What Engagement Looks Like

Making sure families are informed and engaged about school happenings is key to student success. When families are in the know and feel they have a real say, students show up to school prepared and ready to learn.

Informing and engaging families includes:

- Distributing hard copies of school policies (e.g., homework, discipline) in multiple languages
- Communicating in families’ preferred format (e.g., paper, email, phone call, text messages)
- Hosting conferences and trainings at times most convenient for families
- Providing childcare and light refreshments during evening meetings
- Hosting listening sessions to get families’ feedback on school policies and practices
- Sending out surveys so families have a chance to weigh in on school policies and practices

Help us ensure all families are informed and engaged by taking the action steps listed in this brochure and reading up on the policies and practices that make up a great public school (GPS) at nea.org/GPSIndicators.

For tools and resources that can help you achieve a GPS, fill out the Opportunity Checklist at myschoolmyvoice.nea.org where you will be asked questions about your school and emailed resources related to your needs.
Great Public Schools Indicators Framework

The National Education Association's Great Public Schools (GPS) Indicators Framework elaborates on the seven criteria fundamental to a quality education and calls on all educators, families, community leaders, and policy makers to join the effort to ensure that every student has access to a great public school. Together, we can achieve greatness. Here we focus on one of the seven criteria required for student success—Family and Community Engagement.

Family and Community Engagement

The research is clear—when families and communities are engaged in education, students attend school regularly, perform at higher levels, and graduate on time. Student success requires that we all do our part—school administrators must reach out to families and make every effort to make them feel welcomed and ensure that their voices matter. For families, it is their responsibility to hold schools accountable. Also, local communities are perfect partners for schools, offering an exchange of resources and access to additional student services.

A Great Education

As students progress during the school year, it is essential that they are provided all the resources and supports they need to succeed. A quality education begins with access to an exemplary early childhood education and continues to develop students socially, emotionally, and cognitively, preparing them for college and 21st-century careers. The bridge from early childhood education to graduation is only made possible with:

- High expectations and a well-rounded curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions that lift all students, no matter their zip code;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Meaningful assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.

How You Can Advocate for a Great Public School—Family and Community Engagement

**Essential Pieces**

- Collaboration with Families to Improve Achievement
- Inclusiveness and Outreach to Families
- Capacity for Advocacy and Equity
- Community Partnerships (Wrap-Around Services)
- Staff Professional Learning in Family Engagement

**Action Steps**

- Join your school’s parent organization.
- Ask your principal to hire a community liaison, whose job is to go out into the community and meet with families about school policies and practices.
- Does your school collect parent and caregiver feedback through meetings and/or surveys?
- Does your school engage families on school policies, processes, and procedures?
- Encourage your principal to provide access to school services beyond the school day (e.g., school library, computer facilities, gym).
- Ask your principal for onsite services like a family resource center and health clinic.
- Ask your principal if educators have received training in family and community engagement.