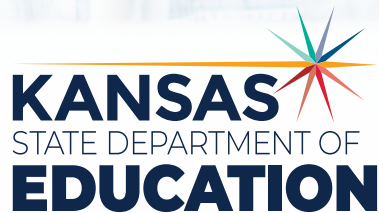


Kansans CAN:

Engage all Families



Would you like to evaluate your current family engagement practices?

The KSDE TASN Evaluation project, in collaboration with the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center, have designed a short family survey that is FREE for all districts and schools in Kansas. The website will automatically generate district/school summary reports, providing actionable data to help you set goals and build strategies around family engagement.

Register for free at: <https://districttools.org>



Introduction

Family Engagement is one of the most powerful predictors of social-emotional development, educational attainment and success in school and life for children and youth. (Global Family Research Project, 2018).

The development of the Kansas Family Engagement Framework was a collaborative effort combining research and best practice. The Framework provides guidance for families, practitioners, community members and educators to examine current family engagement practices and plan future strategies to engage families in the development and learning of their children and youth.

The Kansas Family Engagement Framework was developed by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC), a project of the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Technical Assistance System Network (TASN), in partnership with the Kansas Community and Family Engagement (CAFÉ) Advisory Council, the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Association for Family School, Community Engagement (NAFSCE) and the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO).

This Framework includes:

- A shared definition for family engagement
- Standards for family engagement birth through grade 12
- Guidance for what each standard might look like in practice.

Global Family Research Project: *Joining Together to Create a Bold Vision for Next Generation Family Engagement* (2018).

A Shared Definition for Family Engagement

A first step in developing this Framework was to create a common definition of family engagement for the state, including the KSDE, local schools/districts, educators, practitioners, families and the community. After reviewing research and best practices, the Kansas Community and Family Engagement (CAFÉ) Advisory Council constructed the following shared definition:

Family engagement is an **empowering partnership** among families, educators, practitioners and the community with **shared responsibility** for the **personal success** of children and youth.

- An **Empowering Partnership** means that families, educators, practitioners and the community cultivate and sustain relationships that are active, equitable and respectful to support the learning and social-emotional growth of children and youth.
- **Shared Responsibility** means that families, educators, practitioners and the community collaborate and communicate to promote positive educational outcomes for children and youth.
- The **Personal Success** of children and youth means the accomplishment of their desired visions and goals.

Family Engagement: Providing Equity and Access

Families, practitioners, community members and educators are responsible for ensuring that every child and youth has the opportunities needed to be successful. In practice, equity means services and supports are provided in a timely manner regardless of race, gender, class, disability, language or any other social or cultural characteristics so that children and youth can develop their full intellectual, social and physical potential.

In order to provide equity and access, the following elements may be helpful to consider:

- The historical context of where families may have strived or struggled, their current realities, and the desired future outcomes for their children;
- Ways to communicate effectively with families who are English language learners;
- The families' cultural and language needs when developing and disseminating important information to families;
- Representation on advisory bodies and committees reflects the composition of the families in the community;
- The unique characteristics and strengths of families.



Ensuring Sustainability of Family Engagement

Effective family engagement is an ongoing, interactive process that requires intentional planning and evaluation. Sustainable family engagement requires the necessary personnel and fiscal resources to ensure success, the coordination of activities and initiatives across the learning environment, and the implementation of effective two-way communication with all families, practitioners, community members and educators.

Ensuring sustainability for family engagement can be achieved if:

- The learning environment has a family engagement action plan that incorporates specific steps and activities, ongoing evaluation, and data analysis to support a cycle of continuous improvement;
- Professional development is provided for all staff on family engagement;

- The learning environment ensures adequate resources (both fiscal and personnel) are allocated to support meaningful and effective family engagement;
- The family engagement strategies are coordinated across the learning environment.



The learning environment has a family engagement action plan that incorporates specific steps and activities, ongoing evaluation, and data analysis.

Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood: Birth to Age 5

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood provide guidance for families, educators, practitioners and communities in the effective engagement of families. The standards may be used by the early childhood workforce to examine current family engagement practices and plan future strategies to partner with families in their children's development and learning.



Families as Foundation

All families are recognized and promoted as their child's **first and most influential teacher**.

- Families provide stability in daily experiences for their children.
- Families provide nurturing environments for their children.
- Families promote learning for their children.
- Children have good physical health as appropriate for their development.
- Children demonstrate developmentally appropriate growth and learning skills.



What does it look like in practice?

- Families provide a safe environment in which children experience continuity of care.
 - Connect families with resources that enable basic necessities in a consistent home.
 - Encourage development of strong caregiver-child bonds that lead to consistent nurturing relationships with primary caregivers and other adults.

- Families ensure the health care and nutritional needs of their children are met.
 - Promote the family's well-being to ensure children's health care and social-emotional needs are met.
 - Discuss and share resources to champion children's healthy activity and eating.
- Families practice effective, positive parenting behaviors.
 - Encourage positive parent-child communication and relationships that include reading, talking and playing with their children daily.
 - Foster parental confidence in child development by promoting appropriate skills in communication, cognition, social-emotional, fine motor, gross motor and self-care.
 - Support families as lifelong educators of their children.



Families as Communicators

Early childhood providers and families have effective and ongoing communication.

- Program and family have consistently initiated communication and share knowledge that is timely and continuously facilitated through multiple methods.
- Practices, supports and resources are responsive to the cultural, ethnic, racial, language and socioeconomic characteristics and preference of families and their communities.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families, educators, practitioners and the community engage in consistent two-way communication.
 - Establish multiple modes of communication to share information.
 - Ensure communication between families, educators, practitioners and the community is continuous and fluid.
 - Engage parents in conversations where child assessment data is shared, and parents learn about children's progress.
- Families are able to comfortably and confidently communicate with educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Introduce families to those who will be working with the family and child.
 - Provide families with interpreters for effective communication.
 - Make written documents available in multiple languages.
 - Communicate with families and their children in the context of their language, culture and traditions.
- Families have a shared understanding of desired program outcomes.
 - Have procedures in place to communicate with all families.
 - Provide orientation to the program for families.
 - Encourage family participation by including an open-door policy, family volunteers, and participation opportunities.
 - Integrate families' traditions and culture into instructional practices, events and activities.

Support families as lifelong educators of their children.



Families as Advocates

Families actively engage as an advocate and decision-maker for their child.

- Families have opportunities that promote informed options and decision-making.
- Programs and communities engage families by providing opportunities to be involved in program leadership and decision-making.
- Programs and communities empower families to be advocates.
- Families are aware of resources for selecting and accessing needed services.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families work and advocate for their children with educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Encourage families to gather and maintain important documents pertaining to the health, education, and well-being of their children.
 - Inform families of important schedules, developmental milestones, and community resources.
 - Ensure that families understand their child's unique needs and are aware of relevant services and options.
- Families form connections with peers and mentors.
 - Connect families with opportunities to engage with each other in relevant peer-to-peer support or mentorship.
 - Empower families to use their voice and become mentors.

- Families participate and are engaged in decision-making opportunities.
 - Encourage families to provide input and actively participate in decision-making.
 - Ensure that families have the necessary information to make well-informed decisions.
 - Offer forums for families to use their voice in meaningful ways that influence decision-making.



Families as Partners

Successful partnerships exist between families and professionals based upon mutual trust and respect.

- Early childhood professionals use child and family strengths as a basis for engaging families.
- Families promote learning for their children.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have strong partnerships and trusting relationships among educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Initiate relationships with families that are receptive, responsive and respectful.
 - Offer formal and informal opportunities for families to build an agreed-upon and collaborative relationship.

Programs and communities empower families to be advocates.

- Families, educators, practitioners and the community are equal partners in decision-making that affects children and families.
 - Involve families through the use of feedback tools to inform procedures and strategic planning.
 - Include families in the creation of policies, practices and programs.
- Families develop goals and promote learning with educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Help families identify their interests and articulate their strengths and needs.
 - Work with families to develop goals that incorporate families' interests, culture, traditions, beliefs, and language.
 - Partner with families in planning for transitions within early childhood education.
- Families are supported by community collaborations.
 - Provide networks of support.
 - Facilitate referrals to needed additional health or educational services.
 - Identify and address gaps in services and unmet needs in the community.
- Families are involved within the community based on their interests and goals.
 - Create safe and respectful communities that foster engagement and participation.
 - Encourage families to participate in volunteer opportunities and community service projects based on their interests and goals.



Families as Community Members

Families are active participants in their communities and connect to resources and services.

- Comprehensive services are available, affordable and accessible.
- Communities provide broad supports for families.
- Families live in safe and stable environments.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have access to community supports and resources.
 - Utilize a needs assessment to determine supports and resources that will benefit families.
 - Connect families with relevant supports and resources.
 - Support families in navigating services.



PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: Kindergarten to Grade 12

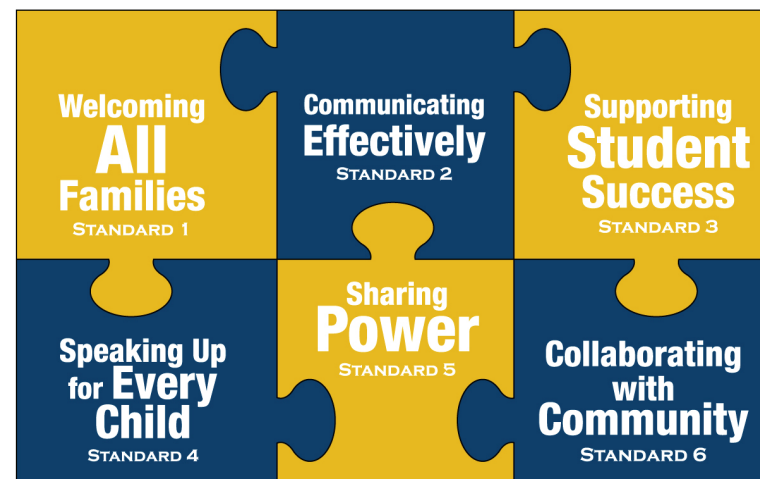
The PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships were endorsed by the Kansas State Board of Education in 2008. The family engagement standards provide districts and schools with guidance in establishing family engagement goals, strategies and evidenced-based practices for the development of family-school-community partnerships.



Welcoming All Families

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.

- Families have a personal relationship with one or more school staff members and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions.
- Families entering the school are greeted personally, have a clear sense of where to go, and find the overall environment inviting.
- Information about school and community programs related to child and family needs is available in common areas for families.



- There are opportunities for family members to participate in meaningful volunteer opportunities within the school.
- School activities for families are designed with the individual needs and interest of all families. Activities are accessible for all.

What does it look like in practice?

- Build relationships
 - Create a family friendly front office.
 - Greet families promptly in their home language.

- Make “Family Parking” only spaces.
- Train all staff to welcome families.
- Provide easy to navigate school buildings with clear, concise and culturally sensitive signage.
- Ask families for feedback on their experiences in the school.
- Promote a “family friendly” vision through school letterhead, signatures on emails, welcome message on school phone, website.
- Schedule time to speak with all who wish to see school staff
- Invite families to visit the school.
- Celebrate families with a bulletin board or hallway as a celebration area.
- Invite families to share about their culture at a staff training.
- Create a family friendly school website.



Communicating Effectively

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

- **Effective Communication Strategies:**
 - Schools have a system in place with multiple strategies to facilitate two-way communications with families and community members on a regular basis.
 - Information is disseminated with enough time for families to respond for follow up appropriately as needed.
 - Communication needs to be comprehensive and take place throughout the year and in different venues.
- Communications are respectful, honest, timely, and collaborative.
- **Communication Across Roles**
 - School staff and families feel equally able to contact one another in support of a child’s learning and recognize that no single means of communication will be sufficient to meet the needs of all families.
 - Families, students, and community members are regularly asked for their input regarding issues and concerns.
- **Culturally Proficient Communication**
 - School staff have an understanding of how the various cultures represented in their school view education and schooling practices so that they can engage in meaningful conversations with individuals of different backgrounds.
 - School activities are representative of all families, and families feel safe sharing information about their child, family, culture, or experience to enhance student learning.

What does it look like in practice?

- **Use Multiple Communication Paths**
 - Review all correspondence and replace the word parent with family.
 - Arrange personal calls between families and staff.
 - Include two-way social media.
 - Provide bi-lingual staff and translation services.
 - Attend high profile community events.
 - Establish home visits.
 - Organize focus groups and receive feedback.
- **Survey Families**
 - Determine the best way to communicate by surveying families.
 - Include in multiple languages.
 - Available to all families.

- Share results.
- Set goals from data.
- Discover the effectiveness of technology.
- Access to Principal and Teachers
 - Provide in small group and with individual.
 - Set up in an unhurried atmosphere.
 - Maintain visibility.
 - Engage as a greeter.



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.

- Educators and families partner to identify and implement plans and practices that support jointly identified desired outcomes or goals for students.
- Educators ask families for information about their child, family, culture, values, norms, beliefs, and/or community to use in classroom planning.
- Families work with teachers, administrators, and other school staff to identify, act on, and achieve their hopes and goals for their child.
- Educators get to know individual families and their stories so that teachers can understand what families need to support their child's learning.

- Families have information, tools, and training about child development and how to create supportive learning environments outside of school that are linked to what the child is learning in the school environment.
- Conferences and visits are arranged by the school or as requested by families based on students' individual needs.

What does it look like in practice?

- Parent-Teacher Communication About Student Progress
 - Dispense family friendly data with families.
 - Use academic and social emotional data discussions.
 - Share positive news.
 - Teachers provide families with tips and tools for student learning.
 - Implement student-led conferences.
 - Engage families in Individual Plans of Study.
- Link Student Work to Academic Standards
 - Teachers explain standards and assessments.
 - Display work with corresponding standards.
 - Discuss how programs and activities link to standards.
- Share School Progress
 - Offer progress updates to families.
 - Involve families in discussions about the school's Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS).
 - Explain school report card.
 - Share progress on school attendance, readiness, reading and math proficiency and summer learning.



Supporting Student Success

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.

- Families are engaged in school planning, leadership, and meaningful volunteer opportunities that result in changes and improvements at the school.
- Opportunities are available to support the development of family capacity and family leadership and advocacy skills so that families may take a more active role in school and/or district planning.
- Families are provided with information on how to understand and make meaning of information provided about their child, including assessment results, so that they can participate in educational decision-making as partners.
- Educators and school staff provide families with objective information so families can make informed decisions about their child's education.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families Understand How the School and District Operate
 - Inform families about policies and procedures.
 - Describe the role of family engagement in schools.
 - Explain mission and goals of school including family-friendly vision.
- Families understand rights and responsibilities under federal law
 - Provide summary of parent rights from ESEA and IDEA.

- Learning About Resources
 - Notify families of resources and programs that promote student success.
 - Share meetings to inform about after school programs.
 - Dispense a handbook with resources available in school and community.
- Conflict Resolution
 - Develop clear written procedures for conflict resolution.
 - Provide information from school to families on conflict resolution.



Explain the mission and goals of the schools including a family-friendly vision



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.

- The school does take into account the historical context of where families may have strived or struggled, their current realities, and the desired future outcomes for their children.
- The school provides strategies to staff on communicating with families who are English language learners.
- Families, teachers, administrators, and other school staff use school and community supports and resources to promote students' progress.
- Educators have knowledge of the community they serve, including the community's need.
- Community partnerships exist among community health, mental health, social service, and youth organizations as well as school partners to build peer networks, link families and students with needed services, and support successful transitions for children and their families.

What does it look like in practice?

- Having a Voice in Decisions That Affect Children
 - Arrange families' input into school improvement plans, principal selection, budget, grading system.

- Inform families of proposed changes to the school policies, practices and programs.
- Address Equity Issues
 - Discuss with families the root causes of achievement gap and strategies to close those gaps.
 - Discuss with families barriers to family engagement in their children's learning.
- Develop Parent Leadership
 - Encourage families to facilitate or lead discussions/focus groups.
 - Learn about families' interests and desires as leaders.
 - Meet with diverse families to learn about unique needs.





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.

- Schools identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
- Schools connect families to community resources that strengthen and support students' learning and success.
- Families, teachers, administrators, and other school staff use school and community supports and resources to promote students' progress.
- Educators engage in the community they serve to build relationships.
- Community partnerships exist among community health, mental health, social service, and youth organizations as well as school partners to build peer networks, link families and students with needed services, and support successful transitions for children and their families.

What does it look like in practice?

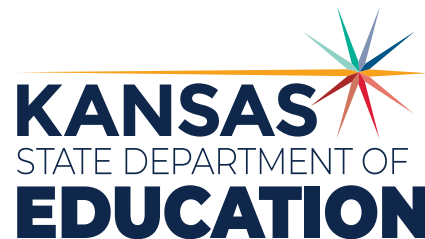
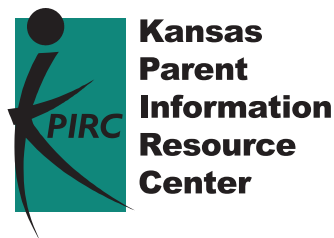
- Link to Community Resources
 - Create a family resource area/center.
 - Provide community/school resources to students and families.
 - Provide a list of community resources.
- Organize Support from Community Partners
 - Collaborate with community and business representatives.
 - Establish internships/mentorships with community members.

- Students participate in mock interviews with community members.
- Encourage community members to sponsor scholarships.
- Consider the School a Hub of the Community
 - Encourage family and community use of the school. library, media center and gym.
 - Offer GED/adult education after school hours.
 - Invite community groups to use the school.
- Partner with Community Groups to Strengthen Families and Support Students
 - Offer students work related skills in areas such as graphic design, entrepreneurship, welding, carpentry and provide for internships within the community.
 - Sponsor health fairs.
 - Partner with mental health services/agreements with providers for services in school.



This publication is available from the:
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A project of the KSDE Technical Assistance System Network (TASN)



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