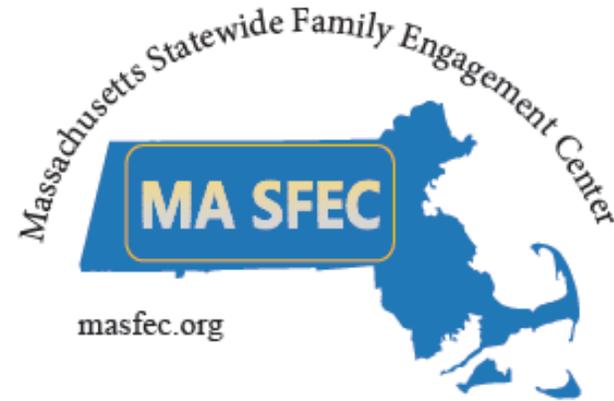




FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



INFORMING, EDUCATING, EMPOWERING FAMILIES

617-236-7210 | www.fcsn.org | fcsninfo@fcsn.org

Family Engagement & SEPACs

**SEPAC Summer School
Cambria Russell
August 11, 2020**



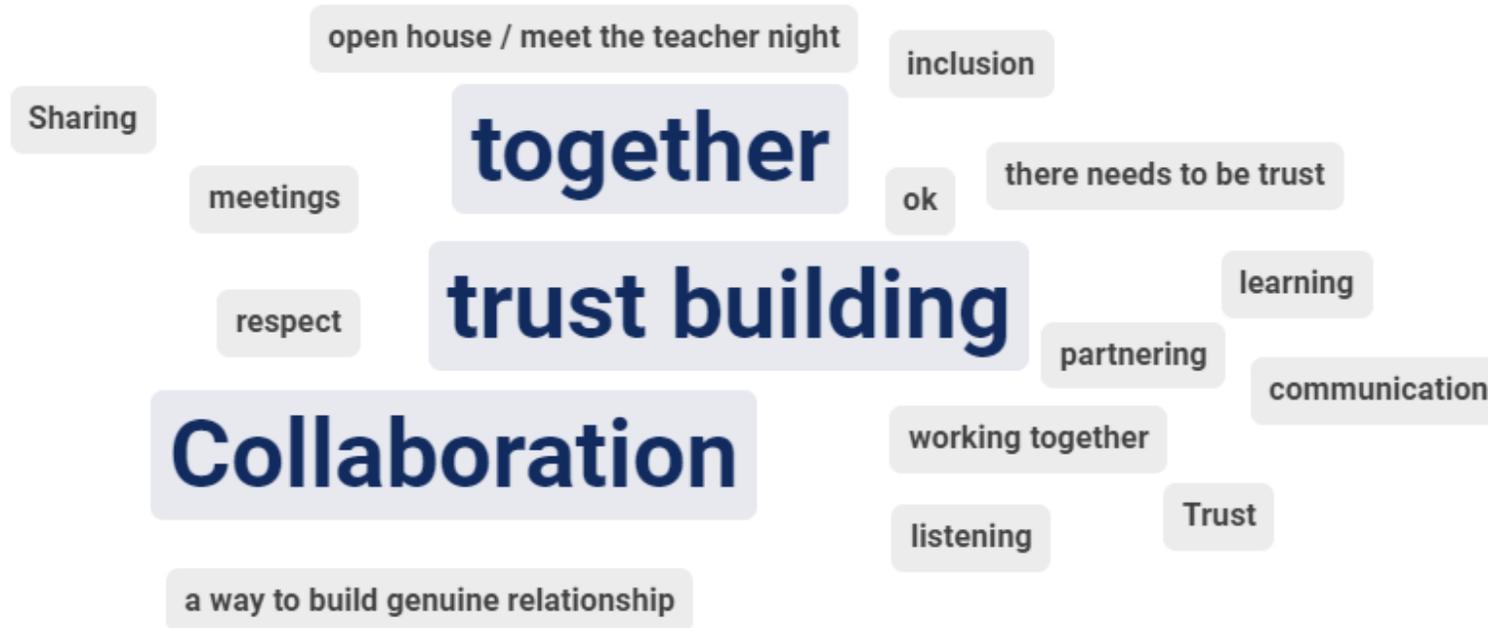
Overview

- What is family engagement?
- Benefits of family engagement
- Family engagement in MA
- Helping families engage
- Family engagement and SEPACs



What is Family Engagement?

When you hear the term "Family Engagement," what do you think of?



Defining Family Engagement



One Definition

“Family engagement refers to the **systematic** inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including in the **planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems.**”

— U.S. Dept. of Education, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Policy Statement On Family Engagement From The Early Years To The Early Grades, 2016



Another Definition

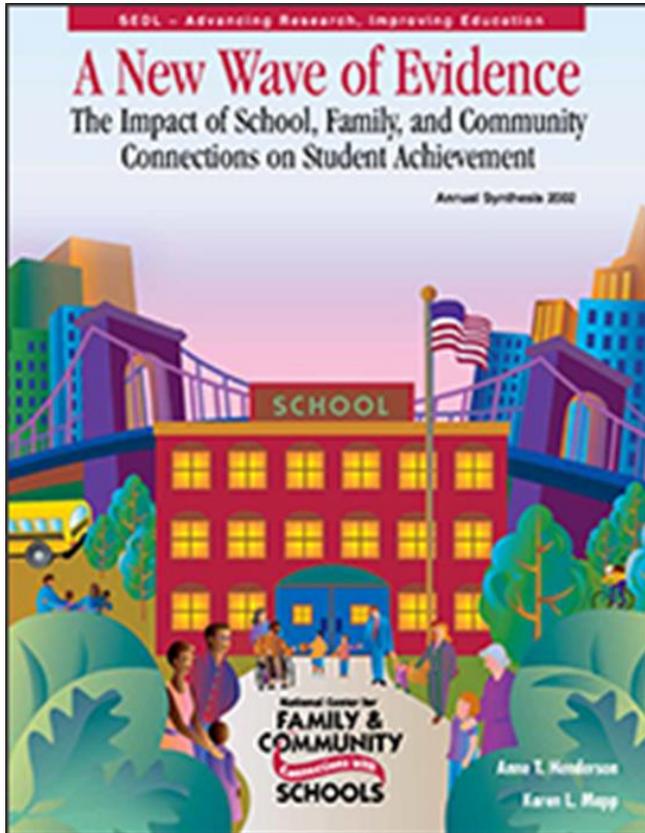
“Culturally responsive-sustaining family engagement is the practice of **authentic, equal partnership with families**, rooted in a deep knowledge and appreciation for the rich social and cultural identities, assets, habits and contexts that families bring to learning.”

–Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools (2020)

Why is it important that families are engaged in their children's learning and education?



Findings from over 45 years of research show...



when families are involved at home and at school, children do better in school... and schools do better educating children

Henderson & Mapp, A New Wave of Evidence, 2002

Engaged families support children's learning

No matter what their family income or background, children with involved parents are more likely to:

- ✓ Attend school regularly
- ✓ Have better social skills
- ✓ Earn higher grades and test scores
- ✓ Pass their classes
- ✓ Graduate and go on to postsecondary education and careers



Henderson & Mapp, A New Wave of Evidence, 2002

Engaged families impact school performance

Five Essential Elements for High-Performing Schools:

- ✓ Effective School Leadership
- ✓ Rigorous Instruction
- ✓ Collaborative Teachers
- ✓ Supportive Environment
- ✓ Strong Family-Community Ties



Underlying Essential Element:

TRUST

Family Engagement in MA



- Family Engagement Framework
- 11 State Agencies involved
- Not Exclusively for Schools
- Upcoming Affinity Group Listening Sessions
- On DESE Website and masfec.org

Framework Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle

1

Each family is unique and all families represent diverse structures. Family engagement includes genuine efforts to understand each family's beliefs, values, priorities, goals and aspirations. **Families and practitioners make joint decisions and share responsibility in a successful partnership.**

Guiding Principle

2

Diversity is expressed and experienced at multiple levels such as (but not limited to) race, religion, ethnicity, culture, language, family structures, ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and educational level. Acknowledging and accepting the need to engage all families is essential for successful engagement of diverse families and includes **recognizing the strengths that come from their diverse backgrounds.**

Guiding Principle

3

Building a respectful, trusting, and **reciprocal relationship** is a shared responsibility of families, practitioners, organizations, and systems. This positive relationship has the individual family's strengths and assets at its center.

Guiding Principle

4

Families are their child's first and best advocate. This premier role puts families in a unique position to nurture their children's growth and development and to help practitioners become knowledgeable about their child.

Guiding Principle

5

Equity is the eradication of privilege, oppression, disparities, and disadvantage. **Family engagement must be equitable.** Equitable family engagement comprises intentional and meaningful engagement activities and systems for all families or groups of families irrespective of families' level of or approach to engagement.

Framework Elements



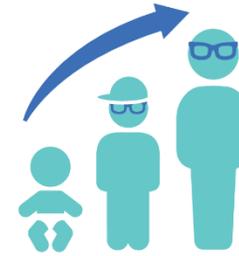
Building Positive Relationships



Promoting Family Well-being



Promoting Pathways for Partnerships with Families



Supporting Child and Youth Development and Learning

Helping Families Engage

- Remove barriers to engagement
- Provide motivation for engagement



Barriers to Engagement

- **Personal** – lack of information; feeling like an outsider
- **Cultural** – what is seen as proper or appropriate for different groups of people / cultural norms
- **Institutional** – the internal workings of organizations favor the engagement of those already involved

Motivators for Families

Family members are more likely to become involved when they:

- Understand that they *should* be involved
- Feel *invited* by the school and their children
- Feel *capable* of making a contribution



Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler

How Can We Enhance Family Motivation?

- Communicate regularly with families and encourage them to share information about their children.
- Help families understand the educational system, its policies and procedures, curriculum and instruction.
- Keep families informed about upcoming school activities and events and personally encourage them to attend.
- Support families in making connections with other families for parent-to-parent support.
- Reinforce what families already do to support their children.

More Ideas...

- Help families understand learning standards and objectives at each grade level of their children.
- Inform and help families understand school and district policies and procedures.
- Provide families with data about school performance and help them interpret what the data means.
- Help families learn about and access resources and services in the community.

How can SEPACs support Family Engagement?

In small groups, consider:

- How to remove barriers to family engagement
- How to create more opportunities for family engagement
- With the most marginalized families in mind, rather than the mythical “typical parent”?

Resources on Family Engagement

- *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (SEDL, 2002)
- *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. John, and Don Davies (The New Press, 2007)
- *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement* by Sam Redding, Marilyn Murphy, & Pamela Sheley, Editors (2011)
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED565697>
- *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships* (2014)
<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>

More Resources

- **Global Family Research Project**
<https://archive.globalfrp.org/family-involvement>
- **Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (2005)** <https://www.parent-institute.com/pdf-samples/h-d-and-s-model.pdf>
- **National Network of Partnership Schools**
<http://nnps.jhucsos.com/>
School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools, Second Edition, by Joyce L. Epstein (2011)
- **SEDL National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools** <http://www.sedl.org/connections/>
https://www.sedl.org/connections/engagement_forum/
 - *A Toolkit for Title I Parental Involvement*
 - *Working Systemically: Engaging Family & Community*



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Cambria Russell
crussell@fcsn.org

Thank You