



Spark Innovation



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



ENGAGING FAMILIES TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

Co-Creating Equitable District-wide Systems of Support

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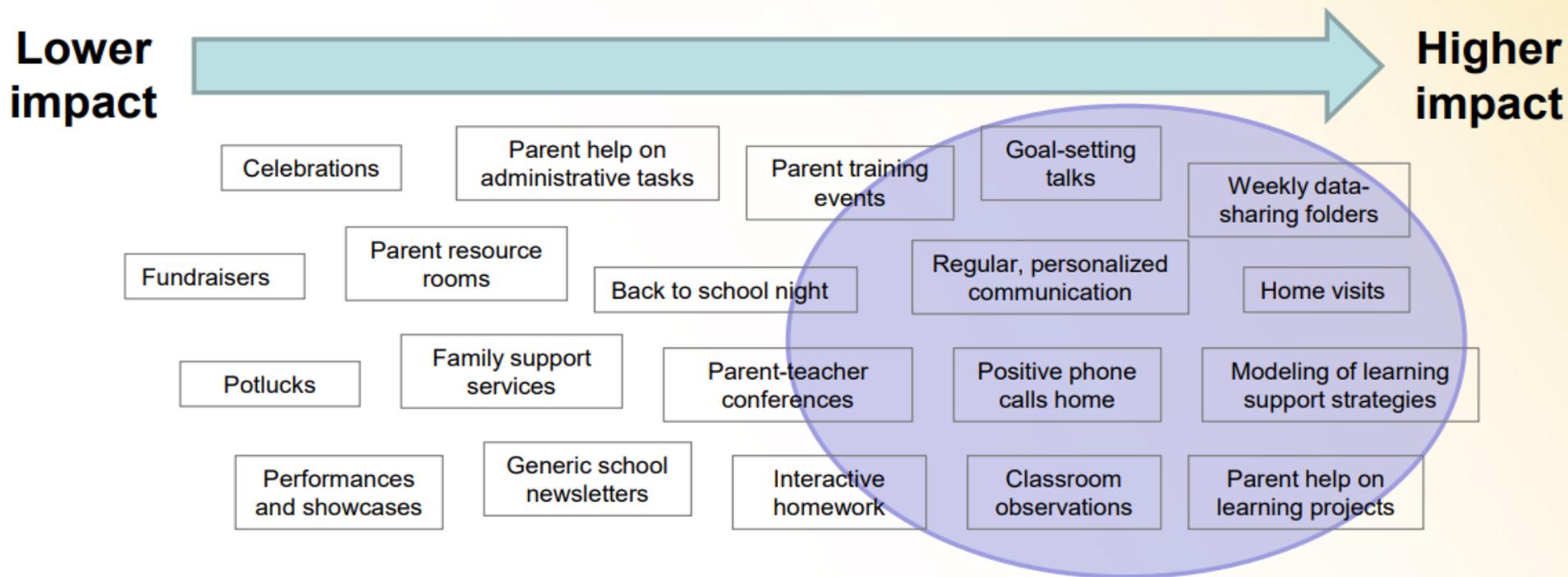
Meeting the Moment

“States are revisiting what it means to have families engaged. The pandemic taught educators the need to be nimble, flexible, and meet families where they are, and that they couldn’t use the same strategies that were ineffective prior to the pandemic.”

Dr. Miguel Cardona
U.S. Secretary of Education



Relative Impact of Family Engagement on Student Learning



Flamboyant Foundation



School Practices Are Key

Students do better in school when their families are involved in their education.

What predicts whether families are engaged?

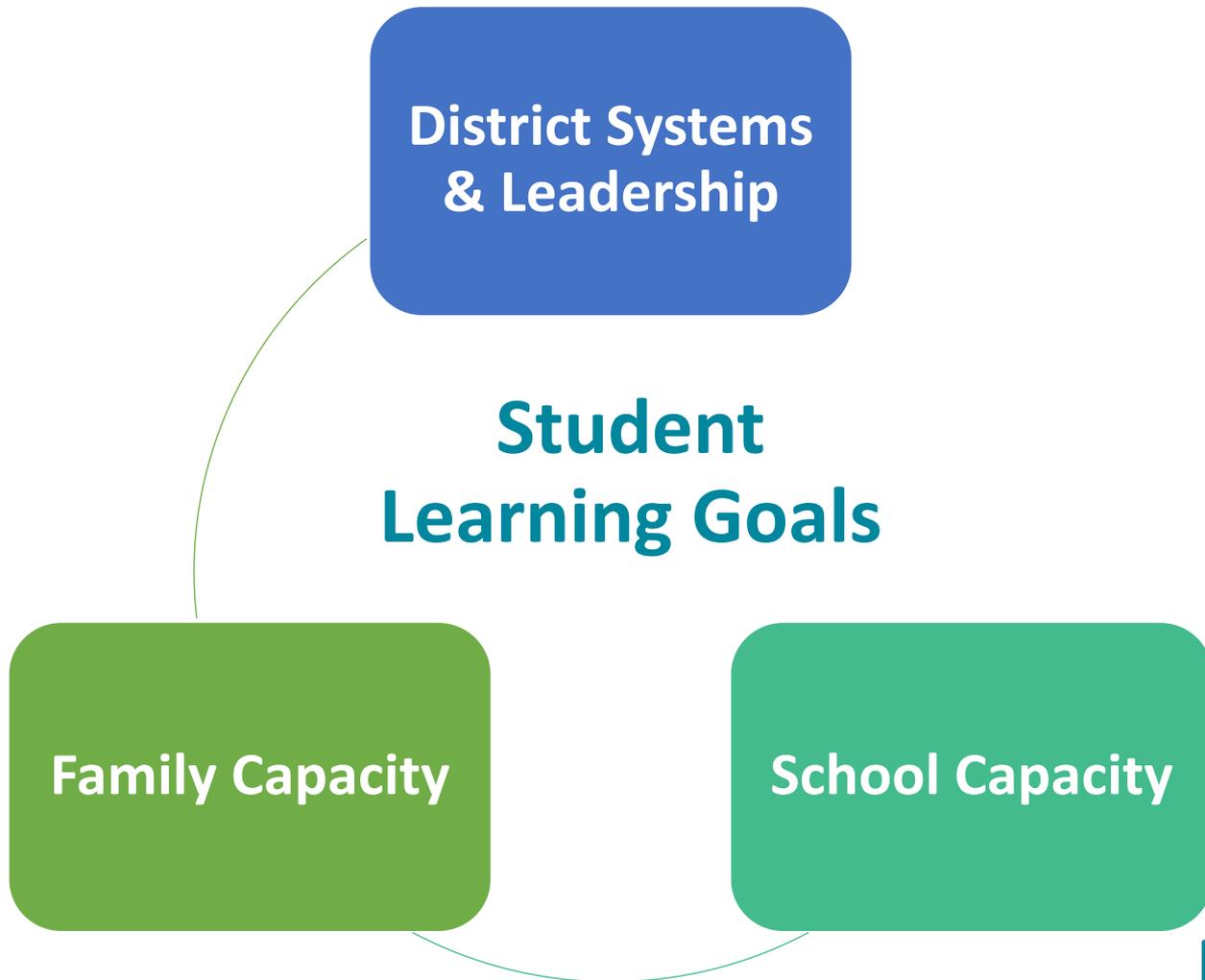
The strongest, most consistent predictors of parent involvement at home and school are the **specific school programs and teacher practices** that encourage and guide parent involvement.

Dr. Joyce Epstein
Johns Hopkins University



Family Engagement Systems at Work

Co-Creating with Families



District Systems and Leadership

What does family engagement mean in our district?

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

Organizational conditions

- Systemic: embraced by leadership across the organization
- Integrated: embedded in all strategies
- Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

[Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships](#) (USED)

Key Questions for Implementing Systemic Engagement

- Has our district clearly and publicly articulated family engagement as a core value and lever for student achievement and healthy development, and school improvement?
- Is engagement a districtwide responsibility or does responsibility reside in one department?
- Do our policies and protocols provide clear expectations for engagement? Are there supports aligned to expectations to ensure positive outcomes for staff?
- Are our engagement efforts aligned to our district goals and targets? Is engagement embedded in the planning and data collection process?

[Taking It To the Next Level: Strengthening and Sustaining Family Engagement through Integrated, Systemic Practice](#) (Institute for Educational Leadership)



“What Does Family Engagement Mean to You?”

Connecticut’s Definition and Framework for Family Engagement

Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families

Connecticut’s Definition and Framework for Family Engagement



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Full-Equal-and-Equitable-Partnerships-with-Families>



Family engagement is a full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators, and community partners to promote children’s learning and development, from birth through college and career.



Indicators of Equitable Partnerships: Guiding Principles

- Build trust and respect
- Listen to families: two-way conversations
- Link family engagement to student learning
- Co-create culturally responsive practice
- Support parents as assets and leaders

Capacity-building Systems Foundation

Co-Create a Capacity-Building Infrastructure

A commitment to family engagement requires an investment in high-quality **professional development** and **time** for educator-family collaboration.

- Senior-level Director
- School-Family Liaisons
- School Family Engagement Coaches:
Provide embedded professional development for staff and families
- School Action Teams: Co-create action plan linked to school improvement

With strong leadership and structure, **every school can** welcome, inform, and engage parents in their children's education.



Building School Capacity

Priorities for Reopening Schools

Goal #1: Build Trusting, Respectful Relationships

Proactive one-on-one contact with every family

- [Parent Teacher Home Visits*](#)
- [Relationship Building Toolkit](#)
- [Welcoming Schools](#)
- Communication & Translation

“The development of relational trust between home and school is key for any other partnership work to actually take place.”

*Dr. Karen Mapp
Harvard University*



Building School Capacity

Priorities for Reopening Schools

Goal #2: Link Family Engagement to Student Learning

What Families Want to Know:

- How is my child doing?
- What are they learning now?
- How can I help?

- Parent-Teacher Conversations About Learning & Academic Parent Teacher Teams
- Demystify assessments and data
- Involve families in interactive homework
- Real-time messaging about curriculum and home activities



Capacity-Building *with* Families

Support Parents As Assets and Leaders

Learn from and with families to build trust and social capital

- Parent Cafes
- Parent Academies
- Parent Leadership Training
- Family Resource Centers
- Community Schools

Family engagement is equity work at its core.

[Dr. Karen Mapp](#)
[Embracing a New Normal: Toward a More Liberatory Approach to Family Engagement](#)





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