Going Far by Going Together: Integrating Family and Community Engagement Districtwide

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Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Improving Family and Community Engagement in Shelby County Schools

• Learning from Case Studies

Four Tips for Integrating Family and Community Engagement Districtwide

Q&A

Closing
Objectives: By the end of this session, you will:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of how integrating family and community engagement efforts across departments can lead to improved partnerships with families and community members.

2. Learn four tips for improving the integration of family and community engagement at the district or school level.
In Destination 2025, we recognized community engagement as a critical component in meeting our student achievement goals.

Our goal by 2025 is to increase community confidence in the District to 90%.
Shelby County Schools used TNTP’s *Community Engagement Compass* to gain a clearer picture of strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

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<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPASS</th>
<th>TARGETED RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We evaluate the district’s engagement footprint through interviews, site visits, analysis of the current landscape.</td>
<td>We share results with recommendations on how to improve community engagement practices.</td>
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**DISTRICT ACTIONS**

- Re-structured its Family and Community Engagement office
- Hired new Chief of Community Engagement and Communications
- Ran successful outreach and educational campaigns
- Launched a pilot effort to share academic data with families
“Too often, when we ask schools how we can help, we’re invited to replace signage or paint the teacher’s lounge. There must be something we can do that has more of a direct impact on students.”

Local Business Executive
The result? An integrated strategy for improving family and community engagement in response to the needs highlighted by stakeholders.

### INTEGRATED STRATEGY

Emphasis on respecting families and communities as critical partners.

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<th>Building Capacity</th>
<th>Increasing Voice</th>
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<td>Prioritizing efforts to help district staff, principals, and teachers engage stakeholders effectively and respectfully.</td>
<td>Collaborating with stakeholders and ensuring they have a strong voice in important decisions.</td>
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<th>Academic Emphasis</th>
<th>Innovative Approaches</th>
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<td>Providing new programs designed to help families and community members support student learning outside of school.</td>
<td>Engaging underrepresented stakeholders through new technologies and in-person outreach.</td>
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### SHARED GOAL

Accelerating student achievement through strong partnerships with families and community members.
CASE STUDY: Students Deserve More! Campaign

- SCS has been forced to cut more than $220 million from its budget in recent years and continues to be underfunded by the State of Tennessee.

- Supt. Hopson launched the Students Deserve More campaign to mobilize parents, students, and community leaders to have an active voice in the budget process.

- These efforts assisted the district in obtaining $22 million in funding from the Shelby County Commission.
CASE STUDY: Greater Schools, Greater Communities Campaign

- Developed a campaign to bring stakeholders together to identify solutions to challenges such as inequities in programs and services, declining population trends, and poor facility conditions

- Over six weeks, we provided multiple opportunities for parents, employees, community partners, and students to provide input

- Feedback has been used to identify 18 Critical Focus Schools and develop intervention plans
CASE STUDY: T-STEM Program at East High School

- Guided by feedback from parents and community members, East High School is shifting to a “T-STEM” program focusing on transportation, science, technology, engineering, and math.

- The transportation aspect seeks to prepare workers to feed the growing transportation and logistics industries in Memphis, home to distribution powerhouse FedEx and several trucking companies.

Source for language and photo: http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2017/01/06/its-official-big-changes-coming-to-historic-memphis-east-high-school/
CASE STUDY: Stakeholder Engagement around Teacher Compensation

- Convened a monthly Teacher Advisory Group and Principal Advisory Group to provide input

- Held bi-monthly Town Hall meetings to share information broadly and invited principals to submit written input

- Feedback from stakeholders was used to make major adjustments to the system (e.g., re-balancing raise amounts and starting salaries, providing bonuses for veteran teachers, expanding eligibility, and increasing the specificity of bonus and stipend awards)

Photo from Chalkbeat.
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Authentic community engagement begins with a mindset shift: working in collaboration with parents and community stakeholders.

**Authentic community engagement:** Collaborating with all stakeholders to build ongoing, trusting relationships that bridge the gap between classroom and community, leading to improved outcomes for students.

“It takes careful planning and purposeful action to build partnerships that involve school, family, and community.”

Joyce Epstein
Four Tips for Integrating Community Engagement Districtwide

1. Engage stakeholders early and often.

2. Align engagement efforts closely with existing district priorities.

3. Make sure that district and school-based staff have the mindset and skills to engage stakeholders effectively.

4. Assess effectiveness by examining a full set of qualitative and quantitative measures.
Engage Stakeholders Early and Often

Don’t mistake one-way communication for authentic engagement. Instead, engage stakeholders as true partners in decision-making.
When districts and schools are engaging stakeholders authentically, they conduct outreach early on and report back about how feedback was used.
Increase Alignment

Integrate an authentic community engagement approach into the core work of the district or school (e.g., academics, talent management, school transformation).
CASE STUDY: Grand Rapids Public Schools in Michigan used the Challenge 5 Initiative to form partnerships with community groups and drastically improve their students’ rates of chronic absenteeism.

• Partnered with leaders in their community to post signs showing their awareness and support for the school district’s Challenge 5 initiative.

• Informed parents about the importance of regular attendance and keep them updated on how often their child was absent.

• Created Parent University to get parents to their schools, review topics such as computer skills—and provide updates on attendance.
Build Capacity

Ensure that district leaders and staff, school leaders, and teachers have the knowledge and skills for effective engagement.
While schools use multiple strategies to engage families, there are a subset of strategies that are more likely to have a direct impact on student achievement.
At the classroom level, welcoming all students’ families into the classroom and leverages family support for student success involves...

1. Building strong relationships with families and giving them multiple opportunities to provide input and respond to information shared by teachers.

2. Accommodating language and cultural differences.

3. Using data to show parents how their student is doing both individually and compared to grade-level standards.

4. Encouraging families to become actively involved in academic decisions regarding students’ education—and providing them with the opportunities to do so.

5. Providing parents with information, resources, and training on how they can support student learning at home.
Assess Effectiveness

Gain a holistic picture of the success of engagement efforts by examining a full set of qualitative and quantitative measures.
## Assessing the Effectiveness of Family and Community Engagement

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<th>SHORT-TERM MEASURES</th>
<th>LONG-TERM MEASURES</th>
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<td>• Number of participants attending a program or event</td>
<td>• Increased enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Number of phone calls made to families</td>
<td>• Increased student and parent satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Number of referrals made to social service agencies</td>
<td>• Positive student behavioral increases</td>
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<td>• Surveys (e.g., self-reported engagement levels)</td>
<td>• Decrease in disruptive student behavior instances in class</td>
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<td>• Increased participation in existing school events (parent teacher conferences, movie nights, etc.)</td>
<td>• College preparedness</td>
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<td>• Quantity and quality of PD or workshops offered</td>
<td>• Parent participation in key school decision (i.e., principal selection, policy change recommendations, etc.)</td>
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<td>• Representation at meetings</td>
<td>• Capacity building (i.e., growth of a parent from being a participant to being a leader/organizer)</td>
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Questions & Answers
Closing - connect with us.

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