



Building Cultural Competence through Family Engagement

MSAN Institute
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University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Welcome

- Angel Barajas, FAST® Program Specialist & Certified FAST® Trainer Supervisor
 - From San Antonio, TX; work for a nonprofit, Families & Schools Together, Inc., based in Madison, Wisconsin
 - Background in Education (EC-4)
 - 15 years working with children and families for: Summer Programs, After School Care, Teaching, Youth Services/Family Engagement, FAST, Youth Groups, Multiple Levels
- Who's in the room?
 - Parents, Teachers, Faculty, District Representatives, Community Representatives
 - ES/MS/HS, Special Programs/Education
 - Anyone else?



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FAST[®] and Families & Schools Together, Inc.

- FAST is an evidence-based parent engagement program that helps children thrive by building strong relationships at home.
- FAST has been engaging families for over 25 years throughout the U.S. and in 20 countries worldwide.
- Our 80% retention rate is one of the highest among early intervention parenting skills programs – especially among low-income, stressed and isolated parents.
- FAST was founded in Madison by Dr. Lynn McDonald, who spent 22 years as a researcher at Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) and as an Assistant Professor of Social Work at University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- FAST is offered through Families & Schools Together, Inc. a non-profit, 501(c)(3) based in Madison, Wisconsin.

Engagement Starts With You

Activity-10 minutes

- Form groups of 4-6 people.
- Decide in what order everyone in the group will answer the questions. (Birthdays from Jan-Dec)
- Take turn answering the questions on the next slide.
 - For example, the person whose birthday is closest to January 1st will answer Question 1; the person whose birthday is next will answer Question 2 and so on.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. Name a gift you'll never forget.
3. Does your name have a special meaning and/or were you named after someone special?
4. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
5. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
6. If you could eat your favorite food right now, what would it be?

Engagement Starts With You

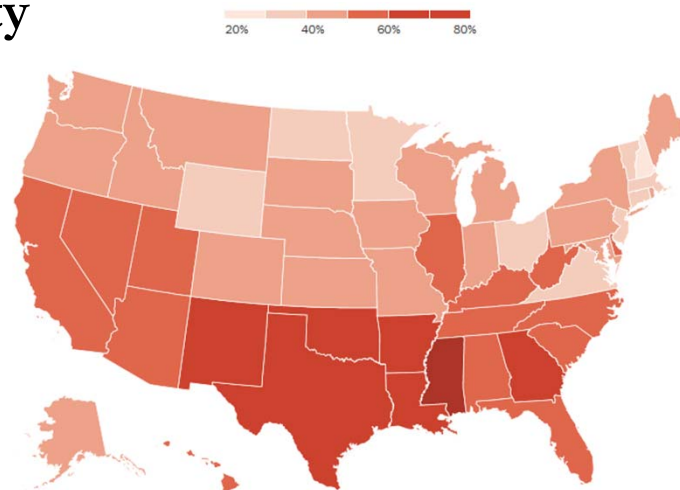
Activity Debrief

- Did you learn something new about someone?
- Do you feel a little more comfortable in your talking/physical “space”?

Workshop Objectives

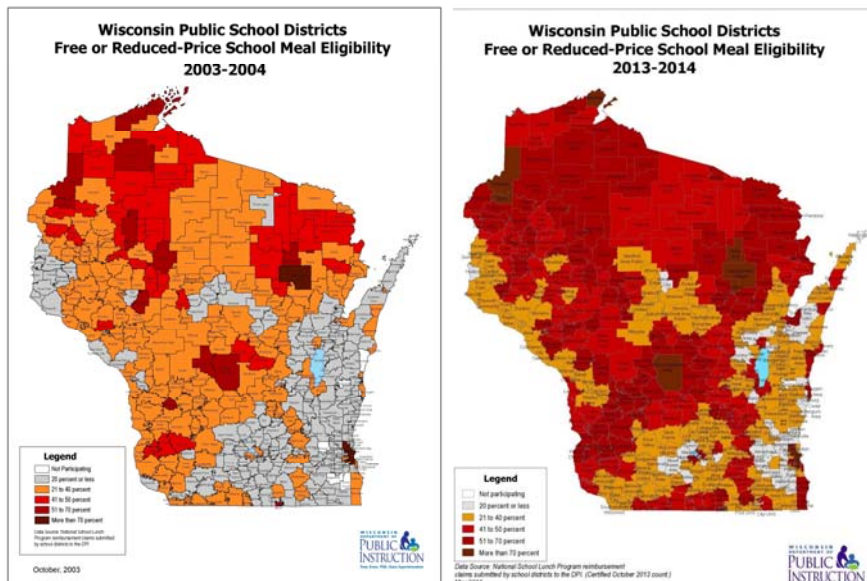
- Consider what has changed in the world, creating more challenges for parents and families to engage in schools.
- Discuss the key factors that are significant in creating successful family-community-school engagement.
- Define how increasing family-community-school engagement can support a culturally competent environment.
- Develop a list of next steps for your campus.

Majority of U.S. Public Schools in Poverty

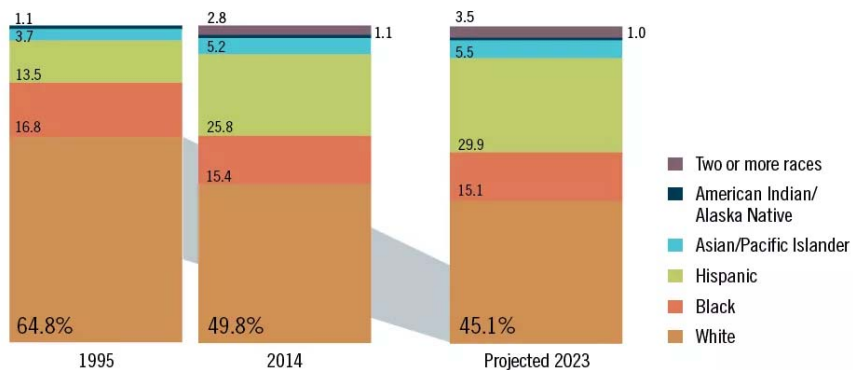


SOURCE: SEF calculations of NCES Common Core of Data, 2013. Published Jan. 16, 2015.

Wisconsin 10 Year Trend



School Demographics Are Changing



Why Families Are Not Engaged

“Because of a myriad of reasons including historic disenfranchisement, systemic marginalization, cultural diversity, language barriers, and a lack of leadership at the school level, many urban parents remain disempowered and fail to participate in the education of their children.”

(Karren Dunkley, Deputy Chief, The School District of Philadelphia, 2013)

Why Families Are Not Engaged

- Increasing wealth disparities highlight the need for wrap-around, supportive services for struggling families.
- Often, going to school is “not enough” to ensure that children living in homes below or at poverty level have an equal chance to succeed in school.
- Parent/family engagement programming is known to improve academic outcomes for all children, but it is particularly helpful to families who have previously been disenfranchised by educational systems.

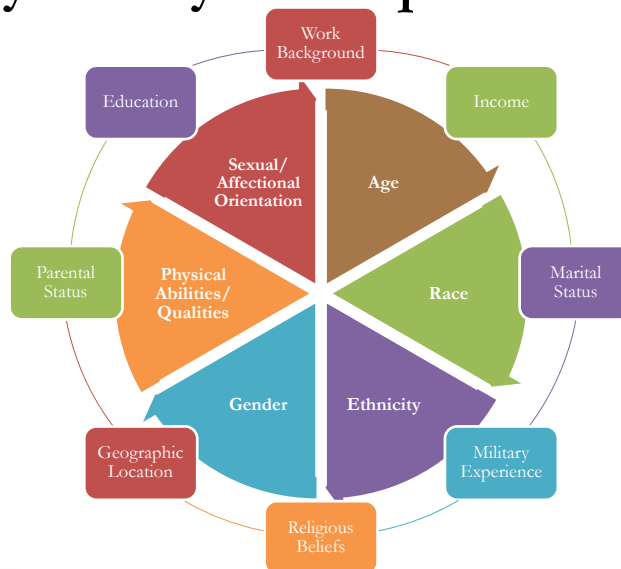
Why Are We Here Today?

“One of the most effective ways to learn about oneself is by taking seriously the cultures of others.

It forces you to pay attention to those details of life which differentiate them from you”.

(Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language)

Every Family is Unique



What is Cultural Competence and why is it important?

Cultural competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families.

(National Education Association, www.nea.org)

Family-Community-School Engagement What is it?

What is Family Engagement?

Today's call for families to become more involved in their children's education both at home and at school is not new.

(National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, dropoutprevention.org)

What is Community Engagement?

Organizations and individuals building ongoing, permanent relationships for the purpose of applying a collective vision for the benefit of a community.

For some, it means residents taking direct action. For others, it focuses on building public support for policies, programs or investments.

(Dr. Gene Roehlkepartain, VP, Search Institute)

What is School Engagement?

The school taking an interest in the family.

Considering the family's dynamics, cultural influences, circumstances and meeting the family where they are to work in partnership for the success of the child.

Why Family-Community-School Engagement?

All Students Benefit

“There is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages.”

- What’s the Impact?
 - Earn higher grades and test scores
 - Enroll in higher level programs
 - Be promoted and earn credits
 - Adapt well to school and attend regularly
 - Have better social skills and behavior
 - Graduate and go on to higher education

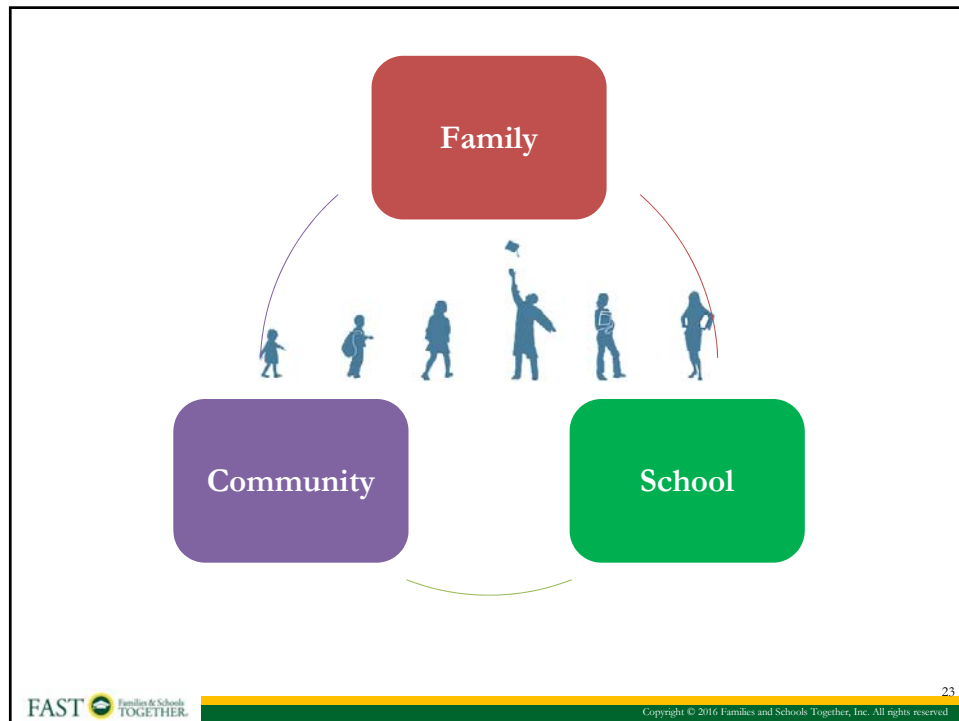
(Karen Mapp, Sr. Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education)

Improved Academic Achievement

A synthesis of research by Henderson and Mapp (2002) concluded that there is a positive relationship between family engagement and improved academic achievement.

- Children in grades K–3 whose parents participate in school activities have high quality work habits and task orientation
- Children whose parents provide support with homework perform better in the classroom.
- Children whose parents explain educational tasks are more likely to participate in class, seek help from the teacher when needed, and monitor their own work.
- Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) has shown positive effects on student achievement at the middle school level.

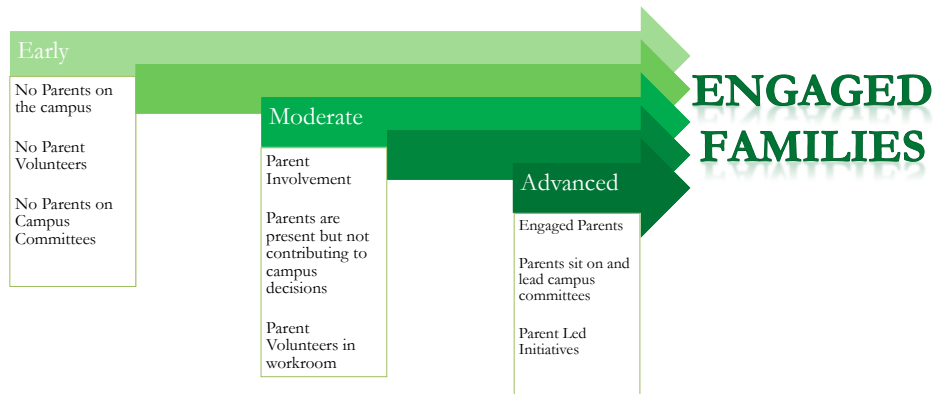
(<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-involvement-makes-a-difference-in-school-success>)



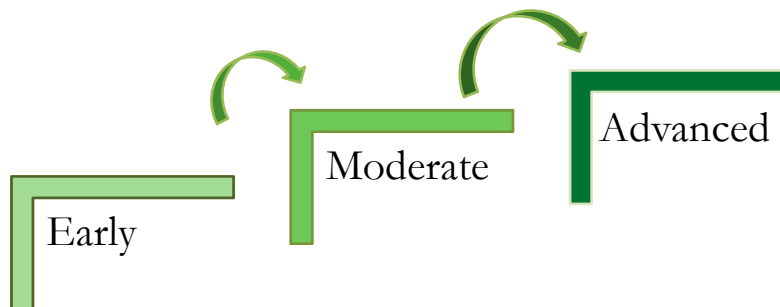
Cultural Competence + Family Engagement

- Cultural competency and family engagement is a reciprocal process – you can't have one without the other.
- Valuing the background and insights of parents is key to building cultural competence and increasing engagement.
- Increasing parent voice and leadership supports an equal relationship, helping to build cultural competence while simultaneously increasing parent engagement.
- Parents need to be at the table while discussing an engagement approach or activities to best represent their views.

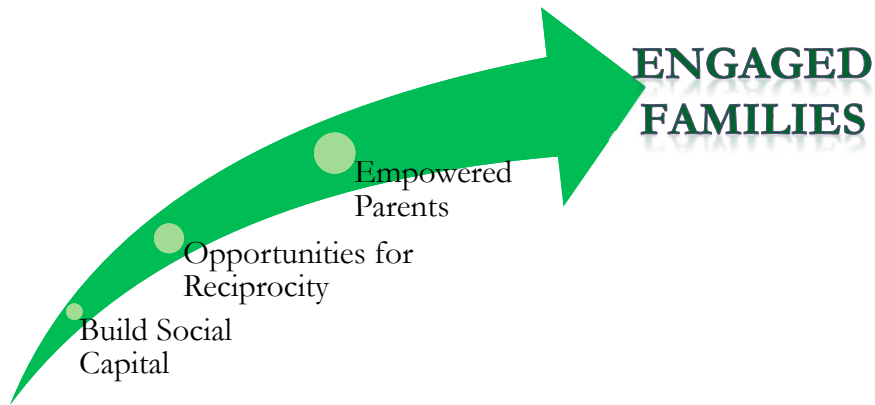
Activity: where are we with our level of engagement?



How do we move forward?



Key Factors to Enhance Family-Community-School Engagement



Social Capital – What is it?

Broadly, social capital is the idea that involvement or participation in social groups has positive consequences for the individual and the group or community.

(Portes, 1988)

Social Capital – What does it look like?



- People talking with people. People listening to people.
- Families who know other families, families talking to each other at school events.
- Families-Communities-Schools sharing resources and coming together to support each other.
- Understanding you are not alone.

Reciprocity – What is it?

A situation or relationship in which two people or groups agree to do something similar for each other, to allow each other to have the same rights, etc.: a reciprocal arrangement or relationship.

(Merriam-Webster, image: <http://www.paloaltoonline.com>)

Reciprocity – What Does It Look Like?



- A partnership, a mutual exchange of ideas, talents, perspectives and information.
- School asking families for help and input, families coordinating events, families making campus decisions.

Parent Empowerment – What Is It?

[It] is described as both a process and an outcome to develop individuals' sense of mastery and control over their personal lives.

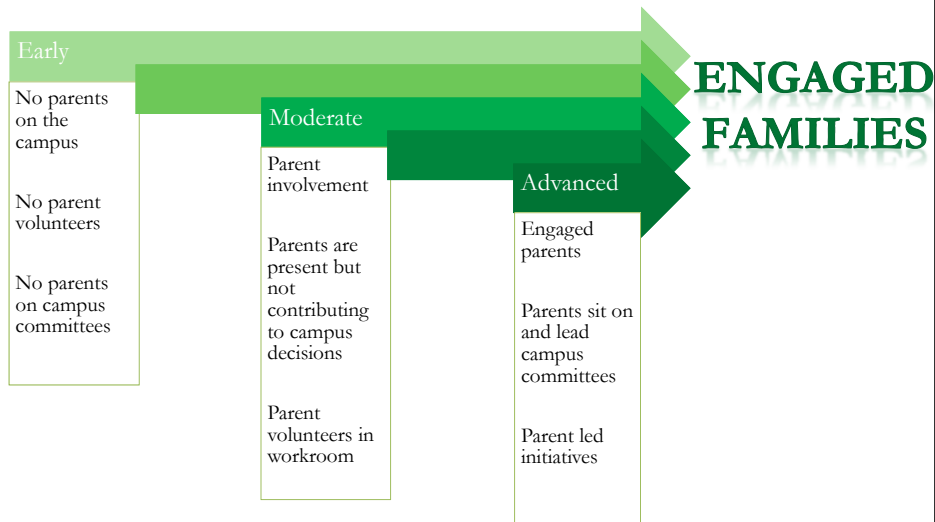
(Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988)

Parent Empowerment – What Does It Look Like?



- Families asking for support and resources, utilizing and bringing in new resources.
- Informed parties-families and school.
- Families on the campus.

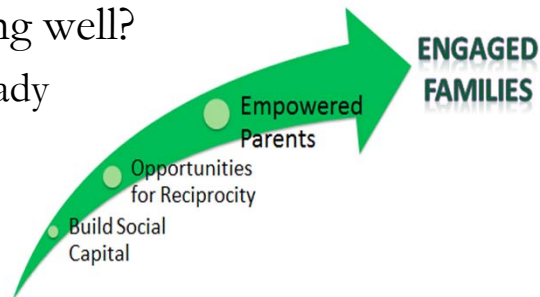
It's a Process



Key Factors to Enhance Family-Community-School Engagement

What are you doing well?

- What are you already doing to support:
 - Social Capital
 - Reciprocity
 - Parent Empowerment



Think-Pair-Share

- **Think:**
 - 4 minutes to review your list from your assessment. Write down more things you're already doing well to support:
 - Social Capital, Reciprocity & Parent Empowerment
- **Pair:**
 - Pair up with someone at your table
 - 3 minutes to share with your partner what you're doing well

Think-Pair-Share cont.

- **Share** (*What could you do?*)
 - 2-2-2 Activity
 - Break up into groups of 6 (facilitator will help)
 - One group per poster
 - 2 Social Capital posters (opposite sides of the room)
 - 2 Reciprocity posters (opposite sides of the room)
 - 2 Parent Empowerment posters (opposite sides of the room)

Think-Pair-Share cont.

- Each group will have 2 minutes with their poster to list at least 10 things that can be done to increase that factor in their campus/district/organization.
- After 2 minutes groups will rotate to a new poster (facilitator will assist with directing everyone).
- This continues until each group has had an opportunity to contribute to each factor (Social Capital, Reciprocity, Parent Empowerment).
- Debrief

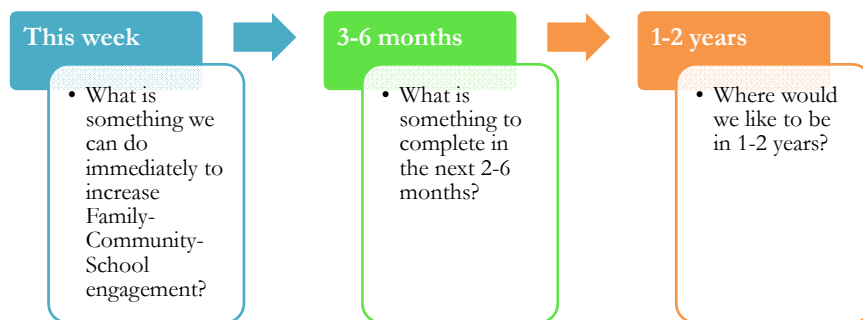
Why Are We Here Today?

Engaged parents and families support child academic success, helping them become “competent, dynamic and self-aware global citizens”.



(Karren Dunkley, 2013 image: coexist.org)

Next Steps



Think about: Who should be involved and how together, you will make it happen.



Questions?

Families and Schools Together, Inc.

Toll Free: (888) 629-2481

www.familiesandschools.org

Join our conversation about family-community-school
engagement:

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