



Why School, Family and Community Involvement Is Important

(ESSA REQUIRED TRAINING—WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND FAMILIES)

ESSA requires “outreach to all parents” and “meaningful involvement with parents.” According to the new ESSA rules, “It is incumbent upon the Local Education Agencies (LEA) of Texas to provide professional development to staff members about the value of working with families as partners with the goal of improving student achievement.”

- To the extent feasible the LEA shall coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with other relevant Federal, State, and Local programs.
- In the evaluation process, LEAs must identify the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children and strategies to support successful school and family interactions.
- Evaluation findings must be used to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement.”

Department of Education

Why should I care about Family and Community involvement in Schools?

Schools, parents, and the community should work together to promote the health, wellbeing, and learning of all students. When schools actively involve parents and engage community resources they are able to respond more effectively to the needs of students.

Family and community involvements foster partnerships among schools, family and community groups, and individuals. These partnerships result in sharing and maximizing resources. And they help children and youth develop healthy behaviors and promote healthy families.

Research shows that students whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to:

- Adapt well to school
- Attend school more regularly
- Complete homework more consistently
- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Graduate and go on to college
- Have better social skills
- Show improved behavior
- Have better relationships with their parents
- Have higher self-esteem

Additionally, linking community activities to the classroom

- Improves school-related behaviors
- Positively impacts academic achievement
- Reduces school suspension rates

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships



National PTA Parent and Community Standards:

Effective parent involvement programs include activities that are addressed by the following:

- Collaborating with community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.
- Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- School decision making and advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Standard 2: Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

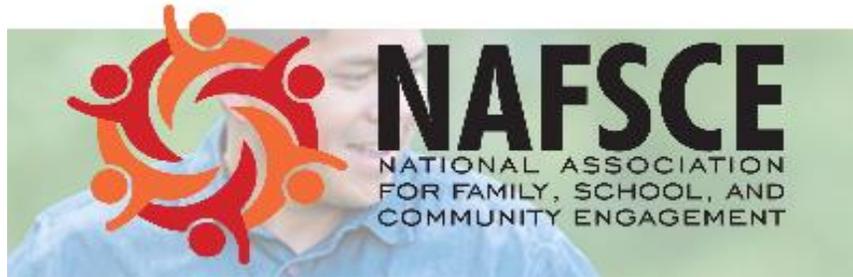
Standard 3: Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Standard 4: Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Standard 5: Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Standard 6: Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.





Family/Community Engagement Defined:

NAFSCE endorses the family engagement definition developed in 2010 by the National Family, School and Community Engagement Working Group (now the NAFSCE Policy Council).

- Family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development.
- Family engagement is continuous across a child's life and entails enduring commitment but changing parent roles as children mature into young adulthood.
- Effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn- at home, in prekindergarten programs, in school, in after school programs, in faith-based institutions, and in the community.

What is High-Impact Family/Community Engagement?

High-impact family and community engagement is collaborative, culturally competent, and focused on improving children's learning.

Some examples of high-impact strategies are:

- Building personal relationships, respect, and mutual understanding with families through home visits, community walks, and class meetings.
- Sharing data with families about student skill levels.
- Modeling effective teaching practices so families can use them at home.
- Listening to families about their children's interests and challenges, then using this information to differentiate instruction.
- Incorporating content from families' home cultures into classroom lessons.
- Aligning family engagement activities with school improvement goals.
- Including Community representatives in dialogues with Families and Teachers.
- Developing a list of Community resources that can assist Families and School Districts in enhancing educational opportunities for all students.
- Practices like these are even more effective when combined. Contrast these with traditional events and activities for families, which research finds have small effects on student achievement.