Engaging Parents and Students from Diverse Populations in the Context of Distance Learning

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Today’s Speakers – Part 1

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Today’s Speakers – Part 2

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Objectives for Today’s Webinar

Participants will:
- Learn about what research tells us about family engagement with diverse populations
- Understand how engagement strategies need to shift in distance learning
- Hear what two districts have experienced – successes, challenges, and new learnings
Agenda

• Research Highlights
  – Margit Birge, WestEd
  – Barbara Jones, WestEd

• Research into Practice: The District Experience
  – D’Lisa Crain, Washoe County School District (Nevada)
  – Sara Stone, Alameda Unified School District (California)
  – Claudia Medina, Alameda Unified School District (California)

• Discussion
  – Adaptations to Shelter In Place and distance learning during COVID-19
  – Q and A

• Closing and Survey
Research on Family and Caregiver Engagement: Key Components

Margit Birge
WestEd
Today’s Roadmap

- What is family engagement?
- Why is family engagement an essential strategy for student success?
- What are key components of culturally responsive family engagement?
What Is Family Engagement?

“An intentional and systemic partnership of educators, families and community members … [who] share responsibility for a student’s preparation for school, work and life, from the time the child is born to young adulthood.”

– Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2010
Why is family engagement an essential strategy for student success?

Improved outcomes for:
- Academics
- Social-Emotional Skills
- Attendance
- Graduation Rate
- College and Career Readiness
- Teacher Satisfaction
- School Improvement

Henderson, 2002
The Center on School Turnaround, 2017
Why is family engagement an essential strategy for student success?

Research on successful schools in Chicago found that schools with stronger ties between educators, families, and the community had higher levels of student achievement than schools with weaker ties.

The stronger ties were characterized by **teacher actions**:  
• understanding local issues and spending time in the community;  
• inviting parents to observe in class;  
• trying to understand parents’ concerns; and  
• embracing parents as partners.

– Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010
Key Components of Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

1) Partnership Orientation
2) Asset-based approach to students and families
3) Relationships of trust and respect
4) Two-way communication
5) Capacity building of educators and families
Partnership Orientation

“Initiatives that take on a partnership orientation — in which student achievement and school improvement are seen as a shared responsibility, relationships of trust and respect are established between home and school, and families and school staff see each other as equal partners — create the conditions for family engagement to flourish.”

– Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, & Walberg, 2005
Contrasting Approaches

**Deficit Approach**
- Myth-based: Families don’t care
- Educators define students and their families by their weaknesses
- Educators blame families for students’ failings

**Asset Approach**
- Research-based: All families want the best for their children
- Educators focus on strengths
- Educators seek to learn about family and community “funds of knowledge”
Relationships of Trust and Respect

“No meaningful family engagement can be established until relationships of trust and respect are established between home and school.”

“Effective family, school, and community engagement in low-performing schools often must begin with intensive efforts to rebuild trust and promises of accountability given longstanding dynamics of miscommunication and distrust between these schools and their surrounding communities.”

– Bryk & Schneider, 2002
Two-Way Communication

“Regular and responsive communication is particularly important [for teachers] because it lays the foundation for strong partnerships and all forms of family engagement.”


“Programs that ‘fostered increased communication between parents and teachers’ were one of four types of parental involvement that had statistically significant, positive effects on student outcomes.”

– Jeynes, 2013
Maslow hierarchy of needs pyramid

- **physiological**: (health, food, sleep)
- **safety**: (shelter, clothes, removal from danger)
- **belonging**: (being a part of a group, love, affection)
- **esteem**: (from self & others)
- **self-actualisation**: (achieving individual potential)
Capacity Building of Educators and Families

Capabilities
Skills & knowledge

Connections
Networks

Cognition
Beliefs & values

Confidence
Self-Efficacy

– Mapp & Bergman, 2019
Partnering with Students in Remote Learning
Teachers Talk about their Evolving Practice

Barbara Jones
WestEd
“Culturally responsive-sustaining remote education grounds the use of education tools and arranges the educational experience in a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple expressions of diversity...are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning.”

Guidance on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Remote Education
By NYU Metro Center
Listening to Educator Voices – Ongoing Study

- WestEd review of online journals of 70 educators enrolled in the online course *Student Agency in Learning*
- Teachers in the course are from Tucson, AZ, Sunnyside Unified School District
  - Primarily low SES, English learner students
- The course focuses on enhancing student agency through formative assessment
- In their online journals, teachers addressed the question:
  - *How did classroom culture and student identity show up in your digital learning spaces this week?*
Partnering with Students in Remote Learning – Themes

• Focus on developing an online learning culture
• Gather and respond to information about student learning and well-being
• Create transparency in learning
• Support student learner identity
• Engage peers in supporting one another in learning
Focus on developing an online learning culture

• Leveraging school/home connection
  – Seeking and sharing information

• Creating motivation without grades
  – Focus on current learning vs. compliance and future outcomes
  – Supporting positive identities and student agency

• Establishing culture of respect and trust
  – Based on learning partnership
Developing an online culture

Classroom culture is playing a big part in our google classrooms. I am not sure that teachers realize this, but the trust that is being built between the teacher, student and even the parents is incredible. Our focus may be a little off topic from what would normally happen in a classroom setting but we are all appreciating individual differences. We are inviting each other into our own personal spaces (homes). Everyone online can see and hear your surroundings and sometimes that can be a little intimidating, but we are all trusting and respecting one another.

– Principal, Sunnyside School District
Gather and respond to information about student learning and well-being

- Survey students and parents
- Start lessons with questions
- Gather evidence of learning through what students say, do, make, or write
- Use information to:
  - Structure timing, frequency, format, and content of lessons
  - Provide student choice in learning participation level, e.g., coping, maintaining, accelerating
  - Plan next steps based on current learning status
Create transparency in learning

• Teachers model sharing their own experiences, learning goals, challenges
  – Teachers and students all function as learners and leaders
• Share or co-create daily learning goals and success criteria
  – Support students in internalizing expectations and developing their own “why” for doing the work
  – Students can better gauge where they are in their own learning if they know where they’re going
In terms of student identity, many students have taken on a new role as a learner, some students are engaged and some are not. We really do not know the “why” for some of students that are not participating in remote learning. The students that are participating are now taking on new roles. The situation that we are in forces students to become independent and problem solvers. I think for the students that are participating, they are developing student agency without realizing it.

– Teacher, Sunnyside School District
Support student learner identity

I noticed that once the students began talking, the others who were either too shy or uncomfortable began to open up and participate more in the hangout. I feel that by sharing with one another something about themselves they were more motivated to talk in this new format.

Those who may be quiet in the actual brick and mortar space are thriving in their identity as learners in this new space. Learners still enjoy routine and knowing what to expect. Systems and routines are important.

– Teachers, Sunnyside School District
Engage peers in supporting one another in learning

• Extending thinking through discourse
• Peer feedback
• Collaborative learning projects
Engage peers in supporting one another in learning

I noticed that students are developing a different sense of responsibility toward each other than they were at times in the classroom. For example, while on Google hangouts, if a student they were normally in a group with during in-class sessions was not in attendance during our live-stream video chat, they would remark on the student’s absence and then send them a text message to encourage them to join the chat. They did this voluntarily. Reaching out to their fellow classmates so that a sense of inclusion was formed is something I did not expect to see during such an upheaval of our normal routine. They make me proud every single day.

– Teacher, Sunnyside School District
Key Takeaways

Importance of:

• Having a learning culture that includes families
• Continually checking on the status of student learning and well-being
• Clearly sharing expectations for participation and learning
• Student learner identity and agency are key drivers of online learning
• Peers are critical in providing support for one another
Research to Practice
Family Engagement in Washoe County School District

D’Lisa Crain
Administrator,
Department of Family-School Partnerships
About Washoe County School District

- Washoe County School District serves 64,158 students in 107 schools
- Covering 6,342 square miles, there are urban (Reno & Sparks, Nevada) and rural areas
- Fun fact: School staff completed 1,322 positive relational home visits in 18–19 and families attended 4,426 sessions of learning through Parent University
Our Journey

• Led with family wellness, social and emotional learning
  – Personal daily contact for every child and family

• Support for basic needs
  – Health and food

• Distance learning
  – Teacher professional learning
  – Reinforce prior learning (no new content)
  – Not a full day of instruction
  – District led creation of materials
  – Translated into Spanish
  – Modeling through video, key community partners, and paper access
Challenges

Do you need information, resources, or help during this COVID-19 crisis?

Your School Counselors, Safe School Professionals and School Social Workers are still here for you and your family

¿Necesita información, recursos, o ayuda durante la crisis del coronavirus?

Sus consejeros escolares, profesionales de la escuela segura, y trabajadores sociales de la escuela todavía están aquí para usted y su familia

Barriers to Equitable Access

• Relationships
• Balancing too much contact with not enough
• Working through our implicit bias
• Geographic Distance
• Internet Access
• Devices
Washoe County School District
Distance Learning Successes

• Strong voices for equitable access
• Strong networks for family engagement with established, trusting relationships and critical community partners
• Collaboration in central office and with School Site Administrators
• Continuous feedback from families and staff to adjust supports and provide appropriate resources
• Systems and partners for diverse language supports
• Staff supports for secondary trauma
Research to Practice
Family Engagement in Alameda Unified School District

Sara Stone
Chief Academic Officer

Claudia Medina
Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement Programs
About Alameda Unified School District

• Alameda Unified School District serves about 10,000 PreK to adult students
• Reflecting the diversity of our community and the San Francisco Bay Area region, our students are 36% Asian, 29% white, 16% Hispanic, 8% Black/African American, and 9% of two or more races. About 27% of our students are low income and 17% are English learners.
• Fun fact: Over 40 different languages are spoken by the families in our district.
Our Journey

• We take a **trauma-informed approach** knowing that students and their families are affected by stress and the trauma of the current situation

• Prioritize:
  – Ensuring the well-being of students and their families
  – Establishing caring relationships
  – Cultivating a sense of safety
  – Having hope

• Learning focuses on:
  – Reinforcing essential standards
  – Constructive feedback to support understanding
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<tr>
<th>More of:</th>
<th>Instead of...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Providing Distance Learning Opportunities</td>
<td>- Direct Instruction and “Assignments”</td>
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<td>- Providing feedback</td>
<td>- Grading and giving point values</td>
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<td>- Posting/Review and feedback dates</td>
<td>- Due dates</td>
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<td>- Having celebrations of completed work</td>
<td>- Consequences for not completing work</td>
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<td>- Giving work that students can complete independently</td>
<td>- Work that requires teacher support and classroom discussions to complete</td>
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<td>- A few hours of learning opportunities based on development level</td>
<td>- Full school schedule</td>
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<td>- Review of standards taught prior to in-class instruction suspension and focus on opportunities related to key grade-level standards</td>
<td>- Sticking to a pacing guide and expecting mastery of all standards</td>
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<td>- Distance Learning is an opportunity</td>
<td>- Referring to work as required</td>
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Mobilizing our community during COVID-19 to meet families’ basic needs—leveraging trusting relationships.

**Physiological Needs:**
- Food and basic needs assistance (school) groceries (Food Bank)
- Internet access/hot spots and school supplies
- Housing and rent assistance

**Safety Needs:**
- Kinship network (AUSD families, volunteers, community leaders)
- Social connection and support (AUSD PTA Leaders, After School Program partners)
- Social Services and Mental Health resources

**Love & Belonging Needs:**
- Well-being checks on students, families, and amongst each other
- Weekly student engagement survey
- Coordinate efforts for support
## Building Capacity During COVID-19

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<th>Capabilities</th>
<th>Connections</th>
<th>Cognition</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
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<td><strong>Beliefs and Values</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self-Efficacy</strong></td>
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<td>• Tools to navigate online learning</td>
<td>• Leverage existing social networks</td>
<td>• Surveys to get feedback from families</td>
<td>• Customized video tutorials to guide children’s online experience</td>
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<td>• Grade-level resources</td>
<td>• Connect families via social networking channels</td>
<td>• Partnering with families to recalibrate what is needed</td>
<td>• Translation into top six languages</td>
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Multilingual Resources

Accessing online resources translated into seven languages

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<th>Family Distance Learning Opportunity Feedback</th>
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<th>Family FAQs about Distance Learning Opportunities (multilingual)</th>
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<th>Family Technology Needs Survey (multilingual)</th>
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<th>Distance Learning Technical Support for Families (multilingual)</th>
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Discussion – Lessons Learned from Practice

Q&A
Lessons Learned From Practice

• Focus on student and family well-being first. Learning won’t happen in the absence of safety and having basic needs met.
• Leverage critical community partners and staff including community-based organizations.
• Strong relationships and clear communication with families and students are key.
• Support families with appropriate resources at the appropriate times (e.g., food, devices, wifi).
• Build the capacity of all staff to engage with families.
Thank you!

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References


References, continued


