

Authentically Engaging Caregivers

Learning Acceleration Series Call 2

Agenda

5 minutes **Introduction**

10 minutes **Building the Foundation**

15 minutes **360 Communication**

25 minutes **Guided Activity**

5 minutes **Closing & Next Steps**

Let's start our day by grounding our decision making and conversations in a set of principles that puts student learning at the forefront.

**Authentically
engage students,
caregivers, and the
community**

Student belonging is
the social and
emotional priority

Grade-level content
is the academic
priority for ALL
students

**Address inequities in
your system head-on**

What are your reactions to these principles?

We're encouraging – and want to support – systems to develop a long-term learning acceleration strategy by moving through four phases.



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Almost a year later, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed nearly everything about how we work, play, and connect, with education being no exception.

 The Tennessean

Tennessee schools close ahead of winter break as COVID-19 surges across the state, staffing challenges continue

These school closings come as many argue that in-person learning doesn't contribute to the widespread transmission of the coronavirus and call for schools to ...

10 hours ago



 USA TODAY

Students are falling behind in online school. Where's the COVID-19 'disaster plan' to catch them up?

Where's the COVID-19 'disaster plan' to catch them up? Students nationwide are falling behind and teachers are stressed as schools go online. But there's still no ...

1 day ago



 The Indianapolis Star

Nearly 3,500 COVID cases reported in schools for second week in a row, total nears 24,000

Nearly 3,500 additional cases of COVID-19 in Indiana schools were reported Monday by the Indiana State Department of Health. The majority of the cases ...

4 hours ago



COVID-19 has meant districts are making more decisions than ever about students and families. How often are they at the table?

The fundamentals of strong community engagement remain the same – and have never been more important.



Authentic community engagement:

Building ongoing, trusting relationships with community members and families to bridge the gap between classroom and community, be responsive, and help all students succeed.

It takes careful planning and purposeful action to build partnerships that involve school, family, and community.

- Dr. Joyce Epstein, Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnership at Johns Hopkins University

At TNTP, our vision for authentic engagement rests on four pillars.



SHARED VISION

Work with stakeholders to develop a common vision for student success



AUTHENTIC COLLABORATION

Share resources and data to help families and community organizations support student learning



INTENTIONAL CULTURE & DIVERSITY

Build trust by addressing bias and understanding the unique community context



360-DEGREE COMMUNICATION

Prioritize ongoing communication and transparency and develop a healthy feedback loop

When teachers, school leaders, and district leaders engage students, families, and communities as true partners, everyone will reap the benefits.

Too often, traditional engagement efforts are limited to information sharing or inviting feedback—rather than shared decision-making.

Impact on Decision-Making

INFORMING

Providing balanced, objective information about new programs, and updates during implementation.

CONSULTING

Inviting feedback on alternatives, analyses, and decisions related to new programs or services. Sharing how feedback has influenced decisions.

INVOLVING

Working with the community to ensure aspirations and concerns are considered at every stage. Sharing how their involvement has shaped decisions.

COLLABORATING

Enabling community members to participate in all aspects of planning and decision-making for new programs.

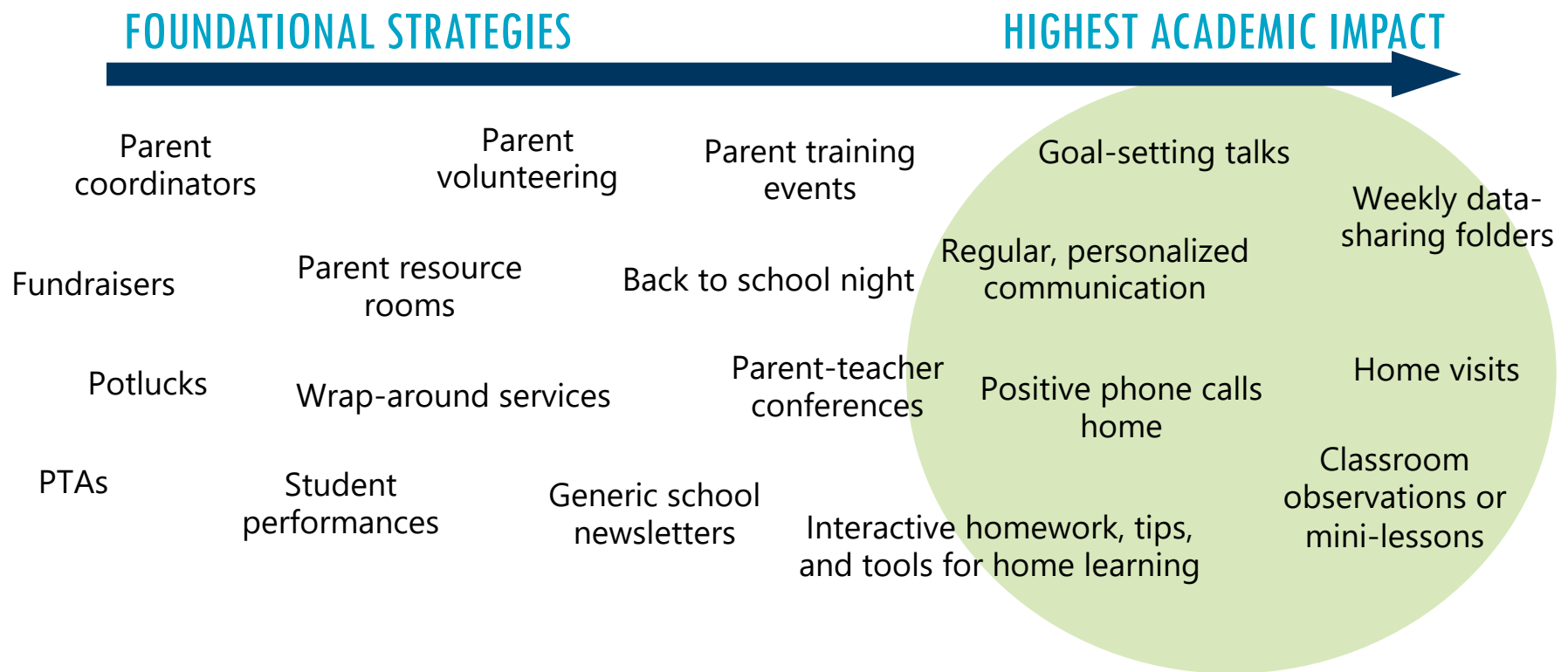
**INCREASING
AGENCY**

Giving community decision-making authority over new programs, and allowing professionals to serve only in consultative / supporting roles.

Traditional Engagement

Community Engagement

It's still critical to make sure to devote time and resources to the engagement strategies that have a direct impact on student success – and some are even more accessible now.



This moment of crisis has given districts and communities the permission/the opportunity to reimagine what's possible.

THEN

Students had inequitable and inconsistent access to Wi-Fi and laptops

Events for parents and families were limited to who could attend in-person

Checking in on missing students limited to a few phone calls

A high school junior struggles to keep up with lectures in class

NOW

Districts and companies/local governments have partnered to distribute laptops, portable wifi options, etc. to increase access

Parents and families can attend school events virtually / watch recordings

Attendance teams taking "all hands on deck" approach to track down students and address barriers

Can now view the lesson on his own time, pausing the content when his mind wanders or re-watching certain segments

What is your community capable of accomplishing for students?

Community engagement is a journey with no “end” – leaders must start with a reflective mindset around how they can better and more equitably inform, collaborate with, and increase agency of families.



Community Engagement Self-Assessment and Reflection Tool

	BEHAVIOR	LOOK-FORS	RED FLAGS	KEY STRATEGIC QUESTIONS
BELIEFS & MINDSETS	Honoring the role families, students, and community members play in change efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District and school staff have positive things to say about students and families* District and school staff are aware of the potential for racial/class bias in engagement efforts and <u>take action</u> accordingly* District and school staff know the history of the community, as well as the community's demographics, assets and challenges* More than 80% of families and students agree that district and school staff see them as critical partners* Families and community organizations have the resources and data they need to support student learning outside of the classroom* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of racial/class bias Derogatory comments about students and families, deficit-based thinking, and/or a patronizing approach to engagement District/school leaders pay attention to the voices of some stakeholders (i.e., wealthier families, small group of go-to parents), but ignore others Engagement efforts are under-resourced; engagement is seen as the job of a single department or one staff person Ignoring or glossing over historical dynamics affecting relationships between the community and the school system Reluctance to share data with families or data trends with community organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we continually <u>lift up</u> the value of authentic engagement, model inclusive engagement and challenge bias? How can we learn best practices for authentic engagement from other districts and schools? (e.g., <i>learning calls, shared resources</i>) How can we deepen our understanding of the unique strengths and challenges of a given community? (e.g., <i>landscape analyses</i>) How can we create opportunities to connect informally with students, families, and community members? (e.g., <i>shadowing students, one-on-one meetings with community leaders, neighborhood walks, home visits</i>)
INFORMING	Communicating important information in a transparent manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is shared multiple times through multiple communications channels (i.e., emails, robo-calls, texts, flyers in parent folders) * Information is shared in a timely manner* Translation provided as needed for written communications and in-person meetings* Opportunities exist for students, family members, and community members to engage in dialogue with district/school staff* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of regular, direct communications channels to stakeholders Stakeholders often hear important information indirectly (through word-of-mouth or media coverage) Stakeholders fail to receive a response to questions within 48 hours Trusted messengers (i.e., <i>principals, teachers, community leaders</i>) are not well-prepared to field questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we prioritize direct and transparent communication? Do we need to create new communications channels? (e.g., <i>parent representative program, email newsletters, robo-calls, text-message initiatives, in-person events</i>) How can we make sure that adequate translation services are available?

Inclusive community engagement is not just about the “what” – but also the “how.”

5 Min: Self-Assessment

1) Open the file attached to the invite for the Authentically Engaging Caregiver Participant Workbook

2) Independently review the Community Engagement Self-Assessment

What surfaced for you?

Key takeaways



Community engagement is journey, not a destination.



It's important to recognize different perspectives based on roles and positionality. Take this self-assessment preview as a team – compare responses, note trends/differences and what that means for district priorities.



We've learned that for community engagement efforts to be successful, teams must start with the reflective/growth/asset-oriented mindset and senior leadership team must see it as a priority and key part of decision-making.

360

Communication

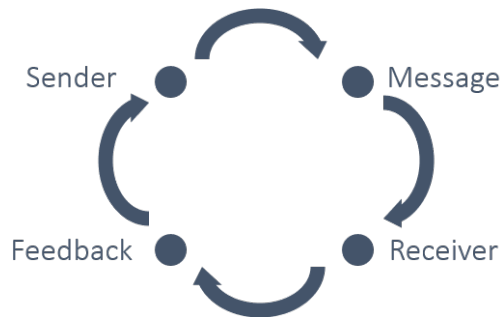
Today we're focusing on 360-degree communication. Each type has a different purpose, and while informing is essential, it's not sufficient.

ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION



The district or school shares information with families with the main goal of providing information.

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION



The district or school shares information and the family responds either to indicate receipt or as feedback.

360° COMMUNICATION



The organization creates a space for family discussions, and the org listens to the family, seeking to understand their perspective and engage them in building solutions. Next, they implement strategies based on learnings and conduct future progress checks.

In 360-degree communication, we collaborate with families, students and community partners to establish an equal voice in decisions about the student experience.

360-DEGREE COMMUNICATION DO'S

Create or utilize practices that promote **strong relationships**.

Seek feedback and ensure families know how to and have opportunities to provide input and make decisions

Listen and learn from families. They are the experts on their children.

Take action and incorporate feedback into your structures and practices.

Share back and help families understand how their feedback is being used.



There are a variety of 360-degree communication channels that teachers and districts can use to keep parents and families informed *and* provide opportunities for input.



Staff from Hartford Public Schools, speak to a middle school student and family out on the balcony of their home in Hartford on June 5. The superintendent told the family to keep the computer they have through the summer for other programs. (Jessica Hill/AP)

Beyond collecting survey feedback, our districts took the crucial next steps to share results back out with their communities – and how it influenced decisions.



Hartford Public Schools @Hartford_Public · Aug 4

We are so thankful to everyone who shared their voice in our HPS Survey: Planning for School Year 2020-21 in late June & early July. We are sharing an overview analysis of the results & providing dashboard access to explore the results of the survey here: bit.ly/3jYRXSm



3



4



Dr. Torres-Rodriguez @HartfordSuper · Oct 3

In response to feedback from families & staff, our school nurses were trained to conduct COVID-19 tests for symptomatic students and cohorts that need to be tested. Thx to our nurses, & partners @HartfordHealthCare @SaintFrancisCT & Htfd Health Dept. We start this coming week!



Hartford Public Schools @Hartford_Public · Sep 24

At a press conference today, @HartfordSuper joined @MayorBronin, @AWynterClarke & city officials to announce free #COVID19 testing for students & the addition of 20 social workers from @UConnSocialWork in our schools. Read more : ow.ly/AF8D50BAwMx @HPSEngagement 🙌❤️



GUIDED ACTIVITY

What are the current ways you are doing 360 communications? How could you improve one or two-way channels to become 360 communications?



10 Min: Communications Audit

1) Open the file attached to the invite for the Communication Audit activity

2) Independently Complete the Communications Audit activity.

Have questions? Post them in the chat.

Brainstorm: What are the biggest decisions facing our district right now?

Key Decisions	How do stakeholders feel about this decision?	What role do stakeholders have in making this decision?	What data are we using to drive our thought process?

What would it look like to increase stakeholder collaboration and agency in making these decisions?

Key takeaways



Especially when making important decisions that will impact students and families, it's critical to build a plan to proactively communicate with stakeholders across several channels, including a 360-degree channel to seek feedback from and share back out with those most affected.



Apply a lens of intentional diversity and culture to examine if you are hearing from all groups proportionally. Are there certain schools, neighborhoods, or populations who are not represented in feedback? How can you intentionally seek those voices out?

Thank you for participating!

Have more questions about TNTP's approach to community engagement?

Reach out to Cristina Marks at Cristina.marks@TNTP.org



Access more family and community engagement resources in our COVID-19 School Response Toolkit on TNTP.org