



Ideas for Building School Staff Capacity

The following are suggestions for building school staff capacity to partner with parents and family members in their child's academic achievement. Please use the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Family-School Partnership Program's *Checklist for Building School Staff Capacity* available on the School Staff Capacity webpage

at <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Partnerships/Pages/School-Staff-Capacity.aspx>, or your school district-developed checklist, to document your Title I school staff's participation. Note that this is not an exhaustive list of ideas.

If you would like to recommend a resource that has been effective with your school staff in building their capacity in working with parents and family members, please send your ideas to the GaDOE Family-School Partnership Program staff at <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Partnerships/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx>. This document will be updated at least annually.

Video Discussion

For faculty meetings, professional development sessions, or online platforms, prepare reflection questions based on the topic of the video relevant to family engagement. Provide the reflection questions to participants and watch a video together (or email the link to the video and the reflection questions). Ask participants to reflect on the questions individually. After giving them time to reflect on the video and the topic, depending on the number of participants in the meeting, ask them to pair with someone near them or in smaller groups. To debrief, discuss their responses as a whole group or ask for volunteers to share the key points in their discussion. Below are links to videos you may want to use for building school staff capacity.

State School Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council Video Series



The GaDOE recorded several members of the 2015 State School Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council for a video series called *What Parents Want Schools to Know*. Titles such as "[How to Communicate](#)" are part of this video series. Each video in this series is less than 2 minutes. The entire video series is available on the Family-School Partnership Program's YouTube Channel at bit.ly/gadoeparentsyoutube

District Teachers of the Year Videos on Engaging Parents



2016-2017 School District Teachers of the Year



The GaDOE Family-School Partnership Program asked the 2017 Georgia District Teacher of the Year recipients to submit a video of themselves on the topic of how to engage their students' parents. Watch Susan Donlin from Marietta City Schools, Jamie Lynn McFarland from Gwinnett County Schools, Dominique Vidal Nichols from Bibb County Schools, and Suzette Weinhardt from Fayette County Schools as they share their tips on effective family engagement and why engaging parents is important at bit.ly/gadoeparentsyoutube.

Videos from National and Other States' Efforts on Family Engagement

Below are links to brief online videos featuring parents, educators, national leaders in family engagement.

A Parent Reflects on Building Relationships with Teachers (3.5 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbyhao0FtaQ>

The Power of Family-Teacher Partnerships (4 min)

Interviews with teachers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNdwJTKuHDw>

Dr. Karen Mapp Shares Advice for Educators on Family and Community Engagement Strategies (Approx. 2 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6j-Hkl5vIS4>

Effective Family and Community Engagement by Dr. Karen Mapp (Approx. 2 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-zlb5wVUAs>

Parent Engagement Overview (Institute for Responsive Education) What Does Research Say (Approx. 2 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZrFXFDCMrc>

Spotlight on Georgia School Systems' Family Engagement Practices

The GaDOE Spotlight webpage features academically-focused best practices from Family Engagement Coordinators and other local Title I Staff from across the state of Georgia. Brainstorm ideas to build school staff capacity based on examples from other district and school staff in Georgia who are implementing effective family engagement practices. The Spotlight webpage is located at <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Partnerships/Pages/PIC-Spotlight.aspx>

Self-Paced, Online Course



Introduction to Family Engagement in Education

Learn about successful collaborations between families and educators and why they lead to improved outcomes for students and schools.

<https://www.edx.org/course/introduction-family-engagement-education-harvardx-gse4x>

Another idea for Building School Staff Capacity would be to ask school staff to take Harvard University's online course on family engagement at their own pace. This online course is offered through HarvardX as a complimentary professional development opportunity for those who are interested in family engagement. There's also an option to pay a fee to receive a certificate of completion.

The *Introduction to Family Engagement* course weaves the latest research and integrates videos of researchers, parents, students, teachers, and other partners. If you promote this online course, you'll need to decide whether each school staff member should finish all the modules within the course or if you'll provide them with a specific number or topics. Then they would indicate to the school principal, Family Engagement Coordinator, or other Title I designee

that they completed the required number of modules. Please document their participation as evidence of engaging in building school staff capacity.

Social Media



From Monday through Friday, the GaDOE Family-School Partnership Program posts on its social media accounts links to news articles, research summaries, infographics, family at-home activities, national trends, and other postings about family engagement. Share these links with your school staff along with response questions in an email or during a faculty meeting or other in-person sessions. The GaDOE Family-School Partnership Program social media accounts are listed below.

Follow us on Twitter: [@GaDOEPartners](https://twitter.com/GaDOEPartners)

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GaDOEPartnerships>

Professional Development Sessions

Virtual Connections



The GaDOE Family-School Partnership Program presented a session during the 2017 Federal Programs Summer Conference called *Virtual Connections: Continuous Communication with Families in the Digital Age*. Use the presentation slides with your school staff to discuss the varied range of online strategies to communicate with parents and family members of your students. Download the GaDOE presentation file from the School Staff Capacity webpage at

<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Partnerships/Pages/School-Staff-Capacity.aspx> and customize the content to your school or school district.

Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative



The GaDOE Family-School Partnership Program developed presentation slides and handouts to help school teams assess their welcoming environments. Visit the Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative webpage at <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Partnerships/Pages/Georgia-Family-Friendly.aspx> or http://bit.ly/ffps_learn and customize a session to build your school staff capacity. This webpage is your “one-stop shop” to download a virtual tour of a model family-friendly elementary and middle-high schools, presentation slides, scenarios for elementary and middle-high schools, sample parent surveys in English and Spanish, a sample parent survey for virtual schools, and a walk-through exercise. These resources were designed for school teams to work together with parents and the community to enhance your school’s welcoming environment.

School-Parent Compacts



SIGNATURE SHEET

School-Parent Compact
(Insert School Name)
(District Year XXXX-XXXX)
(Revision Date MM/DD/YYYY)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

(Insert School Name), students participating in the Title I, Part A program, and their families, agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement as well as describe how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the challenging State academic standards. Please review the attached School-Parent Compact.

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you have read, received, and agree to this School-Parent Compact. Once signed, please return the form to your child's teacher and keep the School-Parent Compact as a reminder of your commitment. The School-Parent Compact will be discussed with you throughout the year at different school-family events as we work together to help your child succeed in school. We look forward to our school-parent partnership!

Teacher/School Representative Signature _____
Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date: _____

Student Signature _____
Date: _____

Dust off your School-Parent Compacts throughout the school year! After your school’s distribution of the finalized School-Parent Compact(s), continue to use the compact as a tool to

build school staff capacity in communicating with parents on how their child is progressing on the identified academic goals. Provide guidance to teachers and other educators at each Title I school on revisiting with parents the academic goals written in the School-Parent Compact and giving an update on how their child is improving in the identified skill areas. *GaDOE Monitoring Tip: A meeting with school staff on revising the School-Parent Compact is considered an input meeting rather than a session on Building School Staff Capacity.*

Improvement Plans



In 2017, the GaDOE launched the Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement framework. This framework guides improvement at both the district and school level to support student academic achievement. As the graphic shows, the whole child is placed at the center of all our improvement efforts. Surrounding the child are the five systems of *what* to improve and the outer rim of the graphic depicts the *how* of the improvement process.

Each school district in Georgia submits a District Improvement Plan to the GaDOE based on an analysis of needs and root causes identified during its Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) process. Some schools may also be using a School Improvement Plan template like the District Improvement Plan template. These templates include S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals and action steps as outlined by the five systems, one of which is the Family and Community Engagement System.

One school staff capacity idea, would be to have staff review the details of the Family and Community Engagement System described in the District or School Improvement Plan. During this review staff could revisit S.M.A.R.T. goals, action steps, the person(s) responsible for each action step, the subgroups, and the timeline and then ask the following questions from the perspective of family engagement considerations: What is the school’s progress on each action step? Are the students making progress toward achieving the S.M.A.R.T. goal? Are parents and community partners engaged in helping the school staff reach the S.M.A.R.T. goal? For a copy of the District Improvement Plan template and the School Improvement Plan template, visit the GaDOE Office of Federal Programs webpage at <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/default.aspx> under “Improvement Plan Resources”. *GaDOE Monitoring Tip: Be sure to use the GaDOE Checklist for Building School Staff Capacity or your school district-developed checklist to maintain documentation of the review session(s), such as meeting agenda, notes taken, sign-in sheets, etc.*