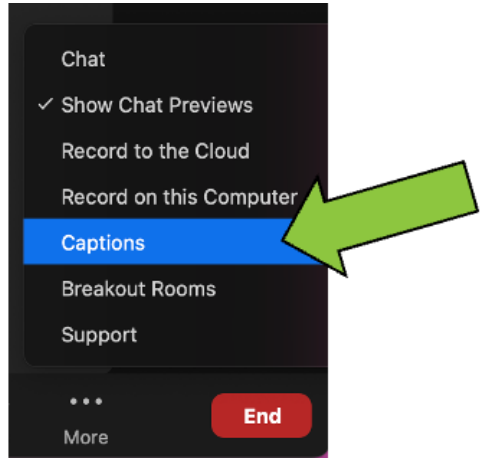
Welcome!

As you enter the space, please do the following:

01 Rename yourself to reflect the school or district you are representing (name, district)

02 Mute your microphone

03 If you would like closed captions, click on the three dots in the bottom right corner and select “captions”.



SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, & BEHAVIOR ACADEMY

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL,
& BEHAVIOR ACADEMY

Family-School Partnerships

Presenters: Lauren Gilman & Sara Niño

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MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Agenda

1. **Introductions**
2. **What Is Family?**
3. **Why Family-School Partnerships?**
4. **How to Achieve Family-School Partnerships**
5. **Barriers**
6. **Strategies**
7. **Questions/Reflection**

Group Agreements

✓ Engage actively in a way that works for you

✓ Share your own experiences and expertise with us

✓ Connection

✓ Listen with curiosity

Today's Presenters

Lauren Gilman
Education Development Center Senior Training and Technical Assistance Specialist

Sara Niño
Education Development Center Senior Training and Technical Assistance Associate

With Much Appreciated Content Developed by Erik Maki, Stephanie St. Joseph, Michelle Pratt & Emily Baton - The May Institute (2024)

Session Objectives

01 Understand the importance of family-school partnerships

02 Consider barriers to family-school partnerships

03 Explore strategies to improve family-school relationships

04 Leave with an idea for an action step

> Imagine families, teachers, and students working together with relational trust and what that will do for your learning community.

— Elizabeth Stock,
Panorama Education & Dr. Karren Mapp on Building Strong Family-School Partnerships

What is "family?"

Who do we engage?

ALL Families… this includes:

- Single-parent families
- Multi-generational families
- Grandparent-led families
- Linguistically diverse families
- Teenage parents
- LGBTQ+ families
- Military families
- Families with incarcerated members
- Foster families
- Adoptive families
- Families of someone with a disability

Family

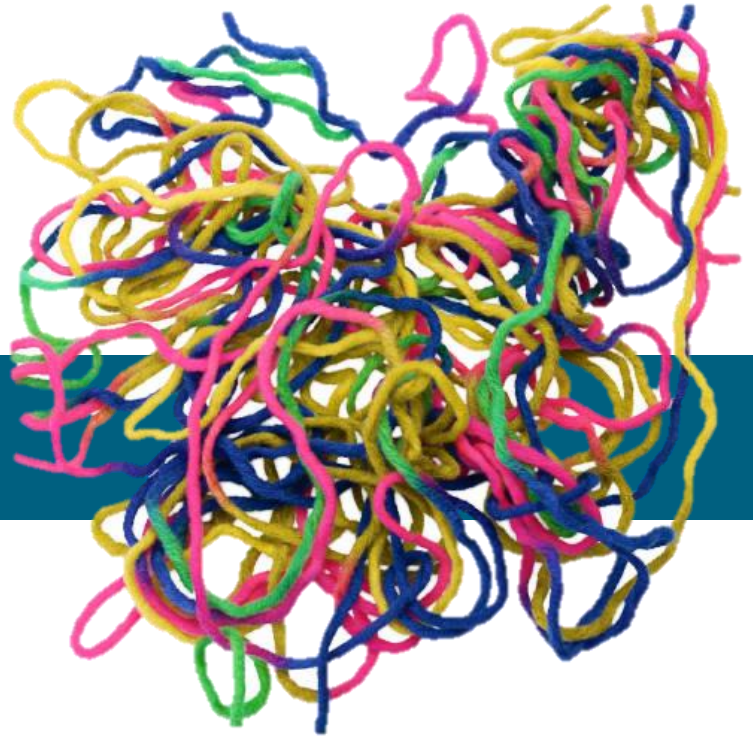
This term is the network of individuals responsible for, or possessing a significant role in, the life of a student outside of school.

Quotes from Families

"…it assumes family engagement is on the backs of the parents. So that family engagement is the family engaging the school, as opposed to the school, engaging the family. Like, where's this sort of bi -directional model of family engagement that I imagined?"

Baton et al., 2023

A Brief History of the Continuum of Terms



Family Involvement **Family Engagement** **Family-School Partnerships**

Whiteboard/Chat Activity

- What are family-school partnerships?
- Why do you feel Family-School Partnerships are important?
- How do you include family voice?

Why Family-School Partnerships?

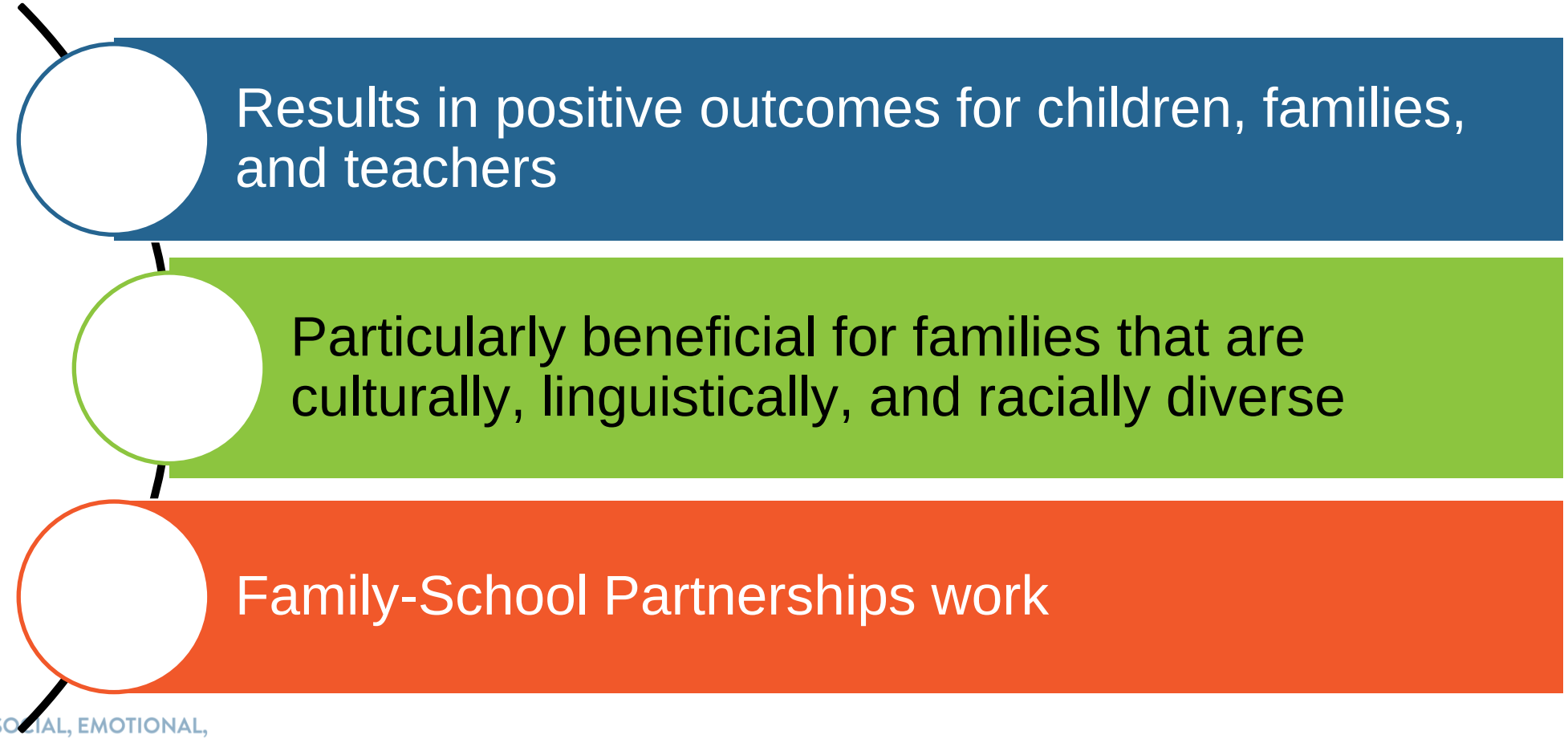
Discussion

How do Family-School Partnerships affect your students?

Your staff?

Your work?

Why Family-School Partnerships?



The “Scaffolding” for Students

- Families have the most impact on a child's **personal health and well-being** than any other single individual or practitioner (Elliott & Mullins, 2004)
- Families and schools have historically been recognized as having a **crucial relationship**
- When working together, schools and families provide children with **life skills that will last them into adulthood** (Araque et al., 2017; McNeal, 2015; Nzinga-Johnson Baker & Auperlee, 2009)

Why are Family-School Partnerships Important?

Student outcomes

- Academic performances (Barton & Coley, 2007; Cox 2005; Camarero-Figuerola et al., 2020; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005)
- Student classroom behavior (Fantuzzo et al., 2004)
- Decreased school drop-out (Barnard, 2004)
- Increased student self-regulation (Stormshak et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2014)
- Increased sense of security and belonging (Morgan, 2016)
- Positive impact on teen's access to college (Camarero-Figuerola et al., 2020)

Why are Family-School Partnerships Important?

Teacher outcomes

- Increased job satisfaction (Christenson, 1995)
- Increased teacher retention and fewer transfer requests (Christenson, 1995; Lasater, 2016)
- Increased family-teacher relationships (Morgan, 2016; Sheridan et al., 2012)

Administration outcomes

- Higher principal ratings (Christenson, 1995)

How Can Family-School Partnerships Be Achieved?

Meaningful Family-School Partnerships can be achieved with:

Family-centered planning

- Schools have more engagement when events are planned with consideration for their stakeholders' needs

Family-School Partnerships

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45F5WfCqD08

How to Establish Partnerships
(2:57-3:55)

What did you notice? What stood out to you?

Meaningful Family-School Partnerships can be achieved with:

Active support from district and school leaders

- Ensure family partnerships are seen as a priority and provide the necessary resources and expertise to help staff build those connections

- Empower family members to take active roles in establishing goals, developing strategies, and evaluating progress for their child's school

Image Source: Brandeis University Staff-Faculty Accessibility Group

Meaningful Family-School Partnerships can be achieved with:

Relevant and meaningful use of data

- School teams evaluate their engagement efforts by examining data that capture the degree to which *meaningful collaboration* is taking place
- At the same time, family members receive appropriate supports so they can use student data to establish academic and behavioral goals and **monitor progress as equal members of the school team**

Meaningful Family-School Partnerships can be achieved with:

Communication

- Communication channels must go above and beyond the occasional parent-teacher conference

- Think of all the different types of communication channels open to family-school partnerships
  - Ex: phone, letter, handouts, or applications

"Look Dad, I said I needed help with some cutting and pasting and...What are *those*?"

Share your reflections in the chat

Creating a space for ALL Families

Think about how you interact with families.

Think about the tone of messaging you share/exchange with families.

Think about the language of the materials you provide.

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Equity Self-Reflection

What kinds of 2-way communication work for families?

Who is this working/not working for?

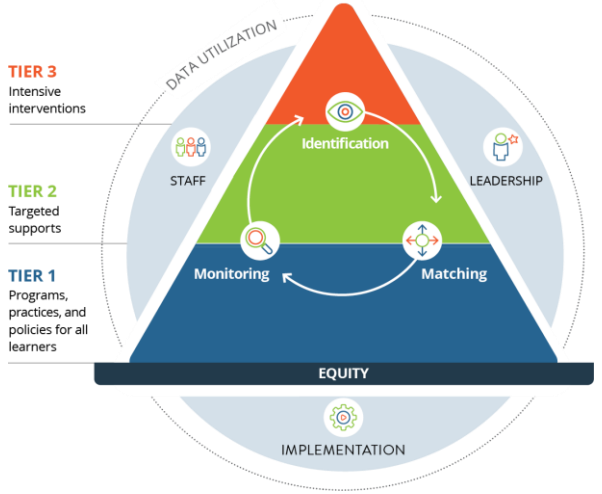
Are we creating space for all types of families?

Share your reflections in the chat

Meaningful Family-School Partnerships can be achieved with:

MTSS

- Family and community members are critical partners in building a contextually relevant **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**



It's not just for students!

- When families fail to respond positively to a school's initial engagement efforts, utilize different and/or more intensive strategies to develop authentic partnerships with those who are too frequently left on the sidelines

Barriers to Family-School Partnerships

What barriers are there to Family-School Partnerships?

Share your experiences in the chat

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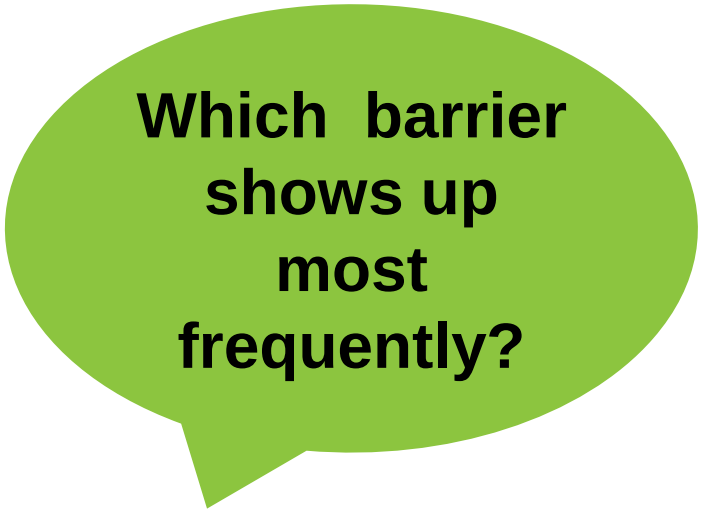
Barriers to Family-School Partnerships

Barriers include:

- limited time and resources available for teachers and families alike;
- a lack of professional development focused on how teachers can best engage families; and
- different levels of family understanding about how or why they should engage with their child's education

Barriers to Family-School Partnerships

- Certain groups of parents also face unique challenges:
  - Immigrant parents
  - Education level/experiences
  - LGBTQ+ parents
  - Foster families
  - Older/younger families
  - Single-parent families



Share in the chat

Strategies to Improve Family-School Partnerships

Share your strategies in the chat!

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Greeting Families

- Extend a personal welcome or greeting
- Think about times you might see families to make a connection:
    - Morning drop off
    - Pick up
    - Parent-teacher conferences
    - Phone call
- Staff visibility

Anyon et al., 2018

Positive Messages

- Schedule time in the year, possibly quarterly, to find a reason to call home to share something POSITIVE
- Consider post it notes on report cards to share something positive about the student

Postcards to Families

- Share something positive
- Think about having the postage already applied or staff in charge of adding it
- Think about having the address already on the card or student's name
- Address on postcard per child
- Use the data as another connection
- Consider the family's first language

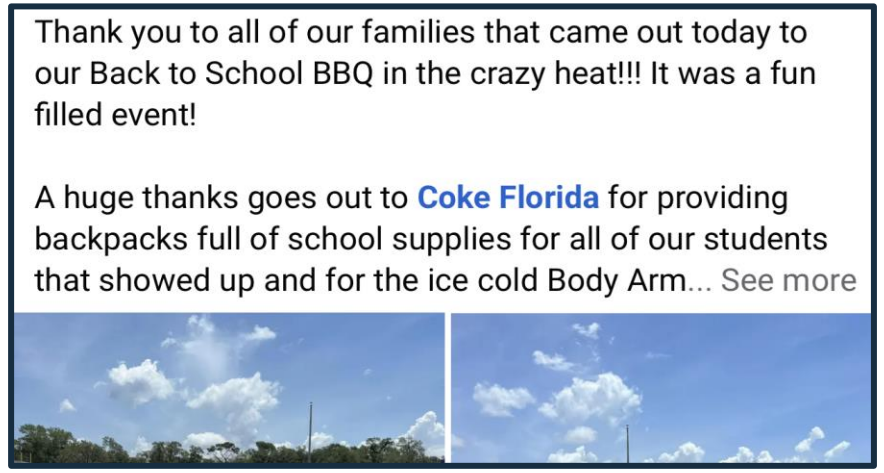
Himmelsbach et al., 2020

Provide a Variety of Volunteer Opportunities

- Provide opportunities at different times
- Provide opportunities with different levels of effort
- Communicate volunteer opportunities across platforms
- Things people can do at home
- Think about times that families might already be at the school

Generalize Your Acknowledgment System to All…Including Families!

Image Source: AIScreen.com



Closing and Next Steps

Three First Steps to Consider

Inform/ Communicate	Include	Involve
This should be through a variety of different ways.	Including family perception and perspective across the continuum of a MTSS can improve family-school partnerships.	Involving families in all aspects of their children's education helps support student success.

Perales et al., 2023

REFLECTION & CLOSING

Please share one insight, takeaway, or piece of information you will bring back to your school.

Share your strategies in the chat!

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https://sebacademy.edc.org/upcoming-events

NEXT STEPS

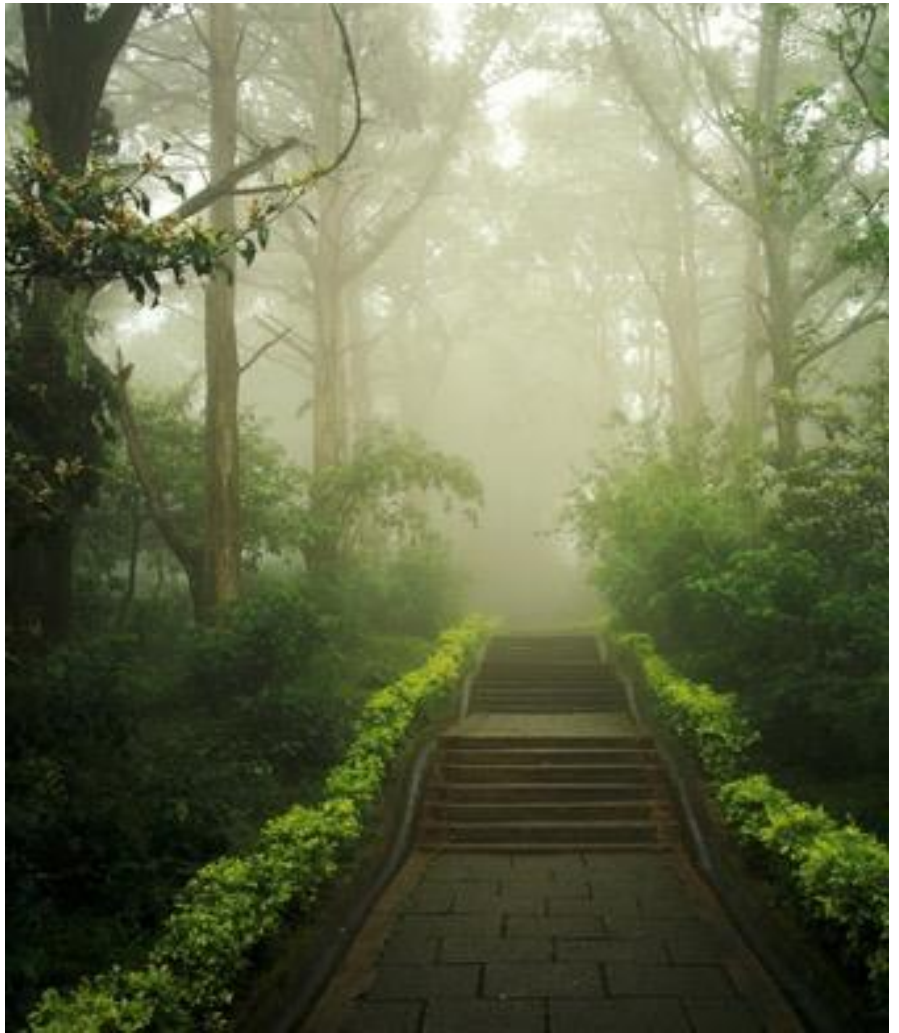
Webinars

- **Integrating SEL and Mental Health Supports**
  Wednesday, December 4, 2024
  9:30-11:00 AM

- **Setting Positive Behavior Norms and Expectations**
  Wednesday, January 22, 2025
  9:30-11:00 AM

Peer Sharing Calls

- **Information coming soon via e-mail!**



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Thank You

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THANK YOU SO MUCH

YOU ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!