

THE KENTUCKY FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

A Complete Resource Guide for Strengthening Family, School and Community Partnerships to Support Student Success



The Prichard Committee
Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

Tools are applicable early education through high school

Dear Families, Educators and Community Partners,

We are proud of our Kentucky history and accomplishments in education and parent leadership. Provisions in Kentucky law ensure families and community members have a powerful voice in our public schools which have been a wellspring for success. This resource was originally created in 2006 and revised in 2021 and will be updated annually by the Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools. This Collaborative is a network of families, schools, districts and community partners who are focused on increasing open communication, learning opportunities and shared decision-making power across the Kentucky education system. The Collaborative believes while high-quality, equitable and inclusive education is dependent upon the partnership of families, schools and communities, the responsibility to systematize family engagement best practices into education falls on the school system and its staff.

We hope this resource helps school and district groups work together more effectively so our state can rise to proficiency in the practice of family and community engagement. The goal is to help Kentucky schools and districts realize an equitable and excellent education for every Kentuckian.

In Partnership,

Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools



KY Collaborative Advisory Council Last update Jan. 2023



Dear Friends of Education,

We are excited about this newly revised Kentucky Family and School Partnership Guide which will enable every school district, school, and early learning organization to help improve outcomes for our children.

Research clearly tells us that when a family is engaged with their child's education, the child does better academically and socially, attends school more consistently, graduates and is more likely to continue their education, (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The COVID-19 pandemic has made abundantly clear that this is especially true for low-income families and minority populations.

The Kentucky Family and School Partnership School Self-Assessment provides a comprehensive measure of an educational organization's strengths and opportunities for building the two-way relationship with families. The accompanying Family Engagement Digital Playbook provides helpful resources to enhance this relationship. It is our sincere hope that educators across Kentucky will use both tools to grow their family engagement work.

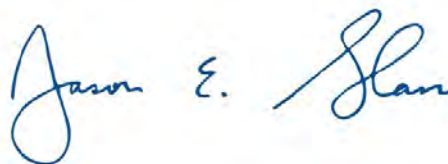
We extend a warm thanks to the talented staff at the Kentucky Department of Education, the Prichard Committee's family engagement partners, and the original members of the Commissioner's Parent Advisory Council whose early work, *The Missing Piece*, was foundational. We especially wish to thank the KDE division leaders who will be using these tools as they work with schools and districts.

The road that leads to every student being successful runs through the family. Let's us take up the journey with renewed enthusiasm.

Your partners in this work,



Brigitte Blom, CEO and President
The Prichard Committee



Dr. Jason Glass, Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education



**The
Prichard
Committee**

Building a Groundswell
for Excellent Education



Letter to endorse the Kentucky Family and School Partnership Guide from the
Prichard Committee and KY Collaborative

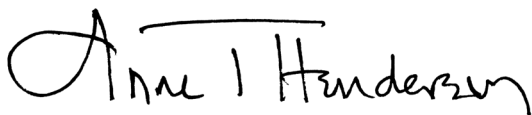
As our recent experience with the COVID pandemic has revealed, family engagement is more important than ever, perhaps more important than we ever thought. What families do to support their children's learning and development is critical to their success, not just in school, but through life. And what schools do to invite, encourage, and support that engagement makes a huge difference.

As we have been saying for years, when schools work as partners with families, not only do students do better in school, but the schools they go to get better.

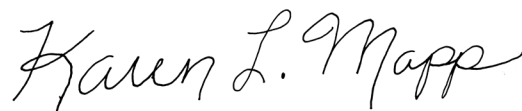
Families and educators need concrete tools and guides like this one to put best practices into action. We are honored to have contributed to this guide and to be part of the Prichard Committee's outstanding work to promote better and more equitable educational opportunities for Kentucky children.

Kentucky has a long history of innovation in the field of parent leadership. This Guide, with the companion Digital Playbook, Self-Assessment, and Certification process, will be a powerful next step in realizing more effective family engagement. We hope that Kentucky's example will support other states to improve their practices.

We can no longer wait. It is more urgent than ever to help our families and educators build authentic, trusting partnerships to ensure that all children get the high quality education that they deserve.



Anne T Henderson
Co-Founder and Senior Consultant
National Association for Family, School and
Community Engagement (NAFSCE)



Karen L. Mapp
Senior Lecturer on Education
Harvard Graduate School of Education



What's Inside

• GLOSSARY	5
• SNAPSHOT OF GUIDE	6
• FAMILY ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH	8
• DUAL CAPACITY-BUILDING FRAMEWORK	11
• SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATE PROCESS	13
• DIGITAL PLAYBOOK	14
• ONLINE MODULES	15
• ACTION TEAM AND ACTION PLANS	16
• FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS	17
• HISTORY AND MISSION OF THIS GUIDE	18
• CHECKLIST K-12 FAMILY FRIENDLY SCHOOL CERTIFICATION	19

We hope this resource helps groups work together more effectively so our state can rise to proficiency in the practice of family and community engagement. We do this to realize an equitable and excellent education for every Kentuckian.

THANK YOU TO THE DESIGN TEAM AND EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS:

Advisory Council for Ky Collaborative for Families and Schools
Berea Partners for Education
Judith Bradley, Founder and Managing Partner, JackBeNimble
Brad Clark, Founder and CEO, Latent Talent Accelerator
Commissioners' Parent Advisory Council
Governor's Office of Early Childhood
KY Department of Education
Learning Grove
National Center for Families Learning
NYU Metro Center

ORIGINAL 2006 AUTHORS WHO PROVIDED FEEDBACK:

Cindy Baumert
Carol Edelen
Anne T. Henderson
Dennis Pierce
Sande Shepherd
Susan Weston



Glossary: Setting the Stage with Common Language

Family Engagement: A productive, equitable and inclusive partnership among families, educators and the community to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career, and across home, school, and community settings. Family, school and community partnerships are about building active, reciprocal relationships in which schools, families and community agencies and organizations engage in meaningful and culturally appropriate collaboration to improve student outcomes.

Within this resource we use the following 5 terms interchangeably to reflect the above definition.

- Family and school partnership
- Family engagement
- Family, school and community partnership
- Family, school and community engagement
- Parent Involvement (used most frequently in Kentucky regulations)

The use of “Parent” or “family”: A natural, adoptive or foster parent or other adult serving as a parent such as a close relative, a legal or educational guardian; and/or a community or agency advocate.

The use of “Student”: We use this as an all inclusive term to also include children in the early education environment, birth to age five, as well as youth and young adults through age 21 who are continuing to receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”).

Equity: The promotion of access, opportunity and advancement of all individuals, including those in underserved communities, in order to identify and eliminate conditions that prevent the ability of all students to reach their full potential. *“The term ‘underserved communities’ refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life,” (January 2021 President Biden’s [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)).*

Inclusion: The intentional act of creating an environment that fosters mutually respectful relationships in which each student, regardless of intellectual, social, cultural and geographic background, is welcomed, supported and valued as fully participating members of society.

Equality: “Equality is the condition under which every individual is treated in the same way, and is granted the same rights and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences, abilities or backgrounds” (*University of Washington Department of Epidemiology Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. Glossary of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Terms. 2019*)

Core Beliefs for Family Engagement

1. All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them
2. All families have the capacity to support their children’s learning
3. Families and school staff are equal partners
4. The responsibility for cultivating and sustaining partnerships among school, home and community rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders. (*Beyond the Bake Sale, Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies. The New Press. 2007*)

[Click here for more definitions of frequently used education terms](#)



Expert Contributors for this section:

Micki Ray, Director, and Jan Sellers, MTSS Coordinator, Division of Program Standards, Kentucky Department of Education



Snapshot of Guide

Family Engagement: A productive, equitable and inclusive partnership among families, educators and the community to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career, and across home, school, and community settings.

[Glossary of Terms and Core Beliefs Here](#)

Why- Family Engagement Research

"The best predictor of student success is the extent to which families encourage learning at home and involve themselves in their child's education. Research suggests if schools successfully engage families in education, their children, regardless of ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic background, are more likely to:

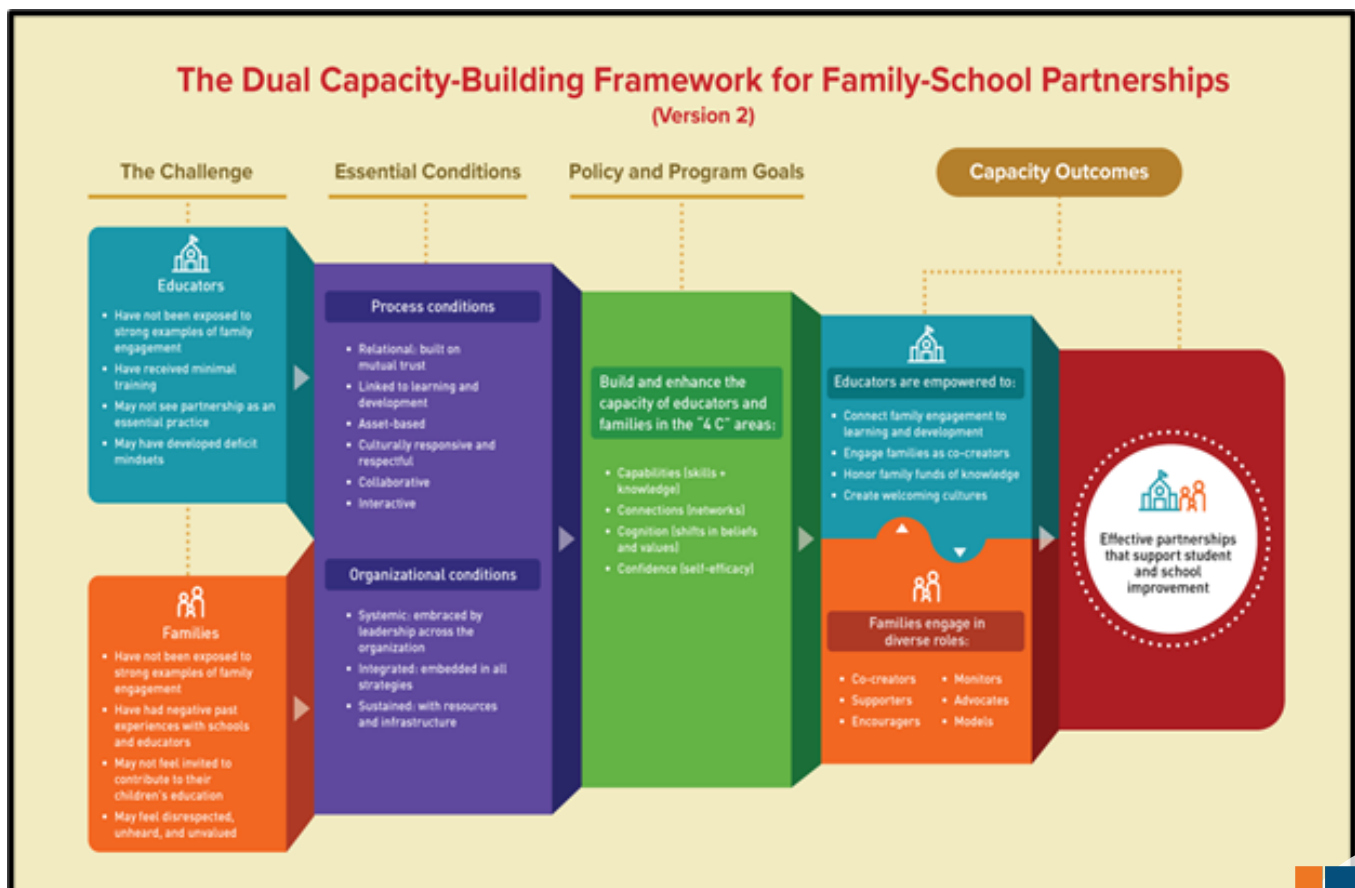
- Earn higher grades or test scores
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Graduate from high school and attend post-secondary education
- Have better social skills and classroom behavior" (A New Wave of Evidence, Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

"According to a national survey of teachers in the US, engaging families is the number one area where teachers feel least well prepared and represents their greatest challenge." (MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2005).

[Learn the Research Here](#)

What and How- A Dual Capacity-Building Foundation:

How you do a family engagement activity is just as important as the activity itself. All family engagement strategies are most effective if schools approach the work through the lens of the Dual Capacity Building Framework. *Phrase to remember: We need to be doing with families, not to families.*



[Dual Capacity -Building Framework Here or Visit \[www.dualcapacity.org\]\(http://www.dualcapacity.org\)](#)



KY School Self-Assessment:

5 Objectives

1. **Relationship-Building:** Staff build productive, meaningful relationships with students and families to build trust, confidence, and authentic partnerships.
2. **Communications:** A variety of constructive, two-way communication flows regularly between staff, students, and families about academic achievement and individual needs.
3. **Shared Responsibility:** Staff ensures that families have multiple learning opportunities to understand how to support their student’s learning and to participate in decision-making and school improvement efforts.
4. **Advocacy:** Staff identifies and supports at least one family member or another adult in the school for each student who is willing to take personal responsibility for understanding and speaking up for the student’s learning strengths and needs.
5. **Community Partnership:** Staff engages and partners with community members and families to plan and implement substantive work to improve student achievement and school improvement.

[Click here for the full Self-Assessment and How to apply for you Family Friendly School Certification Process](#)

11 Goal Post Family Engagement Strategies- A School Year Breakdown	
August and September	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher wellness and support check-in 2. Welcoming phone calls or home visits 3. Family Friendly Back to School Night 4. Family, administrator and teacher trainings: “KY Family and School Partnership 101 Module”
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School goal setting and action planning. - Align planning with existing school initiatives, requirements and improvement efforts
November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Effective Family Conferences/ Conversations and IEP Meetings <i>**Kentucky Family Engagement in Education Week is the 3rd week of November</i>
December	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Social and emotional wellbeing: whole child, whole Family 7. Community partnerships and mental health services
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Improve parent leadership and decision-making roles in the school and district; Student voice in middle and high schools
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Revisit and improve family-school compacts and family engagement policies 10. Mid-year family and staff check-ins via home visits, virtual visits or phone calls
March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Evaluate family engagement efforts for continuous improvement and ensure equitable practices
April and May	<p><i>Extras</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer summer learning and grade transition supports for families and students - Collect input and set goals and dates for next year’s engagement programs - May Teacher Appreciation Week

[Click here for more concrete strategies in the Digital Playbook](#)



Why is Family Engagement Important?

Here is what the research tells us...

I. OVERVIEW

The best predictor of student success is the extent to which families encourage learning at home and involve themselves in their child's education. Research suggests if schools successfully engage families in education, their children, regardless of ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades or test scores
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Graduate from high school and attend post-secondary education
- Have better social skills and classroom behavior (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

What if schools and early learning centers added high-impact strategies for engaging families to other practices for improving learning?

Most common practices of family engagement, such as back-to-school nights, volunteer programs, and parent-teacher conferences focused on behavior - sometimes termed "random acts of family engagement" - are low impact. Research strongly suggests that engaging families in the following ways can have a significant, sustained and positive impact on student learning:

- Building personal relationships, mutual understanding, and trust with families via class meetings, informal one-on-one conversations, and home visits
- Engaging parents in meaningful leadership and decision-making
- Sharing data with families about student skill levels
- Modeling high-impact teaching practices such as dialogic reading and hands-on math activities so families can use them at home
- Listening to families' ideas about their children's interests and challenges, and using this input to differentiate instruction
- Incorporating content from families' home cultures and histories into classroom lessons. (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies, 2007)

II. WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE FOR SUCH HIGH-IMPACT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES TO SPREAD?

A commonly accepted and expansive understanding of high-impact family engagement:

Family engagement is a collection of practices that lead to 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. It must recognize everything family members do to support their children's learning -- guiding them through a complex education system, advocating for them when problems arise, and collaborating with educators and community groups to achieve more equitable and effective learning opportunities. For culturally and linguistically diverse families, in particular, high-impact family engagement also means fostering families' positive cultural and racial identity, sustaining their languages and ways of communication, and protecting them against racism and discrimination. This understanding must be systematically integrated into school reform legislation, programs, professional development, technical assistance, and monitoring efforts.

Improved teacher and principal capacity: According to a national survey of teachers in the US, engaging families is the number one area where teachers feel *least* well prepared and represents their greatest challenge. (MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2005). Clearly, systematic efforts must be made to help teachers connect with families in ways that are respectful, meaningful and effective, and that ensure that criteria for teacher quality (for both hiring and evaluation) include proficiency in culturally responsive family engagement that is closely tied to improving student learning. Teacher preparation curricula should cover the Dual Capacity-Building Framework, which includes core beliefs, essential organizational and process conditions, and key strategies that lead to meaningful outcomes.



Family-school partnerships that are designed to support student achievement and school improvement: This requires school districts and educator preparation programs to develop capacity in school and program staff, so that they can honor and recognize families' funds of knowledge, connect family engagement to student learning, and create a welcoming, inclusive and inviting culture in every school and classroom.

Tools to cultivate school-family partnerships: A collaborative process to assess the school's climate and academic culture can help school leaders to identify areas that need work. For example, using a walk-through procedure accompanied by parents, community members and students. Protocols for open-ended conversations between teachers and families focused on learning and designed to strengthen students' skills can help teachers share data and develop collaborative relationships with families based on their shared interest in student success. A plan that works for many different stakeholders and is inclusive.

A substantial commitment to parent and family engagement as a core element of the work of the school: Engaging families is not an add-on to what schools do. For family engagement to be truly effective, it must be central to their core mission, influencing the way schools are physically designed, the style and tone of reporting on student progress, and the culture within which all parent-teacher-student communications take place. Above all family engagement needs to focus on improving student learning (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). Schools also should consider adjusting their daily schedule and calendar to make parent-teacher communications easier and more accessible.

It is time to recognize that engaging families must be a core strategy for school improvement and that there is ample research and practice to guide us in how to do that well. There is no excuse for delay. (Henderson, 2021)

III. EXAMPLES IN ACTION

Several studies have found that integrating such family engagement practices into programs to improve instruction can accelerate and sustain student gains, particularly if the practices are combined.

Early Education Example:

- This long-term, quantitative study of the Chicago Parent Centers (children ages 3-9) documents a significant, even dramatic, positive relationship between parent engagement and social and academic outcomes for low-income children. The longer parents took part in the program, and the more they were involved at school, the more likely their children were to complete high school, and the less likely they were to repeat a grade, be arrested, or require special education. [Click here for full research brief "Early Education Example: Parental Involvement and Children's Success"](#)

Elementary Example:

- Schools that had "strong ties to families and the community," were four times more likely to make significant gains in reading and math. In those schools, teachers and staff were familiar with community issues and families' home cultures, invited families to observe in the classroom, used community resources, worked as partners with families to improve learning, and responded to families' concerns about their children. This study was based in Chicago, and in schools with predominantly low-income students. [Click here for full research brief "Elementary Example: Organizing Schools for Improvement"](#)



Special Needs Example:

- Achievement for All, which is sponsored by the Department for Education in the United Kingdom, engaged parents with their children's learning which improved performance dramatically for children with special needs and disabilities or from low-income families. The linchpin of the program is collaborative 'Structured Conversations' between teachers and parents, targeted on students' reading and math skills. Not only did the program yield significant gains, it also narrowed the achievement gap between students with special needs and their peers without special needs. This approach was equally effective with low-income students. [Click here for full research brief "Special Needs Example: Achievement for All"](#)

English Language Learners Example:

- This quasi-experimental study evaluated the impact of FASTalk, a school-home text-messaging program designed to improve English Language learning. During the 2017-2018 school year, teachers in 11 predominantly Latinx kindergarten and transition kindergarten classes in Oakland, California, sent parents text messages 3x weekly with tips and activities. After seven months, FASTalk students made between .5 and 1.1 months of additional growth, compared to students in a matched group whose families did not participate. Students whose home language was different from their teacher's made even greater gains. [Click here for full research brief "ELL Example: FASTalk"](#)

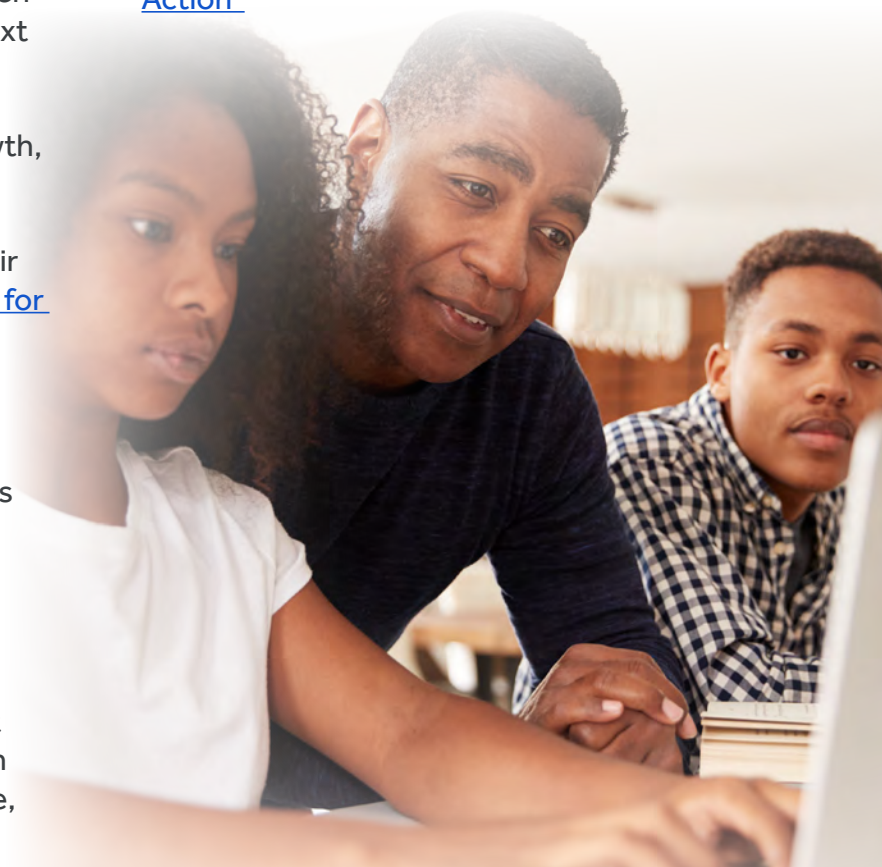
High School Example:

- What characterizes high performing high schools that serve low-income students? This study examined 13 high schools in New York City with graduation rates ten points or more above the district average. All served nearly 100% low-income students of color. Using a four-component framework and indicators, the authors identified effective practices that include extensive and close collaboration with families. By the time students reach 9th grade, most parents have become less involved at

school. Students say they want their parents to back off, schools send the message that it's time to let go, and parents aren't sure what they're supposed to do. But this research shows that helping families stay engaged all through high school is critical to students' staying in school, taking more challenging classes, graduating on time, and going to college or another postsecondary program. [Click here for full research brief "High School Example: Beating the Odds"](#)

Parent Leadership Ripple Effect Research Example:

- This study takes a deep dive into the conditions needed for interventions with families to be both profound and sustained, with implications for any setting that serves families. Most programs to engage families in improving children's outcomes offer knowledge and skills, as well as opportunities to practice them. This study strongly suggests that such efforts would be more successful if they also created a welcoming, safe space for parents to connect with others and share their struggles and issues. [Click here for full research brief "Ripple Effects in Action"](#)



Expert Contributors for this section (2021):

Anne T. Henderson, Senior Consultant National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement, and Dr. Joanna Geller, Director of Policy, Research, and Evaluation Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools New York University



Dual Capacity-Building Framework

INTRODUCTION

Family Engagement as an educational strategy to promote strong academic outcomes requires intentionality, planning and support. To be fully effective, it necessitates being embedded in the family and staff experience from early education through college and career transition.

Historically, Family Engagement has been an afterthought in an increasingly demanding educational structure. Rarely is Family Engagement included in teacher training programs or considered as an executional plan towards strategic academic success. Often, schools consider themselves lucky to be able to create a successful Open House, or partner with parents on student behavioral or academic issues.

Research continues to show that a strong partnership between families and schools can be foundational to both student and school success. When we consider best practices, such as, [Dr. Karen Mapp's Dual Capacity Building Framework](#), we notice that openly acknowledging challenges, then working toward alleviating those barriers, and then intentionally building ongoing and learning focused relationships (that is, relationship-building work on the front end of the school experience, as opposed to a reactive-based relationship model) – leads to more positive outcome. At the base of this work is building trust.

6 ESSENTIAL PROCESS CONDITIONS:

When planning a Family Engagement event, program or initiative consider these:

1. Relational

- Are we helping to build authentic trusting relationships between families and the school?
- How is the school/school-staff seeking input from all families? (Respect)
- Do school/school-staff honor the expertise of families in their role as caretaker? (Competence)
- How can school/school-staff consistently show families that they are interested and invested in the core roles that families hold at their school?

How do schools ensure that they clearly communicate and then follow through on what they say they will do? (Integrity)

- Does the school seek out ways to show families that they value and care about them as people and stakeholders? (Personal Regard)

2. Linked to Learning

- Are families taking home new ideas that they can use to support their child's academic and development needs in the classroom and at home?
- Does the experience provide a concrete way for a family to support their child's learning at home either through conversation starters or activity materials?
- Does the experience provide a way for families to share their understanding of their child's learning with educators?
- Is school staff acknowledging families as capable of learning and as part of the teaching team for their child?

3. Asset-Based (Strengths-Based)

- How are we drawing on each families' funds-of-knowledge about their child? Funds of knowledge: The idea that families have explicit and important knowledge about their child and their community that is extremely valuable for a teacher (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez, 2005).
- How are we providing opportunities for families to shine and tell us what they are good at and what they can offer as part of the school family?
- Is the school staff open to the variety of roles families can play based on their strengths, unique interests and personality type?

4. Culturally responsive and respectful (Equitable Practices)

- How do we celebrate differences among our students and families?
- Are we providing opportunities for Families to Engage in Diverse Roles? Families can be Co-creators, Supporters, Encouragers, Monitors, Advocates, and/or Models



- Do we make it a priority to address language barriers in all school communications? Do staff know family members' level of literacy?
- How do we connect family cultures to what students are learning? Personally invite families to come to class and teach about their different cultures and traditions
- Do we know what cultures and countries our students come from? Do we know why this is important?
- Do we know why we make it a point to consult various representative groups of parents, not only those who attend PTA/PTO, etc.?
- How do we highlight the various ways parents are supporting their kids in atypical ways such as clever homework strategies, extracurricular experiences and talking to their child about college and career goals?

5. Collaborative

- Are we intentional in helping families be friends with other families? Are we creating activities and experiences that help these real connections happen?
- How do we work with families to identify their role and build a "job description" as a parent in the school?
- Do we survey families about how they want to connect with other families, teachers and school staff?
- Do we have a school policy that ensures each family can name at least one person in the school they can call if they need something?
- How could we utilize all staff in the building to make personal contact with every family at least twice a year?
- Do we ensure students have a voice in their education plan as part of the parent and teacher collaborative team?

6. Interactive

- How can we enhance our usual events so families and students can interact with the information being shared?
- When planning events for families do we consider the Principles of Adult Learning?

1. Adults must want to learn
2. Adults will learn only when they feel they need to learn
3. Adults learn by doing.
4. Adults learning focuses on problems, and the problems must be realistic
5. Experience affects adult learning
6. Adults learn best in an informal situation
7. Adults want guidance

[Click here to view the Essential Conditions in Action Examples](#)

4C AREAS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS:

When evaluating event and activities. Consider if they if the program is:

1. Building Capabilities?

- Do participants have an opportunity to put new knowledge into practice?
- Did participants gain a new skill they now use to support student achievement or family-school partnership?

2. Making new Connections?

- Did participants make new connections and expand their network?
- Were lasting relationships formed as a result of their involvement?

3. Changing Cognition?

- Did participants have a positive shift in beliefs and values related to equity and excellence in education?
- Were participants encouraged to take on a more active role in the family-school partnership team?

4. Building Confidence?

- Do families have more confidence about supporting their child's academic and developmental needs because of this activity?
- Do teachers feel more equipped to engage and welcome families as partners?

Family engagement strategies anchored in the 5 Essential Process Conditions and 4C Policy and Program Areas lead to more effective partnerships that support student achievement. Learn more here: www.dualcapacity.org

Expert Contributors for this section:

Introduction by Grace Mckenzie and Becca Parrish, Partners for Education

Reflective Questions from: Beyond the Bake Sale, Henderson (2007) and Powerful Partnerships, Mapp (2017)

Reflections and tools by Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership



Family and School Partnership Self-Assessment and Family Friendly School Certificate

Family Friendly School Self-Assessment can be completed by any individual for personal reflection and a starting place for improving family engagement efforts on the school level. This Self-Assessment is less about a finish line and more about building awareness on where your school is now and being inspired to start making progress and setting goals. Whether you use this as a conversation starter, a training activity or in a group setting for strategic planning we know your family engagement efforts will be improved and your school will be better for it. This tool was designed based on research from the Dual Capacity Building Framework by Dr. Karen Mapp, the Six Types of Parental Involvement by Dr. Joyce Epstein, resources and frameworks presented in Beyond the Bake Sale by Anne T. Henderson and the invaluable experiences and insights from Kentucky families and educators.

A Family Friendly Certified School is a school that reflects widespread belief, knowledge, and skill in engaging all families as equal and productive partners in the education process. It is evident that staff employ multiple, equity-driven strategies to individualize engagement with families that respect their values and cultural backgrounds. Schools at this level have achieved true and meaningful partnership between families and educators.

[KY FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT \(LINK HERE\)](#)

Certification: School teams can use this tool to become a Family Friendly Certified School. Schools scoring at Level 3 are eligible to certify, and schools scoring at Level 4 can certify at the Gold Level. Benefits of the process include:

- Demonstration of commitment to families as equal partners in student education
- Focus on continuous improvement efforts on evidence-based practices that improve student and school outcomes
- Recognition by KDE and your community for your commitment to family engagement
- Contribution to the state-wide commitment to families and communities

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

LEVEL 1	There is a growing interest in building school and staff capacity to engage families in the education process. Schools in this category are good at keeping families informed of individual student progress.
LEVEL 2	Schools at this level demonstrate a belief that all families play a vital role in their student's education. These schools use a variety of inclusive approaches to engage students and families in student learning.
LEVEL 3- CERTIFICATION LEVEL	Schools at this level demonstrate a widespread belief that families play a vital role in education, and they engage in multiple, culturally specific, inclusive approaches to engage families in both their student's learning and continuous improvement processes at the school. Schools at this level can be certified as a Family Friendly School.
LEVEL 4- GOLD CERTIFICATION LEVEL	These schools demonstrate skills in engaging families as co-creators in the education process. Staff employ multiple, equity-driven strategies to individualize engagement with families. Schools at this level can be certified as Family Friendly School -- Gold

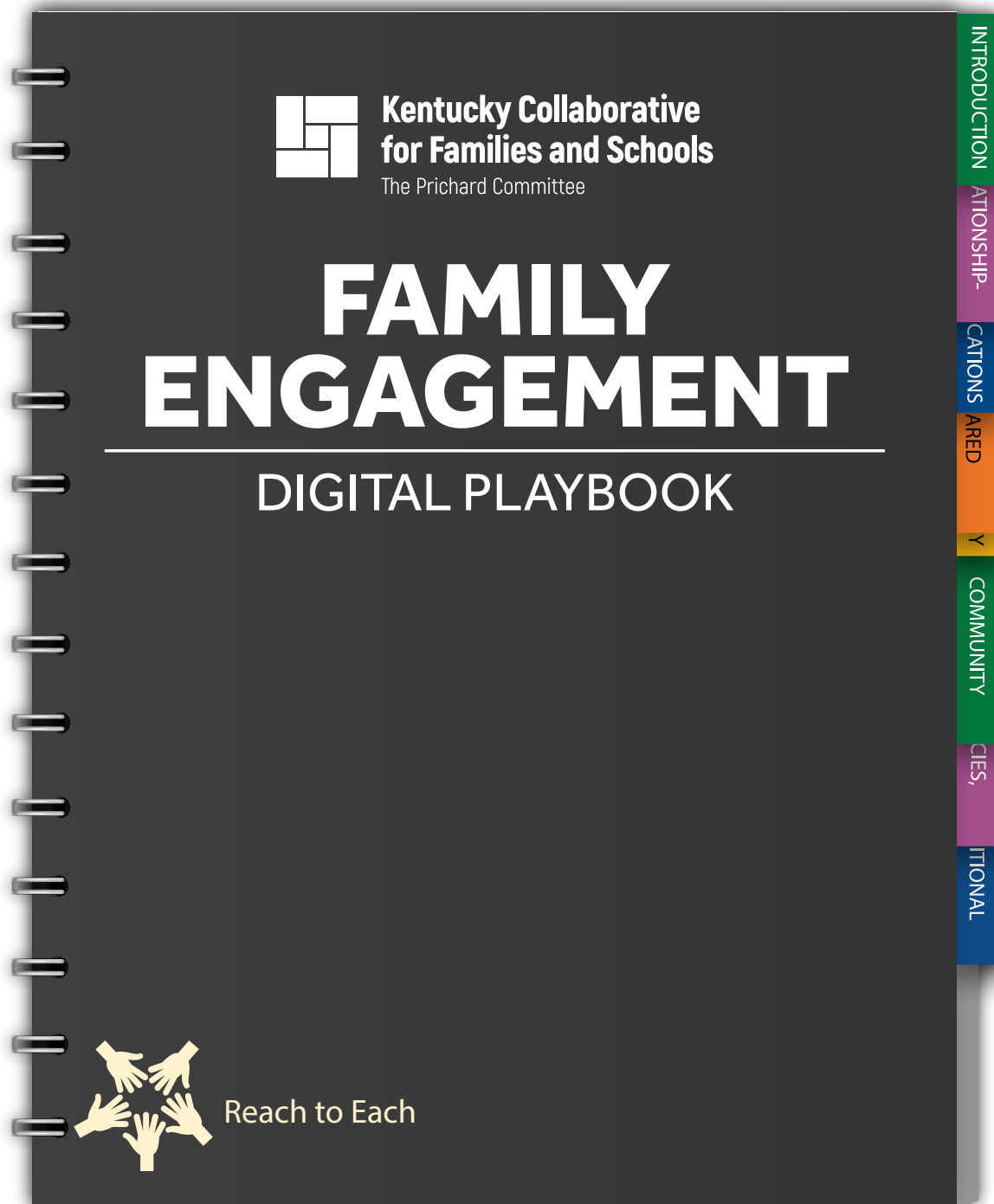
Expert Contributors for this section:

Kathy Burkhardt, Learning Grove, Aspen Institute, KY Collaborative for Families and Schools Advisory Council, Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership 2021 Class, National Center for Families Learning, Partners for Education



Family Engagement Digital Playbook

The Family Engagement Digital Playbook is a framework for Kentucky Schools to develop a family engagement mindset. This collection of information and activities aligns with the Kentucky Family and School Partnership Self-Assessment.



Link to book: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/caxbp/xvrbl/>

Expert Contributors for this section:

Learning Grove, Kentucky Strengthening Families, Project Aware, Jack Be Nimble



Online Modules: Kentucky Family and School Partnerships 101 Training

Learning Objectives

1. **Gain** a deeper understanding about the importance of family and school partnerships
2. **Examine** core beliefs about family and school partnerships
3. **Learn** and apply concrete strategies for increasing family engagement in your school
4. **Analyze** the findings from your KY Family and School Partnership Self-Assessment
5. **Learn** and apply the 6 Essential Conditions from the Dual-Capacity Building Framework
6. **Explore** family engagement action teams and action plans
7. **Confirm** your next steps for improving family engagement at your school

LIVE Learning Groups and Statewide Peer Learning Networks:

If you would like to join a live learning session or learn more about the Statewide Family Friendly Schools Learning Network please email- brooke.gill@prichardcommittee.org

ONLINE, SELF-PACED, LEARNING MODULES for Families, Educators and Administrators



Early Education



K-12

Expert Contributors for this section:

Prichard Teacher Fellows 2021, Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership Fellows 2021, National Center for Families Learning, Partners for Education, Kentucky Department of Education



Creating a Family Engagement Action Team and Plan

Examples of who to recruit for your Family Engagement Action Team:

- 3-4 diverse family members: These members should represent the diversity of the student population. Stipend for time, childcare and travel is recommended. Example members:
 - A parent who is historically not engaged in school activities
 - A parent in an elected position or very involved
 - A grandparent or relative caregiver
 - Family members from different grade levels
- 2-3 classroom teachers
- Educator preparation program representative (where appropriate)
- Family resource coordinator or family engagement staff when available
- 1 member from a community organization
- 1 building administrator (Center Director, Principal or Assistant Principal)

WAIT! Let's Work Smarter, not Harder...

A Family Engagement Action Team might be developed and implemented through an existing school council such as the School-Based Decision Making Council, MTSS Leadership Team, Equity Team, Trauma-Informed Action Team, Family Resource and Youth Service Center Advisory Council, etc. This addition to their work scope could increase meaningfulness and engagement or as a sub-committee within these existing councils. Recognize that you may need to recruit new members and voices to get diverse input. You want to be sure the action team adequately represents the student and teacher population. Start with current parent-teacher teams and get their feedback on how to grow a diverse team to oversee family engagement efforts.

Examples of what Family Engagement Action Teams can do:

1. Develop a 1-year action plan that covers each area you will work on, create a budget and identify sources of funding.
2. Meet regularly (at least monthly) as a whole team and establish goals and guidelines for teamwork. How will you communicate? What decision-making process will you use? When will you allow time to discuss issues and solve problems?
3. Gather ideas and plan programs and activities. See Digital Playbook for Family Engagement Ideas.
4. Publicize activities and team meetings. Include all families and the school community. Make a concerted effort to reach out to families that are normally not engaged.
5. Evaluate your work and report regularly on progress in meeting the plan

[Click here for a Family Engagement Action Plan Template](#)



Expert Contributors for this section:

Ky Collaborative for Families and Schools Advisory Council, Ashlie Cox and Natasha Stein, Division of School and Program Improvement, KY Department of Education; Laura Beard, Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, Lynne Keen, Kentucky Association for School Councils. Credit: Family Engagement Action Guide, Scholastic, 2019



Family Engagement in Federal and State Requirements:

PROGRAM	Parent Engagement Requirement	Parent Participation/ Outreach	Notification Requirement	Parent Meeting Requirement	Parent Inclusion with planning and/ or decision-making	Individual Student Plans	Resources	Legislative Requirements and References
PRESCHOOL	X	X	X	X	X	X IEP (Individual Education Program)	Resources for Families and Schools	Preschool Regulations
PRIMARY PROGRAM	X	X	X	X	X	X (for extra year in primary)	Literacy Plans Mathematics Resources	Primary Program Statutes and Regulations
TITLE 1, PART A SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING IN HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS	X	X	X	X	X	X (To show individual student interventions and progress)	Sample Policy Policy Reminders	Federal Title 1 Programs

(*This Matrix is intended to be a general supplemental resource and is not an official legal reference or all encompassing. Seek official legal guidance for any specific issues, concerns, or actions.)

[Click Here for Full Image of Key Federal and State Family Engagement Requirement Matrix](#)
[Click Here for a Summary of other State and National Family Engagement Laws](#)

Expert Contributors for this section:

Kathy Burkhardt, Learning Grove, Tara Rodriguez, KY Department of Education, Bill Buchanan, KY Department of Education, Rhonda Logsdon, KY Special Parent Information Network, Susan Weston, Prichard Committee



History and mission the original 2006 Missing Piece of the Proficiency, 2021 Update and Expert Contributors and update process moving forward

From its beginning under Commissioner Wilmer Cody in 1999, the purpose of the Kentucky Commissioner's Parents Advisory Council (CPAC) has been to advise the Kentucky Department of Education on policy issues and to increase parent leadership for improving public education. On March 30, 2006, the then Commissioner Gene Wilhoit gave CPAC members this instruction: "My goal is outstanding practice to involve parents in every school in Kentucky. Your charge is to pull together an agenda for the state and produce a document that builds on what exists and pushes us to a higher level." Building on the state's long experience with reform, CPAC strongly recommended that Kentucky become the first state in the nation to set a standard for family and community involvement that is focused on improving student achievement. These standards and accompanying recommendations were compiled into a final report in 2007 titled "[The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle: Recommendations for Involving Families and Community in Improving Student Achievement.](#)"



From 2007 to 2021, The Missing Piece was foundational information for orientations and leadership training for new members of School Based Decision-Making Councils, Commissioner's Parent Advisory Council and many other state and district leadership councils. From 2010 to 2018, Kentucky state regulations adopted the Missing Piece criteria as part of school audits and reviews in the state accountability system. The Prichard Committee offered training on implementation of the standards and recommendations for schools and families.

In 2021, The Prichard Committee's Ky Collaborative for Families and Schools, with support from the US Department of Education Statewide Family Engagement Center grant, led a statewide collaborative update to the 2007 report. Included in this revision was updating research and law reference but most importantly, operationalizing the report by moving on the 2007 suggested actions: 1.) Set high expectations, measure performance, and report progress, 2.) Help schools improve relationship-building and communications, 3. Provide resources and support, and 4. Build capacity through professional development. The 2021 update includes changing the title to "The Ky Family and School Partnership Guide" to better capture the contents and purpose. The contents were created in a true collaborative process with families, educators, community partners and original authors at the table multiple times. Focus groups and testing sites provided feedback over the course of 4 months..

The vision for this Guide is that it becomes a source of information and motivation for schools, families and community leaders to build more effective partnerships. Each section has an "Expert Contributor" which enhances the quality of information while also giving multiple points of contact to ensure the document stays updated across multiple fields. The Prichard Committee is committed to overseeing each section updated annually and will convene partners and Expert Contributors every spring to gather these updates. This Guide must not only be relevant across systems but heavily utilized and serve as a source of motivation, common language and standardization for Kentucky family engagement education.



Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification

Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification

Welcome to the Family Friendly Schools Certification process. We're glad you're here. Your school may use the materials located at [Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools - Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence](#) in any way that is helpful to you and your community.



***Spring 2024 applications can be submitted March 15-May 1st. Applicants will be notified in May regarding their certification status. Fall 2024 applications can be submitted August 15st-October 1st. Applicants will be notified in Oct. regarding their certification status. ***

First steps:

- Watch this [introduction video](#)
- Try a small, fun activity to build momentum. We recommend:
 - [Hopes and Dreams Letter](#)
 - Small group discussion using [4 Versions of Family-Partnership Schools](#)
- Ensure that principal/school administration supports the process
 - Principal should charge a “team lead” with supervising the work toward Family Friendly Schools Certification over the next several months. Choose someone who has authority, credibility, and good relationships with staff AND families.
- Principal should help recruit the Family Engagement Action Team or charge an existing team with coordinating the work of Family Friendly School Certification.
 - Your action team should reflect the diversity of YOUR school community. If your team does not reflect that diversity, form a plan for how you will involve more voices in your team. Diversity includes different forms of families, racial diversity, language diversity, socio-economic diversity, families with children with special needs.
 - Team includes at least:
 - A building leader
 - two teachers
 - two family members (*who do not also work at your school*).
 - You are encouraged to include your FRYSC director as well.
 - If you add additional school staff, consider adding additional families as well.
- Have team members complete the [modules](#). (3 hours online total)
 - Your team can complete these independently or as a group, but be sure all five of your team members [complete this form](#).



Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification (Cont.)

Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification

- Survey your school families. We recommend using questions from [this document](#). Use just 3-4 questions to improve your response rate.
- Have members of your action team score [the self-assessment](#). You can do this independently, but you MUST come together to have a conversation and reach a consensus score.
- Use survey information and self- assessment scores to decide what areas you will focus on to boost your score. Come up with a list of activities to implement to get you to the level you're seeking. Review the [Kentucky Family Engagement Digital Playbook](#) or [10 easy wins](#) for ideas.
- On the application, you will provide evidence of activities under TWO critical attributes per objective on the self-assessment. Make sure that your action plan will give you evidence to report. [Here is guidance regarding evidence](#).

Implementing the plan:

- Implement the activities your team decided on and collect evidence. Create a google folder where members of your team can upload evidence as you work.
- Continue to gather feedback from families. Purposely seek feedback from families who may not have responded to your survey. For example, your FRYSC staff may gather informal data from participants in a Grandparents as Parents group
- Continue to make adjustments to your work based on feedback from families

Completing the application:

- [Preview the application](#). The link will be live March 15th-May 1st and August 15th-Oct 1. As first time K-12 applicants, you will complete pages 1-22. If applying for GOLD, you will also complete an additional section starting on page 62.
- Review this guidance [of what pieces of evidence](#) work at each level of each critical attribute.
- Work with the family engagement action team to compile narrative and evidence to complete these questions in the application. Here is a form with the main areas for [narrative and evidence](#), to help you gather this as a group.
- Attend a Family Friendly Open Office Session. [Click here for Spring 2024 dates and times](#).
- Complete and submit the application.

* Spring 2024 applications can be submitted March 15-May 1st. Applicants will be notified in May regarding their certification status. Fall 2024 applications can be submitted August 15th- Oct 1st. Applicants will be notified in Nov. regarding their certification status. *

If you have any questions, email grace@prichardcommitte.org.

Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification (Cont.)

Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification

Family Friendly Schools Recertification checklist

- Reassemble the Family Engagement Action Team with at least:**
 - 2 educators
 - 2 parents/family leaders who are not school staff
 - 1 building administrator
 - If you add additional school staff, please consider adding additional parents
- Team should complete the following:**
 - Complete 1 hour PD
 - Suggested options can be found at the bottom of [this webpage](#)
 - Other PDs that are focused on family engagement/ family school partnerships will also be counted
 - Reassess the school based on the rubric and affirm that the school is at least at level 3.
 - Discuss a plan to ensure that all 75% of staff have some training in family engagement by 2026.
 - Review the questions for recertification (pages 43-51, with additional questions starting on page 62 if you are applying for GOLD).
 - Determine how tasks of gathering evidence and writing narrative will be completed.
 - Complete the application, submitting evidence and narrative that supports reviewers in understanding your continuous improvement in Family Engagement.



Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification (Cont.)

Checklist for Kentucky Family Friendly School Certification

Family Friendly School Requirement Checklist

	Standard Certification	Gold Certification	Standard RECERT	Gold RECERT
Family Engagement Action Team (FEAT) – minimum 2 parents, 2 teachers, 1 building leader	x	x	x	x
2 parents on FEAT who are NOT school staff	x	x	x	x
Complete self-assessment	x	x	x	x
Average self-assessment score	3	4	3	4
Complete introductory modules (2 parents, 2 teachers, 1 building leader)	x	x		
Complete Family Engagement PD of your choice (2 parents, 2 teachers, 1 building leader) ¹			x	x
Provide evidence for self-assessment through narrative and documentation	x	x	Simplified version	Simplified version
Continuous Improvement Plan: Share how you are making improvements based on best practices in family engagement and family feedback	x	x	x	x
Demonstrate action to get feedback from all families, especially previously unreachable families	x	x	x	x
Submit significant evidence of co-creation with families		x		x
Submit significant evidence of engagement with all families		x		x
Submit significant evidence of how family engagement is woven throughout entire school culture		x		x

¹ Document at least one hour of best practices family engagement learning for each individual on your team. Please do not repeat the introductory modules, although you may choose to have NEW members on your team complete those. To better give you flexibility, there is not a set list of approved PD; however, you can find a list of options under Step #3 on our main page: www.prichardcommittee.org/familyengagement

