

# Prioritizing the Parent/Teacher Relationship — Lessons From 50 Years of Research and Practice

Productive Parent/Teacher Partnership Webinar Series

November 19, 2019





Moderator

**Ginger Young**

Founder and Executive Director  
Book Harvest



## Presenters

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Learning Heroes



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*everychild.onevoice.*®

# 50 Years of Research: Prioritizing the Parent-Teacher Partnership

Helen Westmoreland

Director, National PTA Center for Family Engagement

A National PTA® Initiative

The  
Center *for* Family  
Engagement®

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The  
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Engagement®

# The Center for Family Engagement's Purpose



We aim **to increase demand for transformative family engagement** among PTA members and leaders, policymakers, and educators **by building and supporting grassroots parent leaders** to champion transformative family engagement practices and policies.

# The Future of Family Engagement at PTA



*Inclusive*  
Embracing and valuing diverse perspectives.

*Individualized*  
Meeting the unique needs of every family and child.

*Impactful*  
Empowering families to support their child's success.

*Integrated*  
Connecting and aligning with the educational system.

## 4 prongs to the Center's strategy



1. Building knowledge and awareness of transformative family engagement across PTA



2. Catalyzing PTA leadership for transformative family engagement




3. Contributing to a national “parent voice” agenda on family, school, community partnerships




4. Ensuring sustainability and effectiveness

# 50 Years of Research on PTPs


How do families' and educators' experience family engagement?



How do families' and educators' perceptions and practices affect child outcomes?



What is the impact of PTP programs and interventions?



What are scale-able ways to improve PTPs?





# Research Findings on PTPs

1. Impact
2. Equity
3. Implementation

**HEADLINES**  
**TODAY**

# PTPs Make an Impact

- Parent-teacher partnerships lead to improved student outcomes.

(Epstein, 1985; Dearing, Kreider, & Weiss, 2008; Serpell & Mashburn, 2012; Ngai & Koehn, 2016; Dawson & Wymbs, 2016, Sheridan, et al, 2017)

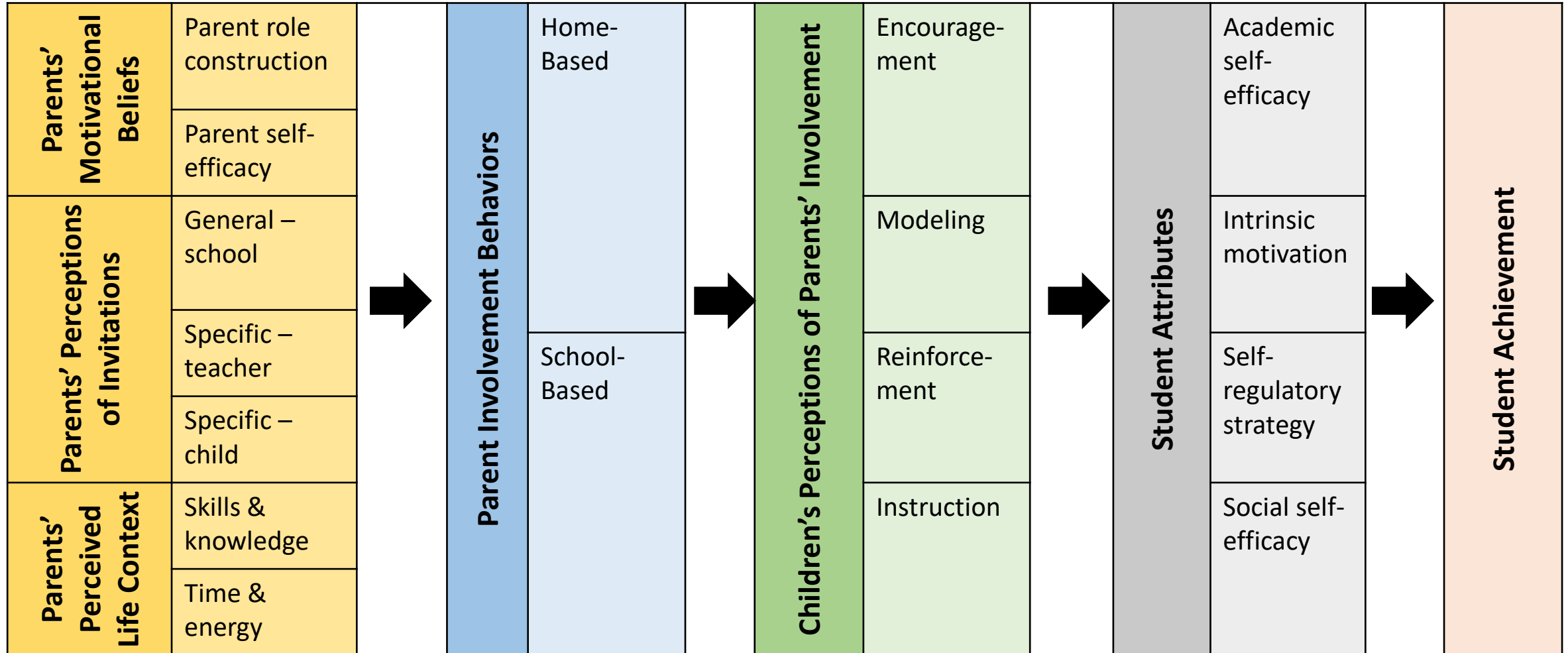
- Teacher relationships with families also have positive benefits for schools and teachers

(Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Garcia, 2004; Stipek, 2012)

- Teacher outreach to families affect *if* and *how* they engage.

(Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Kim, Sheridan, Kwon, & Kosiol, 2013)

# Deep Dive: Process for Engagement



Revised model from Hoover-Dempsey, et al, 2005

# PTPs Affect Equity

- Families' engagement differs demographically, both in practice and in impact.

(Grolnick, Kurowski, & Aposteleris, 2007; Robinson & Harris, 2014)

- Teachers beliefs about families correlate with their expectations and practices.

(Huss-Keller, 1997; Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008; Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Cheatham & Ostrosky, 2013)

- Family-teacher relationships mediate biases and inequities.

(Rowley, Helaire, & Banerjee, 2010; Iruka, Winn, Kingsley, & Orthodoxou, 2011; Minke, et al, 2014; Sheldon & Jung, 2018)

# Participant Poll:

What form of engagement most consistently correlated with achievement across demographic groups in elementary school?



**ALSO**  
**Stop Helping Your Kids With Their Homework**  
p. 84

1. Participating in a PTA/PTO meeting
2. Requesting a specific teacher for your child
3. Reading to your child
4. Attending a parent-teacher conference

Robinson & Harris, 2012

# Implementation Matters for PTPs

- Certain parent-teacher partnership practices make a difference.
  - Personalized learning-focused outreach (Grimmet & McCoy, 1980; Bergman, 2012; Kraft & Dougherty, 2013; Kraft & Rogers, 2014)
  - Frequency (Feuerstein, 2000)
  - Relationship-building home visits (Sheldon & Jung, 2015)
  - Positive communication (Howell, et al, 2014)
  - Teacher workshops for families (Hindman, Skibbe, & Morrison, 2013)
  - Invitations to volunteer (Ibid)
- There is a demand for more teacher training for family engagement and teacher training programs show promising outcomes.

(Markow & Cooper, 2008; O'Donnell & Krikner, 2014; Scholastic, 2017; Smith & Sheridan, 2018)

# Deep Dive: Implementation Help

- There are disconnects between teacher values on importance of their outreach to families and their implementation of these practices.

(Scholastic, 2017; Learning Heroes, 2019)

- Teachers and families experience a persistent and significant disconnect in their perceptions how students are doing and how families can support them.

(Learning Heroes, 2019)

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# Learn More

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# LEARNING HEROES

## VISION

Every parent is a learning hero, effectively advocating on behalf of their children's success in school, driving school improvement.

## MISSION

Ensure parents have a complete and accurate picture of their children's academic and developmental progress.



# Parents: A False Sense of Security



## Perception

**90%**

**of parents**, regardless of race, income, and education level, believe their child is at or above grade level in reading and math.

## Reality

**35%**

**of students** nationally perform at or above grade-level work.

*2019: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading, At/Above NAEP Proficient*

**39%**

**of teachers** report their students come prepared for grade-level work at the beginning of the year.

*Scholastic 2016 Principal and Teacher Survey*

**Good Grades**  
=  
**Grade Level**



Vast majority (74%)  
indicate their children get  
**all A's or mostly A's and  
B's** on report cards.

**and...**

More than 8 in 10 (84%)  
believe A's or B's mean child  
is doing grade level work.

# What do Teachers Think About Report Cards?

Report cards measure *effort* more than *achievement*.

**48% of teachers agree**



Parents focus too much on report card grades alone.

**64% of teachers agree**



# The Parent-Teacher Disconnect

Parents and teachers rank the most important ways to know how a child is achieving



Teachers



#1

Regular communication with the teacher(s)

#2

Graded work and tests/quizzes from the teacher



#3

Report card grades

#4

Whether or not child struggles on homework

#5

Parent-Teacher conferences



Parents



#1

Report card grades

#2

Whether or not child struggles on homework

#3

Graded work and tests/quizzes from the teacher

#4

Child's mood/body language

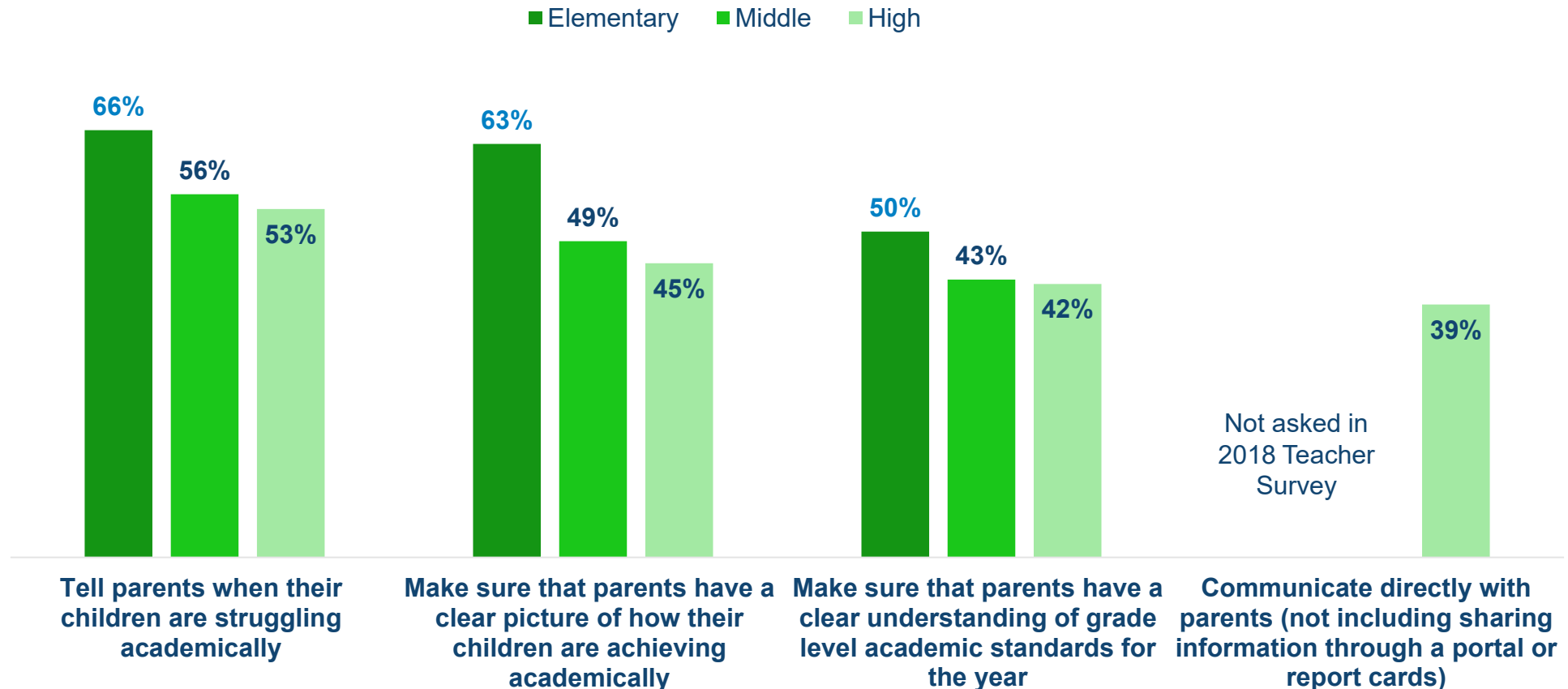
#5



Regular communication with the teacher(s)

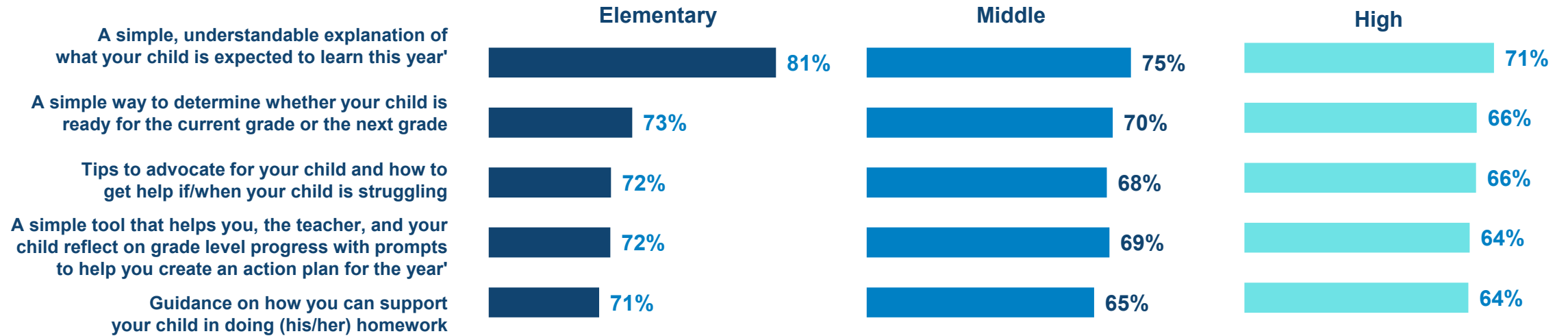
# Communicating with Parents is not a Job Expectation for Teachers

How Important Are These Expectations in Doing Your Job?  
(% extremely important)



# Parents find different resources helpful at each stage

## How Helpful Would You Find Each? (% extremely/very helpful)





# Research-Based Communications



# Surround Sound Approach

1

## Seasonal Campaigns

**Actionable information at key transition points:**

- Spring Ahead: How to help prepare your child for the annual state test
- Summer Stride: How to help your child with specific skills needed in the next grade
- Super 5: Back-to-School: How to set your child up for success in the new year

2

## Learning Hero Roadmap

**K-8 guide with interactive tools, videos, and more:**

- Readiness Check: Grade level progress & skill specific resources
- Social, Emotional & Academic insight and tools
- Parent-Teacher Communication
- College Financial Planning


3

## Technical Assistance

**Build capacity within the field on communicating with parents:**

- State and Local Education Agencies
- Direct Service Providers/Organizations
- School Report Card Template
- Puzzle to Plan
- Developing Life Skills

# Parent Materials for Schools, Districts, Non-Profits

SAMPLE STATE NAME  TEMBO


## SCHOOL REPORT CARD

### South Bernhardt School

269-555-7506 964 Rempel Lake Drive, Port Elenor, DC 19001

**WHY IS THIS REPORT IMPORTANT?**  
Just as your child's report card shows how he or she is performing, this school report card shows how the school is performing in multiple areas. This helps you see the school's strengths in addition to challenges that need to be addressed. The school report card is one piece of information, that when combined with a student's individual state test results, and report card grades, gives parents a more accurate picture of their children's academic experience.

#### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

WHAT IS MY CHILD'S SCHOOL'S OVERALL SCORE?	HOW DOES MY CHILD'S SCHOOL COMPARE TO THE DISTRICT AVERAGE?
 <i>This school was identified for Targeted Support.</i>	South Bernhardt <b>C</b> District Average <b>B</b>

**HOW IS THE OVERALL SCORE MEASURED?**  
The overall score includes academic and school environment factors, though the academic factors count more than the school environment measures.

#### ACADEMICS

**STUDENT PERFORMANCE**  
This measure shows the percentage of students who met or exceeded the expectations on the [NAME OF TEST] in each subject.

**STUDENT PROGRESS**  
This measure shows the amount of academic improvement students have made since the last school year.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS PROGRESS**  
The percentage of English language learners who have met the expectations for reading, writing, and speaking English.

#### SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

**TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**  
This measure provides information about the qualifications of teachers in your school.

**CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**  
Classroom environment includes factors that impact the environment in the classroom, including student attendance and the strategies and methods used by teachers.

**SCHOOL SAFETY**  
This measure is based on the school's disciplinary data and is also measured through student and teacher surveys.



**LEARNING HEROES**

**Avance en el verano**  
¡ME LEERÉ LIBROS SOBRE ROBOTS!  
¡REVALÚA PIENSA DE NUESTRO PLAN ES MÁS UN LIBRO QUE LE INTERESA. ESTOY RESORTO CON SUS PADRES PARA ESTE NOCHE COMIENDO CON EL PLAN!

**Back-to-School**  
BACKPACK AND SUPPLIES—CHECK WHAT'S LEFT TO DO FOR BACK TO SCHOOL?  
¡Cuenta con Información de antemano!  
Antes de que terminen la preinscripción más apoyo y guía en el hogar para prepararse para tu hijo para poder tener éxito correcto durante el verano.  
¡Permítele demostrar lo que sabe!  
A medida que tu hijo lee, juega con aplicaciones educativas o discute con los compañeros en el hogar, pídele que te lo que aprendió y que le diga qué le gustó y qué no. Esto le permitirá desarrollar habilidades importantes y lo ayudará a aumentar la confianza en sí mismo.

**Spring Ahead: A Clear Path for Your Child's Success**  
Your child's grades, results of the upcoming state test, and your school's report card are important pieces of the bigger picture.  
HOW DO WE KNOW HOW HE'S DOING IN MATH AND WHERE HE NEEDS HELP?  
LET'S LOOK AT THE MATH PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM THE STATE TEST - IT MEASURES GRADE LEVEL SKILLS.

Visit [belearninghero.org](http://belearninghero.org) to get your state's practice test, plus tips and tools to support learning at home.

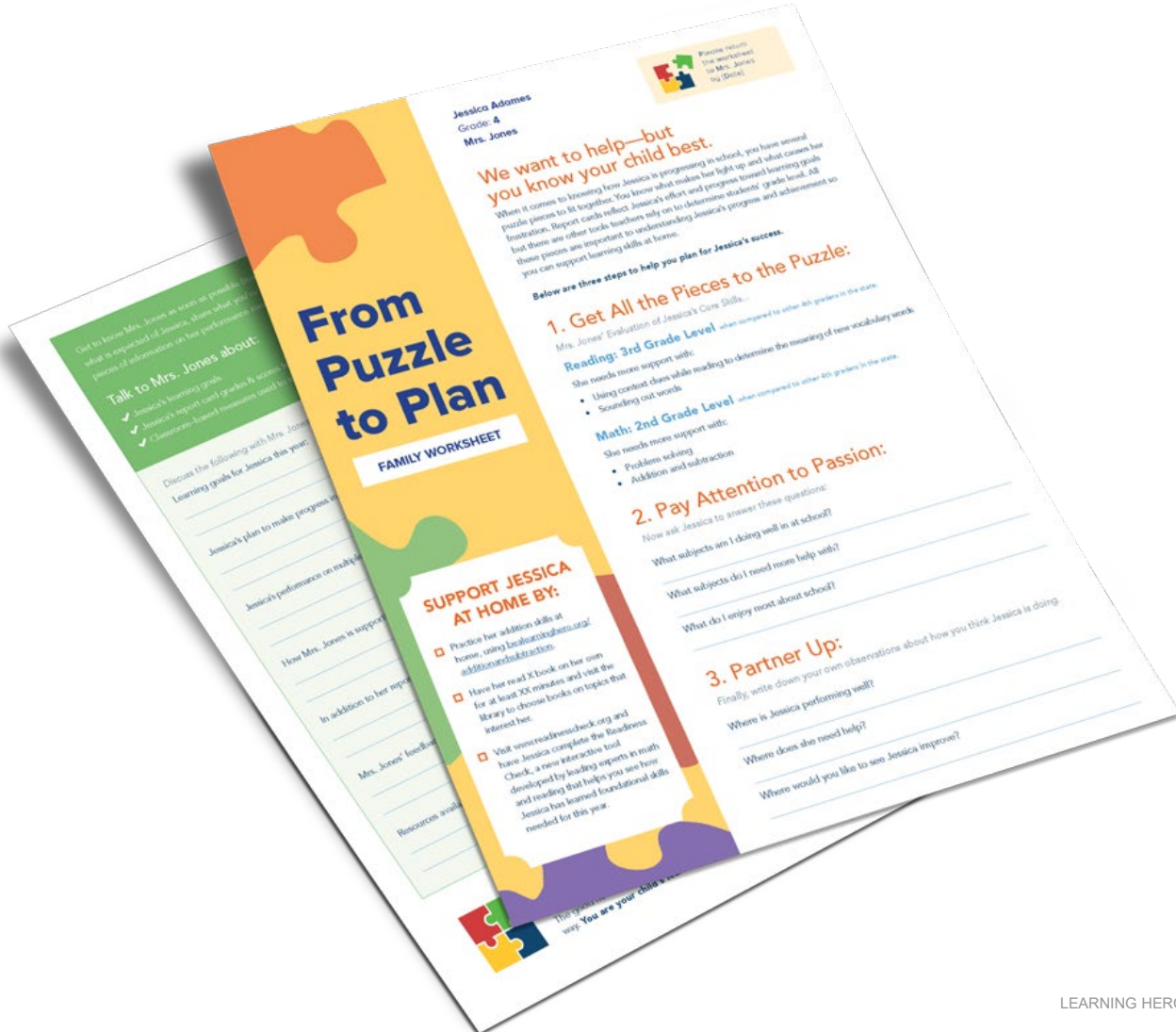
**How can you help your child spring ahead?**

- Look at your state's practice test.**  
Along with grades and class work, the state test is another way to see where your child needs more support. Tests can be nerve-racking—boost self-confidence by showing your child how to take on challenges.
- Check out how your school is doing.**  
Your state releases a report card for every school, which includes important information about your school's performance such as academics, the learning environment, and more.
- Stay connected with the teacher.**  
Teachers say the best way to know how your child is progressing is to be in regular contact. Ask the teacher how your child is doing with specific skills and share what you notice about their learning habits.
- Get a quick gut check.**  
Use the new Readiness Check to see your child's progress and get skill specific videos, activities, and more to support math and reading at home.

# A Conversation Starter

**PARENTS**  
**TEACHERS**  
**+**  
**STUDENTS**

**Student Success**



# Readiness Check

A simple, highly predictive tool,  
based on 3-5 questions in Math and Reading, designed to help parents:



*Get a “gut check”*  
on how their child  
has progressed on  
grade-level skills.



*Learn what they  
can do at home  
to support grade-  
level skills.*



*Get connected  
to free, easy-to-use,  
skill-specific videos,  
resources and  
activities.*

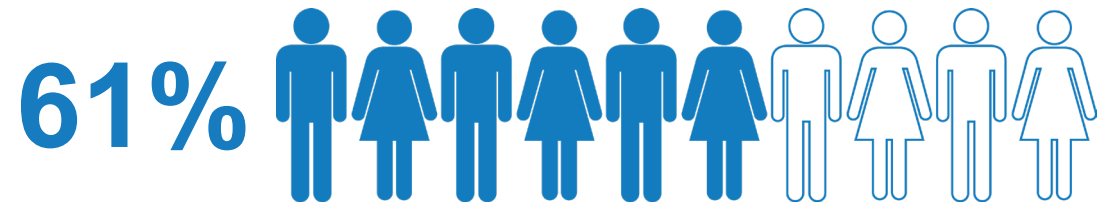


# A Little Information Goes a Long Way

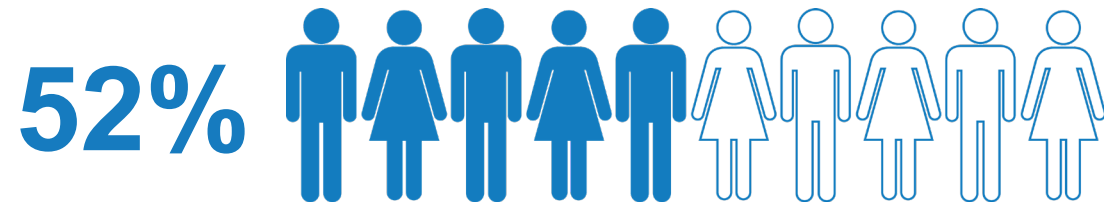


**% THINK THEIR CHILD IS AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL IN MATH WHEN TOLD...**

- Child receives a B in math
- Doesn't meet expectations on state test



- Child receives a B in math
- Doesn't meet expectations on state test
- Child's school received an overall performance rating of C





## Contact

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# Systems, Handoffs, Fumbles, and Bright Spots:





# Who are our Parents & Families?

- First, a Key Fact: All parents and families want to see their children succeed
- Second, demographics and socio-economic status can paint a grim picture
- If we don't get details we're subject to stereotype
- If we don't dig deeper, our biases aren't challenged or addressed





# Who are our students?

- Over 50% of our students are children of color
- Over 50% of our students live in poverty
- 13% receive special education services
- Almost 10% are English language learners



# What do our less “affluent” parents & families experience day to day

- Historically underserved by key institutions that are supposed to support them
- Often underemployed or working multiple low-paying jobs
- Often have less flexibility or control in terms of their work schedules
- Often have less access or fewer mechanisms to influence policy, key leaders and decision-makers (sense of agency)
- Often have less access to “high quality” early childhood and K-12 education settings
- Often face schools that lack the capacity to build trust and relationships

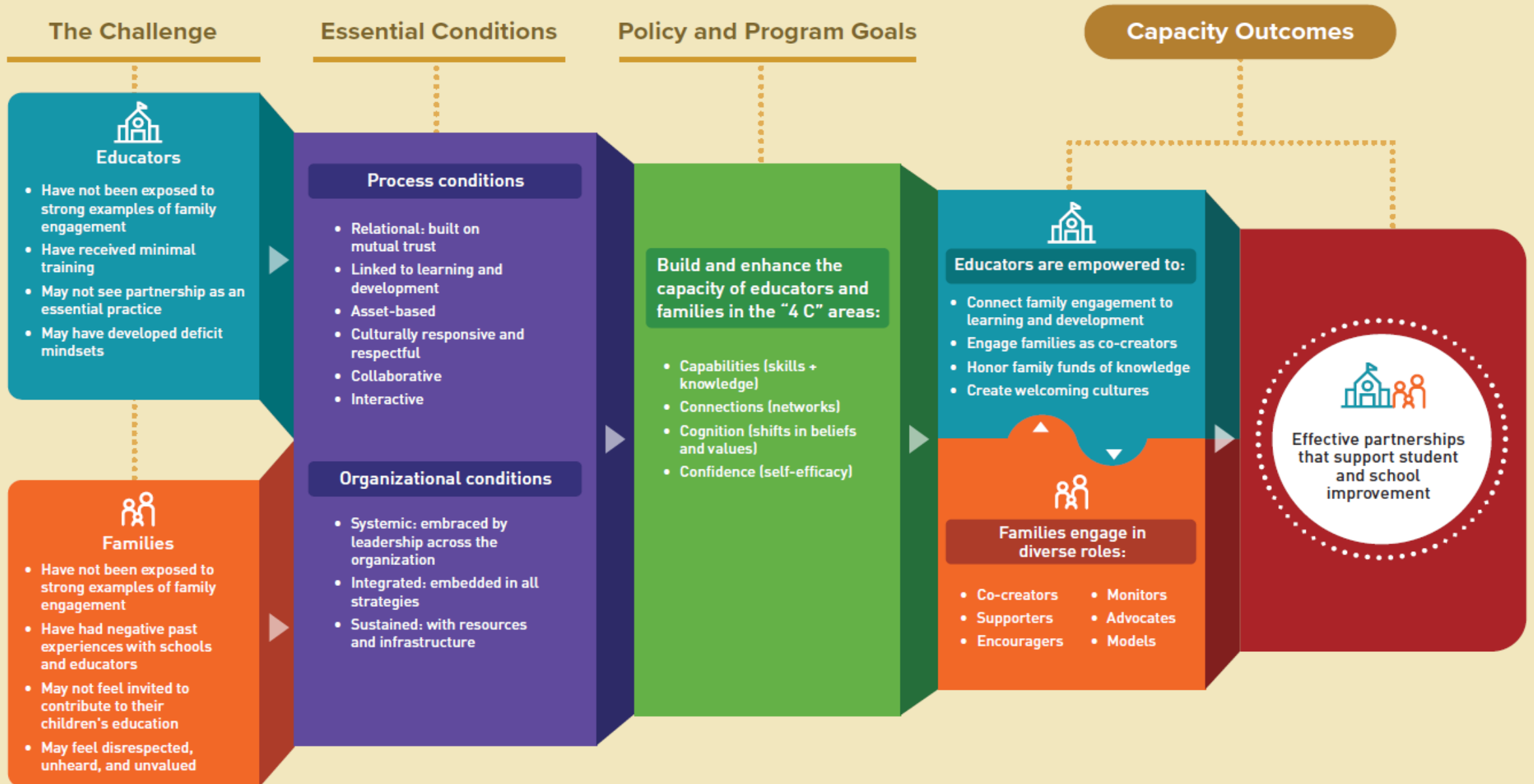
# Old-school Assumptions

- Schools determine how parents are involved. Parents' roles are limited to fundraising, chaperoning and attending PTA meetings.
- Parents need to have specific skills to be resources. Many lack the capacity or willingness to be involved. (deficit-model)
- Starting point: Hold a PTA meeting and have parents sign up for committees.
- Diversity is a challenge. School culture must be imposed on the educational community.
- School knows best, is solely responsible for decision-making, and passes knowledge on to families.
- A system-chosen standardized test determines accountability.
- Parents who are not visible at the school are not contributing to their children's education
- Underlying message: parent involvement is not important for school success.

# New-school Assumptions

- Parents and school staff decide together the meaningful and multiple ways families can be involved: as teachers, supporters, advocates, decision makers, ambassadors and monitors.
- Parents/families are resources to their children's schools. Schools must recognize and cultivate the knowledge and strength of each family. (asset-model)
- Starting point: building trust in a variety of ways.
- Diversity is a strength. School culture and leadership must reflect the diversity of the school community, and racism must be addressed.
- Everyone has knowledge and children's best interests at heart.
- Families, schools and communities hold each other accountable.
- Parents who help their children at home to be ready for school each day are contributing to their education.
- Parent/family engagement & family-school collaboration is required for school improvement

# The Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2)



## Process Conditions

- Relational - built on mutual trust
- Linked to Learning and development
- Asset based
- Culturally responsive and respectful
- Collaborative
- Interactive

## Organizational Conditions

- Systemic
  - ✓ Embraced by leadership across the organization
- Integrated
  - ✓ Embedded in all strategies
- Sustained
  - ✓ With resources and infrastructure



# Taking It To the Next Level

Strengthening and Sustaining  
Family Engagement through  
Integrated, Systemic Practice

**IEL** Institute for  
Educational  
Leadership  
Innovation, Equity, Leadership.

By Michele P. Brooks, S. Kwesi Rollins,  
Joline Collins, Natalie Mayanja

JULY 2019

*Publication URL:*

<http://bit.ly/NextLevelFE>



# Systemic Engagement: *a definition*

“The establishment of systems and structures that promote and embed engagement principles into a district’s core priorities, policies, and practices.”

- *Taking It To the Next Level*

# Key Elements of Systemic Engagement

- District leadership champions and deeply values engagement, which is evident in how families and community are leveraged as assets.
- Policies, plans, and protocols contain clearly-defined expectations and accountability for engagement across all levels of the district.
- Systems of support are in place to build capacity for district and school leaders and staff to meet expectations.
- Systems connected to the district's overarching goals and targets monitor engagement practice, measure outcomes, and assess impact.

# Key Elements of Systemic Engagement

- Engagement practices are integrated across departments, and there are structures to support collaborative efforts to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Engagement structures, goals, and practices are aligned to the district's strategic vision, goals, and targets.
- Time and resources allocated for engagement are aligned to provide sustainable support and coherence.

## Leadership Drives Systemic Engagement



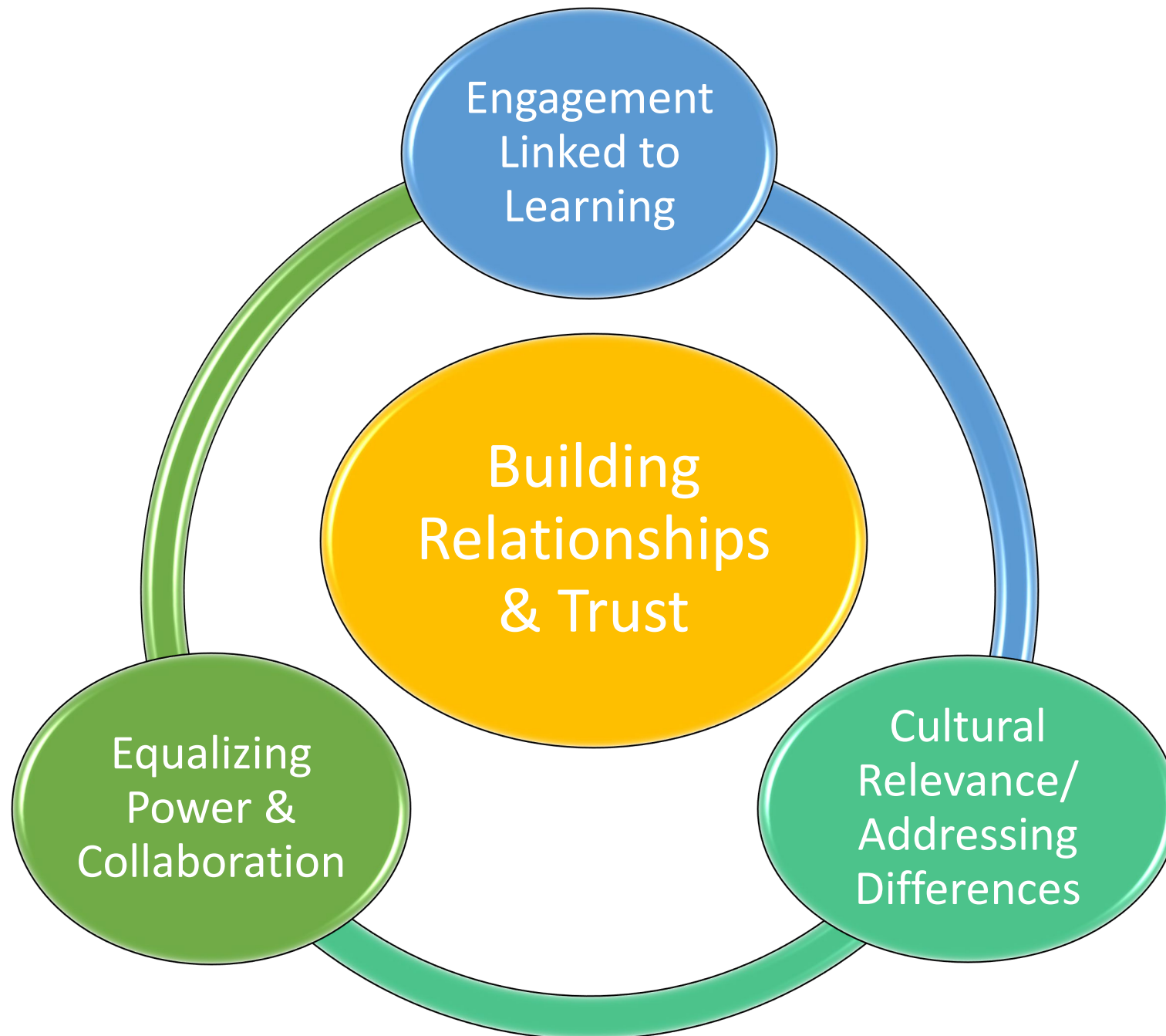
# Bright Spots: *Combining High-Impact Strategies*

**Home Visits +  
Share data with families**

- **Build relationships**
- **Share knowledge and goals for child**
- **Explain data**
- **Focus on skills**
- **Develop a plan**
- **Share progress**
- **Evaluate**

**Improved  
outcomes for  
children**

# Bright Spots



# Bright Spot: Read by 4<sup>th</sup> – Six **Bold** Ideas

1. Grownup **embrace life's teachable moments** in a city full of learning landscapes.
2. Families make **perfect school attendance a monthly goal** because **every day counts, start to finish.**
3. All teachers are **prepared and resourced** to teach reading.
4. Children are **connected to reading during the summer and out-of-school time** and have **access to free, quality reading support.**
5. Children have a **personal home library.**
6. A **Reading Captain** on every block connects families to **early education resources.**

# Despite many challenges our Parents and Families are

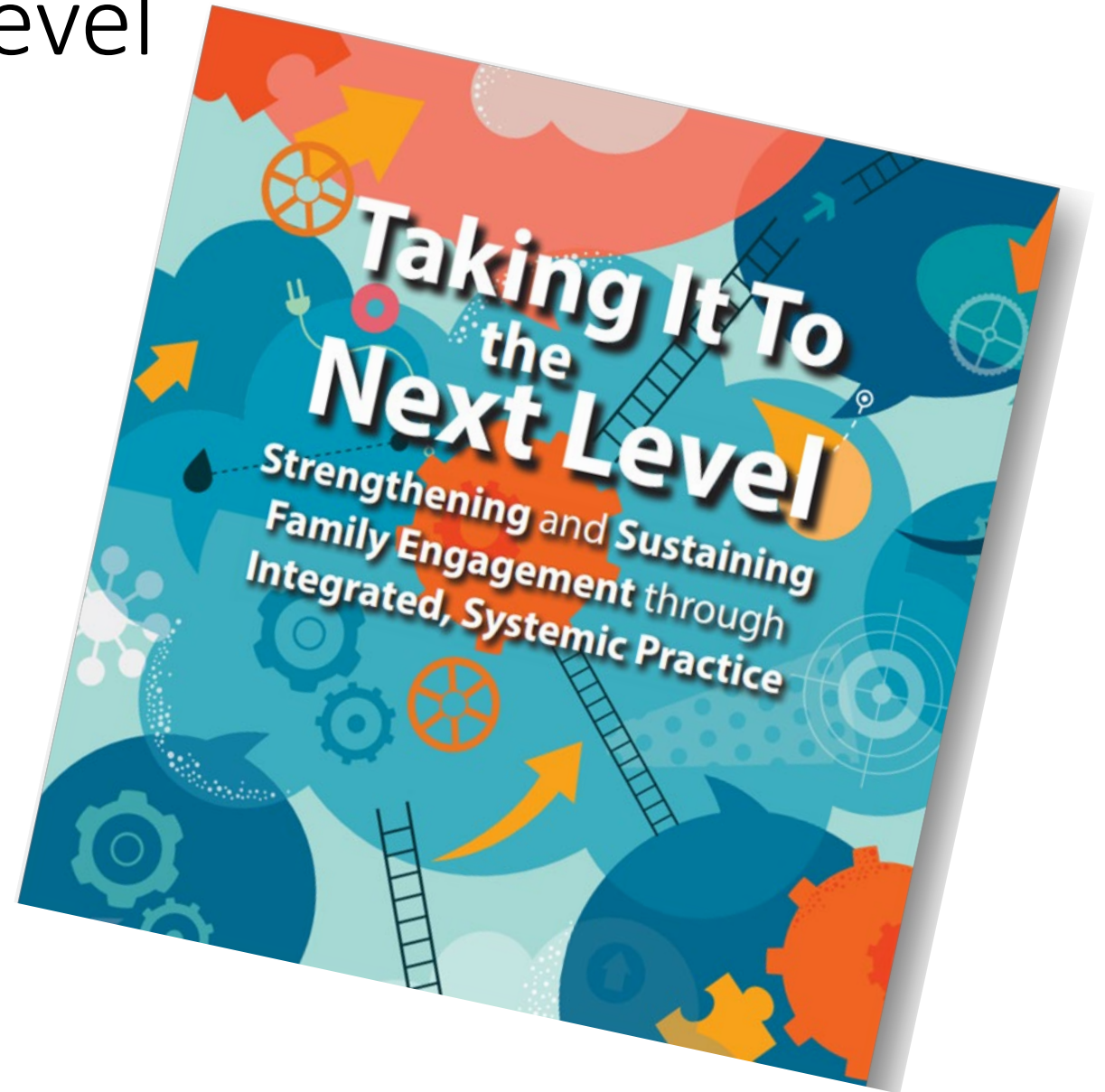
- Resilient
- Creative
- Savvy
- Committed
- Eager to help their children to do better
- Eager to be engaged
- Getting organized and finding their voice all over the country





# Taking It To the Next Level

*“Districts must view family and community engagement as a collective endeavor, distributed across departments with indicators and regular data collection to monitor implementation and provide for continuous improvement.”*







**Institute for  
Educational  
Leadership**

**Innovation. Equity. Leadership.**

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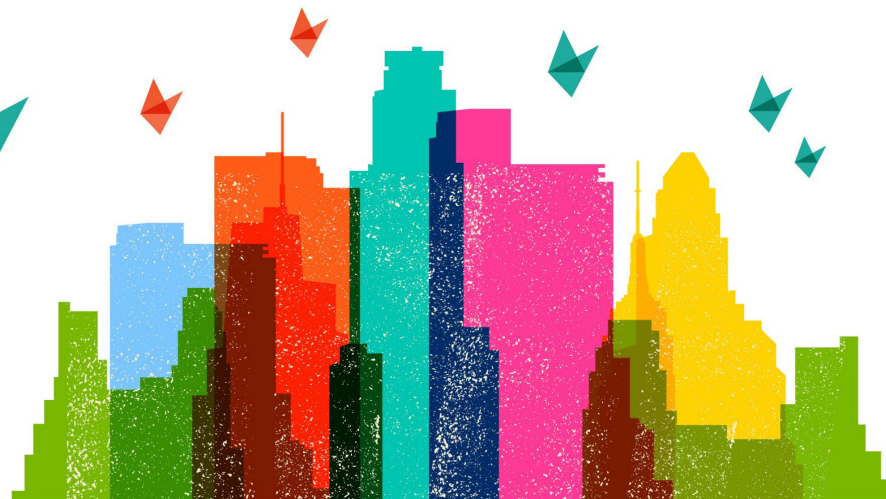
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@fcenetwork



**LOS ANGELES  
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**A NATIONAL SUMMIT  
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& FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

<http://ow.ly/9Eyn50xbyDB>

# Questions & Discussion

# Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

## PARTNER WEBINARS

Reach Out and Read: The Next Chapter

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

## PARTNER WEBINARS

Cornerstone of American Communities, Blueprint for America's Future Success: Head Start in 2019

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

## PRODUCTIVE PARENT/TEACHER PARTNERSHIP WEBINARS

Making Hopes & Dreams the Center of the Parent/Teacher Relationship

Tuesday, Dec. 17, 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT

Please join us!

[gradelevelreading.net](http://gradelevelreading.net) @readingby3rd #GLReading #LearningTuesdays

