

# Equity and Access for District Leaders



## EMPHASIZING EQUITY AND ACCESS THROUGH TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

### How to Use the Self-Assessment

The following self-assessment provides district leaders with a tool for examining existing systems and policies regarding family engagement practices from an equity and access lens, including those centered on the formative assessment process.

District leaders can use this tool to reflect on the current structures that are in place to ensure all families are effectively reached and supported by the district and each school community. The self-assessment has been organized according to research-based standards of effective family engagement practices modeled on the **Illinois State Board of Education: Family Engagement Framework**.

#### Principle 1:

Build a culture of inclusiveness that respects all families and views them as valuable assets.

#### Principle 2:

Create a welcoming environment that builds trust and is responsive to individual strengths and needs.

#### Principle 3:

Ensure two-way communication between families and schools is linked to student achievement.

#### Principle 4:

Understand cultures and communicate in ways that are appropriate for each family.

The tool can be used as a self-assessment by district leaders, as well as to help guide a larger group effort aimed at examining the equity of policies, programs, and practices in the school community. Overall, the intent of the tool is to provide school communities with a thought-provoking set of standards and goals that gauge the effectiveness of existing district-wide efforts in engaging diverse families, with the ultimate goal of supporting all student learning and success.

This resource is designed for district leaders to reflect on the current structures that are in place to ensure all families are effectively reached and supported by the school community.

#### Recommendations

- Implementation Settings
- Planned individual time
  - District level meetings

**Implementation Time:** 30 minutes

#### *Under each standard, the self-assessment:*

- Highlights specific goals to achieve/examine each standard through an equity and access lens;
- Provides an example of what each goal might look like in practice;
- Offers a simple checklist to gauge the current level of progress toward meeting each goal;
- Includes space to record current efforts and/or evidence of work to meet each goal; and
- Provides additional space to record any next steps toward meeting each goal.

## EQUITY AND ACCESS SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

### *Build a Culture of Inclusiveness That Respects All Families and Views Them as Valuable Assets*

All families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff and leadership, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

GOALS	EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE	PROGRESS	EVIDENCE	NEXT STEPS
A jointly developed vision/mission for family engagement that values diversity is shared with all stakeholders and drives policies, programs and practices.	District convenes a meeting between district/school leaders and representatives from families and the community to discuss vision/mission and commit to an inclusive, systemic approach to partnerships with families.	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders support policies, programs and practices that <u>build relational trust and welcoming school environments</u> that are inviting to all families.	District leaders connect with families to listen and learn about the students, families, and community, use a strength-based approach when responding to student and family needs, and have the knowledge, skill, and capacity to follow through on their commitments (See "Listening Tour" Section in Two-Way Communication for District Leaders).	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders facilitate efforts to <u>actively remove barriers</u> to family partnership and participation, such as socioeconomic, mobility, and language differences.	District offers family activities and events free of cost and provides transportation by utilizing resources from the school budget, fundraising, and contributions from community businesses and organizations.	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		

## ENSURE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS IS LINKED TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Families and school staff and leadership engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

GOALS	EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE	PROGRESS	EVIDENCE	NEXT STEPS
District leaders ensure that all <u>communication from the school community is clear, constructive, ongoing, and accessible</u> to all, and in the languages of families.	District leaders support policies and practices that include the use of multiple communication paths, both formally and informally, to develop connections with families (See "District-wide Strategies to Promote Two-Way Communication," Section in Two-Way Communication for District Leaders).	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders facilitate processes to <u>effectively provide access to information on current issues</u> that impact student learning to all families and the larger community.	District leaders, school staff, families, and community members strategically look at developing issues that affect students and families to determine whether there is a need for school-wide response (See "Town Hall Meetings," Section in Two-Way Communication for District Leaders)	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders support policies, programs, and practices that <u>support communication and connections</u> among all families.	District leaders, in collaboration with school staff, work to support efforts to facilitate communication between families, such as offering networking opportunities, setting up district-wide listservs, blogs, and other social events.	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		

## CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT THAT BUILDS TRUST AND IS RESPONSIVE TO INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Families and school staff and leadership 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.

GOALS	EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE	PROGRESS	EVIDENCE	NEXT STEPS
District leaders ensure <u>data regarding students' and families' socio-cultural, linguistic, and educational needs are collected, reviewed, and used to inform</u> the policies, programs, and practices across the school community.	District leaders work to ensure information from various sources regarding students and families in the district (e.g. Census data, summative and formative assessments, school climate surveys, etc.) inform and are reflected in policies, practices, and continuous improvement plans.	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders support efforts that <u>encourage all families to contribute their cultural knowledge, skills, and talents</u> to the school community.	District leaders support policies and practices that create opportunities for families to connect with educators to help support learning projects occurring in the classroom, and to integrate information about students' families into the curriculum and larger school community.	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders prioritize policies, programs, and practices that <u>support all families to meaningfully engage in activities at home</u> that advance student learning and healthy development.	District leaders allocate funding to support programs focused on sharing information, resources, and modeling activities for families to support student learning and healthy development at home (See "Home Visiting" Section in Two-Way Communication for Teachers).	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		
District leaders promote opportunities that <u>build the capacity of staff to effectively engage all families</u> in supporting student learning and healthy development.	District leaders prioritize building the culturally relevant practices of staff through district-wide professional learning opportunities, in order to effectively engage families with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and languages.	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		

## UNDERSTAND CULTURES AND COMMUNICATE IN WAYS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR EACH FAMILY

Families and school staff and leadership collaborate with community members to support staff ability in developing appropriate communication methods with all families.

GOALS	EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE	PROGRESS	EVIDENCE	NEXT STEPS
District leaders <u>partner with community organizations</u> to enhance family engagement efforts.	District leaders leverage partnerships with community organizations to provide resources that promote family assets and enable family engagement in the educational process (e.g. through MOUs to provide social services and/or referrals, by offering in-kind support, and/or through the development of resource guides, etc.).	<input type="radio"/> Not Yet Addressing Goal <input type="radio"/> Started Initial Planning to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Began Efforts to Address Goal <input type="radio"/> Made Solid Progress to Meet Goal <input type="radio"/> Fully Addressing this Goal		

### Sources:

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-pta/files/production/public/National\\_Standards.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-pta/files/production/public/National_Standards.pdf)

NAEYC Program Self-Assessment Checklist: <https://www.naeyc.org/familyengagement/resources/self-assessment-checklist>

Illinois State Board of Education: Family Engagement Framework: A Guide for Illinois School Districts, Schools, and Families: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/family-engagement/pdf/fe-guide.pdf>

Colorado Springs School District 11: Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide: <http://www.d11.org/Communications/Documents/FamilySchoolPartnershipsToolkit.pdf>



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