Family and Community Engagement literature review

Garcia, M. E., Frunzi, K., Dean, C. B., Flores, N., Miller, K. B., Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (ED), … National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (ED). (2016). Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education. Part 1: Building an Understanding of Family and Community Engagement. REL 2016-148. *Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific*. Retrieved from http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED569110&site=ehost-live

The Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education is a four-part resource that brings together research, promising practices, and useful tools and resources to guide educators in strengthening partnerships with families and community members to support student learning. The toolkit defines family and community engagement as an overarching approach to support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships, and students' ongoing learning and development. The primary audiences for this toolkit are administrators, teachers, teacher leaders, and trainers in diverse schools and districts. Part I is designed to guide educators into building awareness of how their beliefs and assumptions about family and community engagement influence their interactions with families and the community and how knowledge about the demographic characteristics of the families in their schools can inform educators about what might support or hinder family engagement with schools.

Section 1.1: Reflecting on beliefs and assumptions

- Understanding how a person's cultural lens influences interactions can encourage family and community engagement.
- Viewing interactions from families' perspectives helps educators work more effectively with them.
- Educators' beliefs about family and community engagement are critical to their success in working productively with families.

Section 1.2: Getting to know school families

- Examining demographic data about families helps educators understand how to engage them as partners in support of student learning.
- Examining demographic data about the community helps schools identify and use resources that can support family and community engagement.

Section 1.3: Understanding the influence of a cultural lens

- Understanding cultural norms and beliefs can help educators overcome challenges in interactions between people with differing backgrounds.

- Developing cultural competence helps educators ensure that families have successful experiences with the education system.
- As students and their families enter new schools for the first time, they may need time for acculturation to the school system.

Section 1.4: Acknowledging cultural differences

- Students' learning is improved when educators understand and honor the attitudes, values, norms, and beliefs of their culture.
- Effective family and community engagement rests on relational trust between families and educators.
- Understanding how various cultures view education and schooling practices can promote family and community engagement.

Garcia, M. E., Frunzi, K., Dean, C. B., Flores, N., Miller, K. B., Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (ED), … National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (ED). (2016). Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education: Part 2: Building a Cultural Bridge. REL 2016-151. *Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific*. Retrieved from http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED569111&site=ehost-live

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Section 2.1: Tapping into the strengths of families and communities

- Identifying family strengths is critical to engaging families as partners in their children's education.
- Collaborating with families based on strengths develops strong relationships between home, school, and community.
- Partnering with communities to promote family engagement helps schools and families support student learning.

Section 2.2: Establishing roles for building family and community engagement

- Family and community can take on a variety of roles when they engage with schools.
- Connecting family and community engagement to school improvement helps focus roles.
- Bureaucracy can discourage engagement and limit the roles that family and community members are willing to accept.
- One role may not fit all.

Garcia, M. E., Frunzi, K., Dean, C. B., Flores, N., Miller, K. B., Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (ED), … National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (ED). (2016). Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education: Part 3: Building Trusting Relationships with Families and the Community through Effective Communication. REL 2016-152. *Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific*. Retrieved from http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED569112&site=ehost-live

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Section 3.1: Cross-cultural communication in a school community

- Communication is integrally tied to cultural backgrounds.
- Using communication practices that are sensitive to language and cultural backgrounds encourages family and community engagement.
- A variety of strategies can promote cross-cultural communication. (encourage family members to provide feedback)

Section 3.2: Preparing educators for two-way communication with families

- Educators need professional development in using basic communication skills to engage families.
- Listening closely to "parent voice" helps educators understand the challenges that students face and rethink their practices.
- When educators increase their capacity to engage parents in dialogue, there are benefits for families, students, and educators.
- A number of strategies are effective for two-way communication when families have limited English skills. (translate materials, use bilingual staff members, build a community network for families who speak the same language)

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Section 4.1: Determining what student data are important to share with families and community members

- Understanding parents' and families' reasons for wanting data helps educators determine which data to share.
- Two-way sharing of student data enhances school-home collaboration.

Section 4.2: Presenting student data in meaningful ways

- Many avenues are available for sharing data with families.
- Educators must be aware of the challenges to communicating meaningful student data to families and take positive actions to encourage and support data sharing.
- Using effective communication skills supports data sharing.

Geller, J. D. (2016). Ensuring That Family Engagement Initiatives Are Successful, Sustainable, and Scalable. *Voices in Urban Education*, (44), 2–5. Retrieved from http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1110964&site=ehost-live

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education launched the highly competitive Investing in Innovation (i3) initiative. School districts and nonprofit partners nationwide have competed for coveted funds to develop a new program, validate an existing program with some evidence of success, or scale up a program backed by ample evidence. Very quickly, however, it became clear to the community of family engagement grantees that i3 was not going to be the panacea for the field's struggles to prove itself worthy. This issue of "Voices in Urban Education" ("VUE") provides an opportunity for i3 grantees to share the real story of what it takes to successfully implement and scale up a family engagement initiative across schools, districts, and states. "VUE" gave authors a fairly general prompt: "What lessons can we learn from i3 grants about how to build the right conditions for family engagement initiatives to flourish?" Interestingly, author(s) focused on the people--and the relationships among those people--that made their work possible. The authors describe the transformative work that has happened both within and outside of schools, and they openly share the long and sometimes painstaking journeys that have led them to where they are today. Together, the articles in this issue have important implications for family engagement practitioners, funders, and policy-makers.

"…successful, sustainable, and scalable family engagement initiatives require:

- *Sufficient time and human and financial resources for*:
  - *Planning*, including developing trust and a shared definition and vision for family engagement. Technical assistance providers should frontload support during the planning phase.
  - *Flexible implementation*, including the freedom to reflect and change course in response to evolving needs and priorities of families, communities, and schools. Changing course does not indicate dysfunction, but rather a tone of reflection and responsiveness.
  - *Capacity building* of all stakeholders – families, young people, teachers, program staff, principals, superintendents – to build relationships rooted in trust and respect.
- *Cultural brokers* – the individuals who build bridges between families and educators on a daily basis – who have access to professional development, supportive supervision, and a professional learning community.
- *Physical spaces* for families to call their own, within or outside of schools.
- *Multi-layered evaluations* that examine the degree to which initiatives have strengthened individuals, communities, and institutions, not just student outcomes." (pp.3-4)

Knoster, K. C., & McREL International, N. C. C. C. (2016). *Strategies for Addressing Student and Teacher Absenteeism: A Literature Review*. *North Central Comprehensive Center*. North Central Comprehensive Center. Retrieved from
http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED584860&site=ehost-live

The North Central Comprehensive Center team at McREL International conducted an analysis of current literature regarding student and teacher absenteeism to better conceptualize the problem and highlight successful steps that can be taken to address it. Drawing upon theoretically conceptualized and practically applied strategies for resolving absenteeism and truancy, they put forward a series of best practices and recommendations for professional educators and administrators struggling to overcome the persistent challenge of chronic absenteeism. Potential solutions to chronic student absenteeism include: (1) effective use of data to identify, monitor, and support the attendance and performance of students at risk of absenteeism; (2) family and community engagement; (3) provision of wrap-around services for students facing obstacles to consistent attendance that are outside of school; and (4) implementation of social and emotional learning supports. A number of factors appear to influence the extent to which teachers are absent from class, including pay structure, working conditions, community conditions, and cultural responsibilities. Potential solutions include: (1) acknowledge and reward teacher attendance and performance; (2) reevaluate policies and procedures in regard to whether or not they mitigate or contribute to teacher abstenteeism; and (3) invest in teachers' physical and emotional well-being and encourage collegial relationships among teachers and leaders.

Recommended steps:

Communicate promptly with families about student absences and encourage them to take an active role in ensuring their students attend school.

Align curriculum to culture in local communities to overcome family perception that the education system is disconnected from the local cultural priorities and perspectives.

Kuo, N.-C. (2016). Promoting Family Literacy through the Five Pillars of Family and Community Engagement (FACE). *School Community Journal*, *26*(1), 199–222. Retrieved from http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1104402&site=ehost-live

Family literacy involves factors beyond what is done at home between parents and children. To help preservice teachers develop their understanding of the multiple dimensions of family literacy, this study uses the five pillars of family and community engagement (FACE)--early literacy, family involvement, access to books, expanded learning, and mentoring partnerships (Scholastic, 2013)--to examine how these five elements influence preservice teachers' knowledge of and practices in family literacy. While each of the five pillars of FACE is critical to the needs of family literacy development and is well described in the literature, there is limited research on the impact of the five pillars of FACE on preservice teachers' knowledge of and practices in family literacy. Thus, grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was incorporated in the present study to investigate the actualities in the classroom. After completing 20 sessions of in-class activities and 30 hours of fieldwork, the **results indicate that the use of the five pillars of FACE not only increased the participants' knowledge of the multiple dimensions of family literacy** but also positively influenced their practices in fieldwork.

Torre, D., & Murphy, J. (2016). Communities of Parental Engagement: New Foundations for School Leaders' Work. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *19*(2), 203–223. Retrieved from http://libezproxy.syr.edu.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1090742&site=ehost-live

The importance of parents to the success of students in schools and to school improvement has long been established and acknowledged by researchers and educators. In this article, we present a fourth--generation model of school--family linkages, one anchored in understandings of schools as communities as opposed to schools as institutions. Our model is based on an analysis and synthesis of the relevant recent empirical evidence. We extend the narrative of school--parent relationships by highlighting "norms of community" school leaders can cultivate to promote membership, partnership and ownership.

"**Care and respect** form the bedrock for cultivating the hallmark element of community: a meaningful relationship between home and school. It is demonstrated when teachers and leaders practice asset-based thinking, have welcoming attitudes, provide individualization, make a commitment to prioritize families and take responsibility for reaching out to parents." (p.206)

"A second pillar supporting effective communities of parental engagement is **trusting relationship predicated on frequent interactions.** Trust between families and schools can increase the social capital available to students and their families. Social capital includes assets such as 'reciprocal obligations, access to information, and norms that enforce functional behavior' and is created through relationships with other people. Trust may also engender increased collective and individual efficacy on the part of educators and parents." (p.208)

"Another facet of a community of engagement is the **authentic and meaningful inclusion** of parents in the operation of schools. Authentic membership is apparent with parents are involved in meaningful work, when partnerships between parents and the school are strategic, and when parents have voice and influence in making decisions." (p.209)

"A community of engagement for parents will not come naturally, but will be the result of **a carefully crafted vision** that has strong buy-in from parents and is context-specific. Visioning for a community of engagement requires a strong will on the part of leaders as overcoming traditionally held beliefs toward family involvement is a formidable undertaking and competing priorities defined by district, state or federal mandates can easily overwhelm anemic efforts." (p.214)