about themselves as readers and learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a list of self-efficacy and educational achievements. List specific strategies to support family beliefs about their self-efficacy.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore different practices of effective family engagement (including family literacy). Identify potential practices that could be effective for participant's school/district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List and describe at least four practices that could be implemented in the participant's school/district. Explain why they may work and are achievable.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using mock data, a fictional Literacy needs Assessment and other tools, assess a fictional district's current level of family engagement and partnerships. Identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and devise action steps to increase family engagement from these data sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document action steps to address ways to improve family engagement.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create three action steps for incorporating and/or strengthening family engagement efforts for participant's school/district's integrated literacy plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List, describe and justify action steps to improve family engagement for specific school/district. The justification should include need and have the potential to be implemented.</li> </ul>	

### Agenda

- Welcome
- Define Family Engagement
- Summarize the Research
- Examine Factors Affecting Family Engagement
- Explore Effective Family Engagement Strategies; including family literacy
- Use Data and a Process for Decision Making
- Plan for action

*Beyond the Bake Sale*  
**How Family Friendly Is Your School? Checklist**

**WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT**

1. **Friendly signs inside and out welcome families and visitors and explain how to get around the building.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*
  
2. **The school has standards of welcoming behavior that apply to all staff, including bus drivers, security guards, custodians, and cafeteria workers.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*
  
3. **Front office staff are friendly—recognize visitors right away, provide information easily, and answer the phone in a way that makes people glad they have called.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*
  
4. **There is a comfortable family resource room stocked with books, games, and educational information that families can borrow and where parents can meet.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*

**PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE FAMILIES IN IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

5. **Current student work is displayed throughout the building. Exhibits clearly explain the purpose of the work and the high standards it is to meet.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*
  
6. **All programs and activities for families focus on student achievement—they can help families understand what their children are learning and promote high standards.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*
  
7. **Special workshops, learning kits, and other activities show families how to help their children at home—and to respond to what families say they want to know about.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*
  
8. **The school reports to parents about student progress and how teachers, parents, and community members can work together to make improvements.**  
 *Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*

**STRONG RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHER AND FAMILIES**

**9. The "joining process" welcomes families to the schools, offers tours, makes bilingual speakers available, and introduces them to staff and other families.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**10. Teachers and families have frequent opportunities to meet face-to-face and get to know each other—class meetings, breakfasts, home visits, class observations.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**11. Teachers or advisors make personal contact with each family at least once a month.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**12. A family liaison helps teachers connect to families and bridge barriers of language and culture.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**DEVELOPING FAMILIES' SELF-CONFIDENCE AND POWER**

**13. Families are involved in planning how they would like to be involved at the school.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**14. School committees and the PTA/PTO reflect the diversity of the school community and actively recruit and welcome families from all backgrounds.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**15. The school is open and accessible—it is easy for parents to meet with the principal, talk to teachers and counselors, and bring up issues and concerns.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**16. Parents develop school improvement projects and do action research—survey other families, observe in classrooms, review materials, and visit other schools and programs.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPEMENT FOR FAMILIES AND STAFF**

**17. Families learn how the school system works and how to be an effective advocate for their child.**

*Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*

**18. Teachers learn about effective approaches to working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds.**

*Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*

**19. Families and staff have opportunities to learn together how to collaborate to improve student achievement.**

*Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*

**20. The school reaches out to identify and draw in local community resources that can assist staff and families.**

*Already doing this*    *Could do this easily*    *This will take time*    *This will be hard*

Which areas are you doing well in? Which ones will need more work?

How are parents involved in making the school open, welcoming, and collaborative?

What are your concerns?

**Reflection:** What steps could you take to help your school become more family-friendly?

Right away:

Over the long term:

## BENEFITS

List five benefits of family engagement that you have observed.

1. children are more engaged & motivated
2. better attendance
3. better social skills / less violent
4. more learning (better test scores)
5. improved school environment

How will you let parents know what is important, necessary, and permissible for them to do to help their children?

during conferences / home visits / pickup / drop-off (face-to-face); send Home Activities home; share parenting classes

List 5 benefits of family literacy that stood out for you.

1. better general background knowledge
2. better social skills, self-esteem, & attitude 😊
3. read more (& better)
4. better achievement academically (& test scores)
5. better attendance

List 3 potential community partners who could actively support family engagement.

1. library
2. food store
3. doctor

*Beyond the Bake Sale*

How well is your school bridging racial, class, and cultural differences? Checklist

**PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT CULTURES**

1. **The school's racial and cultural diversity is recognized and openly discussed in a constructive way at parent group and faculty meetings, school council meetings, and discussion groups that include staff and families.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

2. **The school's curriculum reflects cultures of families, and there are books and materials about families' cultures in classrooms and the library/media centers.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

3. **Families' cultural traditions, values, and practices are discussed in class.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

4. **Activities and events honor all the cultures in the school.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING CLASS AND LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES**

5. **The PTA/PTO is not dominated by any one group of parents, and its officers reflect the school's diversity.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

6. **Extra efforts are made to recruit and welcome all families, and families of all backgrounds are involved in the school.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

7. **School events and activities are planned with parents and respond to their interests.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

8. **Interpreters are available for all meetings and events, and report cards, newsletters, signs, and other communications are translated into the school's major languages.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

9. **English speaking staff and families make an effort to mix with families who speak other languages.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**ADDRESSING ISSUES OF RACE AND RACISM**

10. **School staff and families use books and stories about different groups' experiences, including African-American, to stimulate discussions about their own background and values.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

11. **Teachers and other staff use "teachable moments" and stories from local media to comment on and discuss racially motivated incidents.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

12. **Professional development for staff explores negative attitudes, practices and expectations for students of color, and aims to create high standards, rigorous practice, and increased expectations for all students.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

**WELCOMING AND RESPECTING ALL FAMILIES**

13. **Parents and teachers are surveyed about school climate, and school staff and parent group leaders follow up on results.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

14. **The school has a system for helping staff and students learn how to pronounce all students' first and last names correctly.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

15. **Front office staff are warm and welcoming to all families and visitors and compliment family members on their contributions.**

*Already doing this*  *Could do this easily*  *This will take time*  *This will be hard*

Which areas are you doing well in? Which ones do you want to focus on improving first?

How are parents and parent groups involved in addressing differences?

What are your concerns?

**Reflection:** What steps could you take to address differences of culture, race, and class?

Right away:

Over the long term:

## Teacher/School Centered vs. Mutual Relationship

Look at the quotes in the "teacher/school centered" chart below. With a partner develop a quote that a Mutual Relationship school teacher might say instead. Use the sample as a guideline.

Topic	Teacher/School Centered	Mutual Relationship
Academic Support (A)	"Have your children follow MY directions for their homework."	"Here are some ways to monitor your children's homework and build their skills. Tell us what else you do to help your children."
Parent Support (B)	"Train your children to respect and obey school staff at all times."	see
Status (C)	"We are the professionals; do not question our decisions."	below...
Participation (D)	"Parents are welcome at school during designated times and events."	(B, C, D)

(A) see above

(B) "It is important for the safety of the children & all school staff for everyone to follow the school rules and to be respectful to each other."

(C) "I have some ideas & resources for \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you like me to share them with you?"

(D) "Please try to schedule volunteering times with the teacher so that they can plan accordingly."

Adapted from *Beyond the Bake Sale* (2007).

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(use a sign-up sheet)

## **School District Jargon or Opportunities for Family Engagement**

### **PA Common Core**

The State Board adopted Common Core Standards in July 2010. Since that time, the decision was made to craft a set of PA Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. A group of Pennsylvania educators created a draft set of PA Common Core Standards. These new standards mirror the content and rigor of Common Core, but reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards. Additionally, the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects will be appended to their respective PA Academic Standards.

### **FE Opportunity**

Offer sessions for parents explaining Common Core and the benefits to their children's education. Provide an opportunity for parents to experience activities correlated to Common Core. Provide sample lesson plans aligned with Common Core. Ask parents to comment on the lesson plans.

### **GRADE**

Specific literacy assessment to be done as part of Keystones to Opportunities.

### **FE Opportunity**

Make parents aware of what the GRADE measures, clearly explain what the result indicate, and how the results will inform individualized instruction for their child. Offer ideas and tools for parents that can build skills in children. Offer workshops that teach and allow parents to practices specific strategies.

## **H.E.A.T.**

The HEAT is synonymous with digital-age learning (i.e., 21st Century Skills) and represents Student In the LoTi Continuous Improvement Model, H.E.A.T. is an acronym that is Output in terms of student: Higher order thinking, Engaged learning, Authentic connections, and Technology use.

### **FE Opportunity**

When students are participating in engaging activities they will often share their excitement by talking with their parents about what they are doing. Invite parents into the classroom to see the results of HEAT activities. Post products and results to parent portals and classroom websites for parents to view. Use social media to engage parents.

## **DIBELS** *Next*

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills.

DIBELS are comprised of seven measures to function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. DIBELS were designed for use in identifying children experiencing difficulty in acquisition of basic early literacy skills in order to provide support early and prevent the occurrence of later reading difficulties.

### **FE Opportunity**

Make parents aware of what the DIBELS assessment measures, clearly explain what the results indicate, and how the results will inform individualized instruction for their child. Offer ideas and tools for parents that can build skills in children. Offer workshops that teach and allow parents to practice specific strategies.

## **Standards Alignment System**

The Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System (SAS) is a collaborative product of research and good practice that identifies six distinct elements which, if utilized together, will provide schools and districts a common framework for continuous school and district enhancement and improvement.

### **FE Opportunity**

Offer workshops, tutorials, and tip sheets on the benefits of SAS and practical ways for parents to use SAS.

## **ITERS-R**

A thorough revision of the original ITERS, designed to assess center-based child care programs for infants and toddlers up to 30 months of age.

Scale consists of 39 items organized into 7 subscales:

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Listening and Talking
- Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure
- Parents and Staff

## **FE Opportunity**

Let parents know the results of assessments and what is being done to continuously improve. Involve parents in the assessment; ask for their opinion of the environment.

## **ECERS-R**

The revised ECERS contains inclusive and culturally sensitive indicators for many items. Also, new items have been added on Interaction (staff-child, child-child and discipline), Curriculum (nature/science and math/number) Health & Safety and Parents & Staff. Scale consists of 43 items organized into 7 subscales:

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language-Reasoning
- Activities
- Interactions
- Program Structure
- Parents and Staff

## **FE Opportunity**

Let parents know the results of assessments and what is being done to continuously improve. Involve parents in the assessment; ask for their opinion of the environment.

## Effective Strategies Activity

Briefly describe the family engagement strategy:

parent liaisons, parent academies,  
father involvement, comm./outreach,

What are the strengths of the activity? prof. dev., etc...

"demand parents" esp. fathers

DPCO → Dept. of Family + Comm. Outreach  
(unity)

Which PTA Standards does it align with?

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6...

Which FE markers are evident?

all (see PowerPoint slides) (1, 2, 4, 5, 6...?)  
p. 13

How might this activity be replicated?

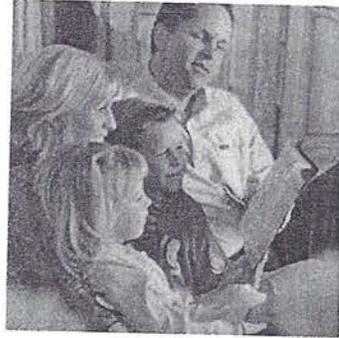
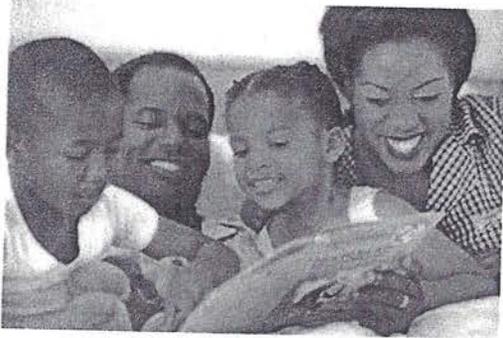
- prof. dev. days... (training, planning, etc.)
- involve fathers... - data tracking + welcoming events
- outreach via phone, blogs, radio, etc...

Could it work in your setting?

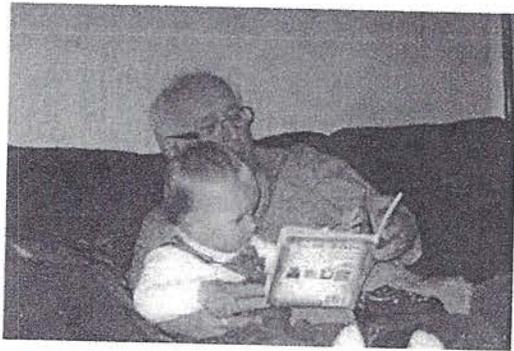
yes, some...

What obstacle may get in the way?

- people/parents' work/life schedules
- money & &



## Family Engagement Action Research



## Table of Contents

What is Practitioner Action Research?

The PAR Process

Step 1, Question-Posing

Step 2, Planning the Intervention(s)

Step 3, Observing the Intervention(s)

Step 4, The Reflection

Appendix

## Practitioner Action Research

### What is Practitioner Action Research?

Practitioner Action Research (PAR) is a reflective process of progressive problem-solving that helps you to answer your questions or concerns about issues or problems in your school or classroom. In a community of learners, or on their own, you decide your OWN questions and work to find ways to improve your classroom or school. Using PAR, you will systematically analyze a problem, review the literature and relevant experience that might relate to what you want to investigate, develop an intervention that might result in positive changes, systematically gather evidence on the observed changes, and reflect on the outcomes. For our purposes, we will consider four main stages of PAR:

- 1 • Question-Posing
- 2 • Planning
- 3 • Enacting and Observing the Intervention
- 4 • Reflecting

### What Action Research is NOT:

1. It is not the usual things teachers do when they think about their practice. PAR is systematic and involves collecting evidence and reflecting rigorously.
2. It is not just problem-solving. It involves problem- or question-*posing* and is motivated by a desire to improve and understand.
3. It is not the scientific method applied to practice. While it poses questions, devises interventions to improve, and uses data to inform, it is concerned about changing situations, not just interpreting them. It changes both the researcher and the situation.

### The PAR Process

#### Step 1: Question-Posing

##### The Question Area

To determine where to focus your PAR work, begin by reflecting on your classroom or school and think about problems, issues, or concerns you might have.

Think about issues or problems in your classroom or school that you want to improve. While you can do this independently, this is an excellent exercise to do as a group, by forming a Program Improvement Team (PIT). Your PIT should include relevant staff, administrators, partners, and parents. Look at your outcome data and determine your strengths. Also let the data highlight areas where you could improve your classroom or school. Data can also be your demographics, or observations or questions that you have about your school's quality, students' concerns or progress toward goals. To begin, you may just start with a "wondering." Starting points for your "wonderings" can be guided by the following:

- "I am curious about..."
- "I would like to improve..."
- "I don't understand why..."
- "How can we...?"
- "How do we efficiently implement...?"

Question Posing: Use these questions to think about what really needs to be changed in your school or classroom.

What is happening now? Why do we want to improve this? How do we know it's a problem? After discussion, write the areas you might investigate.

Next, think deeply. What are the real underlying reasons for this issue? WHAT really needs to be improved?

As you form your question area, think about these:

#### **Commitment**

- "Is this something we want to spend time on?"
- "Are there other more pressing issues that need our attention?"
- "Will others agree to help?"

#### **Feasibility**

- "Is it possible to create one or more interventions to resolve the problem?"
- "Will we be able to implement the interventions? Is it do-able?"

#### **Management**

- "Will we be able to manage and observe the intervention?"
- "Will we be able to complete it in time to see results?"

#### **Prior Research**

- "Are there other studies on this issue?" "What does the literature/research say about this?"

Do NOT tackle questions that you can't do anything about or over which you have no control.

2

### **Step 2: Planning the Intervention(s)**

Now that you've decided on a question area and know that it is important, do-able, and worth the effort, it's time to think of ways to address the question in order to improve your program.

#### **Conceptualizing the Intervention**

With your PIT, discuss the following:

- What specific outcomes do we want to achieve?
- What interventions will help us reach or exceed these outcomes? (Brainstorm all possibilities; later eliminate those that cannot meet the criteria for Commitment, Feasibility, Management).

- What are possible side effects of these interventions? (e.g. You might want to increase family involvement, but may risk alienating families that usually attend?)
- What resources will we need? (human or other)
- How do we involve our parents in PAR? How do we get their buy-in to try our plan? This is especially important if your intended outcome is to raise their engagement, increase self-efficacy, or improve their parent and child interaction.

### **Developing the Measures**

- What is the baseline? If you want to have a sense of “better,” you need to know where you are starting. Better than “what?” The baseline is the “what?” (e.g. attendance at Title I events the previous year as a pre- or the number of positive parent-teacher exchanges in September)
- What are our goals? How will we know if we reached them? What are my criteria for success? (e.g. increase in parent attendance by 10%.)
- What data will tell us if each intervention worked? See Appendix B for suggested methods of collecting data. Plan to use at least three methods for “triangulation” of data. (e.g. hard data, observation, pre and post videos, focus groups).
- What constraints in data collection might we encounter? What can we do about them?

### **The Research Question**

If you’ve identified your question area, your baseline, your goals, and your interventions(s), you are ready to try to write your question. Your question should include your intervention (controllable action), the data that will inform your success, suggest cause and effect (if we try this, then this will occur), and the intended outcome in measurable terms.

### 3 Step 3: *Observing the Intervention(s)*

- Start your intervention(s).
- Collect data and analyze for each intervention. Reflect monthly.
- Change or add interventions if it doesn't seem that you are getting the results you want. (PAR is cyclical and evolving, so feel free to adjust as you go.)
- Bring in another person to your PIT, if necessary.
- Collect more data. Check progress.
- Monitor and evaluate the changes that occur and judge the quality of the changes. Note these.
- Document along the way. Keep journals. Keep all records.
- Decide when to stop collecting data and begin analyzing your data and reflecting on what it means.
- Keep these questions in mind as you work through your project:
  - Am I staying true to the initial plan? If not, why? (It's okay to change.)
  - Am I collecting the data I said I would? (It's okay to change the data you collect, just remember to collect the data that will best inform your progress.)
  - Am I keeping track of changes as we work through the project? (Please note these. They will help you later on.)
  - Is my PIT monitoring progress through regular meetings and meaningful conversations about our research project?

#### **Step 4: The Reflection**

Look at the data with your PIT. Think about these questions each time you meet, but especially when you have decided to end your research—or at least this iteration of it. It's not enough to say, "It seems to be better." Studying the data and figuring out what they mean is the most important step. Use these questions to guide your reflection.

- What were the results? What do the data tell us?
- Did our intervention(s) make a measurable difference?
- If so, did we meet/exceed our criteria for success?
- If not, how far were we from attaining them? What could we have done differently?
- What do these results mean? Did the changes accurately reflect what happened? Did something else happen to affect the outcomes?
- What will we continue to use in our program?
- What can we change to make this idea even better?
- What was less helpful that we can discard?
- How can we repeat this (or have others repeat it) to develop more validity for this intervention?
- What lessons should we share with others?

## APPENDIX

### Methods for Collecting Data

Try to have at least three methods for reliability (triangulation). Here are some suggestions.

**Quantitative Data:** Student reading scores, parent attendance at meetings, number of phone calls with family, hours parent reports helping child with homework

#### **Qualitative Data:**

Interviews or focus groups: Focus groups or interviews can help to make sense of the numbers. There are three categories:

- **Structured:** Useful when seeking specific information on a specific topic, with little room for discussion. ("How many times last week did you do homework at home?")
- **Semi-structured:** Involves asking more open-ended questions, but allows the interviewee to go a bit further or provides some ideas they might not have thought about, using "probes." ("How did you learn about the program?" [Probes: friend, flyers, media]).
- **Open:** Encourages more open discussion and room for wide-row as a learner?")

Questionnaires and Surveys: Like the interviews/focus groups, questionnaires can be closed or open.

- **Closed:** Likert Scale, multiple choice, short response, seeking specific information. Little room for interpretation
- **Open:** Asks for opinions with respondents providing their own words. Can be difficult to analyze.

**Document Analysis:** Your own documents can be powerful sources of data. Look at your and/or your participants' records, written reports, in-take forms, letters, memos, journal entries, portfolios, lesson plans, etc. Analysis of these can also provide a baseline or inspiration for an intervention.

**Anecdotal Records:** Written descriptive accounts of incidents, which are especially valuable for documenting classroom activity and behavior and are helpful in noting patterns. Keeping short notes each time you do something as part of your interventions provides a good memory boost and can provide food for thought for others on your PIT.

**Field Notes:** Similar to anecdotal records, but also include the researcher's impressions and interpretations at the same time. Written on location.

**Case Studies:** A data collection method in which a single person, entity, or phenomenon is studied in depth over a sustained period of time and through a variety of data. The purpose of a case study is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information. For example, your goal may be to increase the quality parent engagement. You may focus on three families. You would carefully document what happens over the year.

**Logs:** Careful records of recurring activities. (Can also be Quantitative-- attendance, time off task, number of phone calls.) Commentary with the logs can be useful observational data.

**Journals:** Researchers keep reflections of the research process, which allow time to express feelings, anxieties, and ideas about the goings on. Journals are very useful at the reflection stage.

**Portfolio:** A collection of relevant materials compiled for a purpose. Photos, papers, grades, minutes—anything relevant should be kept. Student portfolios can provide documentation of their growth.

**Audio and Video Recordings:** Valuable for getting an exact record. Require permission. These can be good as pre- and post- or as records of student growth.

**PAR Project Planning Form**

**School Name:**

**Contact name and email:**

**Topic of investigation?**

**PIT members:**

**PAR Question:**

<b>What does the data suggest? Select top priority.</b>	<b>Intervention(s)</b>	<b>Data source(s)</b>	<b>Results</b>

**Discussion and Reflection:** *(What do the data tell us about the project? What do our results mean? How satisfied were the staff? The families? Other stakeholders?)*

**How we benefitted from our work:**

**How others may benefit from our work:**

**Resources and References for our project:**

Keystones to Opportunity  
Family Engagement and Family Literacy Resources

***Handbook on Family and Community Engagement***

In collaboration with the U. S. Department of Education's Title I Office, the Academic Development Institute and Center on Innovation & Improvement have produced a Handbook on Family and Community Engagement. The Handbook is available free for download at [www.families-schools.org](http://www.families-schools.org) or may be purchased from Information Age Publishing at [www.infoagepub.com](http://www.infoagepub.com).

**Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships** by Anne T. Henderson

**School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action** by Joyce L. Epstein

**A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement** by Karen Mapp and Anne Henderson

**Let's Read Together**

Improving Literacy Outcomes with the Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI)  
By Andrea DeBruin-Parecki, Ph.D.

**Center for Early Literacy Learning**

<http://earlyliteracylearning.org>

**Colorin Colorado; Bilingual Site for Educators and Families**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

**Family Involvement Network of Educators; Harvard University**

<http://www.hfrp.org>

**Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy**

<http://www.ed.psu.edu/goodlinginstitute>

**NAEYC Position Paper on Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity**

<http://www.naeyc.org>

**National Center for Education Evaluation; April 2009; Middle and High School Family Engagement**

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

**National Center for Family Literacy**

<http://www.famlit.org>

**National PTA**

<http://www.pta.org>

**PA Parent Information Resource Center**

<http://www.center-school.org/pa-pirc>

**PA Strengthening Families Project**

<http://www.pa-strengthening-families.org>

**PA Department of Education Adult and Family Literacy**

<http://www.paadulted.org>

**PA Adult Education Resource Site**

<http://www.paadultedresources.org/family-literacy.html>

**Pennsylvania PTA**

<http://www.papta.org>

**Pennsylvania Family Development Credential**

<http://www.pa-fdc.org>

**PA Public Libraries**

[www.publiclibraries.com/pennsylvania.htm](http://www.publiclibraries.com/pennsylvania.htm)

**Pa Training and Technical Assistance Network**

[www.pattan.org](http://www.pattan.org)

**PA Keys to Early Learning**

[www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org)

**Univ. of Pitt Office of Child Development Kindergarten transition resource**

<http://www.readyfreddy.org>

## LESSONS LEARNED

Engaging parents as partners requires providing a range of meaningful opportunities for involvement. Federal Way has brought together families and communities to actively participate in developing family engagement at the district and school levels. Parents have meaningful input into the functions of the district office, the roles of school committees, and the district's yearly family engagement goals, activities and performance measures. Through workshops that focus on academic success, parents learn to advocate for their children and to create action steps that support learning.

## Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland

Prince George's County School District's current family engagement efforts grew out the Comer School Development Program, which started as independent school-based efforts and eventually expanded to a district-wide focus. The district is particularly strong, especially among fathers, at creating "demand parents,"<sup>10</sup> who can navigate the educational system and demand the best from the schools that serve their children.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SYSTEMS AT WORK

### Fostering district-wide strategies

**Superintendent leadership.** In 2000, the superintendent established the Department of Family and Community Outreach (DFCO) and charged its director with monitoring all of the family outreach activities in the district. The current superintendent has also participated in regular meetings and discussions with DFCO staff.

**Data tracking.** The DFCO tracks the number of families that participate in district-wide events, as well as whether it is their first time participating, and has used these data to assess the effectiveness of its outreach. For example, the first time the district held a welcoming event, 500 parents attended. This number increased to 8,000 the following year and 20,000 this past year. The DFCO also looks at Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) reports and has found that schools with higher family participation rates have shown greater gains in AYP. Lastly, the DFCO surveys school staff members to find out what family engagement means to them, and will use these data to inform planning and improvement.

**Performance management.** Family engagement is a required element of each school's improvement plan, and there are currently discussions about the possibility of including principals' efforts in this area as part of their annual performance evaluations. The DFCO believes that this accountability, coupled with ongoing training, is critical to changing school culture.

### Building school capacity

**School-based parent liaisons.** The DFCO indirectly supervises and provides training and technical assistance to parent liaisons through monthly meetings and professional development. These liaisons have a deep knowledge of the teachers, students, and community the school serves and help tailor the school's efforts to meet the needs of those constituents. Their presence also keeps family engagement "on the radar" of principals and teachers and give manpower to data collection efforts for family engagement. Due to budget cuts this past academic year, over half of the parent liaison positions were eliminated, but the DFCO plans to work with the remaining 80 or so liaisons to restructure their work.





Harvard Family  
Research Project

# Issue Brief

July 2009

## Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement

Helen Westmoreland, Heidi M. Rosenberg, M. Elena Lopez, & Heather Weiss

There is widespread consensus that family engagement is a critical ingredient for children's school success "from cradle to career." Research suggests that family engagement promotes a range of benefits for students, including improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation.<sup>1</sup> Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers also recognize family engagement as a critical intervention strategy that maximizes return on other investments in education. Early childhood education programs that have demonstrated significant short- and long-term benefits for children all have intensive family involvement components. Furthermore, investing in family engagement can be cost effective. For example, schools would have to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved parent brings.<sup>2</sup>

Even though it is clear that family engagement matters, less well understood is the role of school districts in promoting this engagement. This brief examines how school districts build systemic family engagement from cradle to career as a core education reform strategy to ensure that parents, educators, and administrators *share responsibility* for family engage-

ment resulting in student success.<sup>3</sup> Shared responsibility requires parents to do their part to support their children's learning, from turning off the TV, to communicating with teachers about their children's progress, to checking (and sometimes helping with) homework, and more. But even though parents want the best for their children, many do not receive the information and support from school and district staff that they need to understand the importance of the parental role in children's education and how best to fulfill that role. Lack of school communication to parents is linked to lower levels of involvement, particularly in lower-performing schools,<sup>4</sup> and parents are more likely to engage when school personnel value, expect, and invite them to be involved.<sup>5</sup> Thus, a shared responsibility for family engagement also requires the commitment of school and district staff to reach out to parents in meaningful ways that help them support their children's academic achievement.

Given that district leadership and capacity building play a key role in supporting strategic and systemic family engagement, it is important to better understand what that leadership and capacity building looks like, how it can be developed and sustained, and how federal, state, and local policies can

support it. The purpose of this brief, then, is to distill promising practices from six districts that are actively working to develop the critical components of systemic family engagement and to examine the implications of their work for federal, state, and local policy.<sup>6</sup>

The core district-level components necessary for systemic family engagement are

- **Fostering district-wide strategies.** A key role of school districts in promoting family engagement is ensuring that it is part and parcel of supporting student learning. This includes superintendents and senior leadership linking family engagement to their district's instructional goals, the creation of an infrastructure that elevates and communicates about the importance of family engagement, and mechanisms to assess progress and performance along the way.
- **Building school capacity.** Districts can't do it alone; that's why districts help schools to understand the importance of, and strategies for, meaningfully engaging families. District-level resources and support enable schools to acquire the capacity to carry out family engagement in strategic ways that align with instructional goals. This happens through ongoing professional development and technical assistance for principals, teachers, and other "family-facing" staff in school buildings. It also includes programs and initiatives implemented by districts to help schools welcome and involve families in their child's learning.
- **Reaching out to and engaging families.** School districts reach out to families both directly and through partnerships to encourage them to have high expectations for their children's learning at school and at home, and to develop and share concrete strategies for engagement that supports student success. This happens through leadership

development trainings, listening tours to gather input, and workshops that impart information and skills focused on student learning.

## PROMISING PRACTICES

Data were obtained from six districts that all have core components of a systemic family engagement strategy in place; these data reveal that implementing these core components requires a commitment to a set of five best practices that ensure that family engagement efforts are interconnected and strategic across the various levels of a family engagement system at work. These promising practices are

1. **A shared vision of family engagement.** Districts, schools, and families share a broad understanding of family involvement that honors and supports each partner's role in supporting student learning—from the district's most senior administrators to classroom teachers and bus drivers. These school districts move beyond the traditional notion of family engagement, which focuses on parents attending events at the school, to recognizing that sometimes schools cannot "see," but can still support, one of the most important parts of family engagement: what happens at home.
2. **Purposeful connections to learning.** From the district's strategic plan and school improvement plans to parent-teacher conferences, these districts demonstrate an unyielding commitment to family engagement as a core instructional strategy, as opposed to an "add-on." Family engagement has the most impact when it is directly linked to learning.<sup>7</sup>
3. **Investments in high quality programming and staff.** These districts have made strategic use of limited resources, often adroitly piecing together multiple public and private funding streams to build and sustain their family engagement system at work. They hire charismatic leaders with expertise in



family involvement to staff family engagement offices and use volunteers. As opposed to “drive-by trainings” and cookie-cutter approaches, they adapt and build on events and models to implement an organizational, rather than individual, approach to professional development.<sup>8</sup>

- 4. Robust communication systems.** Communication for family engagement is designed to cut across administrators in district offices and departments, school staff, and families and community members. These stakeholders reach out to one another to share information in reciprocal and meaningful ways to ensure they can make decisions and implement strategies effectively.
- 5. Evaluation for accountability and continuous learning.** District family engagement staff recognize that data about family engagement are a lever for change but realize that they still have farther to go to develop meaningful indicators of their work and data systems. Evaluation efforts often hinge on persuading teachers, principals, and other district offices to take data collection related to family involvement seriously. Having the district-wide internal capacity not just to collect data but also to use it as information feeds into planning and improvement.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

If districts are to play a crucial role in supporting family engagement in the ways described above, they need the support of federal, state, and local policymakers. The districts informing this study, as well as research on family involvement systems, programs, and policies,<sup>9</sup> indicate that public policies to build stronger family engagement should

**Create infrastructure for district-wide leadership for family engagement.** School districts need the appropriate systems in place to develop, implement, and coordinate the five best practices described above. The districts profiled in this brief have a senior-level officer responsible for family engagement who often participates in the superintendent’s leadership team. Incentives for creating these positions in other districts could be provided by federal and state funds. These district-level family engagement officers also need the staffing—from district-level specialists and trainers to school-level parent and community coordinators—to support family engagement systems at work.

To help build this district infrastructure, the federal government must maintain current investments in family engagement and offer additional resources through new stimulus funds or by increasing the percentage allocations for family engagement within Title I provisions. Furthermore, policymakers need to strategically allocate funds to schools and districts to ensure that there is sufficient oversight, capacity building, and quality control to support effective family engagement policies and practices at the school level.

**Build capacity for family engagement through training and technical assistance.** Districts devote significant time to creating training curricula, tool kits, materials, and other resources that can be replicated across schools and with families. But, across districts, there are limited opportunities to share lessons learned. District staff need the support of intermediaries, such as the state Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs), to facilitate the sharing of research and best practices, to coordinate family engagement with other reform initiatives, and to reduce duplication and maximize efficiency among investments.



More attention and resources are also needed to support preservice and in-service training for administrators, teachers, family-school coordinators, and other educators in family involvement and for collaborations with community organizations. Districts in this brief report that principals and teachers enter school buildings unprepared to understand the importance of, and develop effective strategies for, family engagement. Incentives to spur collaborations among districts and higher education institutions, as well as increased assistance from PIRCs, could help to build this capacity.

**Ensure reporting, learning and accountability for family engagement.** Across all the districts highlighted in this brief, there is widespread consensus that, although there are provisions for family engagement in federal legislation, particularly in Title I, expectations for accountability have been weak. District-level staff who coordinate family and community engagement call for more proactive monitoring to ensure compliance with family engagement provisions across the educational system.

Many of the districts described in this brief have integrated family engagement into performance evaluations of principal or teacher effectiveness but note that it is challenging to give these measures "teeth" without clear expectations across other levels of the education system. To help hold schools accountable, districts need clear buy-in and guidance from states on required measures for family involvement and more monitoring of those that do exist. In turn, states need a clear definition and strategy for family involvement, including key standards for quality, from federal policy for family engagement.

**Help districts understand, design, and implement strong evaluation strategies.** One of the most effective messages district leaders of family engagement efforts can share with their superintendents, central administrators, and local boards of education is that

family involvement *matters* for student achievement. However, many districts are struggling to develop an evaluation strategy that assesses the impact of their family involvement efforts and need support in capturing the important intermediary outcomes that then lead to positive student achievement. Policies can provide technical assistance to districts to help them build robust, yet realistic, evaluation plans for their family involvement systems at work.

A first step is capitalizing on some emerging promising practices and sharing those lessons with the field. For example, some districts have developed particularly innovative theories of change that capture the complexity of how family engagement can impact an entire educational system. These districts have moved beyond counting heads to assessing differences in behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes among parents and school staff, from changes in school culture to changes in parenting skills at home.

## Federal Way Public Schools, Washington

Community and district concerns about educational inequity have led to the creation of a Family Partnership Office, through which parents have greater access to the educational system and opportunities to advocate for their children. Promoting parent leaders to shape family engagement activities is a key district strategy.

### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SYSTEMS AT WORK

#### Fostering district-wide strategies

**District office.** A district office promotes a consistent and integrated approach to family engagement. A Family Partnership Advocate (FPA), who coordinates district wide family engagement activities, heads



## **A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement**

According to a new review of recent research published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

Furthermore, studies show that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children's learning at home. White, middle-class families, however, tend to be more involved at school. Supporting more involvement at school from all families may be an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap.

**Programs and special efforts to engage families make a difference** For example, teacher outreach to parents results in strong, consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math. Effective outreach practices include meeting face to face, sending learning materials home, and keeping in touch about progress. Workshops for parents on helping their children at home are linked to higher reading and math scores. Schools with highly rated partnership programs make greater gains on state tests than schools with lower-rated programs.

**Higher performing schools effectively involve families and community** Schools that succeed in engaging families from diverse backgrounds share three key practices:

- Focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and community members
- Recognize, respect and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural differences
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared

**Parent and community organizing efforts are improving schools** This type of engagement, which is based outside schools and led by parents and community members, is growing nationwide. Aimed mainly at low-performing schools, strategies of community organizing are openly focused on building low-income families' power and political skills. Unlike traditional parent involvement, parent and community organizing intends to hold schools accountable for results.

Recent studies have found that community organizing contributed to these changes in schools:

- upgraded school facilities
- improved school leadership and staffing
- higher quality learning programs for students
- new resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum

- new funding for after-school programs and family supports

 **In Short** When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school. When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, and support parent involvement at home and school, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns, honor their contributions, and share power, they succeed in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. And when families and communities organize to hold poorly performing schools accountable, school districts make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources.

### **How Can Schools, Families and Community Groups Put these Findings into Action?**

- Recognize that all parents, regardless of income, education or cultural background, are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well.
- Design programs that will support families to guide their children's learning, from preschool through high school.
- Develop the capacity of school staff and families to work together.
- Link efforts to engage families, whether based at school or in the community, to student learning.
- Build families' social and political connections.
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power. Focus on developing trusting and respectful relationships. Make sure that parents, school staff, and community members understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise.
- Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.
- Include families in all strategies to reduce the achievement gap between white, middle-class students and low-income students and students of color.

From *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, by Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1994) and *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002).

	Birth – Age 5			Elementary			Middle			High		
	Area of Strength (3)	In Place (2)	Emerging (1)	Not in Place (0)	Area of Strength (3)	In Place (2)	Emerging (1)	Not in Place (0)	Area of Strength (3)	In Place (2)	Emerging (1)	Not in Place (0)
<p>(A) The LEA has strong partnerships within the community that support its efforts toward educational and social growth of the families. The LEA has processes by which all stakeholders (e.g. parents, care-takers, educators, community members, etc.) involved in students' literacy learning can facilitate that learning in a coherent and consistent manner" (The State Comprehensive Literacy Plan; Pennsylvania Keystones to Opportunity, p. 2) Rationale: Shared responsibility for literacy learning among families, community, and educational professionals is essential for improved student learning. (The State Comprehensive Literacy Plan; Pennsylvania Keystones to Opportunity Guiding Principle, #1.)</p>												
<p>VII. Partnerships</p>												
1. The district coordinates with community educational resources (e.g. intermediate unit, early childcare providers, family literacy programs, higher education) to ensure comprehensive, non-duplicative, and aligned educational services.			✓			✓						
2. The district has an advisory committee that engages educational community partners (parents, teachers, administrators, adult education providers, early childhood education providers, family literacy providers, and students) in planning, implementing, and evaluating the comprehensive and integrated literacy services.			✓			✓						
3. The district has additional non-educational community partners that support families including libraries, health services, social services, businesses and industry.			✓			✓						
4. The district participates in community awareness activities to inform the public of the need for literacy education for children birth to grade 12.			✓			✓						
5. The district is well represented in community activities and committees to expand awareness of the need for a comprehensive and integrated literacy program for children birth-grade 12.			✓			✓						
6. The LEA has established partnerships across the disciplines to ensure that reading and writing are taught within the contexts of the content specific curricula. Research indicates that literacy is enhanced when reading and writing are integrated in context (Writing to Read, Carnegie Corporation, NY, 2010).			✓			✓						

3

Keystones to Opportunity

## Family Engagement and Family Literacy

Pennsylvania's Vision for Sustainable Growth in Reading Achievement



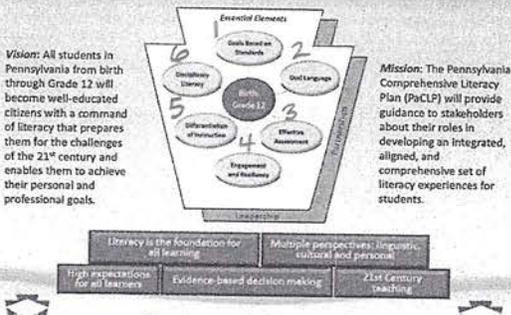

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\*Presenter/Trainer:

Michell B. Ressler

### Pa Comprehensive Literacy Plan

**Vision:** All students in Pennsylvania from birth through Grade 12 will become well-educated citizens with a command of literacy that prepares them for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and enables them to achieve their personal and professional goals.



**Mission:** The Pennsylvania Comprehensive Literacy Plan (PaCLP) will provide guidance to stakeholders about their roles in developing an integrated, aligned, and comprehensive set of literacy experiences for students.

**Keystones to Opportunity**

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- 1- Goals based on standards
- 2- Oral Language
- 3- Effective Assessment
- 4- Engagement + Resiliency
- 5- Differentiation of Instruction
- 6- Disciplinary Literacy

### Family Engagement

*"My vision for family engagement is ambitious...I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in their schools. I want all parents to be real partners in education with their children's teachers, from cradle to career. In this partnership, students and parents should feel connected—and teachers should feel supported...when parents demand change and better options for their children, they become the real accountability backstop for the educational system."*

-Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, May 3, 2010

I now KNOW that I am my son's first and most important teacher, and I want to be able to help him succeed in his education until he graduates. And...maybe beyond that!"

(Family Literacy Parent, Mifflin County, 2011)

**Keystones to Opportunity**




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**Activity**

Turn to a neighbor and reflect on ways that parents or caregivers were involved in your education.

 **Keystones to Opportunity**  4

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**Parent Involvement**

Federal legislation defines parent involvement as:

*The participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving students' academic learning and other school activities. The involvement includes ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child (NCLB, 9101(32)).*

 **Keystones to Opportunity**  5

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**Today we will...**

- Explore research that shows the effects of family engagement on children's literacy development and how it benefits children, adults, families, schools, and the community;
- Reflect on the impact assumptions made about diversity can have on family engagement;
- Examine promising practices in family engagement and consider the implications on our own practice
- Use mock data to assess levels of family engagement, identify strengths and weaknesses, and devise action steps to increase family engagement; and
- Create three action steps for incorporating and/or strengthening family engagement efforts for your school/district's integrated literacy plan.

 **Keystones to Opportunity**  6

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### Nothing New...

*"The school of the future will have as one of its important duties the instruction of parents in the means of assisting the child's natural learning in the home."*  
-Edmund Burke Huey, 1908



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### Activity

Turn to a partner. Together, think of:

- \*2 reasons families might be reluctant to become involved with the school
- \*2 reasons that teachers might be reluctant to involve families

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### The Research



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How Does Family Engagement Affect Children's Academic Achievement?



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Activity 2-4

Take time to complete the survey, "How Family Friendly is Your School?" Complete the survey up to #20 of the multiple choice. We'll come back to this later.

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When and Where?



- The earlier in a child's life, the more powerful the effects
- The most effective parent engagement is when parents work directly with their children at home

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002).

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### The Impact

When parents/families are involved, students have:

- o higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates,
- o increased motivation and better self-esteem,
- o lower rates of suspension, better attendance
- o enrollment in more challenging courses,
- o better social skills and adaptation to school
- o decreased use of drug and alcohol, and
- o fewer instances of violent behavior.

Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002



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### Factors to Consider

- Parents' satisfaction with their child's school
- Reading practice at home with parents
  - Home literacy environment

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002).





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### 3 Major Factors of Family Engagement



1. Families' beliefs about what is important, necessary, and *permissible* for them to do with and on behalf of their children
2. The extent to which families believe that they can have a positive influence on their children's education (self-efficacy)
3. Families' perceptions that their children and the school want them to be involved

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002).



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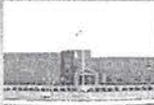
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- Specific school programs and teacher practices
- School-initiated activities to help parents/families improve the home environment
- Providing parents/families with specific information on what to do to help their children

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002).

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### Activity 6

- Based on the information shared so far today and the article you read in preparation for today, write 5 of the most important research-based benefits of family engagement that you have observed.
- Draft a way that you will let parents know that you WANT them to be involved with you and with their children's education.
- List 3 community partners that you could work with to provide for better engagement of families in your school.

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### Family Engagement

Essential, Relational, Systemic



**Keystones to Opportunity**

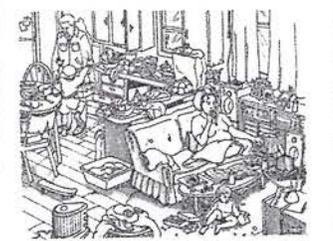
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Karen L. Mapp

CAKE REFERENCE:

- family engagement
  - ↳ flour
- great instruction
  - ↳ baking powder <sup>Soda?</sup>

### Strengths



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### How is your school doing? 7.9



Please complete the survey, "How well is your school doing?" Have a table discussion on any revelations you have.

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### The journey towards cultural competency...

- Building on strengths
- Understanding cultural values
- Personal commitment to learning about other cultures
- Network of supports
- Awareness of hidden rules
- Links to learning

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All families, no matter what their income, race, education, language, or culture, want their children to do well and can make important contributions to their children's learning.




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### Self-Efficacy



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success (is)

raise

self-efficacy

### What is Self-Efficacy?

- Belief that one has some reasonable control over decisions (voice)
- Belief that one will have some success

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrzzbaomLmc&feature=related>

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- ① Perf. Attainments
- ② Vicarious Experiences
- ③ Verbal Persuasion
- ④ Physiological States

Why should schools support the development of strong self-efficacy beliefs?



Schools will:

- Gain the student learning benefits from their parents' active involvement

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Four Specific Factors Contributing to Self-Efficacy



1. Parents' personal success
2. Parents' vicarious experience of success
3. Verbal encouragement and persuasion
4. Personal emotional arousal

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Core Belief

*All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.*

Parents' choices about being involved in their children's education are influenced by 3 key factors:

- Role construction
- Efficacy
- Sense of invitation

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parents

**Core Belief**

Reciprocity:  
Everyone has something to offer and everyone should get something positive out of the relationship

*Parents and school staff should be equal partners.*

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school  
staff

**Activity** 10

In a small group, review the Mutual Relationship handout.  
As a group, create three quotes that would complete the chart on the handout.

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Teachers play a critical role in building parents' self-efficacy for supporting learning.

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### Principals are key to successful parent engagement

- Support from the principal is important for teachers' development of personal self-efficacy for involving all parents
- Principals should highlight parent engagement regularly as part of a school wide effort

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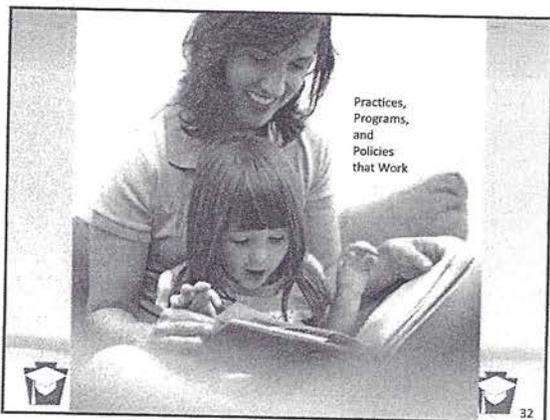
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Practices, Programs, and Policies that Work

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### Effective Family Engagement

- Linked to learning
- Provides parents with a clear idea of what students are learning and doing
- Promotes high standards
- Provides parents with skills/strategies to help their children with specific learning
- Helps parents understand what good teaching looks like
- Focuses efforts on improving learning for all students

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- Supports families involvement in decision-making
- Promotes families' connections with each other, school staff and community groups
- Invites officials to school to respond to families' concerns
- Gives families information about how the system works

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School lingo or FE Opportunities **11-13**

**GRADE**  
ITERS-R/ECERS-R  
PA Common Core  
**SAS** Standards Aligned System  
**DIBELS**

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**Six Word Memoir Classroom Activity**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=To6iaUHF6II>

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**National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships**

- **Standard 1:** Welcoming all families
- **Standard 2:** Communicating
- **Standard 3:** Supporting student
- **Standard 4:** Speaking up for every learner
- **Standard 5:** Sharing power
- **Standard 6:** Collaborating with

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**Engaged Parents Are...**

1. **Supporters** of their children's learning
2. **Monitors** of their children's time, behavior, boundaries, and resources
3. **Models** of lifelong learning and enthusiasm for education
4. **Advocates** for improved learning opportunities for their children and at their children's school
5. **Decision makers/choosers** of educational options for their children, the school, and the community
6. **Collaborators** with school staff and members of the community

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info. from:  
**FACE Handbook**  
(resource)

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**Activity**

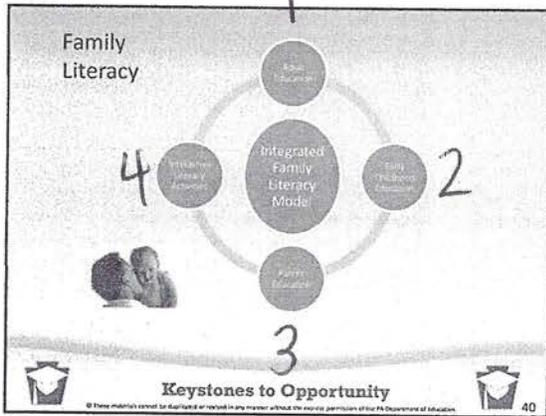
**14**

- As a table, choose an article to read about a program, practice, or policy related to family engagement.
- Using the "Effective Strategies Activity" as a guide, record key points, strengths and challenges of the practice, determine alignment with standards and markers, and how it might be adapted for your setting.
- Select a group member to report out to the larger group.

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- \* Boston ('08) = 56,000 pop  
72% free/red. lunch
- \* Fed. Way ( ) =
- \* Oakland, CA ( ) = 39,000 64%
- \* Prince George, MD = 128,000 48%
- \* St. Paul, MN = 69%?
- \* Wichita, KS = 50,000 48%



1- Adult Education

2- Early Ch. Ed.

3- Parent Education

4- Interactive Literacy Activities

Comprehensive Family Literacy- Video  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Oh1TinTCzA>

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Even Start Literacy

Who Benefits from Family Literacy?

**Children**

Children participating in Family Literacy programs show positive progress in...

- School achievement
- Attendance
- General knowledge
- Oral language
- Overall reading achievement
- Writing
- Math and science scores
- Social skills, self-esteem, and attitudes toward school
- Motivation to read
- English (ELL)

(Padak & Rasinski, 2003).  
[literacykent.edu/ocs/ej/Pubs/WhoBenefits2003.pdf](http://literacykent.edu/ocs/ej/Pubs/WhoBenefits2003.pdf)

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**Who Benefits from Family Literacy?**  
**Parents/Adults**

Parents/Adults participating in Family Literacy programs show positive progress in...

- Persistence (Parents persist in family literacy longer than in other types of adult literacy education)
- Attitudes about education
- Reading achievement
- Writing ability
- Math and science knowledge
- Knowledge about parenting topics and child development
- Social awareness and self-advocacy
- Employability

(Padak & Rasinski, 2003).  
[literacy.kent.edu/opsis/Pubs/WhoBene/lit2003.pdf](http://literacy.kent.edu/opsis/Pubs/WhoBene/lit2003.pdf)

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**Who Benefits from Family Literacy?**  
**Families**

- Value education more
- Become more involved in schools, which leads to better achievement for children
- Become emotionally closer within the family
- Read more and engage in more literacy based behaviors at home
- Build a foundation for lifelong learning

(Padak & Rasinski, 2003)

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**Who Benefits from Family Literacy?**  
**Schools**

Because of programs like Family Literacy:

- Children's social skills, self-esteem, and attitudes toward school increase
- Parents involvement in education is strengthened
- Families value education more
- Overall school achievement increases

(Padak & Rasinski, 2003)

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### Who Benefits from Family Literacy?

#### Society

Because of programs like Family Literacy, there is a decrease in:

- Nutrition and health problems
- Low school achievement and high school dropout rates
- The number of teen parents
- Joblessness and welfare dependency
- Home and community violence

(Padak & Raskinski, 2003)



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### Activity

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Using the Benefits Handout from earlier today, list 5 benefits that stood out to you resulting from family literacy.



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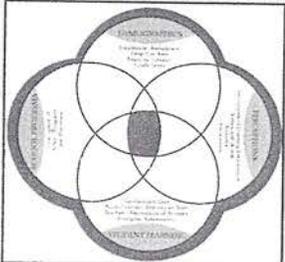
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### Bernhardt's Multiple Measures



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### A Team Approach

- Expands and ensures understanding with shared knowledge and problem-solving
- Action Research provides a strategy for improvement

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### What is Action Research?

- Systematic analysis of a problem
- Identification of interventions that might resolve the problem
- Gathering of evidence (data) that capture the results of the intervention
- Careful analysis of and reflection on the results

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### 4 Stages of Action Research



- Question-Posing
- Planning
- Enacting and Observing the Intervention
- Analyzing and Reflecting

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### Stage 1: Question Posing 17-18

- Consider how your school can improve family engagement
- Starting points for your "wonderings" can be guided by the following:
  - "I am curious about..."
  - "I would like to improve..."
  - "I don't understand why..."
  - "How can we...?"

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### Stage 2: Planning the Intervention 18-19

Ask these questions as you plan:

- What does the data suggest?
- What specific outcomes do we want to achieve?
- What interventions will help us reach or exceed these outcomes?
- What are possible side effects of these interventions?
- What resources will we need? (human or other)

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### Stage 2: Planning the Intervention (cont.) 18-19

- What is the baseline? If you want to have a sense of "better," you need to know where you are starting.
- What are our goals? How will we know if we reached them? What are my criteria for success?
- What data will tell us if each intervention worked?
- What constraints in data collection might we encounter? What can we do about them?

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### Action Research Question

Your question should include:

- Intervention (controllable action)
- Data that will inform your success
- Cause and effect (if we try this, then this will occur)
- Intended outcomes in measurable terms

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### Stage 3: Observing the Intervention

20

- Start your intervention(s).
- Collect data and analyze for each intervention.
- Change or add interventions if it doesn't seem that you are getting the results you want.
- Bring in another person to your team, if necessary.

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### Stage 3: Observing the Intervention (continued)

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- Collect more data. Check progress.
- Monitor and evaluate the changes.
- Document along the way.
- Decide when to stop collecting data and begin reflecting on what it means.

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**Stage 4: The Reflection** 

- What were the results?
- Did our intervention(s) make a measurable difference?
  - If so, did we meet/exceed our criteria for success?
  - If not, how far were we from attaining them? What could we have done differently?
- What do these results mean? Did the changes accurately reflect what happened? Did something else happen to affect the outcomes?

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**Stage 4: The Reflection (cont.)** 

- What will we continue to use in our program?
- What can we change to make this idea even better?
- What was less helpful that we can discard?
- How can we repeat this (or have others repeat it) to develop more validity for this intervention?
- What lessons have we learned?

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**Using Data for Decision Making**

Review data packet  
Use practitioner action research guide to analyze data  
and complete plan of action

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**Today we will...**

- Explore research that shows the effects of family engagement on children's literacy development and how it benefits children, adults, families, schools, and the community;
- Reflect on the impact assumptions made about diversity can have on family engagement;
- Examine promising practices in family engagement and consider the implications on our own practice
- Use mock data to assess levels of family engagement, identify strengths and weaknesses, and devise action steps to increase family engagement; and
- Create three action steps for incorporating and/or strengthening family engagement efforts for your school/district's integrated literacy plan.

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed , it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



Today I will...  
This week I will....  
This month I will....

*Thank you for your participation!*

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