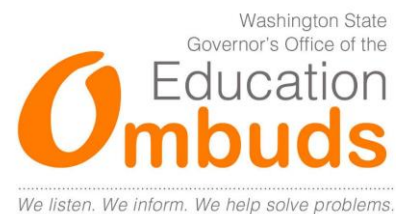


# Family and Community Engagement Recommendations (2016)

*Report to the Legislature,  
In Response to SSHB 1408*



**The Washington State Governor's Office of the  
Education Ombuds (Prepared with Input from  
the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight  
and Accountability Committee)**

December 1, 2016 (Updated March 10, 2017)

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## Executive Summary

Second Substitute HB 1408 (“SSHB 1408”) charged the Office of the Education Ombuds (“OEO”), along with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (“EOGOAC”), with developing and recommending to the education committees of the legislature by December 1, 2016 a definition and model or framework for the staff position variously referred to as “family engagement coordinator”, “parent and family engagement coordinator”, and “parent involvement coordinator”.<sup>1</sup> In developing this model or framework, OEO and EOGOAC were directed to collaborate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”), the Washington Education Association (“WEA”), the Public School Employees of Washington (“PSE”), the Washington School Counselors’ Association (“WSCA”), the Association of Washington School Principals (“AWSP”), and the Washington State School Directors’ Association (“WSSDA”).

Following a process of secondary research, stakeholder input and refinement, including:

- synthesizing prior recommendations to the state relating to the title, role, and funding of family engagement coordinators;
- reviewing the background and context of the various titles, roles, and models or frameworks for family or parent engagement or involvement coordinators currently existing in state law and practice;
- collecting and reviewing existing local and national research on best practices for family engagement;
- soliciting input from the stakeholders identified in 1408;
- soliciting input from current family engagement staff; and
- soliciting input from families and community members through an online and paper survey, focus groups, and panels hosted by the EOGOAC,

OEO recommends to the legislature that it provide leadership, clarity, and vision in the development and sustainability of meaningful, culturally-responsive school and family partnerships by taking the following steps:

1. Adopt as the state’s commitment to family engagement the guiding statement crafted by the ESSA Family and Community Engagement Workgroup;
2. Form a multi-year statewide workgroup that brings direct family, educator, and community voices to the center of the process to create a framework for implementing the EOGOAC’s recent family and community engagement recommendations;
3. Devote adequate resources to this state-level workgroup to conduct community-based meetings to draw on families’ experiences statewide and support cultural responsiveness, language access, and other forms of access (e.g., supporting nontraditional families and guardians, providing for disability accommodations) from the outset of planning and throughout implementation of family and community engagement efforts; and
4. Fund a comprehensive system of education with family and community engagement as a foundation.

It may be tempting to jump to adopt a new title, a definition of the role, and a framework for family engagement coordinators based on existing national research, prior recommendations from various stakeholder groups, and feedback from the families surveyed by OEO in connection with this report. However, if there is one thing that stands out from that work, it is that **there is nothing that can adequately substitute for direct participation by a diverse group of families**,

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<sup>1</sup> SSHB 1408, <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1408-S2.SL.pdf>.

**educators, and community members in determining what works for families, communities, and educators to effectively collaborate in support of student success in our schools.**

Unfortunately, because no funding was allocated to complete the work of 1408, and also due to the short timeframe for the project (6 months), it was impossible to engage in the kind of process that reasonably could be expected to offer a meaningful opportunity for families, community members, and educators across the state to directly provide input. We are, however, able to provide through this report a foundation and roadmap for the kind of collaborative process that can lead to a definition and framework best suited for Washington's schools, families, and students.<sup>2</sup>

This recommendation for continued work should not be misunderstood as a delay or avoidance of decision-making. Indeed, the process that we recommend—of leveraging the direct voices of diverse families, educators, and community members—is the very kind of dual-capacity building, culturally responsive, shared-decision making that fosters effective family and school partnerships to advance student learning.

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<sup>2</sup> OEO would like to thank the families, community and agency partners, and OEO staff that contributed to this report. Without families willing to share their experiences through surveys, panels, and focus groups, this report would not have been possible. Additionally, Carlyn Mueller and Jocelyn Tillisch were invaluable interns during the research stage. Penelope Mena and Paula Moore at OSPI provided assistance with identifying school districts that could offer examples of the work. Finally, EOGOAC provided a critical sounding board for the development of this report.

## Evolution of Parent Involvement/Family and Community Engagement in Washington State

The work of 1408 is significant and timely given national, state, and local discussions of how schools and diverse families can effectively collaborate to foster students' academic and social emotional learning. Increasingly, school leaders are expanding their definition of effective collaboration from parent involvement in school activities, to family and community engagement in shared-decision making and responsibility for student success. School communities are also increasingly applying an equity lens to student growth initiatives, including how to foster and maintain partnerships with families and communities. Over the past decade, educators and policy makers have shifted from talking about "parent involvement," to "family engagement", and then to "family and community engagement." This shifting of language recognizes the complementary and interdependent influences of families, communities, and schools in students' academic and social development, as well as the value of a collaborative approach to school policy and practice. This pathway forward is reflected in the work of the EOGOAC, OEO, prototypical schools model, and state ESSA work, to be discussed below.

### Early Recommendations from EOGOAC on Family Engagement

Within Washington State, inquiries about best practices for family and community engagement were an integral part of the development of the EOGOAC itself. EOGOAC was created during the 2009 legislative session to address the opportunity gap in Washington State (RCW 28A.300.136). Its work is an outgrowth of five Achievement Gap Studies that drew on the expertise of the Commissions on African American Affairs, Asian Pacific American Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning. In its first year, the EOGOAC (then called the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee), synthesized the five studies, highlighting significant factors in reducing opportunity gaps and realizing equity for students of color, including supporting and facilitating culturally responsive family and community involvement and outreach. In its *Synthesis of the Recommendations from the 2008 Achievement Gap Studies* (p.2), the EOGOAC makes clear that this kind of engagement depends not only on educators developing cultural competence, but also on the state creating an infrastructure of support within schools and districts that leverage families and communities' expertise and perspectives on how to best cultivate every student's potential. That *Synthesis*, delivered to the legislature in 2009, brought forward several key elements for successful engagement of diverse families, including:

- Recognizing and respecting families' rich and varied backgrounds and life experiences;
- Employing family advocates and liaisons to build connections;
- Developing government to government relationships with Tribal Governments;
- Collaborating with community-based organizations; and
- Providing interpretation and translation services for limited English proficient parents.

Seven years later, many of these needs still exist.<sup>3</sup> In its 2016 report to the legislature, EOGOAC emphasized the importance of family engagement across students' experiences, from the creation of discipline policies to fostering effective reengagement practices.<sup>4</sup> EOGOAC highlighted family and community engagement as a key component of an integrated student supports model and recommended a change in title and allocation for the position (p.28).<sup>5</sup> Specifically, EOGOAC recommended:

***Increase Allocation for Family and Community Engagement Coordinators***

- *In order to be more inclusive of the diversity of families within the state and to reflect national research, the title of the position should be changed from Family Engagement Coordinator to Family and Community Engagement Coordinator.*
- *Each school district to receive the allocation determined in the prototypical funding model with the condition that no district receives less than 1 FTE allocation per district.*
- *The allocation must be used for the purposes of family engagement and not for other duties.*
- *Family engagement coordinators should be required to engage in cultural competence training and have the appropriate background to act as a liaison between the complex expectations of schools and unique families.*

***Family and community engagement framework***

- *Every school district must be required to adopt a family and community engagement framework based on national research and evidence-based models. The legislature must adopt family and community engagement standards to define and measure family and community engagement strategies used in schools and districts. As family engagement is a required component of both federal (Title I, Part A, Title III and school improvement for Priority, Focus and School Improvement Grants) and state (Learning Assistance Program) programs, it is essential that schools use culturally responsive research and evidence-based family engagement models and standards tailored to the community being served.*

EOGOAC's 2016 recommendations provide the starting point for the future work-plan to be discussed later in the "Recommendations" section of this report.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, in the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs' Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, the Commission recognized the connection between community and family partnership in improving academic success. CAPAA Strategic Plan 2015-2018 (at p. 11), <http://capaa.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CAPAA2015-2018-StrategicPlanFinal.pdf>. Similarly, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs recognized in its 2013-2014 report that academic successes for Latino students were tied to parents being informed and engaged. CHA 2013-2014 Latino/Hispanic Assessment Report at p.7, [http://cha.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/CHA\\_Report-2014\\_Web.pdf](http://cha.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/CHA_Report-2014_Web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> EOGOAC Annual Report to the Legislature (2016) at p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> RCW 28A.150.260 Allocation of state funding to support instructional program of basic education — Distribution formula — Prototypical schools — Enhancements and adjustments — Review and approval — Enrollment calculation. Retrieved from <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.260>





## Development of OEO and Its Expertise

The Washington State Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds was founded by the legislature in 2006 to serve as a resource to eliminate barriers to student achievement and tackle the opportunity gap, primarily by leveraging collaborative family engagement as a conflict resolution tool. Its founding legislators were some of the original leaders of EOGOAC and continue to serve in that role. OEO was the first state education ombuds office of its kind in the nation and has served as a model for other agencies nationally and locally since its inception. OEO is also intended to be the lead state agency on harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB). Over the years, OEO has become a leading voice on family engagement practices, as well as a trusted source of information for families as they navigate complex issues within the K-12 system.

The mission of the OEO is three-fold: direct service to families and educators through casework and informal conflict resolution; data-driven outreach to families, communities, and educators to support and strengthen school-family partnerships and build understanding and capacity to engage on important education concerns in the state; and policy recommendations based on the OEO’s direct interaction with families and educators and as a member of state education committees such as Results WA, EOGOAC, ESSA, and the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup. OEO performs its three functions by:

- Listening to concerns and offering an impartial, independent perspective
- Advocating for consumer access to fair processes
- Ensuring that in resolving conflicts between schools and families, all stakeholders focus on equitable processes
- Resolving complaints through alternative dispute resolution techniques
- Collecting data, identifying trends, and reporting recommendations to policy-makers and elected officials to improve educational access and outcomes for every student
- Answering questions about the public education system
- Providing trainings to families, educators, and community groups on education issues and creating new publications and resources to help stakeholders navigate the state’s public K-12 system



All of OEO's services are offered free of charge and are intended to resolve conflicts informally and increase the quality of the relationship between families and schools, rather than allow deterioration of communication and collaboration to the point where formal processes and litigation result. Demand for OEO's supports, especially from families with special education, discipline, and HIB concerns, has continued to increase over the years as families have recognized the unique role of the agency and its ability to both facilitate individual dispute resolution and strengthen school-family relationships. Last fiscal year, 4.9 FTE Ombuds provided direct service in 1140 cases statewide and made almost 90 presentations as a team. The previous year, OEO's small team staffed 1367 cases.

OEO's role as a policy voice has increased in recent years as the legislature has tasked the office with leading recommendations on such issues as special education reform, language access, and now, best practices for family engagement in Washington. OEO's Director also served as a consolidated plan team member this year for Washington's draft state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act, as well as the family and community engagement workgroup.

### Inclusion of Parent Involvement Coordinators in the Prototypical Schools Model

Around the same time that EOGOAC was created and a few years after OEO's founding, the legislature created a new finance structure called the prototypical school funding model, which was intended to increase transparency in education funding and identify the elements required to fulfill Washington's basic education mandate.<sup>6</sup> The Quality Education Council (QEC) was charged with recommending staffing allocations for a prototypical school that would fulfill these conditions. In 2010, OSPI's Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL), in collaboration with OEO, convened a group of school and ESD representatives with extensive experience engaging diverse families, to assist QEC in determining an adequate level of staffing for classified parent involvement coordinators.<sup>7</sup> The workgroup recognized the influence of not only parents, but also other family members and communities, on students' relationship with and success in school, and encouraged a shift from "parent" involvement to "family" involvement. In 2013, QEC recommended that the prototypical funding model title of "parent involvement coordinator" be replaced with "family involvement coordinator."<sup>8</sup> At that time, the position was included as a staffing category in the funding model, but no funding was allocated.

In its 2013-2014 annual report,<sup>9</sup> OEO recommended strengthening Washington's prototypical schools model to better support family and school partnerships. Specifically, OEO recommended that the state take the following steps for building capacity (p. 20):

- Allocate full funding for at least one family engagement coordinator in each school;
- Incorporate principles of effective family engagement in teacher and administrator preparation programs;
- Support the cultural competence of all staff; and
- Support replication of successful programs to build sustainable school/family partnerships.

OEO cautioned at that time that while having a dedicated staff member at each school is a productive start to addressing family and community engagement, no one person can build and lead a program alone. Even with a prototypical schools model that could be adequately funded in the future, families will only find success in collaboration if teachers and school administrators have sufficient foundations in cultural competence, communication, and conflict resolution skills to engage in the practice of partnership throughout the school year (p. 21).

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<sup>6</sup> RCW 28A.300.173.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.k12.wa.us/QEC/Meetings2010/Sept/4-ParentInvolvementCoordinator.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Quality Education Council Report to Legislature (pp. 13-14), <http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2013documents/QEC2013Report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://oeo.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/OEO\\_Annual\\_Report\\_Summary\\_2013-2014.pdf](http://oeo.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/OEO_Annual_Report_Summary_2013-2014.pdf)

### Allocation versus Actual Expenditures on Parent Involvement/Family Engagement Coordinators

While the state's prototypical funding model now allocates funds for parent involvement coordinators, this model determines the amounts allocated to districts, but does not mandate that the funds be spent on the staffing positions they are allocated for in the model.<sup>10</sup> In practice, this means that while some districts use the allocation to fund family engagement staff, others do not.

For the 2014-15 school year, the state allocated a total of 107.76 FTE to staff school level "Parent Involvement Coordinator" roles. Districts actually staffed a total of only = 46.54 FTE – using less than half of the allocated staffing for this designated role. At the actual staffing level, the ratio of students for each school level Parent Involvement Coordinator equaled **21,191.52 students: 1 FTE Parent Involvement Coordinator**, calculating out to **\$2.60 per student** for the academic year.<sup>11</sup>

One of the reasons for this disconnect between the allocation model and actual staffing was highlighted in the Washington Association of School Administrators' (WASA) 2016 report. WASA points out that the baseline for school funding comes from a 2009 calculation that has not changed to take into account the new elements that are part of the prototypical school model nor the increased needs for teacher staffing as school populations have grown and changed.<sup>12</sup>

Many districts have funded family engagement staff by utilizing the allocation from the prototypical model along with Learning Assistance Program ("LAP") and Title I funds. In 2013, the legislature included employment of parent and family engagement coordinators as an activity that could be supported with LAP dollars, if they were identified as a best practice.<sup>13</sup> OSPI's Technical Report on Best Practices and Strategies for English Language Arts then outlined evidence-based family involvement strategies to improve student outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Roadmap "Follow the Money" Presentation, <http://www.roadmapproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016-Follow-the-Money-Presentation.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> OSPI's recent financial reporting on actual funding versus the prototypical school allocation model is available at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SAFS/INS/2776/Portal.asp>; District Allocation of State Resources Portal 2014-2015 (Excel) (Reposted August 29, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Washington Association of School Administrators, Recommendations to the Legislature's Education Funding Task Force (2016), [https://www.wasa-oly.org/images/WASA/4.0%20Government%20Relations/4.3%20Current%20Issues/Download\\_Files/WASA%20Recommendations%20to%20EFTF%20Final%207-29-16.pdf](https://www.wasa-oly.org/images/WASA/4.0%20Government%20Relations/4.3%20Current%20Issues/Download_Files/WASA%20Recommendations%20to%20EFTF%20Final%207-29-16.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2013-14/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5946-S.L.pdf?cite=2013%202nd%20sp.s.%20c%2018%20C2%A7%20203;RCW%2028A.165.035>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.k12.wa.us/SSEO/pubdocs/ELA-MenuBestPracticesStrategies2015.pdf>.

## Family and Community Engagement in the Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) carries forward from the No Child Left Behind Act, the requirements that states and districts develop policies and set aside funds to support parent involvement in Title I schools.<sup>15</sup> Under ESSA, every district is required to set aside at least 1% of its Title I funds for family engagement, with 90% of these funds to go directly to schools. High-needs schools must receive priority in funding and parents with low incomes must be included in decision-making for how these engagement funds are spent. Funds must be spent in at least one of the following areas: programs that reach families at home, in their communities, and at school; information-dissemination on best practices for family engagement, especially supporting families that are economically disadvantaged; sub-grants to schools to collaborate with nonprofits or businesses that have a reputation for improving engagement efforts; or other activities that the district identifies for engagement.<sup>16</sup>

### Dual Capacity Building and Cultural Responsiveness

Of particular note is ESSA’s requirement to leverage a dual capacity-building policy and framework to ensure that every student is supported in school and that every family feels engaged and welcomed in decision-making, leadership, and organizational culture shifts.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, ESSA places requirements on schools to make inclusion and cultural responsiveness core values of family and community engagement strategies by specifically calling out the need to involve families with limited English proficiency, families with disabilities, and families of migrant children in a format and language they understand. Under ESSA, family and community engagement is envisioned as a coordinated and integrated effort across programs with one of the ultimate goals being the improvement of student achievement. As part of ESSA’s implementation, the federal government has planned to create grant opportunities under Title IV for statewide family engagement centers.<sup>18</sup>

### Washington State’s ESSA Planning

As part of its state ESSA implementation plan, Washington is required to address how it will support schools and districts in implementing family engagement strategies. Not only is Washington required to submit a state plan to the U.S. Department of Education that addresses family engagement, but also every district is required to submit a plan to the state and every school identified as “in need of comprehensive support” must collaborate with the district to develop and implement a plan that addresses in part its family engagement practices.

In March 2016, OSPI convened a Consolidated Plan Team (CPT) and several workgroups to contribute to initial drafting of recommendations for the state’s ESSA plan. One of the workgroups, originally titled Parent and Community Engagement, met three times to develop recommendations to present to the CPT for review and recommendation to the Superintendent for the state’s plan. These recommendations and their final status after review by the full CPT are included in [Appendix A](#).

OEO’s Director Carrie Basas participated as a member of both the Parent and Community Engagement Workgroup and the Consolidated Plan Team, serving as one of EOGOAC’s representatives. The first change that the Workgroup made was to

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<sup>15</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act, <http://www.ed.gov/ESSA>; Parent Involvement: Title I, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance for NCLB, <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc>.

<sup>16</sup> ESSA, Sec. 1116. Parent and family engagement. Leadership Conference Education Fund, Parent and Family Engagement Provisions in ESSA (2016), <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/education/ESSA-Parent-Family-Engagement.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education’s Dual Capacity-Building Framework for School-Family Partnerships, <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/frameworks-resources.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Title IV, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools; ESSA, Sec. 4501.

adopt the more inclusive language of “family and community engagement” rather than focus on traditional parent status alone. One of the central themes of the Workgroup’s discussions was recognizing the importance of equity in approaching family and community engagement by shifting from schools working with parents to engaging families and communities as collaborative partners in supporting student growth and success. The guiding statement recommended by the Workgroup, and edited and recommended by the CPT was that OSPI should:

*Devote resources and staff to ensure schools, districts, and OSPI support and grow family and community collaboration and engagement. This should occur from students’ birth through graduation and onto their careers. This effort on family and community engagement is the undergirding to support the success of all students and families, reduce the opportunity gap, and develop more culturally responsive and inclusive schools. Schools, districts, and OSPI must recruit, hire, train, and retain all staff for this commitment to cultural responsiveness, inclusion, and family-community-school engagement. Families, communities, community-based organizations, civic groups, youth service groups, ethnic and racial affinity and support groups, and faith-based organizations provide vital input and wisdom about their students. All staff should leverage this knowledge to improve school policies and practices. When planning for, or implementing racially and culturally equitable and inclusive (e.g., disability, gender, faith, language) family and community engagement efforts, schools, districts, and OSPI must focus on reaching and developing ongoing relationships with families and students whose voices have been lost or not heard as well by holding diversity and inclusion as core values. Washington’s students and families come from diverse communities, life experiences, and perspectives and enrich our schools with their input and support.*

The Family and Community Engagement Workgroup made more than 25 recommendations to the Consolidated Plan Team, as well as other workgroups. Several recommendations were not approved by the Consolidated Plan Team or were considered to be internal work for OSPI, but some highlights are included as part of a summary of the Workgroup’s early discussions in [Appendix B](#). State Superintendent Randy Dorn reviewed the recommendations that were forwarded by the CPT and approved the following commitments that were then circulated for public feedback through January 2017:<sup>19</sup>

- Adopt a guiding statement of family and community collaboration to frame OSPI’s work with ESSA,<sup>20</sup> including “devote resources and staff to ensure schools, districts, and OSPI support and grow family and community engagement” from “birth through graduation and onto their careers . . . “
- “Ensure research-based family and community collaboration is woven into all of the federal programs as a key instructional and school improvement strategy . . . ”<sup>21</sup>
- “OSPI, districts, and schools will be encouraged to increase transparency”<sup>22</sup>
- “Districts should identify community groups providing key family collaboration services and explore establishing community partnerships . . . ”<sup>23</sup>
- “Students and families must receive state and district assessment information about student academic progress that is timely, accessible, and actionable . . . ”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Washington’s ESSA Consolidated Plan, Parent and Community Engagement Recommendations (October 31, 2016), at pp. 31-40, <http://k12.wa.us/ESEA/ESSA/pubdocs/ESSARecommendationsApprovedStateSuptDorn.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Relevant ESSA sections include: Sec. 1111(a)(1)(A); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F); Sec. 1111(g)(1)(D); Sec. 1111(g)(1)(G); 1112(b)(7); Sec. 1112(e); Sec. 1116(a)(1)

<sup>21</sup> Relevant ESSA sections include: Sec. 1111(a)(1)(A); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F); Sec. 1112(a)(1)(A); Sec. 1112(b)(7); Sec. 1112(e); Sec. 1116(a)(1)

<sup>22</sup> Relevant ESSA sections include: Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F); Sec. 1116(a)(2)(D); Sec. 1116.

<sup>23</sup> Relevant ESSA sections include: Sec. 1116(e); Sec. 1111(g)(1)(A); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(H); Sec. 1119

<sup>24</sup> Relevant ESSA sections include: Sec. 1111(b)(2)(B); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C); Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F)

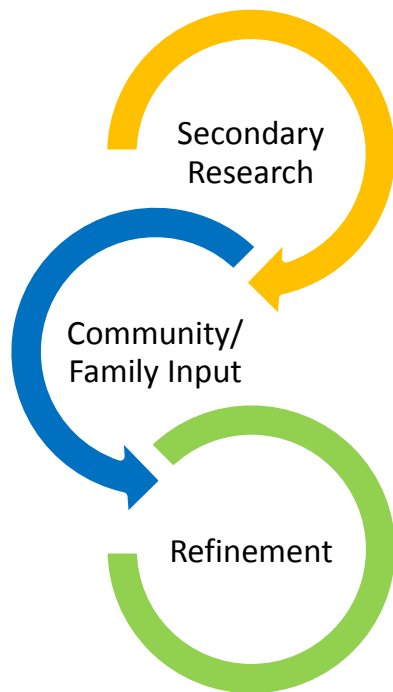
Detailed information about the superintendent-approved recommendations can be found in [Appendix A](#). The state's plan is due to the U.S. Department of Education later in 2017.



### OEO's Process to Address 1408's Charge

The charge of 1408 clearly comes at a time when multiple discussions about basic education are ongoing and best practices for leveraging family and community engagement to narrow, and eventually eliminate, the opportunity gap are at the forefront of state education policy. Rather than adding to the many voices of this work by creating a separate or distinct approach, OEO decided to have its research and analysis for this report model what family engagement should look like. Therefore, OEO mapped best practices in the field (secondary research); created opportunities for family and community input through surveys, focus groups, and panels at EOGOAC meetings; and leveraged feedback from stakeholders to refine its recommendations.

Figure 1: OEO's Family-Centered Model for Responding to 1408



This approach to identifying a definition of family engagement and a structure for the work within schools and districts was extremely limited given the small size of OEO as an agency and the absence of appropriation of funds to do the work of 1408. However, OEO saw this work as an initial step in how a larger effort around family and community engagement could unfold in the future with adequate resources from the legislature and the investment of a spectrum of partners and perspectives.

### Mapping Prevalent National Models of Family Engagement

To frame the work of 1408, OEO first took a look at the dominant national models of family engagement, identifying the key models as Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the National Conference of State Legislatures, California, and the University of Washington. OEO presented these models to EGOAC at its August meeting and will offer a brief description of each in this report to show similarities and differences between these approaches.



The Harvard Family Research Project approaches family engagement as an issue of human-centered design, meaning taking an “approach that is based on observation, empathy, optimism, collaboration, and experimentation” to create “new possibilities for educators to motivate and sustain family engagement.”<sup>25</sup> Its overarching values are shared responsibility, policy work that builds institutional capacity to reach every family, family engagement as a continuous and dynamic process across student development stages and settings, and appreciation for the multiple definitions of family and family roles. Harvard’s research team shares profiles of state work on its website, including snapshots from Maryland, Oregon, and California.

Johns Hopkins University runs the National Network of Partnership Schools<sup>26</sup> and offers concrete strategies for partnership, primarily regarding parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with communities. Coming from the work of Dr. Joyce Epstein in the early 1990s, and often referred to as the “Epstein model”, this family engagement framework is perhaps the most popular nationally, and anecdotally, within Washington as well.

Some researchers have critiqued this model as being weak in the area of cultural competence because of the language regarding assisting with parenting.<sup>27</sup> Given the on-the-ground framing of these strategies, the Epstein model can be helpful at the school level, but it also needs to be situated in what district and state level supports might be. The National Network of Partnership Schools offers consulting and support to members to develop this multi-tiered system of family and community engagement.<sup>28</sup>

A third prevalent approach to family engagement nationally comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures (“NCSL”). NCSL defines family engagement as different from parental involvement in that the former is “culturally-relevant and sustained relationships between family and school staff in the shared responsibility of a child’s well-being.”<sup>29</sup> NCSL focuses on two-generation strategies— such as efforts to engage families by providing English language instruction to them, as well as their students; the role of community schools; capacity-building school practices; the use of technology in

### Keys to Successful Partnerships: Six Types of Involvement



Retrieved from: <http://nnps.jhucos.com/nnps-model/school-model/six-types-of-involvement-keys-to-successful-partnerships/>.

<sup>25</sup> Harvard Family Research Project, “Human Centered Design”, <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/human-centered-design>

<sup>26</sup> National Network of Partnership Schools, “Promising Partnership Practices,” <http://nnps.jhucos.com/success-stories/ppp/>

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, H. Bower & D. Griffin, “Can the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement Work in a High-Minority, High-Poverty Elementary School? A Case Study”, ASCA 15.2 (December 2011), <http://web.cortland.edu/andersmd/psy501/epstein.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> The National Network of Partnership Schools, “NNPS Model”, <http://nnps.jhucos.com/nnps-model/>

<sup>29</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, “Engaging Families in Education” (June 2015, p.1), [http://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/educ/Engaging\\_Families\\_Education.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/educ/Engaging_Families_Education.pdf)

engagement; home-visiting programs; and the creation of task forces on sustainable family engagement.<sup>30</sup> NCSL not only tracks where family engagement practices have been captured by legislation in each state, but also builds on some of the work of the Epstein model.

The last two models that have received national recognition are California's efforts and a model developed at the University of Washington.

The California Department of Education created a framework through a multi-year effort in collaboration with WestEd that is intended to serve as a tool for local districts.<sup>31</sup> The California framework identifies 18 principles in 5 different action areas: Build Capacity; Demonstrate Leadership; Resources: Fiscal and Other; Monitor Progress; and Access and Equity. The overview is included here.

Some highlights of the California model are that families, staff, students, and communities are involved in program development. Governance, administration, funding, and standards must comport with statutory requirements. Staff are recruited, trained, and assigned with engagement in mind and to ensure program effectiveness. Finally, the model's strong core of opportunity and equity focuses on removing barriers to family and community engagement.

## District Principles

### 1. BUILD CAPACITY<sup>1</sup>

- 1.01 Ensure that all principals understand and implement required and effective parental involvement practices at their schools [Title I, Part A, 1118 (a)(1)].
- 1.02 Establish family-friendly volunteer policies to recruit and organize help and support from parents.
- 1.03 Train parents to successfully participate in curricular and budgetary decision making.
- 1.04 Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
- 1.05 Ensure staff and family access to training in effective school, family, and community partnerships.
- 1.06 Train staff, with the assistance of parents, in how to reach out to and work with parents as equal partners in their children's education [Title I, Part A, 1118 (e)(3)].
- 1.07 Ensure that teachers and families have knowledge and tools to help students with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

### 2. DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP<sup>2</sup>

- 2.01 Ensure that all schools have parent/family involvement programs (EC 11502 – 11504).
- 2.02 Meet requirements of state and federal law regarding family involvement.
  - a. Ensure parent representation on district and school committees as required by law.
  - b. Establish district family involvement policies and programs [Title I, Part A, 1118 (a)(2); EC 11503 – 11504].

### 3. RESOURCES: FISCAL AND OTHER<sup>3</sup>

- 3.01 Allocate resources and assign staff to implement the plan.

### 4. MONITOR PROGRESS<sup>4</sup>

- 4.01 Ensure all schools integrate parental involvement programs into the school's Single Plan for Student Achievement [EC 11502(e), 11504].
- 4.02 Provide oversight, support, and coordination of parent involvement activities among district schools and programs.
- 4.03 Document progress of each school's implementation of its parent involvement program [EC 11503(c)(d), refers specifically to Title I].
- 4.04 Assess every principal's effectiveness in establishing and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships at his or her school.

### 5. ACCESS AND EQUITY<sup>5</sup>

- 5.01 Ensure that critical parent information is readily available in accessible formats and languages spoken by families in the district [EC 48985].
- 5.02 Ensure that parent representation on committees reflects the composition of the student body.
- 5.03 Ensure that schools have a system in place with multiple strategies to facilitate two-way communication with parents and community members on a regular basis [EC 11502(c), EC 11503(b)(4)].

Retrieved from Family Engagement Framework (p.9),

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/famengageframeenglish.pdf>.

The University of Washington's Equitable Parent-School Collaboration Research Project offers a culminating example that connects national work on family engagement with local practices to be discussed in the next section. Researchers took family engagement values from existing frameworks, such as Epstein's, and asked parents to evaluate them and offer reframing as relevant. From this community-grounded research that was a partnership with Project Roadmap, University of Washington identified the following elements of equitable collaboration:

<sup>30</sup> NCSL, "Family Engagement in Education" (June 2016), <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/family-engagement.aspx>

<sup>31</sup> California Department of Education, "Family Engagement Framework: A Tool for Local Districts," <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/famengageframeenglish.pdf>

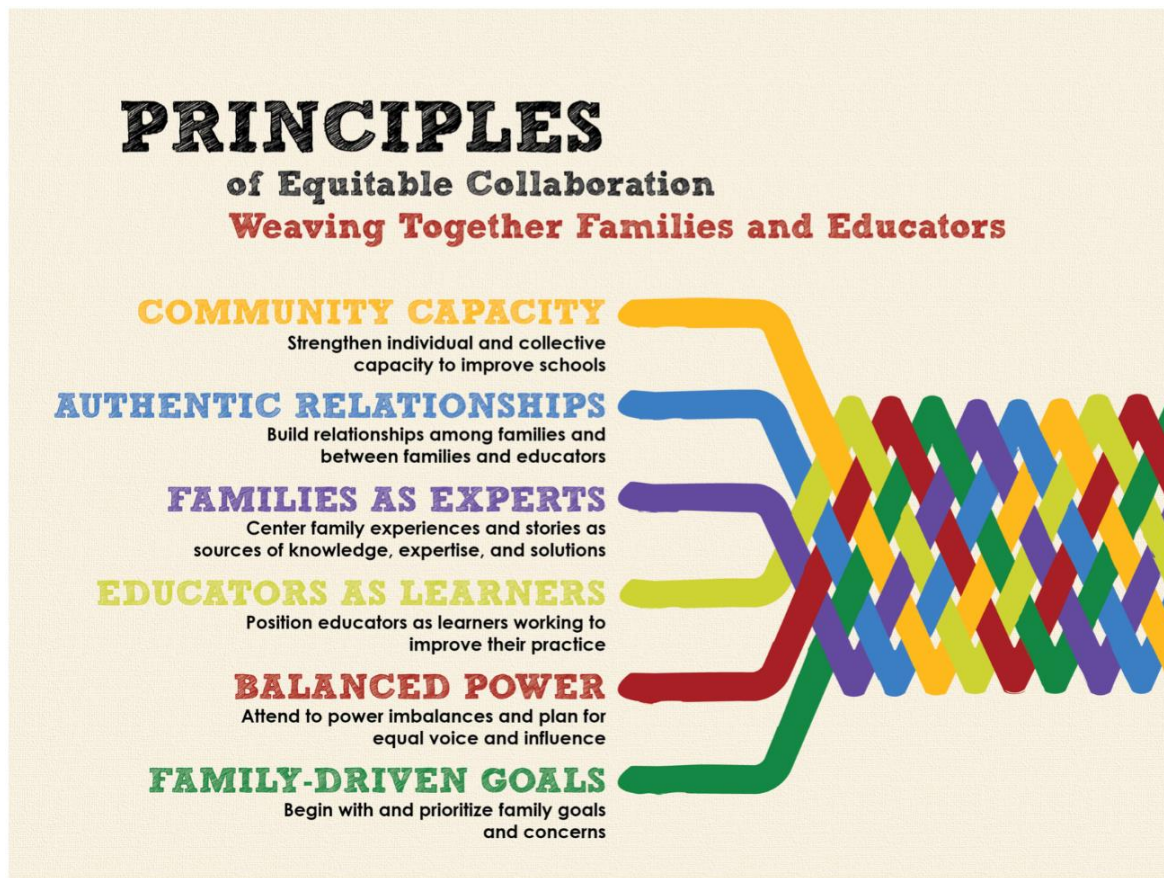


Figure by Research Designers, <http://researchdesigners.com/> © Copyright 2015, University of Washington

The researchers also identified what indicators of success would look like: parent knowledge and confidence; welcoming and culturally responsive school climate; and parent leadership opportunities and influence. Therefore, in assessing the impact of engagement efforts, the team recommended looking not only at student outcomes (both short term and longitudinally), but also looking at data related to parent outcomes and the parent-school relationship. This collaborative work has taken a strong equity focus and has created additional resource materials to be used locally and nationally, including a user's guide, parent curriculum, and research briefs on cultural brokering and data inquiry.<sup>32</sup>

Retrieved from Equitable Parent-School Collaboration:  
<http://www.education.uw.edu/epsc/>.

### Mapping Prevalent Local Approaches to Family Engagement in Washington

As the OEO team researched national models of family engagement, including those that were developed locally, such as the Equitable Parent-School Collaboration, they also reached out to districts in Washington State to learn more about their approaches. OSPI staff in Title I programs were helpful partners in identifying schools with high reported rates of family engagement. A synthesis of this research was shared with EOGOAC as part of the August 2016 presentation. OEO followed this background research with a survey of family engagement staff in school districts in Washington, to be discussed later in this report.

Many of the larger school districts in Washington are using family engagement strategies that are influenced by the Epstein model. The following district snapshots provide examples of common tools in use across the state:

<sup>32</sup> University of Washington, "Equitable Parent-School Collaboration," <http://www.education.uw.edu/epsc/>

### **HIGHLIGHT #1: PASCO SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Pasco school district is a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools and began implementing the Epstein model in

2006. The model calls for central-office designated staff and Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP) in every school building. School staff, parents, and community members comprise Action Teams for Partnerships. Their work is to develop and implement annual engagement plans focused on academic progress. Central office staff provide technical assistance to principals and ATPs, as well as manage the Parent Center, a central hub of community learning. The Parent Center offers classes for parents, including in early learning, with childcare and transportation assistance provided. The central team also collects and disseminates ideas for school-level engagement through a monthly newsletter and pursues partnerships and sponsorships with businesses and community organizations to support school activities and information dissemination. Pasco has hosted annual bilingual Parent Advisory Committee conferences for families to raise awareness of the programs offered.

### **HIGHLIGHT #2: YAKIMA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Similar to Pasco, Yakima leverages the Epstein model and offers a Student and Family Center that provides interpretation and

outreach to Yakima's large migrant community. Yakima's Community Relations Department takes the lead in disseminating information from the school to families and community members. Yakima's newsletter is sent in both English and Spanish. Through the community-based Yakima Schools Foundation, the district is able to fund programs that schools could not otherwise afford. Thirty-five grants were provided in 2015, for example.

### **HIGHLIGHT #3: VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Vancouver School District, using the Epstein model, has nine Family-Community Resource Centers (FCRCs)

strategically placed in high-needs schools. These resource centers serve a variety of family academic and social needs, and staff assist in coordinating family and community engagement efforts. Central office staff with a focus on family engagement offer additional technical assistance to all schools in the district. The district has also run a Parent Academy program and early learning programs. The district seeks partnerships with businesses and community-based organizations to increase resources for family and community engagement.

### **HIGHLIGHT #4: SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Seattle Schools has combined elements of the Epstein and Harvard models to craft its approach to family and community

engagement. At the district level, the Family Advisory Council assists the Superintendent in implementing family engagement policies. Family Engagement Action Teams in 41 schools assist in implementing plans for school-family partnerships. A cadre of volunteers serves as Volunteer Family Connectors, acting as liaisons between families and schools in their communities. Seattle has also created two ombuds positions to assist families in resolving problems and getting information. The district has a regular newsletter, as well as workshops for families.



Spotlight: Strategic Planning with Family Partnership as a Core Belief in Federal Way Public Schools

The Federal Way School District’s family engagement work starts with its core belief that “families are critical partners in each child’s learning.” Grounded in Dr. Karen Mapp’s Dual Capacity Framework (Harvard University), the district links family engagement to learning and improved student outcomes. Parents are included as decision-makers on the Superintendent’s Strategic Planning team and other district and school level decision-making teams.

Defining the Work

The district has seen definitions for parent engagement improve with the shift from “involvement” to “engagement” but has not created a single definition for the district. Finding its families were not looking for a single definition as much as they were wanting meaningful partnerships, the district chose to focus its efforts on defining **CORE BELIEFS** and **STRATEGIES** for meaningful partnerships. While terminology may shift, the district has embedded structures and practices for engaging parents as partners.

**Federal Way Public Schools**  
**Stats in Brief**  
  
22,511 students

- 67.8% Students of Color
- 59.2% Free & Reduced
- 16.5% Transitional/bilingual
- 13.5% Special Ed

  
Families

- 112 Languages Spoken

**Staffing**

- 23 Family Liaisons – one at each of the district’s 23 Elementary Schools
- 1 Family Engagement Director

  
**Funding**

- Prototypical Schools Allocation for Family Involvement Coordinator
- Title I
- LAP
- Local Levy Dollars

Strategic Planning for Partnership

The District’s Strategic Plan includes a commitment to continuously developing a “Safe Climate and Strong Relationships with Families and Communities.” The district promises to “nurture trust and mutual respect among home-school-community through shared responsibility for student success, proactive communication, and meaningful stakeholder voice.” Their work focuses on the early years – from pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, with intensive efforts to support transitions to elementary and middle school.

Embedding Partnerships in Practice

Some of the ways the district has woven family and community partnerships into district structures and practices are through monthly meetings, monthly outcome reports, and mid-year evaluations for each of their Family Liaison staff. The reports track actual contacts with families and evaluations incorporate feedback from parents, students, and staff. The district also ensures on-going feedback loops through quarterly meetings with a Key Communicator group (consisting of parents from each Title I

school) and Key CBO Partners meetings. They plan separate meetings for parents and community-based organizations (CBOs) to ensure that parents’ own voices are heard directly, and to solicit families’ ideas and questions on how to support students, as well as CBOs’ perspectives on system connections and indirect service enhancements.

Spotlight: A Look at the Numbers Behind Two Districts’ Family Engagement Efforts

Spokane Public Schools

In the 2015-16 school year, the Spokane Public Schools exceeded the 1% required commitment of funds toward parent involvement by more than \$94,000, allocating \$145,448 for Title I Parent Engagement efforts at the building level.

Other "parent engagement" expenditures are embedded in individual school budgets, such as newsletters that keep families informed of what is happening in the classrooms. The district has also invested in technologies and services, such as the Thoughtstream platform, that allows the district to interact with the community on multiple levels to inform both building-level initiatives and district priorities. The district makes use of a messaging system that allows it to send important communications to specific groups of parents or all families, including in languages other than English.

The district also just added a new “Parent/Student Advocate” position in their Student Services with a salary and benefits of \$121,181.

Schools engaged in improvement efforts incorporate family involvement in their plans and facilitate ongoing communication among teachers, schools, and families.

**Spokane Public Schools Stats in Brief**

29,275 students

- 1,314 ELL students, speaking 56 different languages
- 24% students of color
- 57% students qualify for free/reduced meals

Staff

- 3,226 employees
- 1,758 classroom teachers, with average 13 years’ experience

Volunteers

- 13,000+

Kennewick School District

**Kennewick School District Stats in Brief**

18,000+ students

- 14.7% ELL
- 36.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 55.4% White
- 58.8% students qualify for free/reduced meals

During the 2015-16 school year, the Kennewick School District spent \$99,226.99 for Title I Parent Engagement activities at the building level, exceeding its required 1% set-aside by \$57,931. Kennewick partners with John’s Hopkins University and the National Network for Partnership Schools (NNPS) to support its family engagement efforts. The National Network of Partnership Schools from Johns Hopkins University helps preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools organize research-based and goal-oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships. NNPS also guides district and state leaders to encourage every school to create a welcoming climate of partnership and implement involvement activities linked to school goals for student success. In Kennewick, there are currently 17 schools utilizing the NNPS framework, including all of its Title I schools.

The Kennewick School District also employs a full-time Family and Community Manager and a full-time Family and Community Engagement Coordinator dedicated to helping schools’ initiatives.

## Summary of the Core Components of Family Engagement Models in Some Washington Districts

To summarize, some of the best practices of school districts in Washington focus on:

- Communicating with families in their home languages about important school and district information (e.g., welcome documents, notices of meetings, policies, and grades).
- Having innovative and flexible schedules to accommodate the multiple demands of families, such as holding meetings before school or later in the evenings and providing childcare, and leveraging popular events to provide information about family involvement and parental rights.
- Increasing opportunities for families to contribute in their own ways to the school communities through volunteering and/or visiting students' classrooms. This can be done through formal school activities or by simply offering welcoming, informal opportunities.
- Creating authentic roles for parents to be critical decision-makers about school policies and practices and to assume leadership in a variety of ways, not just traditional pathways. Fostering leadership involves offering training for those positions, whether it be data analysis, budgeting, curriculum development, or school safety.
- Facilitating families' access to community-based organizations to further ties to additional resources and opportunities for collaboration.

These best practices are reflected in other local models in the state that come from the nonprofit sector, such as the Washington Alliance for Better Schools' ("WABS") Natural Leaders Model and the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition's recent family engagement survey of diverse communities in Southeast Seattle. For example, the Natural Leaders Model emphasizes collaboration among families, schools, and community-based organizations.<sup>33</sup> Leadership training is provided to parents so that they can direct engagement efforts.<sup>34</sup> In the 2015-2016 school year, a number of school districts participated in the work, such as Edmonds School District, Everett Public Schools, Lake Washington School District, Marysville School District, Monroe Public Schools, Mukilteo School District, Northshore School District, and Shoreline Public Schools.<sup>35</sup> WABS developed the program, but it continues with financial support from OSPI, participating districts, the Discuren Foundation, Gates Foundation, Tulalip Tribes Charitable Trust, and United Way of Snohomish County.<sup>36</sup>

In collaboration with the University of Washington, the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition ("SESEC") released in February 2016 the results of a survey that it conducted of family engagement in Southeast Seattle. SESEC's team created the survey in 10 languages (Amharic, Chinese, English, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese) online and by paper, reaching 639 families from 38 different schools.<sup>37</sup> More than half of the respondents took the survey in a language other than English.<sup>38</sup> In fact, participants had 25 different home languages, from Urdu to Toishanese. While there is sometimes a perception that people of color constitute a "minority" in Seattle, SESEC found that people of color, immigrants, students receiving free and reduced lunch, and families where English was not the home language constituted the majority of respondents. Throughout the study results, the research team referred to these communities as the "majority" versus "dominant" populations within Southeast Seattle schools (e.g., white, holding power, paying full-price for meals). The primary findings of the SESEC Parent Engagement Survey were that families and communities were highly

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<sup>33</sup> Washington Alliance for Better Schools, "Family Engagement", <http://www.wabsalliance.org/community-leadership/natural-leaders/>

<sup>34</sup> Natural Leaders Program Key Elements, <http://www.wabsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Natural-Leaders-Program-Key-Elements-1.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Washington Alliance for Better Schools, "Family Engagement", <http://www.wabsalliance.org/community-leadership/natural-leaders/>

<sup>36</sup> Washington Alliance for Better Schools, "Family Engagement", <http://www.wabsalliance.org/community-leadership/natural-leaders/>

<sup>37</sup> SESEC Community Data Summit Presentation (February 2016), <http://www.sesecwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-SESEC-Summit.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Over 77% of the families preferred taking the survey by paper, which runs in contrast to many ways that schools and agencies engage with families in today's modern environment.



invested in research in this area and that many strong family engagement practices already existed in the region (e.g., families feeling as if schools asked for their feedback, schools meeting children's needs, and schools resolving families' concerns fairly). Many majority families, as framed by SESEC, felt that schools helped them to develop leadership, they had community allies, and interpretation services were overall adequate. However, majority families also noted areas in need of improvement, such as schools needing to rethink the (over)use of technology for communications and their language bias, and the need to recognize that families valued person-to-person communication, as well as clarity in communication. Majority families cited concerns that schools did not value their home language and culture as much as that of dominant families, that they had fewer opportunities to influence decisions, and that they were not as welcome to talk about their concerns with school leadership. Interestingly, majority families reported lower rates of hearing praise or compliments about their children's behavior than dominant families.<sup>39</sup> Overall, the results of SESEC's community survey point to making cultural competence and racial equity foundational components of family engagement, and much like the WABS Natural Leaders Program, improving families' opportunities to make decisions and exercise leadership within their children's schools.

### Exemplary Models of Development and Implementation of Statewide Family Engagement Frameworks

As is evident in the sections above, to date much of the research and policy setting around family engagement has happened at a national level, and on the ground implementation has happened at a district level. With SHB1408, Washington proposes to have a state-level definition and framework that would reflect our state's policy toward school and family engagement while leaving flexibility for local implementation. Fortunately, we would not be the first state to take this on as a state-level issue and we can learn from the efforts undertaken in states like California, Oregon, Maryland and Minnesota. These states had multi-year processes that stemmed organically from insights brought by public and private sector stakeholders about what was needed to support students and families in creating healthy, respectful, and sustaining school communities. Each of these states offer different examples of how a statewide framework for family engagement can be developed and implemented. Outlines of these states' models are included in [Appendix F](#).

Some takeaway principles from each of these states' frameworks include:

- California's multi-tiered approach offers an example of an ongoing process of refinement, guided by local input and national best practices.
- Maryland's piloting of a community schools model, particularly in Baltimore, where full-time staff positions coordinate with certificated and classified staff shows how family engagement requires a team effort where professionals serve in complementary roles.
- Oregon's inclusion of early learning as part of family engagement offers an example of how a state can create a more seamless P-20 continuum and reduce opportunity gaps that appear or are exacerbated at current transition points.
- Minnesota provides an exemplar for integrating a cultural and linguistic competence approach to family and community engagement, along with a clear working definition of family engagement that emphasizes collaboration, responsibility, and partnership for lifelong learning. Minnesota also created a statewide framework for planning and accountability in family engagement, and will have much to share as it begins implementation.

Minnesota's strong approach to family and community engagement through an equity lens provides a helpful comparison for Washington moving forward in how to move beyond the baseline requirements of ESSA to bring authentic community and family engagement to every school in the state.

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<sup>39</sup> SESEC Community Data Summit Presentation (February 2016), <http://www.sesecwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-SESEC-Summit.pdf>

## A Side-by-Side Look at National Policy (ESSA), a State Framework (MN), and Potential Takeaways for Washington

ESSA Requirements Regarding Parent Involvement <sup>40</sup>	Minnesota Statutory Approach to Parent Involvement, MSA §124D.895 <sup>41</sup>	Potential Takeaways for Washington State
<p>Educational Agencies must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Develop a family engagement policy with parents and family, and distribute the policy to families;</li> <li>-Provide assistance to families in how to improve their child's achievement;</li> <li>-Educate staff on how to work with families, implement programs, and build connections between families and school;</li> <li>-Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs with other programs that encourage and support families;</li> <li>-Communicate in an understandable language with families;</li> </ul> <p>Note: An education agency can only receive funds if the agency conducts outreach to all parents and implements parental and family involvement programs.</p>	<p>§124D.895: The Department of Education in consultation with the State Curriculum Advisory Committee must develop guidelines and plans for parent involvement programs that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engage parents in recognizing and meeting their child's needs;</li> <li>-Promote healthy self-concepts among parents;</li> <li>-Provide learning experiences for families and parents of color;</li> <li>-Encourage parents to participate in curriculum advisory committees;</li> <li>-Encourage parents to help promote school desegregation; and</li> <li>-Partner with parents to establish a positive school climate.</li> </ul> <p>Activities in the model plans must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for families that enhance children's learning and language development;</li> <li>-Education programs for parents on families' educational rights and responsibilities;</li> </ul>	<p>OSPI, State Board of Education, and OEO can coordinate a statewide effort for family engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Leverage the goals of Minnesota's program, but broaden them to include family and community – centric language and to focus on the mutual and shared nature of family, community, and school relationships to promote student success and reduce (and eventually, eliminate) opportunity gaps collaboratively.</li> <li>-Leverage the study results of the University of Washington and the smaller survey with the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition to identify what shared and valued elements of school climate and this collaborative relationship will be.</li> <li>-Collaborate with OEO to build on its 10 years of success in assisting families in understanding their rights and responsibilities in navigating complex education issues.</li> <li>-Ensure that family and community opportunities for learning are culturally and linguistically responsive and accessible to all families, regardless of structure, income, or ability, for example.</li> </ul>

<sup>40</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act. 20 United States Code 6301 (2015).

<sup>41</sup> Parental Involvement Programs. Minnesota Statutes: Education Code §124D.895 (2016).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parental Involvement Liaison workers to coordinate family involvement activities, foster competent communication among families and educators;</li> <li>-Parent resource centers and training programs;</li> <li>-Reports to parents on children’s progress;</li> <li>-Use of parents as volunteers;</li> <li>-Using parents’ suggestions in planning, developing, and implementing school programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Expand Minnesota’s approach and create a baseline model of one full-time, well-compensated professional for each school. Allow for additional school, district, and state-level staff as needed. Consider additional integration with the early learning system to provide for continuity of supports.</li> <li>-Train and support school leaders on the development of human-centered design processes to allow for local customization of communication and information sharing, trainings, curriculum design, and leadership opportunities.</li> </ul>
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## Collaborating with 1408's Organizational Stakeholders

As part of the work of 1408, OEO and EOGOAC consulted with the following stakeholders to get their input on what models of family engagement they had developed through their organizations or valued as peers working in education: the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction ("OSPI"), Washington Education Association ("WEA"), Public School Employees of Washington ("PSE"), Washington School Counselors' Association ("WSCA"), Association of Washington School Principals ("AWSP"), and Washington State School Directors' Association ("WSSDA"). These additional perspectives can inform the state's future work in this area.

### Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

OSPI, through both its Title I Office and the reinvigorated Center for the Improvement of Student Learning ("CISL")<sup>42</sup>, shared how Titles I and II and LAP funds currently support family engagement. CISL's new Director Andrea Cobb offered that before CISL had been defunded, it had supported a survey of 1000 respondents about family engagement. Those surveys have still not been processed and are now over 6 years old, but CISL plans to look at the data soon. CISL's Director also suggested that OEO, EOGOAC, and the legislature consider OSPI's 2010 Classified Adequacy Staffing Reports, specifically the one addressing the position of Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator.<sup>43</sup>

As discussed earlier in this report under the Prototypical Schools Model, OSPI, in coordination with OEO, convened a group of family involvement experts to help the QEC answer questions regarding an adequate level of staffing for classified parent involvement coordinators (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.32). The workgroup recommended that the position be titled Family Involvement Coordinator ("FIC") to acknowledge all families within Washington schools (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.32). FICs are defined as "the staff that work as an integral part of the student support team to involve families as full partners in the education of their students" (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.37).

The FIC is distinct from the role of certified staff (social workers and school counselors) in three ways: (1) FICs provide only Tier 1 (universal) interventions to students, while certified staff provide Tier 2 and beyond; (2) FICs leverage the strengths of families and the benefits they can bring to schools rather than delivering specialized social services to students; and (3) FICs do not act as volunteer or community partnership coordinators (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.38).

The workgroup recommended that districts receive funding for 1.0 FTE family involvement coordinator at the elementary level, 1.0 FTE family involvement coordinator at the middle school level, and .08 FTE at the high school level (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.32). However, the Funding Formula Technical Work Group recommended that this should be lowered to .676 FTE in each school and increased to 1.0 FTE in response to student needs that require a greater degree of parent involvement to ensure success (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.32). The Funding Formula Technical Work Group also recommended that priority should be given to those districts with the highest percentages of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010, p.32). As noted earlier in this report, since these workgroups concluded, funding remains a constant challenge.

### Educators' Associations

While OEO did not receive a response to its requests for input from WEA and PSE, it looked to the National Education Association ("NEA") and its leveraging of the Epstein framework to promote family and community engagement.

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<sup>42</sup> This year, as part of SHB 1541, addressing the opportunity gap, the legislature reinvigorated the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) to develop the integrated student supports protocol with a workgroup and resume its duties of improving student learning and disseminating best practices.

<sup>43</sup> This report from QEC can be found at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/qec/pubdocs/ClassifiedReportCompilation.pdf>

Specifically, NEA notes success in three program categories: community and family-community programs that rely on the community to advance student learning; parent and family-centered programs; and wraparound social and community health-oriented programs.<sup>44</sup> NEA also found ten key strategies for effective family-school-community partnerships which were: “agreeing on core values; listening to the community; using data to set priorities and strategies; providing relevant on-site professional development; building collaborations with community partners; using targeted outreach to focus on high-needs communities, schools, and students; building one-to-one relationships between families and educators that are linked to learning; setting, communicating, and supporting high and rigorous expectations; addressing cultural differences; and connecting students to the community.”<sup>45</sup>

NEA recognized that while these efforts are gaining momentum, they are not yet central features of our schools and that they require investments in infrastructure and staff that will support continuity, community relationships, and consistency. NEA recommended that these efforts be expanded to learn more about replicability and to evaluate the efficacy of these strategies.<sup>46</sup>

### Washington School Counselors’ Association

The Washington School Counselors’ Association (“WSCA”) suggested shaping family engagement’s definition and the model for it along the lines of the Model Framework for Graduation Coaches, which was created by an OSPI-led workgroup in 2012. The Model Graduation Coaches Policy was intended to resolve conflicting job duties, titles, and reporting structures that had developed across the state as schools tried to support students toward attaining diplomas. WSCA and the workgroup recognized that graduation coaching overlapped with much of the expertise of school counselors and that these additional staff could benefit from partnership with school counselors as part of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program.<sup>47</sup> The workgroup distinguished how each team member would perform tasks in supporting schools with such activities as implementing school-wide dropout prevention programs and analyzing data. In that framework, the key language request from the WSCA board was reflected in the following statement from the Executive Summary of the OSPI’s 2013 report on the Model Graduation Coaches Policy:

Graduation coaches, by working within a Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (CGCP), provide a structure through which high-quality support systems can be implemented, creating a coordinated and sustainable model to provide targeted support. In addition, working within the CGCP framework also links the skills and knowledge of the graduation coach to those of school counselors whose significant training and roles within the school contributes professional knowledge, skills, and leadership, combined with a clearly articulated role to support all students in becoming graduates and in successful transitions to postsecondary education and life.<sup>48</sup>

WSCA also shared materials from the American School Counselor Association (“ASCA”). ASCA’s 2010 position on family engagement entitled “The School Counselor and School-Family-Community Partnerships” emphasizes that engagement improves students’ academic success and that school counselors “are called on to create, lead, facilitate, and evaluate these partnerships and work to remove barriers to these helpful collaborative relationships.”<sup>49</sup> Additionally, given their expertise about community resources, communication, and data-driven student supports, school counselors are to be viewed as a vital resource for non-school-counseling credentialed individuals that might be creating or staffing programs

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<sup>44</sup> National Education Association, Priority Schools Campaign: Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0 (2011) at p.4.

<sup>45</sup> National Education Association, Priority Schools Campaign: Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0 (2011) at p.5.

<sup>46</sup> National Education Association, Priority Schools Campaign: Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0 (2011) at p.5.

<sup>47</sup> E2SHB 1599 PASS ACT OSPI Model Graduation Coach Policy (February 2013).

<sup>48</sup> E2SHB 1599 PASS ACT OSPI Model Graduation Coach Policy (February 2013) at pp.2-3.

<sup>49</sup> American School Counselor Association, “The School Counselor and School-Family-Community Partnership” at p.1.

related to family and community engagement or directing families to resources that school counselors understand well.<sup>50</sup> WSCA, through its outgoing Advocacy Committee Co-Chair Kim Reykdal, emphasized that “ultimately, given the lack of training/certification requirements for Family Engagement Coordinators, we would strongly advocate for language that connects school counselors (and/or other certificated school staff trained specifically to work with at-risk, underrepresented students) with the Family Engagement Coordinator.”<sup>51</sup>

These recommendations echo those of others, including the 2010 recommendations from OEO in collaboration with CISL, that the role of family engagement coordinators is critical but not sufficient to meet the needs of students and of schools in connecting with families. While a person in the role of Family Engagement Coordinator may be charged with leading or facilitating efforts, or with being a primary point person for families, neither this person, nor any other single individual in a school or district, can be expected to effectively carry the entire responsibility for meaningful family engagement.

### Association of Washington School Principals

The Association of Washington School Principals highlighted that family engagement is already part of both teachers’ and principals’ evaluation frameworks in the state. For teachers, work with families and communities is centered in Criterion 7 of the Danielson, CEL 5D+, and Marzano TPEP frameworks. For example, under CEL 5D+, Criterion 7 includes the following language: “. . . Teacher considers the language needs of parents and guardians. Teacher effectively engages in two-way forms of communication and is responsive to parent and guardian insights . . .”<sup>52</sup> In Criterion 7 of the Danielson framework, evaluators consider whether or not the “teacher’s communication with families is frequent and sensitive to cultural traditions, with students contributing to the communication . . .”<sup>53</sup> And similarly, under the Marzano framework, Criterion 7 is framed in part as an evaluation of whether or not the “teacher is a recognized leader in helping others communicate and collaborate with parents/guardians and school/community . . .”<sup>54</sup>

AWSP noted that principal evaluation under the current TPEP system also relies on two frameworks in which family and community engagement is part of evaluating the success of school leaders. Under the AWSP approach:

An effective leader engages with the community in sensitive and skillful ways such that the community understands the work of the school and is proud to claim the school as their own. An effective leader understands the greater community to be a valuable resource and works to establish a genuine partnership model between home and school. . .<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, Marzano’s leadership framework recognizes a distinguished principal as one that “intervenes and provides support when students, parents, and community input is not working to optimize the function of the school.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> American School Counselor Association, “The School Counselor and the Use of Non-School-Counseling Credentialed Personnel in Implementing Comprehensive School Counseling Programs” (Adopted 1994, Revised 2000, 2006, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Email correspondence between Carrie Basas, OEO Director and Kim Reykdal (July 29, 2016).

<sup>52</sup> CEL 5D+ Framework, Criterion 7, <http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/CEL/CEL-Rubrics-by-criteria.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> Danielson Framework, Criterion 7, <http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/Danielson/Danielson-rubrics-by-criteria.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Marzano Framework, Criterion 7, <http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/Marzano/Marzano-rubrics-by-criteria.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> AWSP Framework, Criterion 7, [http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/AWSP/AWSP\\_Framework\\_Version\\_2.0.pdf](http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/AWSP/AWSP_Framework_Version_2.0.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Marzano Leadership Rubric, Criterion 7,

[http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/MarzanoLeadership/Marzano\\_Leadership\\_Rubrics\\_by\\_Criteria.pdf](http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/Frameworks/MarzanoLeadership/Marzano_Leadership_Rubrics_by_Criteria.pdf)

## Washington State School Directors' Association

The Washington State Schools Directors' Association shared its current model policies and procedures for family involvement. WSSDA Model Policy 4129 on "Family Involvement" is reproduced here, with key sections highlighted by OEO that emphasize culturally responsive and coordinated best practices:

### Family Involvement

It is the policy of the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Directors to encourage and support family involvement in education at home, in our schools and communities, and in school governance. **The board recognizes the diversity of family structures, circumstances, and cultural backgrounds and respects families as important decision makers for their children's education.** The Board is committed to the creation and implementation of **culturally inclusive** and effective school-family partnerships throughout the school district and **in each school**, and believes these partnerships to be critical to the success of every student. The district's family involvement efforts will be **comprehensive and coordinated**.

The board recognizes that family involvement in education has a positive effect on student achievement and is an important strategy in reducing achievement gaps. The intent of this policy is to create and maintain a district-wide climate conducive to the involvement of families and to develop and sustain partnerships that support student learning and positive child and youth development in all schools.

The board is committed to professional development opportunities for staff and leadership to enhance understanding of effective family involvement strategies. The board also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to school-family partnerships.

In support of the implementation of this policy, a copy will be distributed to all schools, school staff, families, teachers and community members. Further, the district will provide support and guidance, to parents and teachers as they plan and implement effective family involvement efforts.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Directors support the development, implementation and **regular evaluation of family involvement efforts that includes parents and family members at all grade levels in a variety of roles.** The district will use the results of the evaluation to enhance school-family partnerships within the district.

The superintendent will develop procedures to implement this policy.

This policy was last updated in 2011 and is discretionary. WSSDA has also produced a model process for family involvement to be implemented by school boards. The key components of that procedure seem to be the definitions and family involvement, again, reproduced here with key sections highlighted by OEO:

**The term "family" is used to denote parents, extended family, guardians, or other persons with whom the student lives. "Parent" or "family" may also include community members or other concerned adults involved in the student's life,** pursuant to state and federal laws surrounding confidentiality.

"Family Involvement" refers to school/family partnerships. It is the collaborative interaction between educators and families in activities that promote student learning and positive child and youth development at home, in school, and in the community. **These activities include regular, two-way and**



**meaningful communication between parents and school personnel; outreach to families; parent education; volunteering; school decision making; and advocacy.**<sup>57</sup>

WSSDA's model procedure outlines how the family involvement policy will be translated into action:<sup>58</sup>

The superintendent will identify a **district administrator to supervise** the implementation of this policy and procedure, and **each school in the district will develop a family involvement plan** aligned with their academic goals and/or school improvement plan and, if applicable, Title I services. Each plan will be **tailored to the realities of school families, be culturally relevant** to the school population and delineate strategies to increase family participation in education, **particularly among families who are economically disadvantaged, have disabilities, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background.**<sup>59</sup>

This three-tiered system is reflected in what WSSDA has highlighted as best practices and values for family involvement. These goals flow from, but are not limited to, the following research-based national standards for family involvement: communicating, parenting support, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making, and collaborating with community.<sup>60</sup> These goals seem to track the Epstein model of family engagement.

## Survey of Family Engagement School Staff Statewide

After mapping national models of family engagement and identifying prevalent local and statewide approaches to the issue, OEO then conducted primary research by engaging with school staff working in the field of family engagement to learn more about their roles and daily tasks, as well as sources of programmatic support. OEO distributed a survey (see [Appendix C](#)) to these educators by individual email to schools that had been identified as having active family engagement programs under Title I, as well as asking leaders at OSPI to distribute the survey link through their email listserv of school family engagement leads around the state. Unfortunately, even after multiple requests to complete the survey, OEO only received 8 responses statewide, 7 of which seemed to come from unique individuals; one survey response appeared to be submitted twice in error. The full responses are provided in [Appendix C](#). OEO noted the following themes in the survey:

- Districts defined engagement in a number of ways, from making parents partners in implementing district strategies for improved student achievement to shifting the climate of schools.
- Districts felt the need for greater supports to increase capacity and efficacy of family and community engagement programs.
- There was an underlying desire to develop and sustain relationships with as many families as possible.
- Multiple sources of funding were needed to sustain these efforts.
- Supervisory structures could be unclear and/or staff leading these efforts were placed at different levels within the school system, such as within an individual school versus having a role in the central administration office.

Family engagement leaders come in the form of Ombuds, Directors of Equity, mediation staff, family engagement coordinators and liaisons, school and community specialists, and others, with supervisory structures having these staff reporting to everyone from building principals to the district superintendent. Many survey respondents shared examples of accomplishments that brought them pride in their work, such as having a welcome system, coordinating professional

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<sup>57</sup> WSSDA Policy 4129P: "Procedure Family Involvement."

<sup>58</sup> Again, OEO highlighted phrases that seemed to fit with the equity lens of this report.

<sup>59</sup> WSSDA Policy 4129P: "Procedure Family Involvement."

<sup>60</sup> WSSDA Policy 4129P: "Procedure Family Involvement."

development, and shifting cultural representation in staffing and curriculum development. Programs served anywhere from 300 to 58,000 students.

## Survey of Families' Priorities for Family Engagement

Concurrently, OEO took the dominant values from the national models of family engagement that were presented to EOGOAC in August 2016 to create a survey for families ([Appendix D](#)). This survey was distributed in English and Spanish by paper and online, leveraging distribution through the state's racial and ethnic commissions, OEO's website and Facebook groups, Washington State PTA, the Arc, Washington Autism Advocacy Alliance, CIELO, Southeast Seattle Education Coalition, Washington Family Engagement Trust, and other community organizations. OEO opened the surveys in September 2016 and closed the recording period on November 1, 2016; no surveys were received from families in Spanish, but Spanish-speaking families were invited to give feedback through a focus group, to be discussed in the next section. OEO also offered to use phone interpretation to have families with Limited English Proficiency respond to the survey.

Between September and November 1, 2016, OEO received 70 surveys statewide; OEO excluded 9 surveys from the final counts because they were blank or completed incorrectly such that no answer could be ascertained. Families identified their top values for family engagement, essentially what they saw as the basic building blocks of family and community engagement in schools, through a ranking system. The top values receiving the most votes (out of 61 surveys counted) were:

- **Make sure that there is effective two-way communication (school to family; family to school) about what is happening at the school and with students. (35 respondents)**
- **Work to build authentic relationships between families and educators. (26 respondents)**
- **Help families understand and be confident about how schools and processes work. (23 respondents)**
- **Build a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate. (19 respondents)**
- **Respect and honor racial, ethnic, cultural, language, ability, belief, or other identities in working with families and students. (19 respondents)**

Respondents were invited to not only identify which of the 5 values resonated with them the most, but to also rank them in terms of their priority. Looking at the surveys through that lens produces similar results to some extent. Respondents chose most often as their top value: "Make sure that there is effective two-way communication (school to family; family to school) about what is happening at the school and with students." The second most frequently chosen top value was: "Respect and honor racial, ethnic, cultural, language, ability, belief, or other identities in working with families and students." Most notable was that rankings produced a wide range of values identified as among the 5 most important to one or more respondents.

OEO also allowed space on the surveys for families to share what the values meant to them in their own words or to suggest alternatives to the values presented. The full results are presented in [Appendix E](#). Some of the highlights of alternative definitions for the top 5 values were:

**Make sure that there is effective two-way communication (school to family; family to school) about what is happening at the school and with students.**

Families' Summary of the Value in Their Own Words:

- *Parents can be intimidated to be the first to communicate, so school should initiate but understand that they have to listen & not assume information is automatically heard & put to use.*
- *Schools are good at "telling" us but awful at listening to what we see as a problem.*
- *Communication cannot be 1 way. Follow-through is important to make sure understanding both ways is happening.*
- *Make sure each side understand the other*
- *Provide interpretation and translated services for all students and families to ensure teachers are hearing family/community concerns.*
- *Prioritizing training for teachers and principals: They need to listen respectfully and stay open and receptive to families.*
- *Parents are only contacted when a student is not behaving in the manner that a particular teacher likes and that is inconsistent depending on the culture of the school and the racial background of the student. There is no ongoing conversations where families' opinions are truly respected and appreciated.*
- *Teachers and administrators do not have all the answers; be humble and open to self-reflection on classroom/school practice and policy.*
- *Find one on one ways to communicate with parents. Email and website tend to be better received. Not all methods work for all families.*
- *Each of my favorite values can be summed up in the importance of the success of students in school through meaningful and educationally relevant action. I am not interested at all not one bit in any type of sensitivity as the world is not a sensitive place and when we entertain that we set outsiders to fail.*
- *The school needs to ensure that families are continuously informed about what is happening in the schools in a timely and easily accessible manner.*

**Work to build authentic relationships between families and educators.**

Families' Summary of the Value in Their Own Words:

- *Respect, getting to know each other, listening, [giving] feedback*
- *Partnership & trust*
- *Relationship building is a key factor to move forward.*
- *Mutual respect*
- *The school should provide ways and opportunities for families and educators to engage with each other on a regular basis.*

**Help families understand and be confident about how schools and processes work.**

Families' Summary of the Value in Their Own Words:

- *Don't focus too much on "educating" the parent on how to navigate. Focus on accessibility by design. Your school system should be easy to understand. Yes, parents need "welcome and here's the ropes." Some will need more, depending on their situation. But if as a rule if parents require a LOT of help, ask yourself if your set-up might be the problem.*
- *Demystify grades/report cards. Help understanding standards & state tests. How do I know if my child is successful? What supports are available if my child is struggling? How do I access those? How do I know that my student is on track to be eligible for opportunities beyond HS?*

- *Parent inclusion*
- *Engagement may not happen if parents are not familiar or feel embarrassed about not knowing rules, processes, etc.*
- *The school should make information about their processes (and any other relevant information) transparent, easy to understand, and easily accessible.*
- *How does education work in my area?*

**Build a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate.**

Families' Summary of the Value in Their Own Words:

- *Welcoming to ALL - ability, culture, language, race. No one is sidelined.*
- *All children need to feel accepted, this is actually very important.*
- *Understanding*
- *Parents who feel welcome are more engaged in their child's academic life.*
- *Welcome all families without judgment.*
- *People need to feel welcomed in the school house. They should not be afraid of going to schools for meetings. Parent teacher conferences need to be on the schedule of the parents not the teachers.*

**Respect and honor racial, ethnic, cultural, language, ability, belief, or other identities in working with families and students.**

Families' Summary of the Value in Their Own Words:

- *Acknowledge systemic racism + implicit bias. Explicitly respect/honor/value difference. Teacher/staff training in cultural humility/culturally responsive practice.*
- *We are diverse respect = cultural competency are essential to our role*
- *Within bounds of the law*
- *People are different in many ways as such staff and educators should understand those differences when providing services and support.*
- *Once trust and respect can be established between the two, then the work can begin to work together.*
- *Respect all cultures, different does not mean stupid or lesser.*
- *Does personnel use culturally responsive pedagogy?*
- *It is felt that there is a lot of conversation around this but little put into practice. Our families are told what to do and when asked it is similar to this questionnaire; the creator seeks a certain response and frames the questions as such. We should do a better job of listening.*
- *Teaching is not a one-size fits all approach.*
- *Every child, every person is important and deserving of the best possible education and kindness from adults.*
- *Communication with teacher.*
- *Teachers and parents should pick curriculum not the government.*

Families were also asked to identify some values that were important to them that they did not see on the survey. Those notes are included in full in [Appendix E](#). Some of the highlights were:

- *The need to engage families of all sizes and forms, including kinship, families of students with disabilities, families of color*

- A desire to see family engagement staff reflect the surrounding communities in terms of life experience, race, language, and culture
- The importance of beginning this work with a racial equity lens and expecting schools to engage in professional development and family engagement practices that dismantle racism
- Reaching families in ways that are accessible to them, such as avoiding complex surveys, exercising listening skills, and making sure that building connections and trust with families is a skill that everyone from the superintendent to front-desk support has and exercises daily.
- Providing more staffing to support students and families

The results of the survey were small when put in the context of this statewide effort. However, OEO hopes that by highlighting voices of the some of the families reached, the legislature can move forward with a framework for what a larger state effort might look like with appropriate resources, a longer timeline, and a workgroup that places family and community perspectives at its core.

## Other Sources of Stakeholder Feedback: Focus Groups and Family Panels

OEO was interested in making sure that its efforts for feedback had a geographic equity and language access lens. Our Central Washington Regional Education Ombuds conducted two focus groups with families using the survey instrument. Twelve families in the Ellensburg/Yakima area were reached that way and they were largely families of students with autism and other disabilities.

Additionally, one of our Associate Ombuds took the survey to a group of 7 Somali parents in King County on October 22, 2016, by collaborating with the Somali Parent Education Board and East African Community Services. Families were happy that the Somali community was being asked for feedback and suggested having a larger event in the future to reach more parents. In general, families found the family engagement work to be positive, but also were concerned that the timeframe for generating a statewide policy was too short, required more resources and deeper community involvement, and more details and opportunities for continuous feedback. Families completed the surveys as part of the focus group and their individual responses were tallied in the counts.

After realizing in early November that no surveys had been returned in Spanish, OEO partnered with the Arc of Snohomish county and its Latino family group to receive feedback. Twelve of the group's members met and together identified the following as the top 5 values:

1. Respect and honor racial, ethnic, cultural, language, ability, belief, or other identities in working with families and students.
2. Provide easy-to-understand information to families in the language(s) they speak at home and make outreach in those languages a priority within the school and district.
3. Respect and honor families as important decision-makers for their students.
4. Make sure that there is effective two-way communication (school to family; family to school) about what is happening at the school and with students.
5. Provide classes to families that help them with things like assisting students with homework or navigating online grades and reports.

OEO summarized the top 5 values as identified by the limited survey results and shared them on its English and Spanish Facebook pages with an invitation to send feedback to OEO by email. SESEC responded and shared how those values were reflected in its research work with the University of Washington.

OEO also organized panels of families to speak at two EOGOAC meetings—the first in September in Seattle and the second in October in Yakima.

The Seattle panel was composed of Erin Okuno, Director of the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition and a mother in Seattle Schools; Keshia Porcincula, Education Projects Coordinator at the Equity in Education Coalition and a mother in Renton schools; Hodan Mohamed, the Family Services Program Manager for Open Doors for Multicultural Families and a mother in Seattle Schools; and Robin Pratt, Native American Education Coordinator for Auburn Schools and also a mother in that district. The families at the Seattle panel shared several concerns with EOGOAC, including the need for schools to invest more in developing authentic and open relationships with families, noting that many families did not feel welcome at their children's schools because of racial, cultural, and language differences or the disability experiences of their students. The families also expressed a desire for schools and districts to think about how relationships and family engagement positions work when there is conflict and also how schools and districts will retain staff with strong ties and relationships to the communities reflected in their schools.

Cultural competence and responsiveness was a strong theme of the panel, along with the need to remove barriers to language and disability access for families and students. Panelists cited examples of how schools had worked well for families, too, in reflecting cultural values in school assemblies and events. The panel also discussed strategies for setting clear visions for family engagement at the state and district levels, while supporting school communities in adapting those strategies to reflect the cultural richness of their communities. Panelists emphasized the need for greater resources for family engagement and had concerns about over-reliance on local levy funds, for example, to sustain family engagement programs. However, at least one panelist shared concerns that having district-placed family engagement liaisons and leaders came with its own power dynamics and suggested that family engagement might work better as an effort outside of district control but with an equitable distribution of resources.

Panelists recommended that families and communities be asked about what they wanted for their children, in their own languages and respecting their cultural and tribal values, for example, before schools set an agenda for what engagement would look like. They also suggested strategies for creating flexible leadership opportunities for families, varying the times and locations of meetings to be more family-friendly, thoughtfully placing liaisons in schools with high needs for support and perhaps historically divided relationships between schools and families, and thinking beyond traditional modes of engagement, such as the PTA, to embrace engagement through a racial equity lens. Portland Schools, for example, has contracted with community-based organizations to advance family engagement.<sup>61</sup>

At the Yakima panel in October, Ombuds Sam Blazina, Loretta Bushbaum (a foster parent for 20 years), Jenny Jones (a foster parent for 25 years), and Tamara Lovewell (a parent through fostering and adoption and a pre-law student) presented about their experiences of family engagement in rural schools in Washington. Many of the foster mothers had experience raising children of color and Sam Blazina offered her perspective as a multiracial mother of children in Ellensburg schools, including a son with autism and Down syndrome. The mothers shared many concerns about how schools engaged with families around special education, including a lack of services, and issues with transportation. They also shared frustration with school staff's gaps in knowledge, especially in supporting students of color or those formerly or currently in foster care. The mothers raised the issue that few schools had restorative justice practices in place and that those practices were critical in cases of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, for example. Some parents on the panel

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<sup>61</sup> Portland Public Schools, School-Family Partnerships, <http://www.pps.net/school-family-partnerships>

noted concern that in rural districts, there can be a lack of objective review or an appeals process with objectivity where a principal might also serve as the district's superintendent.

OEO presented an overview of the primary research results at the November WSSDA annual conference in Spokane as part of a panel presentation on whole child, whole family, and whole community engagement, tying this family engagement work to its participation in the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup. OEO, and its panelists from Colville Tribes, SEL for Washington, and the Washington State Association of School Psychologists, offered to be resources to school leaders as they were planning for and implementing family and community engagement practices.



## Recommendations

### Summary of Recommendations

OEO's timeline and resources for creating a robust recommendation for a statewide definition of family engagement coordinator or a single framework were limited, but OEO's commitment to modeling a *future* process that responds to this need can be the basis for additional work. The legislature can leverage the best practices documented in this report and a thriving and iterative approach to engaging with families, schools, and communities to both establish an appropriate definition and framework and refine it to meet Washington's needs. Therefore, after reviewing best practices and emerging developments in Washington State in the area of family and community engagement, the Office of the Education Ombuds makes the following recommendations to the legislature:

- 1) Adopt as the state's commitment to family engagement the guiding statement crafted by the ESSA Family and Community Engagement Workgroup;
- 2) Form a multi-year statewide workgroup that brings direct family, educator, and community voices to the center of the process and builds on EOGOAC's 2016 recommendations;
- 3) Devote adequate resources to this state-level workgroup to conduct community-based meetings to draw on families' experiences statewide and support cultural responsiveness, language access, and other forms of access (e.g., supporting nontraditional families and guardians, providing for disability accommodations) from the outset of planning and throughout implementation of family and community engagement efforts; and
- 4) Fund a comprehensive system of education with family and community engagement as a foundation.

For each of these proposals, OEO has provided a rationale and suggested next steps.

### ESSA Workgroup's Guiding Statement for Statewide Family and Community Engagement

While 1408 charged the OEO, in collaboration with EOGOAC, to define the *position* of family engagement coordinator, the first step that needs to be taken is to identify the overarching values of this work. That first step was undertaken in the Family and Community Engagement Workgroup that met to make recommendations to ESSA's Consolidated Plan Team in Washington State. Again, that Workgroup's guiding statement was:

*Devote resources and staff to ensure schools, districts, and OSPI support and grow family and community collaboration engagement. This should occur from students' birth through graduation and onto their careers. This effort on family and community engagement is the undergirding to support the success of all students and families, reduce the opportunity gap, and develop more culturally responsive and inclusive schools. Schools, districts, and OSPI must recruit, hire, train, and retain all staff for this commitment to cultural responsiveness, inclusion, and family-community-school engagement. Families, communities, community-based organizations, civic groups, youth service groups, ethnic and racial affinity and support groups, and faith-based organizations provide vital input and wisdom about their students. All staff should leverage this knowledge to improve school policies and practices. When planning for, or implementing racially and culturally equitable and inclusive (e.g., disability, gender, faith, language) family and community engagement efforts, schools, districts, and OSPI must focus on reaching and developing ongoing relationships with families and students whose voices have been lost or not heard as well by holding diversity and inclusion as core values. Washington's students and families come from diverse communities, life experiences, and perspectives and enrich our schools with their input and support.*

In essence, that Workgroup has defined what the parameters are for family and community engagement as part of ESSA implementation. Family and community engagement with schools involves developing the capacities of all stakeholders to

refine policies and practices that affect students and the opportunity gap by leveraging a culturally responsive, racially equitable, and inclusive set of tools. This form of engagement is not a one-time effort; nor can effective policies, structures or strategies be developed with only limited input from the families that make up school and district communities. Rather, it must be an ongoing, dynamic, and responsive process as community and school needs shift and change.

Rather than recommend a single model framework for Washington State, OEO recommends that the state engage in a more robust process to solicit direct input from families, educators, and community members to outline guiding principles for our state. The state should then support districts' development and refinement of their own family and community engagement efforts in direct partnership with their families and communities.

Components of the Epstein model, Harvard's human-centered design, combined with values identified through the University of Washington's research, the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition's study, and OEO's small sample survey offer a solid starting point for consideration by families, educators, and other community members shaping district-level policies and strategies.

### Developing a Statewide Workgroup that Brings Family, Educator, and Community Voices to the Center

Authentic family engagement is not simple or quick, especially when families and communities are not treated as a final sign-off on a draft report or practice, but rather are the original source and the final review of best practices. This kind of community-grounded, human-centered design means listening openly and being ready to have that input reshape the process and predicted outcome. As we shaped this report, for example, and tried to incorporate direct family experiences, we were reminded of the barriers that exist for participation and the temptation (both expedient and short-sighted) to rely on individuals whose professional role (of family engagement coordinator or leader of a community-based organization) allowed them to participate during the workday. However, limited panels of families or surveys cannot speak for and represent the diverse perspectives of the families that make up a region's school communities. There is no doubt that they add critical perspectives but some voices cannot adequately substitute for hearing directly from more families and communities, particularly those individuals for whom the doors to school seem closed to their input and contributions.

Washington can better understand what core elements will be necessary for successful school and family collaboration in our state by enlisting the identified stakeholders in 1408, together with family engagement coordinators and community-based organizations. Critically, the Workgroup would not be tasked with making a recommendation themselves, but with facilitating a process to draw out recommendations from a broad and diverse group of families, educators, and community members from all regions of the state.

There are many stakeholders that have direct, ongoing relationships with large numbers of families, including the Department of Early Learning, the University of Washington and other higher education partners, Department of Health, OSPI's Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, EOGOAC, OEO, Washington State PTA, Washington's race and ethnicity commissions, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and community-based organizations. Those stakeholders should be at the table. Given the focus of this work, the Workgroup should be at least half representatives from family and community-based organizations that are outside of state and local government. To create an authentic family and community engagement structure involves immersion in the needs and voices of families and communities, free from the push and pull of representatives holding dual roles, such as a principal and parent, or an OSPI staff member and a leader of color. Simply put, just because educators, state agency leaders, or policymakers are parents does not mean that they can fill a position in this work designated for a family or community perspective.

The Workgroup can begin with EOGOAC's 2016 recommendations from its annual report, reiterated here:

***Increase Allocation for Family and Community Engagement Coordinators***

- *In order to be more inclusive of the diversity of families within the state and to reflect national research, the title of the position should be changed from Family Engagement Coordinator to Family and Community Engagement Coordinator.*
- *Each school district to receive the allocation determined in the prototypical funding model with the condition that no district receives less than 1 FTE allocation per district.*
- *The allocation must be used for the purposes of family engagement and not for other duties.*
- *Family engagement coordinators should be required to engage in cultural competence training and have the appropriate background to act as a liaison between the complex expectations of schools and unique families.*

***Family and Community Engagement Framework***

*Every school district must be required to adopt a family and community engagement framework based on national research and evidence-based models. The legislature must adopt family and community engagement standards to define and measure family and community engagement strategies used in schools and districts. As family engagement is a required component of both federal (Title I, Part A, Title III and school improvement for Priority, Focus and School Improvement Grants) and state (Learning Assistance Program) programs, it is essential that schools use culturally responsive research and evidence-based family engagement models and standards tailored to the community being served.*

The timeline for creating Washington's family and community engagement effort should not be truncated. Rather, learning from existing state models points to the need to allow for a minimum of two years of concerted development activities, to run parallel to ESSA's Title I activities, but to expand beyond that focus to provide a consistent baseline of engagement efforts for every child, every family, and every school. Sustainability of these family and community engagement efforts at all levels of the school system will depend on creating an ongoing state-level advisory group modeled after the family leadership teams that would become part of local school climates. Advice, consultation, evaluation, and improvement are part of the healthy feedback model for family and community engagement.

### Resources Needed for Facilitating a Workgroup with an Equity Focus

Due to a small staff and no resources provided for this work, OEO was unable to launch the kind of family engagement effort it intends for the future Workgroup to have. However, its cycle of secondary research, community and family feedback, and refinement provides a solid foundation for the beginning of this next phase of work. A statewide family and community engagement effort will only be as valuable as its underlying mission and vision. That vision must focus on equity—broadly defined—to honor both the requirements of ESSA and the spirit that drives Washington State’s commitment to innovation and diversity. Not only should the workgroup, and then subsequent ongoing advisory effort, reflect communities and families in Washington in terms of demographics and geography, but also in lived experience. Resources for interpretation and translation, community-based meetings, outreach to parents with disabilities, input from foster families and kinship care providers, and engagement with homeless and emancipated youth must guide the efforts, not as a final bias and sensitivity check alone, but as a theme throughout every discussion and plan. Community-based organizations will be invaluable partners for developing tools for feedback as recommendations emerge, just as they must be ongoing voices at the table. This Workgroup, in particular, will need to offer multi-modal opportunities for input, as SESEC’s survey of family engagement in Southeast Seattle highlighted as one example. Families, depending on their comfort with government systems, literacy, cultural background, and school relationships, might be reached better in person, by phone, by email, or through online tools—and there will be tangible variations across Washington communities.

### Funding a Comprehensive System of Education with Family and Community Engagement as a Foundation

The prototypical schools model is illustrative of the final and most important recommendation for this work—that the legislature adequately fund not only the preparation stage of family and community engagement, but also commit when setting on this path to mapping where additional funds will come from for *sustained* statewide work. District models of family engagement show us that Title I funds will not be enough. Simply establishing a family involvement coordinator position as part of the prototypical schools model was not adequate, either, as schools and districts had to choose between staffing services and positions that appeared to be more essential than family engagement by using the funds earmarked for that work. Districts and schools in Washington rely on a range of resources to make family and community engagement possible—from Title I to LAP, levy funds to grants, in-kind donations to volunteer hours by families.

The first step that the legislature can take is to fully fund the family involvement coordinator piece of the prototypical schools model and specify that those funds can only be used for family and community engagement. However, to make this effort successful without detracting from other student learning needs, the legislature will have to fund the other elements of the prototypical schools model that schools and districts have tried to meet through engagement resources in the past. These pieces of student and family experience are inextricably connected.

## Conclusion

The Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds, in consultation with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee, undertook a modest process to ascertain what mattered most to families and communities in developing a statewide approach to family and community engagement. Building on the expertise of school staff working in these positions, existing national and state models of engagement, and feedback from communities, OEO was able to model what a robust process might look like with a longer timeline and adequate resources. At this time, OEO does not recommend a specific definition for family engagement coordinator or a model framework, but rather recommends that the legislature engage the core principles of family and community engagement by beginning a Workgroup that will reflect communities and experiences in Washington State and answer these questions from a human-centered design approach, rooted in family and community wisdom about what meaningful, equitable, and inclusive collaboration can look like. The starting point for this work should be the ESSA Family and Community Engagement's guiding statement and the EOGOAC's 2016 recommendations, and from there, a two-year Workgroup (and ultimately, ongoing advisory committee) should look to other state models, such as Minnesota and Maryland, and ongoing family and community engagement research efforts from the University of Washington and others, to create and fund an overarching framework for family and community engagement in Washington State. This effort must be a multi-year, cross-sector collaboration that is sustained through a renewed commitment to the prototypical schools model and emerging opportunities for foundation and private sector support.

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## Appendices

Appendix A: ESSA Consolidated Plan Team Recommendations, Parent and Community Engagement

Appendix B: Initial ESSA Parent and Community Engagement Discussion (Summary by Carrie Basas)

Appendix C: Statewide Survey of Family Engagement Staff with Responses

Appendix D: Statewide Survey of Families Regarding Important Values in Family and Community Engagement Programs

Appendix E: Responses from the Statewide Survey of Families

Appendix F: Examples of State-Level Frameworks for Family Engagement

## Appendix A: ESSA Consolidated Plan Team Recommendations, Parent and Community Engagement



# OSPI | Washington's ESSA Consolidated Plan

**NOTE:** The ESSA Consolidated Plan Team reviewed the recommendation(s) for Washington's ESSA Consolidated Plan. They will not take effect unless they are approved by the State Superintendent and the U.S. Department of Education.

### Every Student Succeeds Act Recommendations: Parent and Community Engagement

Recommendation Number	Item	ESSA Citation	Recommendation(s)	State Superintendent Approval & Date Approved
PCE1	Adopt a Guiding Statement for Family and Community Collaboration to Frame OSPI's work with ESSA.	<p>Sec. 1111(a)(1)(A) <i>SEA consultation process while developing Consolidated Plan.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C) <i>SEA provides assistance to LEAs and schools meeting ESEA requirements.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F) <i>SEA supports collection and dissemination of effective engagement strategies.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1111(g)(1)(D) <i>SEAs will support LEAs to meet the needs of students at all levels of schooling.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1111(g)(1)(G) <i>SEA determined factors to provide students opportunity to achieve knowledge and skills described in the state standards</i></p>	Devote resources and staff to ensure schools, districts, and OSPI support and grow family and community engagement. This should occur from students' birth through graduation and onto their careers. This effort on family and community engagement is the undergirding to support the success of all students and families, reduce the opportunity gap, and develop more culturally responsive and inclusive schools. Schools, districts, and OSPI must recruit, hire, train, and retain all staff for this commitment to cultural responsiveness, inclusion, and family- community-school engagement. Families, communities, community-based organizations, civic groups, youth service groups, ethnic and racial affinity and support groups, and faith-based organizations provide vital input and wisdom about their students.	Approved by Randy Dorn on October 19, 2016

Recommendation Number	Item	ESSA Citation	Recommendation(s)	State Superintendent Approval & Date Approved
		<p><i>Sec. 1112(a)(1)(A)</i> <i>LEA consultation with parents</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1112(b)(7)</i> <i>Effective engagement strategies.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1112(e)</i> <i>Parents' right to know</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1116(a)(1)</i> <i>LEA consultation with parents.</i></p>	<p>All staff should leverage this knowledge to improve school policies and practices. When planning for, or implementing racially and culturally equitable and inclusive (e.g., disability, gender, faith, language) family and community engagement efforts, schools, districts, and OSPI must focus on reaching and developing ongoing relationships with families and students whose voices have been lost or not heard as well by holding diversity and inclusion as core values. Washington's students and families come from diverse communities, life experiences, and perspectives and enrich our schools with their input and support.</p>	

Recommendation Number	Item	ESSA Citation	Recommendation(s)	State Superintendent Approval & Date Approved
PCE2.A	Emphasize family and community collaboration as part of ESSA Implementation.	<p>Sec. 1111(a)(1)(A) <i>SEA consultation process while developing Consolidated Plan.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C) <i>SEA provides assistance to LEAs and schools meeting ESEA requirements.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F) <i>SEA supports collection and dissemination of effective engagement strategies.</i></p> <p>Sec. 1112(a)(1)(A) <i>LEA consultation with parents</i></p> <p>Sec. 1112(b)(7) <i>Effective engagement strategies</i></p> <p>Sec. 1112(e) <i>Parents' right to know</i></p> <p>Sec. 1116(a)(1) <i>LEA consultation with parents.</i></p>	Ensure research-based family and community collaboration is woven into all of the federal programs as a key instructional and school improvement strategy. Family and community engagement must be a focal point of ESSA implementation. OSPI must ensure that federal programs work together and their individual requirements and efforts are not in conflict or duplicative, given limited resources.	Approved by Randy Dorn on October 19, 2016

Recommendation Number	Item	ESSA Citation	Recommendation(s)	State Superintendent Approval & Date Approved
PCE2.B	Improve transparency and communication of district and school funding available for family and community collaboration.	<p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C)</i> SEA provides assistance to LEAs and schools meeting ESEA requirements.</p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F)</i> SEA supports collection and dissemination of effective engagement strategies.</p> <p><i>Sec. 1116(a)(2)(D)</i> LEA annual evaluation of parent and family engagement policy.</p> <p><i>Sec. 1116(e)</i> LEA builds parent and family capacity to be engaged in activities and requirements funded by Sec. 1116.</p>	OSPI, districts and schools will be encouraged to increase transparency.	Approved by Randy Dorn on October 19, 2016
PCE3.D	Build Community Outreach  Recommendation first to the Early Learning Workgroup and then to the Federal Programs Team and Consolidated Plan Team.	<p><i>Sec. 1116(e)</i> LEA builds parent and family capacity to be engaged in activities and requirements funded by Sec. 1116.</p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(1)(A)</i> SEA provides assistance to LEAs and elementary schools on use of Title I, A funds to support early childhood education programs.</p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(H)</i> State will ensure LEAs will work with intermediaries or individuals with practical expertise.</p> <p><i>Sec. 1119</i> LEA must coordinate activities with Head Start agencies and if feasible, other entities carrying out early childhood development programs. These activities focus on improving the transition from early childhood to preschool.</p>	Districts should identify community groups providing key family collaboration services and explore establishing community partnerships. An example is the community school results framework. Districts and schools need to build partnerships with community organizations, including but not limited to, organizations that are affinity and support groups for youth and their families based on their faith, race, ethnic, or cultural identity as well as community organizations that support students and families with disabilities.	Approved by Randy Dorn on October 19, 2016



Recommendation Number	Item	ESSA Citation	Recommendation(s)	State Superintendent Approval & Date Approved
PCE5.A	Assessment Information Provided to Families  Recommendation first to the Assessment Workgroup and then to the Federal Programs Team and Consolidated Plan Team.	<p><i>Sec. 1111(b)(2)B)(x)</i> <i>Assessments should produce reports that allow parents to understand the academic needs of students and to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C)</i> <i>SEA provides assistance to LEAs and schools meeting ESEA requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F)</i> <i>SEA supports collection and dissemination of effective engagement strategies.</i></p>	<p>Students and families must receive state and district assessment information about student academic progress that is timely, accessible, and actionable. Families and communities should be informed of the test and its intent prior to the state assessment and any major district assessments. The assessment information should be free of acronyms and professional jargon. The information provided about results should include recommendations to families explaining the next steps for how a student can improve his or her score. OSPI should provide guidance to districts on reporting assessment results in a way that makes sense to families. OSPI should work with families in developing this guidance. Further, OSPI should require that districts provide translated copies of these materials for Limited English Proficient families.</p> <p>The workgroup encourages adoption of an aspirational goal that districts establish a system to engage and inform families on the purpose of assessments throughout the academic year.</p>	Approved by Randy Dorn on October 19, 2016

Recommendation Number	Item	ESSA Citation	Recommendation(s)	State Superintendent Approval & Date Approved
PCE7.C	Older English Learners' School Enrollment Options  Recommendation first to the Consolidated Plan Team after consultation with the English Learner workgroup.	<p><i>Sec. 1112(e)(3)(D)</i> <i>A student shall not be admitted to, or excluded from, any federally assisted education program on the basis of a surname or language-minority status.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(2)(C)</i> <i>SEA provides assistance to LEAs and schools meeting ESEA requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(1)(D)</i> <i>SEAs will support LEAs to meet the needs of students at all levels of schooling.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 1111(g)(1)(G)</i> <i>SEA determined factors to provide students opportunity to achieve knowledge and skills of the challenging academic standards.</i></p> <p><i>Sec. 8304(a)(3)(B)</i> <i>SEA monitoring responsibilities.</i></p>	<p>OSPI must provide clearer guidelines under Title I, C and Title III/TBIP and Civil Rights to districts and schools on the responsibility to provide services to older EL students with limited credits or SIFE (Student with Interrupted Formal Education) status. Schools and districts must ensure all eligible EL students are provided the opportunity to enroll in traditional academic settings, regardless of their high school credit status. The enrollment decisions should be made based strictly on the student's best interest determined by the student's families. This should be based on appropriate information from the school and district on available programs.</p> <p>OSPI needs to monitor and enforce the guidelines as part of Title I, C and Title III grant administration. This should include data review to identify any potential disproportionality of EL enrollment, graduation, and retention rates among the school and district.</p> <p>Additional resources should be provided for this effort.</p>	Approved by Randy Dorn on October 28, 2016

## Appendix B: Initial ESSA Parent and Community Engagement Discussion (Summary by Carrie Basas)

At the August EOGOAC meeting, OEO presented some of the preliminary ideas that the Family and Community Engagement Workgroup from the Washington ESSA team had considered:

- Sharing information on best practices (giving OSPI leadership duties in this area)
- Improving transparency and communication re: funding for collaboration
- Creating a family and community advisory group within OSPI
- Embedding reflective questions in grant applications, reviews, and program evaluation
- Creating better transitions for families/students along the P-20 continuum
- Facilitating better coordination between DEL and OSPI
- Developing an early learning ombuds
- Disaggregating early learning data
- Having OSPI provide technical assistance for the use of Title I/Part A funds for early learning providers
- Encouraging districts to forge community partnerships
- Making collaboration and engagement a part of educator and classified staff effectiveness metrics
- Making assessment information (scores, purpose) accessible and clear to every family (including families with interpretation and translation needs)
- Soliciting and valuing family and community input on school improvement plans
- Encouraging cooperation and resource-sharing among districts to realize collaboration (e.g., cooperative agreements, interpretation/translation)
- Providing greater access to core classes for English Learners and clarifying supports for older EL students
- Creating school climate surveys for every school in the state, where collaboration and engagement are factors

## Appendix C: Statewide Survey of Family Engagement Staff with Responses

### Survey Questions and Answers:

**1. If your district has a definition of "family engagement" (or "parent engagement or involvement") what is it?**

- Ensuring that all families are included as partners in their child's education

- In [district name removed], we recognize that families provide early and ongoing education to their children, and a strong collaboration between families and schools will ensure that students continue to receive the supports they need to graduate. Our schools should be welcoming environments for our students and families, while also embracing high expectations for all our students in academic achievement and in conduct. We all—School Board, Superintendent and principals; teachers and staff; families and students; the community—have a shared responsibility to educate our students. We believe that all students can be successful when schools and families partner in children's education.

The School Board supports and encourages family engagement in education at home, in our schools and communities, and in school governance. We recognize the diversity of family structures, circumstances, and cultural backgrounds and respect families as important decision makers for their children's education.

We will motivate, empower, embrace and engage active participation of families in the education of all students. We will promote mutual trust and culturally relevant practices among school, home, and community.

We recognize that family engagement in education has a positive effect on student achievement and is an important strategy in reducing achievement gaps. The intent of this policy is to create and maintain a district-wide climate conducive to the engagement of families and to develop and sustain partnerships that support student learning and positive child and youth development in all schools.

High quality family engagement includes multiple methods that encourage two-way communication and welcomes families into the school and learning environment. It also validates the diverse knowledge, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds within the school community.

For the purposes of this policy the terms "parent" and "family" are designed to be inclusive of the many relationships that students have with parents, guardians, other relatives, or community members, pursuant to state and federal laws surrounding confidentiality.

- The Family Liaison will provide information and training to parents to enable families to understand, access, and participate fully in school activities designed to increase family involvement and knowledge of strategies that can improve the academic achievement of their children

- Family engagement

- Our district has a Family Engagement policy that touches upon what family engagement means. It states that, "family engagement in education has a positive effect on student achievement and is an important strategy in reducing the education opportunity gaps. The intent of this policy is to create and maintain a district-wide climate conducive to the meaningful engagement of families and to develop and sustain partnerships that support student learning and positive child and youth development in all schools. In order to create and maintain this climate, schools will provide a welcoming atmosphere to family members of their students."

- [name removed] Elementary is taking the opportunity to engage all staff, parents, community members and partners in an effort to raise student achievement by providing Academic Press and at the same time providing Social Support. We will do this by employing the support and collaboration of all stakeholders of Elementary. The Elementary Staff and Community have identified and developed a common vision set a common vision and a set of four school wide goals that have been developed and defined by members of the school community:

- 1) Improving student learning
- 2) Creating a collaborative and cohesive staff through the employment of appropriate professional development
- 3) Developing a Parent/Community engagement framework;
- 4) Preparing pre-service teacher candidates for successful teaching in high need schools.

-"We do what's best for kids" This also happens to be our district's mission

**2. What is your job title and job description? If you don't have it handy, please list your title and your top 3-5 duties.**

- Assistant Director of Equity, Outreach, and Engagement

- District Ombudsman: Designated neutral or impartial dispute resolution practitioner whose major function is providing independent confidential and informal assistance to visitors to the Ombudsman's office including students, parents and community members. The incumbent serves as an advocate for fairness who acts as a source of information, referral, and aids in answering individuals' questions and assists in the resolution of concerns and critical situations. Promotes family engagement for student achievement through identifying family needs/barriers. Coordinate specific programs through the department of Family Engagement and Student Support; assist with staffing the Family Center. The primary duties of the position are related to dispute resolution, family engagement and partnerships, and staff support for the Family Center.

- Family Liaison: will provide information and training to parents to enable families to understand, access, and participate fully in school activities designed to increase family involvement and knowledge of strategies that can improve the academic achievement of their children

- Parents & Community Liaison

- My title is Family Engagement Coordinator: I lead programs that increase meaningful family engagement and racial equity in schools across the district. These programs build the capacity of families to advocate for the academic success and social/emotional well-being of their children, and also builds the capacity of school staff and administrators to receive, respect, and utilize the strengths that families bring, especially that of our linguistically and ethnically diverse families

- School Community Specialist

- 1) Attend to social, emotional and behavioral needs of the students and families enrolled at [name redacted] Elementary.
- 2) Coordinate outreach and engagement with community partners and school staff to support students and families to improve student educational outcomes.
- 3) Coordinate with PTG, Parent Liaison and other parent community members to increase parent involvement.
- 4) Insure the integration of academics, behavior and attendance data and student history to improve their on-time attendance, time out of class for behavior issues and increased academic progress.

- Director of Mediation-Liaison Services: Assist parents understand school culture, concerns and barriers regarding the academic/social need of their students

**3. Please name 1-3 things accomplishments that you are most proud of in your engagement work**

- Developing a Family Engagement Liaison program and positions
- Supporting staff with professional development around family engagement
- Participating in regional work around family engagement (conference development, etc.)
  
- The Superintendent has a Family Action Committee that meets with her quarterly. I am proud that over the course of the years, we have had an increase in diversity. Currently we have Latino, Somali, Vietnamese and SPED parents
- I provide professional development regularly to family liaisons and bilingual para educators to build on professional growth, to increase their skills in becoming a stronger support to parents, and to have a more active role in school leadership and decision making around parent engagement
- A few weeks ago I helped coordinate a team of 26 members (district administrators and staff from 3 schools) to attend a Family Engagement Institute. That was the first step of a larger plan, where each of the three schools will get individualized support including a parent institute to increase family engagement
  
- We partnered with WABS and formed a Natural Leader team (Natural Leaders are volunteers who are warm, caring social persons who serve as multi-cultural bridges between students, families, communities, and schools.). Our team now consists of 48 volunteers. We also believe in

furthering our own education and as a result we have 10 pursuing GED, 4 pursuing their Associates, and 2 who earned their Associates and are continuing on to their Bachelor's degree. Almost all of these families received a scholarship to go back to school from either Edmonds CC or Everett CC.

- Newcomer families start to USA school system.
- Families start to share their thoughts about Education in USA.
- Families start to involve in school meeting.
  
- Program and curriculum development that is responsive to the needs of marginalized families
- Program and curriculum development that disrupts racist practices in schools by shifting beliefs about difference and white supremacy
- I am most proud of the unintended impact our programs have had on families. Many have gone on to further their formal education, or have developed programs and/or community based organizations that support families in their respective communities
  
- Walking School Bus
- Music Innovates
- Parent/Community Professional Learning Team (PLT)
- Attendance Review Team
  
- Work closely district wide with our liaisons on attendance, advocacy and to be a resource to our parents and students

**4. To whom do you report for this work? You don't need to give us the name of the person, just the title of that person.**

- Assistant Superintendent of Family Engagement and Student Success
- Executive Director of Student Support & Family Engagement
- Director of Instructional Support Programs
- Family engagement and refugee service manager
- Director of Family Engagement
- Principal and PLT
- Superintendent of Schools

**5. What is the best thing about the supervisory structure for family engagement work in your district**

- The support that she provides
- It allows for a district level team to keep up on current research and practices and support schools as needed
- The support I receive
- Not sure
- Unknown
- We are allowed to use the resources and culture of each neighborhood school to create a family engagement program based upon the needs of students, families and school



- Each school building has an extensive parent volunteer list and a Parent Advisory Committee

**6. What is the worst thing about the supervisory structure for family engagement work in your district?**

- The confusion with some of who to connect with since her position was added after mine
- Capacity. It is not realistic for a two-person team to support 39 schools. The idea is to build the capacity of others in other departments to expand efforts
- Not necessarily supervisory, but position needs more hours to do it right
- There is no structure.
- Our department could benefit from having a department manager
- We would not say that there is a worst part. We like that we are able to work independently to support our students, families and schools
- Not having the ability to allow all parents who are active in their children's education volunteer, as we require a state clearance for all volunteers

**7. From where do you get the funding to do your family engagement work? (some potential examples but you might have others: district funds, grant, levy funds, private donations, state funds, Title I, LAP, etc.)**

- District, grants, Title I
- Basic education (state dollars allocated to the district); Title I and LAP funds
- Title, LAP, District Funding.
- Title I
- District Funds, Private donations, Grants, Title I
- Collaborative Schools for Innovation and Success (CSIS) Grant from OSPI provides our funding to be able to do our family engagement work. We also get funding from our Title I funds as well. We also engage with community partners such as the symphony and the Regional Health District to provide our families with additional services.
- District, Title I and LAP

**8. About how many students and families are you expected to support district-wide with these funds for engagement?**

- 15600
- [name removed] Public Schools serves 20,000 students in 39 schools in a K-12 system
- 1900 students, which equates to about 1200 families
- 300 students
- 58,000 students, 38,000 families
- 400
- All who are in need, or have concerns district wide

## Appendix D: Statewide Survey of Families Regarding Important Values in Family and Community Engagement Programs (Survey Instrument)

### What matters most for Family and School Collaboration?

This spring, the Washington State legislature asked our office (The Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds) to research and recommend a model for how schools can best work with families and communities. Also, under the new law known as the “Every Student Succeeds Act” or “ESSA,” the US Department of Education is requiring each state to make a plan to support family and school partnerships. Washington State is working on its plan now.

**We want to hear from you** about what matters most to you as a parent or family member when schools reach out to you to work together. We will use this information when we make our recommendations to the state for a model. We will also share this with the leaders who are working on the state plan for family engagement under ESSA. **Your input will help shape what collaboration looks like in Washington.**

We have listed below some of the values from different national models for school and family engagement.

1. Please **read the list**. **Circle yes or no** to indicate which values you think are important. Think about whether any values are missing. If you feel a value is missing, you can add it in the blank space on the back side of this form.
2. Next, please **select your TOP FIVE most important**, and **number them #1-5**. If you do not see your top 5 in this list, please add them in the extra spaces at the back. **We have also left space for you to write next to each value what it means to you in your words.**

The values listed below come from different models of family engagement.

**Please circle which values you think are important and number their order of importance from #1-5.**

Value: Each statement begins with: <i>Schools should...</i>	Is this value important to you?	Order from most important (1) to least important (5)	What this value means to you in your own words.
1. Share responsibility with families for helping students succeed.	Y e s / N o		
2. Make sure that any rules or policies serve <u>every</u> family.	Y e s / N o		
3. Reach out to families across all grade levels, from preschool through graduation.	Y e s / N o		

4. Help families understand how supporting their students changes as students age and mature.	Y e s / N o		
5. Respect that families define themselves, their roles, and values in different ways.	Y e s / N o		
6. Help families understand and be confident about how schools and processes work.	Y e s / N o		
7. Work with community partners, such as nonprofits, businesses, and government to reach out to families	Y e s / N o		
8. Ask for families and communities' help in making schools better.	Y e s / N o		
9. Provide classes to families that help them with things like assisting students with homework or navigating online grades and reports.	Y e s / N o		
10. Build a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate.	Y e s / N o		
11. Create opportunities for families to be leaders in the school for decision-making.	Y e s / N o		
12. Work to build authentic relationships between families and educators.	Y e s / N o		
13. See and treat families as experts and value their stories and their ideas for solving problems.	Y e s / N o		
14. Help teachers understand that they are learning, too, and need families' feedback.	Y e s / N o		
15. Identify who has power and who does not and make sure that every family and community has equal voice and power.	Y e s / N o		
16. Encourage families to set goals for schools and	Y e s / N o		

students rather than having schools decide what is best.			
17. Offer parenting skill classes or support groups.	Y e s / N o		
18. Prioritize training for teachers and leaders that helps them understand families better.	Y e s / N o		
19. Make sure that there is effective two-way communication (school to family; family to school) about what is happening at the school and with students.	Y e s / N o		
20. Work with families to create meaningful, flexible volunteer opportunities for families.	Y e s / N o		
21. Assist families in supporting learning at home, through homework or other activities.	Y e s / N o		
22. Respect and honor families as important decision-makers for their students.	Y e s / N o		
23. Coordinate community resources and services that can help families and students.	Y e s / N o		
24. Support community-based efforts and groups because school is an extension of the community.	Y e s / N o		
25. Provide easy-to-understand information to families in the language(s) they speak at home and make outreach in those languages a priority within the school and district.	Y e s / N o		
26. Respect and honor racial, ethnic, cultural, language, ability, belief, or other identities in working with	Y e s / N o		

families and students.			
Other Values (Write your own)	Important? Yes / No	Order of Importance	What this value means to you:
Other comments:			

Please contact the Office of the Education Ombuds, at 1-866-297-2597 or [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov) if you have any questions about this work. Thank you for your help!



## Appendix E: Responses from the Statewide Survey of Families

**The number of responses to each value, as presented in the order on the survey itself, are recorded here, as well as alternative definitions that respondents provided.**

### **1. Share responsibility with families for helping students succeed.**

16 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Understand that sometimes your actions sideline parents. Example: If you don't use books or make tests available, it can be difficult for parents to help with homework at the middle and high school level. Consider HOW the student is going to get support outside of school. In fact, ASSUME the student will get help outside of class and plan accordingly.
- Support / equip and affirm families to help their students succeed
- Not only school responsibility
- Utilize parents as partners
- Common good
- My child should be welcomed, not tolerated
- Each party has a responsibility but the school should take the lead when the value of education is not culturally understood
- It is not just the school's responsibility to teach. Parents should also be held accountable.

### **2. Make sure that any rules or policies serve every family.**

8 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- You need more people at the table so we don't have as many blind spots/unintended exclusion
- The IEP is a team product, not a take it or leave it option
- Rules and Policies should be developed with diversity to ensure equitable support.
- Rules and policies should not only apply to a few schools or racial groups but to all. Equity is not always giving everyone the same but giving everyone what is needed and that is not always the same thing(s).

### **3. Reach out to families across all grade levels, from preschool through graduation.**

8 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Do not assume engagement happens naturally. Be intentional
- Schools make an effort to inform and involve families
- Teachers are communicating with families for positive things. Being responsive, using language line.
- Equity is not equality
- The school should actively engage and communicate with families throughout a student's school career - not just during elementary school years.

#### **4. Help families understand how supporting their students changes as students age and mature.**

13 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- This really strikes me as paternalistic and off-putting. Help parents understand how kids develop and change, but DON'T tell parents how they should be supporting them.
- Family and cultural values in supporting children varies
- Teaching parents to advocate is not a criticism of the school system but a true representation of how to support our families as they learn how to support their student(s). It is a give and take process and the importance of parent/guardian participation.
- Supporting my children through every stage and age
- People need to feel welcomed in the school house. They should not be afraid of going to schools for meetings

#### **5. Respect that families define themselves, their roles, and values in different ways.**

8 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Models of family engagement should be flexible and as a spectrum
- Understand differences
- Parents are the experts on their children's strengths and shortcomings, take time to listen to them about those areas and support in a genuine way.
- Not all families operate the same-but they all care about their children and may show it in different ways

#### **6. Help families understand and be confident about how schools and processes work.**

23 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Don't focus too much on "educating" the parent on how to navigate. Focus on accessibility by design. Your school system should be easy to understand. Yes, parents need "welcome and here's the ropes." Some will need more, depending on their situation. But if as a rule if parents require a LOT of help, ask yourself if your set-up might be the problem.
- Demystify grades/report cards. Help understanding standards & state tests. How do I know if my child is successful? What supports are available if my child is struggling? How do I access those? How do I know that my student is on track to be eligible for opportunities beyond HS?
- Parent inclusion
- Engagement may not happen if parents are not familiar or feel embarrassed about not knowing rules, processes, etc.
- The school should make information about their processes (and any other relevant information) transparent, easy to understand, and easily accessible
- How does education work in my area?

#### **7. Work with community partners, such as nonprofits, businesses, and government to reach out to families.**

4 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Would prefer to focus on nurturing authentic school-parent relationship directly.



**8. Ask for families and communities' help in making schools better.**

11 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Don't like how this is phrased. You want to ask for their insight and perspective on what is working, and why, and what could change, and why. Honor their expertise. Then they will contribute/volunteer (and not feel used)
- They are experts on their own lives!
- Child(ren) education is not only the responsibility of the teacher but the child's family, community, etc. Students' success impacts our communities.
- Family time, less in terms of home work - school is ENOUGH time for school work.

**9. Provide classes to families that help them with things like assisting students with homework or navigating online grades and reports.**

15 people chose this value as one of their top 5

(no alternatives received)

**10. Build a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate.**

19 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Welcoming to ALL - ability, culture, language, race. No one is sidelined
- All children need to feel accepted, this is actually very important
- Understanding
- Parents who feel welcome are more engaged in their child's academic life.
- Welcome all families without judgment
- People need to feel welcomed in the school house. They should not be afraid of going to schools for meetings. Parent teacher conferences need to be on the schedule of the parents not the teachers.

**11. Create opportunities for families to be leaders in the school for decision-making.**

17 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- You help youth see their loved ones as role models. This is HUGE.
- I don't even know what this would look like, I've seen it so rarely
- Part of committees no parent/family voice no decision
- Parents/Caregivers are busy thus school leaders need to be thoughtful about leadership opportunities for parents to advocate for themselves and their children which fits the needs of all being served not just a select few. These opportunities should consider language, time, cultural expectations, etc. True effort should be put forth to include everyone.
- Too often families are given "lip service" at IEP meetings or board meetings--families need to be part of the decision makers for their children's educational services
- Families are partners in every decision.
- Parent Empowerment
- Families as decision makers and partners.
- Parent teacher conference is need to be on the schedule of the parents not the teachers
- More teachers and volunteers in the classrooms

**12. Work to build authentic relationships between families and educators.**

26 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Respect, getting to know each other, listening, [giving] feedback
- Partnership & trust
- Again, relationship building is a key factor to move forward.
- Mutual respect
- The school should provide ways and opportunities for families and educators to engage with each other on a regular basis

**13. See and treat families as experts and value their stories and their ideas for solving problems.**

16 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- You are honoring their expertise and affirming their valued role in the community, and help youth see loved ones as role models. This is HUGE
- But it depends on the family & their experiences & knowledge
- But impractical, can't be easily implemented
- Kids are not one size fits all and parents are in the best position to explain what works for their kids
- Meet people where they are
- Parents are a virtually untapped resource in the school system.
- Listen to family input and treat them as partners
- Don't understand this question
- Stop Common Core

**14. Help teachers understand that they are learning, too, and need families' feedback.**

10 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Huge in realize parent/family know too
- Teachers see themselves as teammates and not captains
- Communicate with parents!! We are ALWAYS interested in information about our children (students spend the bulk of their days away from their families, it would be nice to know more, about everything!).
- StopFedEd
- Teachers and families in partnership of learning.
- Teachers need to stop making parents fit into their schedule teachers need to come to parent's homes and communities for meetings

**15. Identify who has power and who does not and make sure that every family and community has equal voice and power.**

10 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Framed this way, the experience is a power struggle. Partnerships are NOT about power struggles. Yes, families must have voice, but leave the tug of war out of it. Also don't like "equal." Someone with bias against students with disabilities, say, should not have an "equal" voice in where they are placed. All need to be respected, valued and heard.
- Within bounds of the law: if community???? Has something barbaric, would not be supported
- Don't pretend that parents have a say in things (like w/IEP's) actually involve them with decision making authority related to their child's education
- When making decisions, has personnel looked at every subgroup and discussed how the decision will impact them?
- Individualized learning.

- Teachers and students should be able to pray freely in public schools

**16. Encourage families to set goals for schools and students rather than having schools decide what is best.**

9 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Families do not always agree. This sounds like chaos to me. Someone needs to affirm programs, etc. And that should be the school board.
- Involving the families in setting goals for their students/children will reinforce the follow-through and support in both the home and school environment.
- Listen to our families and not spoon feed them what we want them to know, there are more than one way to instruct or discipline and that should be listened to and respected.
- Again, treat families as partners
- Education goal setting for success

**17. Offer parenting skill classes or support groups.**

7 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- I think this is best accomplished by another group. Schools telling parents how to parent sets up a power imbalance.
- Self-help support and education strengthen family involvement

**18. Prioritize training for teachers and leaders that helps them understand families better.**

10 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- The issue isn't "understanding families". What does that mean, anyway? The issue IMO is help staff learn to be welcoming, to communicate effectively, to share, to partner.
- Parents have missing skills just like kids and teachers
- Put individualized back into IEP
- Teachers and leaders working with students should be well versed in various areas, not just their subject matter (i.e., mental health, social emotional, cultural, etc.) and training should be on-going.
- Educator training in current best practices essential to empower families as partners

**19. Make sure that there is effective two-way communication (school to family; family to school) about what is happening at the school and with students.**

35 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Parents can be intimidated to be the first to communicate, so school should initiate but understand that they have to listen & not assume information is automatically heard & put to use
- Schools are good at "telling" us but awful @ listening to what we see as a problem
- Communication cannot be 1 way. Follow-through is important to make sure understanding both ways is happening.
- Make sure each side understands the other
- Provide interpretation and translated services for all students and families to ensure, teachers are hearing family/community concerns
- Prioritizing training for teachers and principals: They need to listen respectfully and stay open and receptive to families.

- Parents are only contacted when a student is not behaving in the manner that a particular teacher likes and that is inconsistent depending on the culture of the school and the racial background of the student. There is no ongoing conversations where family's opinions are truly respected and appreciated.
- Teachers and administrators do not have all the answers; be humble and open to self-reflection on classroom/school practice and policy.
- Find one on one ways to communicate with parents. Email and website tend to be better received. Not all methods work for all families.
- Each of my favorite values can be summed up in the importance of the success of students in school through meaningful and educationally relevant action. I am not interested at all not one bit in any type of sensitivity as the world is not a sensitivity place and when we entertain that we set outsiders to fail
- The school needs to ensure that families are continuously informed about what is happening in the schools in a timely and easily accessible manner.
- I don't have the list in front of me to reference them. Sorry!

## **20. Work with families to create meaningful, flexible volunteer opportunities for families.**

7 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- To me this means schools don't try to keep some parents out.
- Teachers can be so unwelcoming when potential volunteers have limited skills
- Most families have parents who work, if not one parent, then both parents. It is hard to volunteer with a full time job. There should be other ways to make a positive impact as a parent that is not always during school hours.
- The school should ensure opportunities exist for any interested family members to make meaningful contributions to the school community
- Students that can't meet grade standards should be held back

## **21. Assist families in supporting learning at home, through homework or other activities.**

10 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Make sure families have necessary materials give them guidance + strategies and alternatives (hw club@ school)
- I do not understand how the school would even do that
- Part of #2
- Child has down time to be a child.
- Parents should support teachers.

## **22. Respect and honor families as important decision-makers for their students.**

10 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Make sure parents understand paperwork before asking them to sign!
- Appropriate training for staff needs to be in a timely manner, not as a follow up action to problems
- Family culture is important and it's important not to undermine that at school by having expectations that violate family values
- Recognize that teachers and administrators do not always know what is best for a child, and most often a parent does.

**23. Coordinate community resources and services that can help families and students.**

6 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Schools should focus on school. Yes, integrate resources and services, but use community groups for this service
- Housing. Food, clothing, jobs/job training, positive youth development

**24. Support community-based efforts and groups because school is an extension of the community.**

4 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- But be careful. Sometimes “community” can overwhelm minority voices. Relationships with families and students are paramount. Community should honor and support that
- Important to some extent but not as much of a priority due to logistical constraints
- Do school have partnership agreements with CBO's?
- Strong families support the community, and strong communities then in turn support the family.
- Associate more with the community and local businesses. A sense of community, support, and pride between school and community elevates the opportunities for each.

**25. Provide easy-to-understand information to families in the language(s) they speak at home and make outreach in those languages a priority within the school and district.**

15 people chose this value as one of their top 5

- Yes! If we don't remove the language barrier, it's difficult to do any of these other things. Pay for interpreters, let parents know about their rights to an interpreter
- If families don't have any idea what is going on! You don't know translate/interpret but you blame them for not knowing.
- Provide language access to parents and community members.
- Less testing!

**26. Respect and honor racial, ethnic, cultural, language, ability, belief, or other identities in working with families and students.**

19 respondents chose this value as one of their top 5

- Acknowledge systemic racism + implicit bias. Explicitly respect/honor/value difference. Teacher/staff training in cultural humility/culturally responsive practice.
- We are diverse respect = cultural competency are essential to our role
- Again, within bounds of the law
- People are different in many ways as such staff and educators should understand those differences when providing services and support.
- Once trust and respect can be established between the two, then the work can begin to work together.
- Respect all cultures, different does not mean stupid or lesser.
- Does personnel use culturally responsive pedagogy?
- It is felt that there is a lot of conversation around this but little put into practice. Our families are told what to do and when asked it is similar to this questionnaire the creator is seeks a certain response and frames the questions as such. We should do a better job of listening.
- Teaching is not a one-size fits all approach.

- Every child, every person is important and deserving of the best possible education and kindness from adults.
- Communication with teacher.
- Teachers and parents should pick curriculum not the government

**Comments:**

Family engagement is NOT about volunteering. Creating meaningful opportunities to interact is important. And volunteering can be that for some people. When done with love, and received with honor, volunteering can help parents and staff learn to partner in a very natural setting. It is also powerful for kids to see their parents volunteering in the school. It affirms role models. Volunteering is an excellent tactic.

BUT....

Fundamentally family engagement is broader. Engagement can lead to collaboration. Engagement is families feeling the school reflects them and their values; that they have a place there... that the school understands their child, and will help their child thrive. It is about TRUST.

A family asking for advice is one thing. A school presuming to give it is another. When you don't have trust, misunderstanding is rampant. And you can't get to trust with a power imbalance. Schools should not be teaching parents how to parent, or tell them how to support, or react. Telling people what to do is a power thing.

Schools need to learn how to interact with parents; they need to be humble and realize EVERYONE has insight and some sort of expertise to offer.

**Values that Families Shared That They Did Not See on the Survey Itself:**

1. Build the capacity of staff to work with, honor and prioritize families - at all levels, classroom teacher and support staff; principal; district leadership
2. Help school staff understand power dynamics and consequences of an imbalance
3. Foster dialogue between parent body and school staff so they can create common understanding. Don't assume it just happens. Don't assume the voice of some parents reflects the voice of all parents
4. LEP Families should have adequate interpreting services available
5. Engage families that are parenting special needs/disabled children.
6. Remember that grandparents parenting their grandchildren or other bonus children involves a different demographic and need supported.
7. Ensure bicultural/bilingual educators/staff represent the demographics, particularly for those students considered most at-risk.
8. Planning at all levels--local (School District), Regional (ESD), State (OSPI)--other agencies/human services have family engagement at multiple levels--not only local and school districts are so unequal from place to place--more needs to be done for family input at the state level with OSPI

9. Communication and support between the families and the school is essential to build trust and respect between the two so the families can feel comfortable that their children are getting a good education.
10. Need to address racial inequality. Dominant group (Caucasians) controls PTA's, Building Leadership Teams and majority of teachers and staff.
11. You need a question that asks if all personnel is dealing with ways to dismantle racism in their school.
12. Avoiding unnecessarily complex, long and confusing surveys with entirely too many nuanced questions around the same topic areas that are very likely to be off-putting to the families you are trying to reach
13. Hold top administrators accountable from the superintendent to deputy chiefs and all others and not have it so top heavy with those positions with their constant diction of how things should be done and yet they appear to be totally out of touch with what actually goes on in our schools and classrooms.
14. Be open to meeting families on different schedules (not just during school hours or immediately after)
15. Students learn in different fashions and a "one size fits all" approach to education is a huge disservice to the children. When possible every opportunity should be taken to ensure the student is being taught in a manner that they can best relate with whether it be visual, audio, or hand on participation.
16. Teaching kids to speak up when they see another kid being bullied, including cyber, exclusion, physically, etc. All aspects or methods of bullying. Also a school liaison between families having issues with bullying. Educating parents that, yes, their child might be a bully. It's painful to watch happen and have no support from the school.
17. Evaluate and reward principals on developing cultures in their schools that value families and their involvement in the school
18. Engage us to explain that we can opt out of invalid testing.
19. Transparency and a proactive approach to students who struggle would be light years ahead of where we are today. Parents who care and are concerned must fight for everything and it immediately places schools and parents in odds as opposed to a partnership.
20. Include families in decisions around curriculum and school policies
21. All schools need to have translated materials for families that speak second language.
22. All secretaries need to be trained in customer service and welcome families no matter race or gender



23. Teachers and parents should set the curriculum for students, not the government.
24. Parents should be more supportive of the teachers and follow through with homework from the teacher at home
25. All students should be challenged in all areas of curriculum
26. There should be more teachers and volunteers in the school
27. If a child does not meet expectations for grade level at the end of the school year, the teacher should have full rights to keep them back and parents should be supportive of it.

## Appendix F: Examples of State-Level Frameworks for Family Engagement

<b>Recap of California's Approach:</b> Uses family engagement/parental involvement interchangeably.	
Working Definition of Family Engagement	<p>"Parent Involvement is the exchange of information (communication), purposeful interactions, and meaningful participation between parents and schools to support student learning and achievement." <sup>62</sup></p>
Statutory Approach	<p>Each contracted education program (e.g., school district, county superintendent) is required to have a parent involvement and education component that includes: a parent orientation, at least two individual parent conferences annually, parent meetings with program staff, and a parent advisory committee focused on issues related to families and children. <sup>63</sup></p> <p>The goals of the program are to: engage parents in their child's academics, create consistent and effective communication between home and school, and integrate parent involvement programs into each school's accountability plan. <sup>64</sup></p> <p>Each school that receives federal funds under Title I of The Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act must establish a parent involvement program. The programs must have procedures to ensure parent involvement and parent trainings.</p>
Family Engagement Program Highlights	<p>The Family Engagement Framework was developed by the California Department of Education and California Comprehensive Center at West-Ed, and is modeled after the Epstein framework. <sup>65</sup></p> <p>The Family Engagement Framework addresses all levels within the state including the counties, districts, schools, communities, and families. The Framework was developed beginning in 2003, and it was revised in 2014, after an extensive review of state and federal requirements.</p> <p>Schools and districts receive funding via the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) which places priority and emphasis on parent involvement. Each school must create accountability plans on parent involvement and submit them to the LCFF to receive funding.</p>

<sup>62</sup> California Department of Education. (2014). *Family Engagement Framework: A Tool for California School Districts*. Retrieved from: [https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files\\_mf/1414600912familyengagementframework2.pdf](https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/1414600912familyengagementframework2.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Parent Involvement and Education, 5 Cal. Code. Reg. §18275 (2016).

<sup>64</sup> Programs to Encourage Parental Involvement, 1 Cal. Educ. Code. §11502 (2016).

<sup>65</sup> California Department of Education. (2014). *Family Engagement Framework: A Tool for California School Districts*. Retrieved from: [https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files\\_mf/1414600912familyengagementframework2.pdf](https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/1414600912familyengagementframework2.pdf)

Family Coordinator Position	There is currently no statutory provision regarding a family coordinator position, but it appears that several school districts within California hire Parent Coordinators at the district level, and Family and Community Engagement Coordinators at the school level. The family and community engagement coordinators are responsible for developing family action teams, data tracking, professional development around family engagement, case management for parents, and school and community partnerships.
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Oregon	
Working Definition of Family Engagement	Family engagement is a shared responsibility and involves partnering with families to support student learning and success. <sup>66</sup>
Statutory Approach	The legislature recommends, but does not require, that school districts provide opportunities for parents to be involved in decision-making at schools. The legislature intends to have a school system that emphasizes parent and community involvement in the education of its students. <sup>67</sup>
Family Engagement Program Highlights	Oregon's family engagement approach is based on the Epstein model and the Federal Dual Capacity Model, and is focused on the Oregon Early Learner's System. The Oregon Early Learner's System was created by combining the Early Learning Council, Early Learning Division, Office of Childcare, and Early Learning Hubs. Oregon created Early Learning Hubs throughout the state that combines resources for children and their families, pulling together family involvement and early intervention. <sup>68</sup> They are funded by the Federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. The early learning hubs cost 4.6 million to launch.
Family Coordinator Position	None specified.

Maryland	
Working Definition of Family Engagement	The following definition is taken from Maryland's Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework, as developed by the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition: "Family engagement is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement; it is continuous from birth into the school-age years; and it occurs across the various early care and learning settings where children are. Family engagement means building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships,

<sup>66</sup> Worcel, S. & The Oregon Community Foundation. (2016). *K-12 Student Success: Out-of-School Time Initiative, Family Engagement, A Learning Brief*. Retrieved from: [http://www.oregoncf.org/Templates/media/files/grants/k12\\_student\\_success/2016%20Family%20Engagement%20Learning%20Brief.pdf](http://www.oregoncf.org/Templates/media/files/grants/k12_student_success/2016%20Family%20Engagement%20Learning%20Brief.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Participation by Parents, Guardians, and Community, 30 Oregon Revised Statutes §329.125 (2016); School System Characteristics, 30 Oregon Revised Statutes §326.715 (2016).

<sup>68</sup> Hinojosa, A. & Lopez, E.M. (2015). *Putting an Equity Lens on Family Engagement in Oregon*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/putting-an-equity-lens-on-family-engagement-in-oregon>

	and the ongoing learning and development of parents and children alike. It reflects culturally competent and universal design approaches, encompassing the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and activities of all families, as well as early care settings that support all children's positive development." <sup>69</sup>
Statutory Approach	While there is no set statutory approach, yet, in Maryland, last legislative session, a bill entitled "Maryland Community School Strategy for Excellence in Public Education" was designed to prepare local schools to embrace community schools as a strategy for student success. While this bill was pared down dramatically by the time of the Governor's signing, the original bill was intended to leverage community schools as an evidence-based strategy for family and community partnership and leadership. The bill had several components that were exemplars for this work, including having a full-time, professional-level family engagement leader at each school and reaching every student, with additional data required for students with disabilities, highly mobile students, homeless students, English learners, and students receiving free or reduced meals. <sup>70</sup>
Family Engagement Program Highlights	The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition also developed a family engagement framework using Maryland's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. This framework set common goals for family engagement for the Maryland early childhood system and education programs. The framework created implementation strategies focused on the points of impact in early care and education settings, with the intended result of positive school readiness outcomes in children.
Family Coordinator Position	While there is no statewide requirement for family coordinator positions at every school, Baltimore City Schools have piloted this community schools model in which a "community school coordinator" facilitates "the Community School Strategy in partnership with the Community School Principal and larger school community." <sup>71</sup> The person in this position works on such issues as family and community engagement and youth development.

Minnesota	
Working Definition of Family Engagement	Minnesota Department of Education defines family engagement as "the collaboration of families, schools, and communities as active partners in

<sup>69</sup> The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition. *Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children* at 3. Retrieved from: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/CYF%20Docs/ECAC/MDFamEngageFinal.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> Maryland Community School Strategy for Excellence in Public Education Act. Maryland House Bill No. 1139. (2016).

<sup>71</sup> Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners Policy (2016). *Community School Strategy*. Retrieved from: <http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/bcpss/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AHBLGP52C637>

	the shared responsibilities of ensuring each student’s success in lifelong learning and development.” <sup>72</sup>
Statutory Approach	Minnesota requires new programs to be developed beginning July 2016. The education department must develop advisory committee, guidelines, and model plans for parental involvement program that will engage parents in recognizing and meeting the needs of their children; promote healthy self-concepts among families; provide creative learning experiences for parents and children, including addressing the needs of families of color; encourage parents to participate in their districts’ curriculum advisory committee; encourage parents to help with school desegregation/integration. <sup>73</sup>
Family Engagement Program Highlights	<p>New programs are required to be developed beginning July 2016 by the Minnesota department of education, involving schools and districts, and applying the Epstein model. These programs will be paid for with Title I funds.</p> <p>Minnesota’s approach is focused on leveraging cultural and linguistic assets, which are also key components of Washington’s efforts in this area.<sup>74</sup></p>
Family Coordinator Position	Parental Involvement Liaison Workers are a core component of model plans for family engagement. These leaders are intended to coordinate family involvement activities and foster linguistic and culturally competent communication among families, educators, and students. <sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Minnesota Department of Education. (2016). *Families as Partners*. Retrieved from: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/part/>

<sup>73</sup> Parental Involvement Programs. Minnesota Statutes: Education Code §124D.895 (2016).

<sup>74</sup> Parental Involvement Programs. Minnesota Statutes: Education Code §124D.895(3) (2016).

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*

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