

What Engagement Looks Like

Communication between schools, families, and communities is changing. Better approaches are being used to increase the flow of two-way information, but there's always room for improvement. You may have experienced the following forms of formal communication:

- Distribution of school policies (e.g., homework, discipline).
- Parent education workshops.
- Special programs to address curriculum changes, testing, and other issues of interest to the community.

But schools may also use the following, more informal methods of communicating with families:

- Surveys.
- Notebook exchanges, in which parents and educators can share notes with one another.
- Home visits.
- Classroom visits by parents and school tours.
- Principal roundtables or coffee hours.

Family and community engagement is one critical piece of a continuum of known factors that improve student achievement.

For more information on what makes a great public school, please visit:

www.nea.org/gpsindicators

Is Your School a Great Public School?

Family and Community Engagement

Series 2 of 7



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 with development of 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 standards and a rigorous curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions conducive to engagement and enrichment;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Valid assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.

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, graduate, and perform at higher levels.

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.



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

Does your school have a plan to engage parents?

Ask your principal if the school has any formal agreements with community partners.

Does your school have a community liaison?

Ask your principal for information on academic standards, school procedures, and student progress data in multiple formats and languages.

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).

Work with your principal to form partnerships with the community to provide family support services, including programs for at-risk youth and developmental activities for caregivers.

Ask your principal if educators have received training in family and community engagement.