How to Use the Self-Assessment

The following self-assessment provides district leaders with a tool for examining existing systems and policies regarding family engagement practices from an equity and access lens, including those centered on the formative assessment process. District leaders can use this tool to reflect on the current structures that are in place to ensure all families are effectively reached and supported by the district and each school community. The self-assessment has been organized according to research-based standards of effective family engagement practices modeled on the Illinois State Board of Education: Family Engagement Framework.

Principle 1:
Build a culture of inclusiveness that respects all families and views them as valuable assets.

Principle 2:
Create a welcoming environment that builds trust and is responsive to individual strengths and needs.

Principle 3:
Ensure two-way communication between families and schools is linked to student achievement.

Principle 4:
Understand cultures and communicate in ways that are appropriate for each family.

Under each standard, the self-assessment:

- Highlights specific goals to achieve/examine each standard through an equity and access lens;
- Provides an example of what each goal might look like in practice;
- Offers a simple checklist to gauge the current level of progress toward meeting each goal;
- Includes space to record current efforts and/or evidence of work to meet each goal; and
- Provides additional space to record any next steps toward meeting each goal.

The tool can be used as a self-assessment by district leaders, as well as to help guide a larger group effort aimed at examining the equity of policies, programs, and practices in the school community. Overall, the intent of the tool is to provide school communities with a thought-provoking set of standards and goals that gauge the effectiveness of existing district-wide efforts in engaging diverse families, with the ultimate goal of supporting all student learning and success.

BuildInitiative.org/FamilyEngagementToolkit
### EQUITY AND ACCESS SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

**Build a Culture of Inclusiveness That Respects All Families and Views Them as Valuable Assets**

All families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff and leadership, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE</th>
<th>PROGRESS</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>NEXT STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A jointly developed vision/mission for family engagement that values diversity is shared with all stakeholders and drives policies, programs and practices.</td>
<td>District convenes a meeting between district/school leaders and representatives from families and the community to discuss vision/mission and commit to an inclusive, systemic approach to partnerships with families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>District leaders support policies, programs and practices that build relational trust and welcoming school environments that are inviting to all families.</td>
<td>District leaders connect with families to listen and learn about the students, families, and community, use a strength-based approach when responding to student and family needs, and have the knowledge, skill, and capacity to follow through on their commitments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>District leaders facilitate efforts to actively remove barriers to family partnership and participation, such as socioeconomic, mobility, and language differences.</td>
<td>District offers family activities and events free of cost and provides transportation by utilizing resources from the school budget, fundraising, and contributions from community businesses and organizations.</td>
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### ENSURE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS IS LINKED TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Families and school staff and leadership engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>District leaders ensure that all communication from the school community is clear, constructive, ongoing, and accessible to all, and in the languages of families.</td>
<td>District leaders support policies and practices that include the use of multiple communication paths, both formally and informally, to develop connections with families.</td>
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<td>District leaders facilitate processes to effectively provide access to information on current issues that impact student learning to all families and the larger community.</td>
<td>District leaders, school staff, families, and community members strategically look at developing issues that affect students and families to determine whether there is a need for school-wide response.</td>
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<tr>
<td>District leaders support policies, programs, and practices that support communication and connections among all families.</td>
<td>District leaders, in collaboration with school staff, work to support efforts to facilitate communication between families, such as offering networking opportunities, setting up district-wide listservs, blogs, and other social events.</td>
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</table>
CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT THAT BUILDS TRUST AND IS RESPONSIVE TO INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Families and school staff and leadership continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

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| District leaders ensure data regarding students’ and families’ socio-cultural, linguistic, and educational needs are collected, reviewed, and used to inform the policies, programs, and practices across the school community. | District leaders work to ensure information from various sources regarding students and families in the district (e.g. Census data, summative and formative assessments, school climate surveys, etc.) inform and are reflected in policies, practices, and continuous improvement plans. | ☑️ Not Yet Addressing Goal  
☑️ Started Initial Planning to Address Goal  
☑️ Began Efforts to Address Goal  
☑️ Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal  
☑️ Fully Addressing this Goal | | |
| District leaders support efforts that encourage all families to contribute their cultural, knowledge, skills, and talents to the school community. | District leaders support policies and practices that create opportunities for families to connect with educators to help support learning projects occurring in the classroom, and to integrate information about students’ families into the curriculum and larger school community. | ☑️ Not Yet Addressing Goal  
☑️ Started Initial Planning to Address Goal  
☑️ Began Efforts to Address Goal  
☑️ Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal  
☑️ Fully Addressing this Goal | | |
| District leaders prioritize policies, programs, and practices that support all families to meaningfully engage in activities at home that advance student learning and healthy development. | District leaders allocate funding to support programs focused on sharing information, resources, and modeling activities for families to support student learning and healthy development at home (See “Home Visiting” Section in Two-Way Communication for Teachers). | ☑️ Not Yet Addressing Goal  
☑️ Started Initial Planning to Address Goal  
☑️ Began Efforts to Address Goal  
☑️ Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal  
☑️ Fully Addressing this Goal | | |
| District leaders promote opportunities that build the capacity of staff to effectively engage all families in supporting student learning and healthy development. | District leaders prioritize building the culturally relevant practices of staff through district-wide professional learning opportunities, in order to effectively engage families with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and languages. | ☑️ Not Yet Addressing Goal  
☑️ Started Initial Planning to Address Goal  
☑️ Began Efforts to Address Goal  
☑️ Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal  
☑️ Fully Addressing this Goal | | |

UNDERSTAND CULTURES AND COMMUNICATE IN WAYS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR EACH FAMILY

Families and school staff and leadership collaborate with community members to support staff ability in developing appropriate communication methods with all families.

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</table>
| District leaders partner with community organizations to enhance family engagement efforts. | District leaders leverage partnerships with community organizations to provide resources that promote family assets and enable family engagement in the educational process (e.g. through MOUs to provide social services and/or referrals, by offering in-kind support, and/or through the development of resource guides, etc.). | ☑️ Not Yet Addressing Goal  
☑️ Started Initial Planning to Address Goal  
☑️ Began Efforts to Address Goal  
☑️ Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal  
☑️ Fully Addressing this Goal | | |

Sources:

This document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department, and you should not assume endorsement by the U.S. Federal Government.