



HLPs in Action **From Lift off to Locating the Landing Zone: Families and Educators as Co-Pilots**

Shared experience that increase focus on a common vision and values is often what bonds communities more intensely. The goal of family engagement with schools is to bring families and educators together as equal partners, and the unique circumstances of this school year have demonstrated why “robust partnership is not only desirable but crucial for promoting school success for children and youth” (Reschley & Christenson, 2012). Collaborating with families is an identified [High-Leverage Practice](#) for special educators by the Council for Exceptional Children, and for the most vulnerable students with learning and behavioral challenges, partnering with families is an essential component to supporting students' achievement (Sheridan et al., 2019).

In the literature review, *How Family, School, and Community Engagement Can Improve Student Achievement and Influence School Reform* by Wood and Bauman (2017) they conclude that schools who reach out to families and the community and build strong parent-school

relationships also were found to have a positive impact on students. Dr. Steven Constantino in his book, *Engage Every Family Five Simple Principles, 2nd Edition (2021)* says that “family engagement is not a cure-all or a panacea for everything that ails our system of education, nor is it the sole solution to our student achievement woes. However, it will move us closer, much closer, to our goals of excellence for every family”. The research is clear that, “creating meaningful partnerships is vital” (Mapp, et. al, 2017), and not just the responsibility of a few.

Get Ready to develop a shared vision and a tiered approach for building authentic partnerships reflective of the cultural and linguistic lenses of all families within your school community. From lift off to landing on a shared vision, families are far more likely to form partnerships when the norms, values, and cultural representations in schools reflect their own experiences (Herrera, 2016). These resources will help you to learn how to empower families and increase shared understanding of the essential components of family engagement.

- [Family Engagement in Virginia Tiered Systems of Support- Formed Families Forward Partnership Video](#)
- [The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships](#)
- [Recorded #EdEquityVA Webinar- Communication is Not Engagement: Advancing Equity Through Family Efficacy](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Tips \(Education Development Center\)](#)

Get Set to collaborate with families to establish engaging learning environments for all students. The context of this school year created a new sense of urgency for school and family collaboration. Prioritize learning with families, and use these resources to develop and design family engagement efforts. Develop joint professional learning with families so that all are empowered as co-pilots and equal partners with the same skills and knowledge.

- [Aligning and Integrating Family Engagement in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](#)
- [Joining Together to Create a Bold Vision for Next-Generation Family Engagement](#)
- [High Leverage Practice Highlight Tools \(2\) Organize and Facilitate Effective Meetings with Professionals and Families](#)
- [High Leverage Practices \(1, 2, 3\) Collaboration Checklist and Implementation Guide](#)
- [Professional Development for Continuity of Learning- Virginia Department of Education](#)
- [What Do These Words Mean? Virtual learning Terms for Parents to Know \(PEATC\) \(English and Spanish\)](#)

Go explore the following resources to further engage families in co-creating engaging learning environments for all students.

- [Classroom Family Engagement Rubric](#) A rubric that can help guide the development of a clear vision for family engagement, serve as a tool for self-reflection and assist with future planning.
- [Family Engagement Virginia Department of Education Resources and Flyer \(November 2020\)](#) Resources for educators and families with links to support the National PTA standards (Welcoming All Families, Communicating Effectively, Supporting Student Success, Speaking Up for Every Child, Sharing Power, Collaborating with the Community).
- [IRIS Center Module- Family Engagement: Collaborating with Families of Students with Disabilities- Revision](#) This module provides highlights practical ways to build relationships and create opportunities for involvement for families with disabilities (est. completion time: 1 hour).
- [National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement \(NAFSCE\)](#) This organization focuses on advancing family, school and community engagement highlighting meaningful ways to empower families to support their children’s learning and development.
- [Talking Points- Communicate with Families in Their Home Languages](#) A multilingual technology platform for two-way communication with families.
- [Tips for Successful Communication with Families During Online Learning \(Virginia Department of Education, VDOE\)](#) A comprehensive list of tips for educators to successfully communicate with families.
- [Virginia Family Special Education Connection](#) This website with current resources for families and caregivers of children with special needs.

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