



Strengthening Family-School Partnerships: A Reference Guide for School Administrators

The National Standards for Family-School Partnerships highlight the key tenets of effective family engagement practices that support student success and well-being. Read on to learn how you can put the National Standards into action in your work. For more resources, visit [PTA.org/Standards](https://pta.org/standards).

Welcome All Families

- ✓ Communicate school-wide goals for developing personal relationships with students and their families
- ✓ Allocate time in teachers' schedules to implement relationship-building practices with families.
- ✓ Prepare instructional coaches to lead reflective conversations with teachers about teachers' relationships with families in routine coaching and/or observation/feedback cycles
- ✓ Encourage front office staff, security, custodians etc. to attend trainings provided to teachers around family-school partnerships
- ✓ Conduct focus groups with families to gather feedback on their experiences with the school to understand any barriers to full participation in the school community
- ✓ Ensure the building is fully accessible to individuals who use wheelchairs and to other people with disabilities



Communicate Effectively

- ✓ Communicate to staff school-wide expectations for communication with families
- ✓ Offer guidance for how teachers develop individualized communication plans with families aligned to each families' preferred mode of communication
- ✓ Audit communication practices to ensure that all written and spoken school communication, including routine forms, zoom meetings, and in-person conversations are translated for all languages spoken in your school community
- ✓ Identify a team of staff and families to create communications plans for times of crisis

- ✓ Designate an individual or individuals who are tasked with ensuring that all communication outlets utilized by families in your school community are streamlined in messaging
- ✓ Assess the impact of streamlined information-sharing efforts by determining if the message was received and understood by the intended audience

Support Student Success

- ✓ Provide teachers with templates and resources for co-constructing social, emotional, and academic goals with families and students
- ✓ Support teachers in providing students and families with regular, formative progress reports inclusive of sample student work
- ✓ Provide teachers with opportunities to practice having conversations with families about student progress, particularly when conversations may be difficult
- ✓ Develop and communicate a clear process/protocol for families so they know how to plan to observe or initiate participation in their child's classroom
- ✓ Adjust outreach practices to ensure that underrepresented families have equitable opportunities to contribute to classroom learning
- ✓ Provide workshops for families to build their capabilities and confidence to support their child's learning and socio-emotional well-being at home

Speak Up for Every Child

- ✓ Audit school and district operations and adjust policies and practices that create disparities in adverse impact on underrepresented students and families
- ✓ Ensure that information sharing about families' rights under federal and state law is communicated *using multiple communication modalities* (school handbook, conspicuous posting, etc.) to reach all families
- ✓ Provide families with a FAQ guide with answers to common questions, contact information for school and district personnel, and general guidance on school and district operations
- ✓ Develop and communicate norms and expectations for responding to family requests for resources and answers to their questions
- ✓ Engage staff in reflection on the role bias may play in building strong family-school partnerships, particularly across lines of difference
- ✓ Share data with families and teachers on school discipline practices and make adjustments to practices that disproportionately impact a demographic group or subgroup



Share Power

- ✓ Cultivate an environment that positions families as equals collaborators with schools for improved outcomes
- ✓ Establish specific goals to promote equity within the family/parent organization and the school community at large
- ✓ Co-design decision making protocols that incorporate the viewpoints and perspectives of families, staff, students and community constituents
- ✓ Develop systems for tracking and cataloging information to create a comprehensive picture of representation in decision making
- ✓ Identify and/or create opportunities for to build families' capabilities and confidence for civic engagement, and share these opportunities with students and families

Collaborate with Community

- ✓ Ask families about issues affecting the community and how the school can contribute to community-wide solutions
- ✓ Communicate a clear "why" for engaging with community partners, and a vision for what can be achieved through community partnerships
- ✓ Build relationships with "official" and "unofficial" community leaders to learn about the needs, assets and priorities of community partners
- ✓ Invite community partners to have a physical presence (office space, information desk, participation in school etc.) in the school community so that families can make connections and build relationships
- ✓ Engage in continuous feedback cycles with families, staff and community leaders to evaluate the impact of strategic partnerships and address shifting priorities