

School-Level Inventory Starting Points: Family, School, and Community Partnerships

This survey may be used to assess school-wide progress in strengthening partnerships between school personnel and the school’s families and community members. It is suggested that the survey be used at different points in the school year to assess progress in the six areas of parent involvement identified by the work of Dr. Joyce Epstein and PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. This inventory may be modified for use in planning and evaluation within specific grade levels and school communities.

Rating Scale	
Frequently	Occurs in most classes or grade levels. Receives substantive time and emphasis. A highly prevalent component of the school’s parental involvement plan.
Sometimes	Occurs in some classes or grade levels. Receives minimal or modest time and emphasis. Not a prevalent component of the school’s parental involvement plan.
Never	Strategy does not occur at the school or occurs in isolation.

	<b>WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES INTO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY</b>	“All” families includes culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse families, and families with English Learner students and/or students with disabilities.			
Our School:		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Planning To
a. The school has standards of welcoming behavior that apply to all staff, including office staff, teachers, bus drivers, security, custodians, cafeteria staff, etc.					
b. The school climate reflects a welcoming tone and respect for all families, regardless of culture, ethnicity, language or disability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs by the school entrance clearly guide visitors where to check in.</li> <li>• The school campus and entrance to the building is inviting with a sign/banner/bulletin board welcoming parents.</li> <li>• ADA requirements are met.</li> <li>• The culture and language of the community is clearly reflected.</li> <li>• There are designated parking areas and parents are thoroughly informed of parking arrangements when visiting the school.</li> </ul>					



WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES INTO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

“All” families includes culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse families, and families with English Learner students and/or students with disabilities.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Planning To
c. A Mission Statement and/or policy on parent involvement is posted in the languages of the families that guides them to more information about opportunities to get involved with school programs.				
d. A Family Area is located in an easily accessible area of the school and is designed as a gathering place where families, school staff, students, and community members are welcomed and supported. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It supports special events and features like clothing banks, lending libraries, health fairs, parenting workshops, etc.</li> </ul> The family center information matches the developmental levels of the students, e.g. high schools connect parents with other parent centers at workforce solutions centers, and institutions of higher education.				
e. There are signs located outside each classroom door noting grade level/course title, and teacher’s name. Student work is displayed throughout the school. The work also includes a description of the purpose.				
f. Positive connections with families and communities are made outside of the school walls by collaborating with chapter houses, community centers, local businesses, libraries, restaurants, etc.				
g. Parents are surveyed regarding their interests, talents, and availability to volunteer. Follow up communication and coordination is managed (background checks, volunteer policies and procedures, volunteer training, and matching skills and interest to school needs.				



## COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

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

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
Conducts parent-teacher conferences with every parent at least once a year. In high schools with large numbers of students, events are planned to meet with groups of parents.				
Provides translators to assist families as needed.				
Provides clear information about report cards and how grades are earned.				
Provides clear information about testing requirements as well as school and student results.				
Has established two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home.				
a. Has an automated phone system for delivering important messages or collecting attendance information.				
b. Provides clear information about selecting courses, programs, and activities.				
c. Sends folders of student work home weekly or monthly for parent review and comment.				
d. Sends home positive messages or makes phone calls to parents about students on a regular basis.				
e. Notifies families of a student's academic or behavior problems. Teachers have easy access to telephones, e-mail, contact information, and are encouraged to communicate with parents during or after school.				
f. Provides parents with the contact information of the school, principal, teachers, and counselors (at school or after school hours).				
g. Has a homework hotline for students and families to hear daily assignments and messages.				
h. Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about students' needs and perceptions of school programs and processes.				

	COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.			
Our School:		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
Our School Newsletter/Website Includes:					
i. Recognition of students, families, and community members as well as student work and accomplishments.					
j. Information in the language(s) of the community.					
k. A calendar of school events.					
l. Student activity information.					
m. Information about curriculum, assessments, and standards-based instruction.					
n. Information regarding volunteer involvement (when and how to volunteer).					
o. School governance information (how the school is run, site council, etc.).					
p. A column to address parents' questions.					
Other:					



**SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS**

The school fosters a culture of caring and shared responsibility for student success.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
a. Provides learning resources for students and families through the website, workshop opportunities, and outreach to all parents, including those with limited contact information or availability.				
b. Provides family-friendly information to families on grade level , goals towards graduation, New Mexico’s Common Core State Standards and student progress.				
c. Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork and testing with their children.				
d. Provides information on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve.				
e. Has a regular schedule of interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.				
f. Asks parents to listen to their child read or to read aloud with their child as age-appropriate.				
g. Assists families in helping students to set academic goals, select courses and programs, plan for college, and next levels of schooling (i.e. The Next Step Plan) and/or work.				
h. Provides summer learning packets to help students sustain academic skills.				
i. Provides professional development and planning opportunities related to family engagement and developing partnerships for student success.				
j. Parent-teacher-student conferences or student-led conferences are carefully planned and accommodate parents’ schedules and transportation needs. Concern for student is the focus of teacher-parent interaction.				
k. Partners with organizations that provide programs for after school and out-of-school time and shares useful information with families.				

	<b>SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD</b>	All students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.			
Our School:		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
a. Helps families understand how the school and district operates.					
b. Helps families understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws.					
c. Develops and shares resources for families to help them navigate the educational system.					
d. Has policies and procedures in place to quickly help resolve problems and conflict involving families.					
e. Helps families develop capacity to be effective advocates for their children and the whole student population.					
f. Includes families in discussions about planning for the future of the school.					
g. Implements policies and procedures that encourage smooth transitions between and within schools.					
h. Engages families in civic advocacy (i.e. partnering with other educational advocates) for student achievement.					

	<b>SHARING LEADERSHIP</b>	Families as participants in school decisions and developing as parent and community leaders.			
Our School:		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
a. Involves parents in selecting school staff (leadership team).					
b. Has a parent involvement policy and an action team to develop a goal oriented program with practices for all six types of involvement.					
c. Has a Title I and/or Indian Education Parent Advisory Team, PTA, or other parent organization.					

	<b>SHARING LEADERSHIP</b>	Families as participants in school decisions and developing as parent and community leaders.			
Our School:		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
d. Invites parents to be on the school’s advisory council, improvement team, or other committees.					
e. Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to share information and opportunities.					
f. Provides information on school or local elections for school representatives.					
g. Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives.					
h. Includes parent representatives in professional development opportunities around school-wide programs.					
i. Involves parents in revising school/district curricula, developing policies, and participation in required parent advisory teams.					
j. Uses e-mail and quick surveys to obtain parents’ input and ideas on school policy.					

	<b>COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY</b>	Families and school staff collaborate with community to provide each other services, opportunities and support for student success.			
Our School:		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
a. Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community agencies, programs, and services.					
b. Provides information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.					
c. Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills.					
d. Offers after school programs for students, with support from community businesses, agencies, or volunteers.					



### COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

Families and school staff collaborate with community to provide each other services, opportunities and support for student success.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Plan To
e. Sponsors intergenerational programs with local senior citizen groups.				
f. Provides family services through partnerships with school counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies.				
g. Organizes service learning projects for the community, students, families, and schools.				
h. Building is open for use by the community after school hours.				
Other:				

## Summary of Strengths and Needs

- Ratings of “frequently” indicate that the activity or approach is strong.
- Ratings of “sometimes” or “never” indicate that the activity is not yet part of the school’s program or needs improvement.

The results provide information on the strength of current practices and insights about future directions or needed improvements in your school’s parental and community involvement partnership program. Use the chart below to begin identifying areas of strength, need, and action plans for improvement. Consider current initiatives as well as short- and long-term goals.

Choose one or two of the six areas to explore further in the Framework as you develop an Action Plan

NMENGAGED.COM	Standards for Family-School Partnerships	What are we doing well?	How could we improve?	Family Engagement Strategies
	Welcoming All Families Into the School Community			
	Communicating Effectively			
	Supporting Student Success			

	<p>Speaking Up for Every Child</p>			
	<p>Sharing Leadership</p>			
	<p>Collaborating with Community</p>			

# Welcoming All Families into the School Community School Level Reflection Rubric

Use this rubric to focus on your goals for creating a welcoming school climate and building a respectful, inclusive school climate. Consider how families can be active participants in their school community and how you are ensuring that families feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are doing in school.

Think about where you see yourself in the process and strategies used for welcoming all families into the school community. Mark the level of quality that most clearly matches what you are doing now. The levels of quality build on each other, assuming that practices in the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the excellent level.

WELCOMING FAMILIES INTO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY			
ELEMENT	EMERGING	PROGRESSING	EXCELLENT
<b>Developing personal relationships</b>	<p>Families are greeted promptly in their home language by friendly front-office staff who give them correct information and help them connect with appropriate faculty members.</p> <p><i>For example, a staff member or family volunteer, using the family's home language, gives a new family information about the school and provides a tour of the building.</i></p>	<p>Family volunteers from different neighborhoods and backgrounds work or volunteer regularly in the school office to provide information and support to families and students and to serve as mentors to help other families become more engaged in the school.</p> <p><i>For example, a help desk is established and staffed by family volunteers and school employees. Mentors call new families to invite them to attend parent group programs, offering to pick them up or meet them at the entrance of the school.</i></p>	<p>Family volunteers are invited to speak to small groups of staff to inform them of cultural norms and traditions to help them better connect with students and families.</p> <p><i>For example, a Navajo elder is invited to share customs and traditions that are common in the community to a group of new teachers.</i></p>
<b>Creating a family-friendly atmosphere</b>	<p>The school campus is clean and welcoming to families. The school building is easy for all visitors to navigate, and the community knows what is going on at the school.</p> <p><i>For example, entrances are clearly marked and a sign inside the front door welcomes families in the main languages of the community. Signs clearly direct visitors to important places within the school such as the library and guidance office. An outside marquee keeps the community informed of upcoming events.</i></p>	<p>The school is a welcoming place where families can visit and connect with school staff and other families. The school regularly opens its doors to families and the community to provide resources such as: internet access and use of the library and school computers.</p> <p><i>For example, parent groups and school staff work together to create a family resource center staffed with parent volunteers or school staff fluent in community languages and filled with information about the school and</i></p>	<p>Teachers and staff are encouraged to participate in community events outside of the school in order to connect with families. The school makes a concerted effort to make connections with businesses and nonprofit organizations in the school and provides space for these community entities to participate in the school to provide more seamless access to community resources.</p> <p><i>For example, the school partners with a local clinic to open a school-based health care center. A GRADS program supports students who are parents in completing their education.</i></p>

## Welcoming All Families into the School Community School Level Reflection Rubric

	<p><i>Specific environmental design features are considered to make the school more accessible, such as ramps, spaces for diaper changing and nursing, and a visiting area with comfortable seating.</i></p>	<p><i>community in the languages of that community. The school provides regular opportunities for families to come and find out what is happening in the school.</i></p>	<p><i>The school offers connections with local community colleges to offer GED and vocational trainings for family members. The school offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for families.</i></p>
<p><b>Providing opportunities for volunteering</b></p>	<p>Families are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer their services in the school or individual classrooms.</p> <p><i>For example, a group of families are used by the school when volunteers are needed.</i></p>	<p>School staff and parent groups work together to organize a formal volunteer program.</p> <p><i>For example, they develop a range of volunteer options, send volunteer invitation forms to all families in their home language, and coordinate the responses.</i></p>	<p>Teachers, staff, and school volunteers reach out to families and community leaders of all neighborhoods and backgrounds to identify their unique interests and skills, and offer varied volunteer opportunities for both at home and school.</p> <p><i>For example, parent group leaders make personal phone calls to families, connecting them to volunteer opportunities and to solicit their ideas. Volunteering opportunities enhance classroom instruction with the community's cultural funds of knowledge.</i></p>
<p><b>Respecting all families</b></p>	<p>Families and school staff affirm student cultures and history in school resources, classroom lessons, and activities.</p> <p><i>For example, parent leaders from different neighborhoods and backgrounds work with school staff to ensure that media center and classroom materials reflect the diversity of the community visually and culturally.</i></p>	<p>School staff and parent leaders work with parents and community members from different neighborhoods and backgrounds to gain their insights on how to make the school more respectful and supportive.</p> <p><i>For example, families and school leaders discuss how the school will accommodate students who might be absent from school because of occasions such as religious events, cultural celebrations, or harvest time.</i></p>	<p>The school and families from all neighborhoods and backgrounds assume collective responsibility to identify and break down barriers to family engagement related to race, ethnicity, class, family structure, religion, and physical and mental ability.</p> <p><i>For example, families from diverse cultures create family histories that tell the story of the entire school community. These family histories are used to inform curricular planning and families are invited to share their cultural knowledge in the academic setting.</i></p>

## Welcoming All Families into the School Community School Level Reflection Rubric

<p><b>Removing economic obstacles to participation</b></p>	<p>For family activities, school staff and parent groups make a commitment to keep the events free or low-cost.</p> <p><i>For example, the school book fair offers donated books at no cost.</i></p>	<p>School staff, parents, and community members work together to offer extracurricular activities at no cost.</p> <p><i>For example, the parent group sponsors a dialogue with a children's author and each family receives a free copy of the author's book.</i></p>	<p>Family and student activities and events are free. The schools staff and parent groups collaborate to cover the costs through the school budget, parent group fundraising, and contributions from community businesses and organizations.</p> <p><i>For example, fees to participate in family and student activities are waived. Transportation and/or childcare are offered for families to attend parent-teacher conferences and events.</i></p>
<p><b>Ensuring accessible programming</b></p>	<p>Family activities are held at various times and days of the week to respect parents' work schedules.</p> <p><i>For example, a family dinner and science exploration program is held on an evening or weekend.</i></p>	<p>School staff and parents work together to plan family programs to be held at the school and in community locations such as libraries, community centers, faith-based centers, homes in different neighborhoods, and work sites.</p> <p><i>For example, the parent group organizes a family program about applying effective study skills at an apartment building near the school.</i></p>	<p>School staff and parents jointly create schoolwide procedures and policies to ensure that all parents and students have access to school-sponsored programs and events, including academic services. Families are given the opportunity for input in curricular and community event planning.</p> <p><i>For example, services such as interpreters during meetings or classroom instruction, transportation, and child care are consistently provided for both school-based events and school events held in community locations. Families are invited into the conversation to share how students' identities can be fostered and reinforced in academic projects.</i></p>

Summarize strengths and needs here and use your results as you develop your Action Plan in Step Four of the Framework. The School-Level Reflection Rubrics can also be used to monitor progress in reaching goals, designing professional development for school staff, and/or conducting a school walk-through.

Adapted from: PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide <http://www.pta.org/nationalstandards>

## Action Plan Template

School Name:	District:	Initial Date:
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School Advisory Team Members and Roles (parents, grandparents, school staff, teachers, students, administrators):

Family-School Partnerships Vision Statement:

Goal	Activity/Strategy	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Comments/Evaluation	Timeline