

School-Wide Family Engagement Strategies

Strategy Three: Investing families and community in school success. *Take 1 minute to list 10 community organizations that have a strong partnership with your school/LEA.*

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Can you list any organizations that may be potential partners for the near future?

1.

2.

School-Wide Family Engagement Strategies

Strategy One: Creating a welcoming and engaging climate with strong relationships and communications between families and school staff. *What is currently taking place at your school/LEA to promote a welcoming environment?*

Strategy Two: Partnering with families to support student achievement. *Identify an individual at your school/LEA who is successful in building partnerships with parents. What are they doing to accomplish this goal?*

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Strategy One: Creating a welcoming and engaging climate with strong relationships and communications between families and school staff

Objective	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<p>1.1 The school values families as important partners in their students' education.</p>	<p>Families think the school would rather they not be involved.</p> <p>School staff believes that families aren't really capable of partnering in their student's education, or that it is more trouble than it is worth to engage families. School staff does not articulate to families that their involvement is important.</p> <p>The school does not pro-actively reach out to engage its families.</p> <p>Sounds like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My parents are the reason my kids are so far behind. Engaging parents won't help my students do better in school. I can't engage my parents because they don't value an education. It's not my job to engage parents. There's nothing I can do to get families to step up. 	<p>Families think the school does not really care if they are involved or not.</p> <p>School staff believes that families have too many needs or are too busy to partner in their student's education. School staff may articulate to families that their involvement is important, but not that they want to partner.</p> <p>The school makes initial efforts to engage families, but these efforts are not sustained throughout the year. If families are not responsive to initial outreach, the school does not make additional efforts to engage them. As a result, the school's family engagement approaches do not equitably serve all families.</p> <p>Sounds like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I try hard to get parents to be involved but it's not my fault if they don't show up. I don't want to bother families by asking them to be involved. Families might want the best for their students, but they can't do what they need to do. 	<p>Families describe the school as committed to engaging families but sometimes unable to do so meaningfully because of other school priorities.</p> <p>School staff believes that most families can be effective partners in their student's education and they try various strategies to support them. School staff articulates to families that they want to partner and why it is important.</p> <p>The school makes sustained efforts to engage all families. The school successfully reaches some families, but usually is not able to reach their "hard to reach" families. As a result, the school's family engagement approaches do not equitably serve all families.</p> <p>Sounds like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To really know my students, I must know my families. I want families to feel good about our school. I try, but there are some families who I just can't get in touch with. My parents don't have 	<p>Families describe the school as committed to engaging families and willing to put in the time and attention to make it a priority.</p> <p>School staff believes that all families, if treated respectfully and given the necessary tools, can be effective partners in their student's education. School staff articulate to families that they want to partner and explain to families what that looks like and why it is important.</p> <p>The school is relentless in ensuring that every student's family is engaged in the success of their student. The school is persistent and creative in reaching all families, regardless of their circumstances, and their efforts reach all families equitably.</p> <p>Sounds like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My parents are the most important partners in helping my students succeed. All families want the best for their children. I tell families I want them engaged and will do what it

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes to work with them to support their child. I'll stop at nothing until I reach all my families. • It's my job and my responsibility to engage my families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enough time to meet with parents now, you'll have problems with them later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you don't reach out to parents now, you'll have problems with them later. 	<p>Some school staff invite families to be engaged, but it is often on their own terms.</p>	<p>1.2 School staff have strong, mutually respectful relationships with families.</p>
<p>All school staff invites families to be engaged in their students' education in affirming ways. Teachers reach out to learn families' hopes and dreams for their student, experiences with school, cultures, skills, and assets at the beginning and throughout the year.</p> <p>Families' concerns or questions are responded to in a timely and respectful way. School staff engage families in collaborative problem-solving that results in a plan for action and consistent follow-up to inquire about whether the plan is working and what adjustments may need to be made.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visits • Parent teacher conferences in the community • Opportunity for each family to share an interest or talent that supports student achievement in the classroom (i.e. a parent 	<p>Most school staff invite families to be engaged in their students' education in affirming ways. Teachers sometimes reach out to learn families' hopes and dreams for their student, experiences with school, cultures, skills, and assets. Families' concerns or questions are responded to in a timely and respectful way. School staff engages families in collaborative problem-solving that results in a plan for action, but do not always follow-up to inquire about whether the plan is working.</p>	<p>Some school staff invite families to be engaged, but it is often on their own terms.</p> <p>Families' concerns or questions are respectfully responded to after some persistence, but school staff typically do not engage in collaborative problem-solving that results in a plan for action.</p>	<p>If school staff reaches out to families, it is usually to report something negative.</p> <p>Families' often feel that their concerns or questions are not adequately addressed. Families' concerns tend to escalate into conflicts with school staff.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling home only about poor academic performance or misbehavior • Raised voices and intimidating gestures when families meet with school staff to discuss concerns or problems • Families do not have positive relationships with anyone in the school and rarely enter the school building. 	

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				<p>who is a seamstress teaches students about scale and measurement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive phone calls at least monthly throughout the year • Teacher-parent communication at pick-up and drop-off • Meeting times scheduled around parent availability • Families frequently support learning in classroom.
<p>1.3 The school has a respectful, inclusive community in which families feel connected to one another.</p>	<p>Families are disconnected from one another.</p> <p>Families who transition into and out of the school feel lost and isolated.</p>	<p>There are pockets of family “cliques” in which families know one another and feel their voice is included or respected, but many families do not know others. There may be tensions between different groups of families.</p> <p>Families who transition into and out of the school struggle to understand their expectations and options.</p>	<p>Most families know other families in their class and at the school and call on each other for help. Most families feel that their voice or perspective is included and respected by other families or school staff. Some families may feel that their voices are “drowned out” by families who may consume much of the teachers’ time and occupy many of the school leadership roles.</p> <p>Families who transition into and out of the school can easily access information from school staff or other families.</p>	<p>Families have strong relationships with other families at the school and feel that their voice or perspective is included and respected equitably across engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Families who transition into and out of the school have pro-active guidance and support from school staff, programs, and other families.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning-focused community-building and culture-honoring activities • “New parent” orientation or buddy system • Governance and advisory bodies representative of the diversity of the school • Parent-to-parent phone

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families reaching out to trees and parent phone directory Families reaching out to less engaged families to invite their participation 	<p>The majority of school staff is warm and welcoming towards families and helpful when contacted for guidance or assistance. School staff is helpful in answering families' questions and concerns, though they do not always have the information or proper channels to streamline responses or referrals for families. School staff responds to families' outreach in timely and responsive ways.</p> <p>The school is physically inviting to families and is set up so that all families can easily enter and navigate the building, and so that they can use its space.</p> <p>The school leader is usually visible to families at school and greets families warmly and by name when he or she sees them. The school leader is pro-active in creating opportunities to interact with families frequently throughout the year, which include sharing information as well as seeking families' ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent visitors personally greeted by name and 	<p>The school is clean and well-maintained and is set-up so that some families can easily enter and navigate the building, though those unfamiliar with it may have difficulty.</p> <p>The school leader is occasionally visible to families inside the school building but does not make much effort to greet or get to know families. The school leader makes some initial efforts to interact with families.</p> <p>The school leader is sometimes visible to families inside the school building and usually greets families warmly when he or she sees them. The school leader is pro-active in creating opportunities to interact with families throughout the year. These opportunities tend to be driven by the school leader's belief for what families need to know or do.</p>	<p>School staff make families wait or do not provide appropriate help when families contact the school for guidance or assistance.</p> <p>The school is clean and well-maintained and is set-up so that families can easily enter and navigate the building, though those unfamiliar with it may have difficulty.</p> <p>The school leader is occasionally visible to families inside the school building but does not make much effort to greet or get to know families. The school leader makes some initial efforts to interact with families.</p> <p>The school leader is usually in his or her office, and is hesitant to interact with families.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never returning families' phone calls Leaving families' calls on hold and not returning calls promptly Ignoring families who come into the front office The school entrances, classrooms and additional facilities are not marked School and classroom doors are locked Over-use of prohibitory signs (i.e. NO ONE FACULTY ONLY) Security guards do not 	<p>1.4 The school provides a positive customer service experience for families.</p>
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	<p>treat visitors warmly and cannot answer simple questions about the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed posters or nothing on walls; absence of student work • School leader is routinely unavailable to families. • Defensive or blaming language towards families 			<p>assisted by front office and security staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School entrances, classrooms and additional facilities such as library and cafeteria clearly labeled • “Welcoming school walk-throughs” conducted by families and staff • Office located near the school entrance and clearly marked • School map in lobby and arrows lead the way to important locations • Responses to parent outreach within 24 hours • Signs in families’ native language(s) • Student work displayed throughout the school • Photos of families displayed • Bulletin board in lobby for parent information • Designated place(s) in the school for families to use • Designated parent parking • Monthly principal coffees • Principal office hours • Principal greetings to families at drop off and pick up
<p>1.5 The school provides</p>	<p>The school has no or very limited clear, consistent information available to families about school</p>	<p>There is written information available for families, but it may be out of date or not reflect the</p>	<p>Families receive updated information at the beginning of the year that includes a school</p>	<p>Schools have consistent homework, discipline and other policies, and families know what</p>

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<p>clear, consistent information on school and classroom expectations, policies, and procedures.</p> <p>The school does not make an effort to collect information about how families prefer to communicate.</p> <p>Home-school communication is infrequent, not on a schedule, and not differentiated to meet families' language, media or literacy needs.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No translation or interpretation available • Inaccurate contact information for families • A lot of education jargon in written materials 	<p>current information on school and classroom expectations, policies, and procedures.</p> <p>The school has limited information about how families prefer to communicate and how to get in touch with families.</p> <p>Home-school communication occurs on a set schedule a few times a year, but is not differentiated to meet the language, media, or literacy preferences of families.</p> <p>The school has some information about how families prefer to communicate and how to get in touch with families.</p> <p>Home-school communication is frequent, information is provided multiple times in different ways, and generally meets the literacy, language, and media preferences of families.</p> <p>The school may send home too many colored fliers, desensitizing families to information and making it difficult for them to discern what is important.</p>	<p>they are. Schools have multiple, consistent communications systems to inform families about important issues, events, and opportunities to be involved.</p> <p>The school has substantial information about how families prefer to communicate and how to get in touch with families.</p> <p>Home-school communication mechanisms consistently meet the literacy, language, and media preferences of ELL, low-literacy, or other "hard-to-reach" families. Communication is frequent, consistent, and occurs in multiple ways.</p> <p>School communication is streamlined so that families can easily prioritize and understand its relevance for their student. Communications feature families as valued partners in the school community.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters co-created with or featuring families and students • Parent handbook sent to each parent and available on the school website • System to regularly update contact information • Weekly school bulletin 	<p>and classroom expectations, policies, and procedures.</p> <p>The school does not make an effort to collect information about how families prefer to communicate.</p> <p>Home-school communication is infrequent, not on a schedule, and not differentiated to meet families' language, media or literacy needs.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No translation or interpretation available • Inaccurate contact information for families • A lot of education jargon in written materials 	<p>clear, consistent information on school and classroom expectations, policies, and procedures.</p>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Tuesday folders”• Robo-calls, text messages, & email communication• School website and Facebook page• Updated school calendar distributed weekly• Translation and interpretation, as needed• Visuals accompanying written materials• Written materials using simple language & sentences• Communications color-coded based on importance
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Strategy Two: Partnering with families to support student achievement

Objective	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<p>2.1 The school's programming and communications for family engagement and learning-centered.</p>	<p>Family engagement is not a priority for the school. Few events are organized.</p>	<p>Family engagement efforts at the school are largely focused on getting families to participate in meetings or events. The school may involve families to celebrate, to get them to "buy-in" to decisions, or to raise funds or volunteer in the school.</p> <p>Many families do not attend most events and meetings because they have little to do with their individual student's learning and therefore feel like a waste of time.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families attending "fun events", but not parent-teacher conferences • Potlucks • School-wide student concerts, plays, or field day • Class parties • Families making copies or doing other administrative duties 	<p>Family engagement efforts at the school are broadly tied to learning and instruction but often do not provide individualized student information.</p> <p>Families can consistently prioritize the most important engagement opportunities for supporting their student's learning and achievement.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General instructions like "read with your student at home" • Literacy or math nights • Author's cafes • Families chaperoning field trips 	<p>Family engagement efforts at the school are centered on learning and instruction for specific student goals and progress.</p> <p>Families can consistently prioritize the most important engagement opportunities for supporting their student's learning and achievement.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back-to-school night used to introduce systems to share data and student performance information • Literacy nights providing individual students' scores and differentiated information for families based on student performance • Families supporting learning centers in classrooms or reading with students • For middle and high schools, workshops to navigate college application process providing individual student transcripts and differentiated information

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				for families based on student performance
<p>2.2 The school provides the information and guidance for families to effectively and regularly monitor their student's progress on academic goals.</p>	<p>Teachers do not know what families' goals are for their students. Families do not know what their teacher's goals are for their students.</p> <p>Families receive information on their student based on the bare minimum required by the school, local/state policies, and federal policies. This information usually comes at the end of the grading period when little can be done about it.</p>	<p>Teachers do not know what families' goals are for their students. Families do not know what their teachers' goals are for their students.</p> <p>In addition to the required information at the end of the grading period, families receive some information about how their student is doing. The teacher may send home quizzes, tests, and graded homework periodically. The teacher may send a note or call home if there are issues with discipline or homework completion.</p>	<p>Teachers know what families' long-term goals are for their students. Families know what their teachers' annual goals are for their students. Goals are not broken down into actionable time frames.</p> <p>Families receive regular information about their student's performance, but it is not compared to their goals, so it is not easy for families to know if their student is on track.</p>	<p>Teachers know what families' long-term goals are for their students. Teachers share their long- and short-term goals for students with families and seek their input. Families and teachers communicate regularly about short- and long-term goals and set new goals periodically.</p> <p>Families receive frequent information about how their student is progressing relative to their goals, other students, and grade-level standards. Teachers regularly check for families' understanding of whether their student is on track.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-teacher conferences used to set individual goals with families and check in on specific student progress towards those goals • Monthly or quarterly data-sharing reports for families on how their student is performing • For middle and/or high schools, online systems for families to monitor

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<p>on a weekly basis student grades, homework completion, etc.</p>	<p>School staff and teachers regularly communicate with families about what is being taught in the classroom and how it is being taught. School staff and teachers build the capacity of families to support what their students are learning at home through modeling instructional strategies and inviting their participation in classroom learning. Teachers regularly suggest to families' activities they can do at home to support their student's learning that are tailored to the student's specific needs and goals. Teachers provide families resources to use this end and explain how to use them. Teachers give families feedback and hear from families about the success of their efforts or issues they encounter. For middle and high schools, programs and/or information are pro-actively available to and used by families to help them make good decisions about their child's academic and career paths.</p> <p>Looks like:</p>
	<p>School staff and teachers communicate with families throughout the school year about what is being taught in the classroom, although the information often comes after the fact. School staff and teachers build the capacity of families to support what their students are learning at home by sending home suggestions, sharing resources and holding parent education and training events that are relevant to grade-level skills. For middle and high schools, programs and/or information are pro-actively available to families to help them make good decisions about their child's academic and career paths.</p>
	<p>School staff and teachers communicate with families at the beginning of the school year about what standards will be taught. School staff and teachers provide general information on how families can support learning at home and on how they can create an environment conducive to learning. For middle and high schools, school staff are responsive to families that seek information to help them make good decisions about their child's academic and career pathways.</p>
	<p>School staff and teachers rarely or never communicate with families about what is being taught in class. School staff and teachers do not provide information to families on how they can support student learning at home. For middle and high schools, school staff are not responsive to families that seek information to help them make good decisions about their child's academic and career pathways.</p>
	<p>2.3 The school provides information and guidance for families to effectively and regularly reinforce and guide their students' learning.</p>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly classroom communication about upcoming homework and topics being taught • Interactive homework • Mini-lessons of how subjects are being taught in class in person or via YouTube • Classroom observations or showcases • Family-supported learning centers • Family-led demonstrations • Student-specific learning support strategies included in monthly data-sharing reports • Parent-teacher conferences used to suggest and model specific learning support strategies • Partnerships with family literacy and adult education programs • Literacy and math nights organized by content/cluster or grade level • In middle school, families participating in high school fairs, tours, and application processes • In middle and high school, families participating in the
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development of the Individual Growth Plan				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In middle and high schools, families participating in college tours and information sessions 				

Strategy Three: Investing families and community in school success

Objective	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
3.1 The school informs families about the state of the school and the plan for improvement, and invites families' feedback.	<p>The school does not provide information about its performance to families or the community and is not in compliance with federal regulations for doing so.</p> <p>The school does not share information with families about the school's goals and what strategies it is using to improve.</p>	<p>The school is in compliance with federal regulations for sharing performance information with families, but may be selective about the information it shares, especially if it is struggling. Or, the school shares the information, but in a way that is inaccessible to families. As a result, most families cannot articulate whether their school is below average, or above average, or above average in its performance compared to other schools nor whether the school has improved or declined over time.</p> <p>The school shares information about the school's goals and what strategies it is using to improve with families that serve on the committee or other parent leadership structures and with</p>	<p>Even if the school is struggling, the school is transparent and honest with families about how the school is doing. The school holds a well-publicized meeting and sends school performance information home to families in written form. As a result, most families can articulate whether their school is below average, or above average in its performance and whether it has improved or declined in recent years.</p> <p>The school pro-actively shares information about the school's goals and what strategies it is using to improve with families via written documents that are distributed. As a result, most families understand the school's goals and improvement</p>	<p>Even if the school is struggling, it is transparent and honest with families about how it is doing relative to other schools. The school uses multiple, creative ways to ensure this information reaches all families and to check for understanding. As a result, families can articulate whether their school is below average, or above average, or above average in its performance, whether it has improved or declined, and how any sub-groups are doing compared to other schools.</p> <p>The school pro-actively shares information about the school's goals and what strategies it is using to improve via multiple formats and opportunities and through multiple messengers, including via the committee and</p>

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		<p>those that seek the information out. As a result, a few families understand the school's goals and improvement strategies.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AYP letters sent home 	<p>strategies.</p>	<p>other families. Families know about the academic life of their student and of the school as a whole. As a result, families understand the school's goals and improvement strategies.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Committee helping with outreach to inform parents of school goals and strategies • Data walls • "State of our school" forums • Study circles • Annual school improvement meeting for families
<p>3.2 The school ensures that families participate in collaborative strategic planning for school improvement.</p>	<p>Families are not involved in creating the School Improvement Plans. The school does not have a plan for getting families' input into developing this plan.</p> <p>The school does not provide norms or capacity-building opportunities so that families can participate in this planning.</p>	<p>Families are engaged in creating the School Improvement Plan through serving on the needed committee, though these families may not be representative of the school community. The school does not have a plan for getting families' input into developing this plan.</p> <p>The school does not provide norms or capacity-building opportunities so that families can participate in this planning.</p>	<p>Families are engaged in creating the School Improvement Plan by providing input at one point in time or through serving on the assigned committee. The school has a clear process in place to get families' input in developing this plan. As a result, it is mostly representative of the feedback of all families.</p> <p>The school has norms, but no capacity-building opportunities, so that families can participate as equal partners in this planning.</p>	<p>Families are consistently engaged in creating the School Improvement Plan at multiple stages in its development or by serving on the assigned committee. The school has a clear process in place to get families' input in developing this plan. Families participating in this process are representative of the school community and regularly communicate with other families to get ideas and feedback.</p> <p>The school has norms and capacity-building opportunities, such as leadership development</p>

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<p>or other skill-building activities, so that families can participate as equal partners in this planning.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information collected on families' hopes and dreams for the school • School-wide visioning and strategic planning meetings • Monthly committee meetings • Expanding the committee to be a true representative sample of the schools' families • Information from families collected via surveys, focus groups, and other methods to identify challenges and ideas for solutions 				<p>3.3 The school encourages families to take initiative and contribute to school improvement priorities.</p>
<p>The school is responsive to families' ideas for improving the school, and families who want to volunteer or participate in activities to help improve the school are encouraged to do so. The school leader or other staff works with these families to support and shape their interests to support the school's improvement plan.</p> <p>Looks like:</p>	<p>The school is responsive to families' ideas for improving the school. Families who want to volunteer or participate in activities to help improve the school are allowed to do whatever it aligns with the school's improvement plan.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA/PTO not focused on school goals 	<p>Families who want to volunteer or participate in activities can do so, but the opportunities are mostly decided by the school and are rarely connected to the school improvement plan. The school does not solicit families' ideas for improving the school but is somewhat responsive to them.</p>	<p>Families are not given opportunities to volunteer or participate in activities to improve the school. There is no forum to hear or respond to families' ideas for improvement.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leader is resistant to responding to families' ideas • Families' ideas go unaddressed 	

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent leadership structures for school improvement aligned to school goals • Planning meetings between families and the school leader • Helping families network and/or get resources to contribute to school improvement
<p>3.4 School staff work closely with community organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education to strengthen the school, and make resources available to students, school staff, and families.</p>	<p>The school does not ask families what additional programs or services they need to support their student’s achievement.</p> <p>The school does not know what resources and assets exist in the community.</p>	<p>The school determines families’ needs and preferences for additional programs or services they need to support their student’s achievement from conversations with a few families or general demographic data.</p> <p>The school has some idea of what resources and assets exist in the community. The school partners with community organizations or agencies, but these partnerships are not aligned to the school’s goals or purposeful in meeting families’ needs and preferences, so they can be better guides, partners, and advocates for their student’s education.</p>	<p>The school determines families’ needs and preferences for additional programs or services they need to support their student’s achievement from data collected from at least 50% of the school’s families.</p> <p>The school knows what resources and assets exist in the community. The school partners with community organizations or agencies, and these partnerships are mostly aligned to the school’s goals or are purposeful in meeting families’ needs and preferences, so they can be better guides, partners, and advocates for their student’s education.</p>	<p>The school determines families’ needs and preferences for programs or services they need to support their student’s achievement from data collected from at least 50% of the school’s families. Families play a role in developing and delivering programs and services.</p> <p>The school knows what resources and assets exist. The school partners with community organizations or agencies, and these partnerships are consistently aligned to the school’s goals or are purposeful in meeting families’ needs and preferences, so they can be better guides, partners, and advocates for their student’s education.</p> <p>Looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships guided by needs assessments

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partners and programs aligned to the school's goals • Asset map of community resources • One-on-one or small group meetings with community leaders • Families identifying, recruiting and planning with community partners • School staff attendance at community events 				
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