PowerSchool

Effective K-12 Family Engagement Activities and Strategies

A Guide for Educators



Introduction

When schools and districts address the needs of their community, they are more likely to engage successfully with families. In turn, this leads to improved outcomes for students.

When families are involved in a student's education:

- Students show higher engagement and motivation
- Students score at or above proficiency on standardized math tests
- Students display greater reading achievement, language comprehension, expressive language skills, and attention in the classroom

As more education leaders enhance their school-home connection, some have begun to implement software that simplifies interactions and ensures that parents are well-informed, connected, and involved.

Here are some strategies and activities that boost family engagement.

Impact of Family Involvement in Education



Family support increases math proficiency.



Children with engaged families have higher GPAs.



Parent impact increases student interest in reading.

65%

of educators correlate absenteeism with a lack of family support.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

1 Make it Easy for Families

One way to highlight the impact of family engagement is to demonstrate its benefits. Schools often find success with positive phone calls or nudge letters about the benefits of family involvement in learning.

Nudge letters help demonstrate the impact of family involvement on student success. They can be sent by mail, email, text, or school messaging systems. They often include:

- **Gentle reminders** about simple actions for family involvement, like attending meetings or helping with homework.
- **Clear calls** to action that provide steps families can take to support their child's learning and success.
- **Positive reinforcement** that acknowledges and celebrates the impact of family engagement on student development.



Activities and Strategies to Make Engagement Easy for Families



Collect updates into a single weekly email that tells families about school activities. While updates are separate from emergent notifications like weather-related cancellations, schools can also ask families which way they would like to receive both.



Invite caregivers to share their perspective in regular family surveys. This data can help districts understand the broader school community experience and gain clarity on possible challenges or disparities that can guide policymaking.



Include a link in email signatures and in weekly newsletters where families can offer suggestions, skills, or information updates. When planning fundraising, events, or field trips, schools can offer various options for family participation.



Beyond chaperoning, parents can be supportive from home by creating nametags, cutting out designs for bulletin boards, or introducing staff to their community connections. With a list of ways to participate, schools show families that all help is valuable.



Allow parents to sign up for home visits. Research points to several benefits of home visits, including engagement in academics, increased trust, and improved behavior.



Host an annual event that highlights cultures and foods across your community. This multicultural event can include class visits or an evening gathering where families share meals or traditions that students may not have experienced.

Reducing Information Overload for Families

Learn how Billings Catholic Schools streamlined family communication and boosted engagement.

Read Now



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

2 Highlight the Impact of Family Involvement

Just as communities are multi-generational, so are today's caretakers. Families can include grandparents, co-parents, non-English speakers, other relatives, foster parents, and more. The most successful schools engage all types of families with streamlined systems like single sign-on and clear navigation tools to view student progress.

Use multiple channels and translation features

Schools that offer families multiple avenues for communication are more likely to engage them. While some people may prefer mobile alerts, others might prefer desktop login details or in-person workshops. To reach families across languages and cultures, schools can select systems with embedded two-way translation.

Avoid information overload

Establish a communications plan that offers a balance between "too many" and "not enough" updates. This can start with a regularly scheduled newsletter that caretakers rely on receiving each week.



Activities and Strategies that Highlight the Impact of Family Involvement



Adopt software systems that notify families when their child arrives at school to show that the school cares about their presence in class and to keep them informed on possible interventions can help ensure their child's arrival.



Build family engagement into course curricula by having students write letters to relatives or give extra credit for parental signatures on schoolwork and reading logs.



Host Muffins with Moms, Donuts with Dads, Refreshments with Relatives, or Grandparents Day events with a light snack and an activity to do together.



Ask families to present on their profession or business. Allow them to **share their experience** on Zoom or recorded video as well.



Reward students and thank families for in-person or virtual attendance in family workshops that connect them with community resources.



Use a portion of your **weekly newsletter or classroom updates** to ask parents about their skills/hobbies, and to share statistics on the impact of family involvement.



Stay tuned into social media discussions. Many communities have locally based social feeds where parents engage on a variety of topics around schooling, and leaders can acknowledge/address their needs via their professional accounts.

Engage Families in Their Child's Education

Learn how PowerSchool's communication tools lead to student success.

Get a Demo



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

3 Offer Transparency and Clarity

Recently, schools have worked to gracefully communicate changes in funding or staff transitions. They have become more transparent about these changes than ever before, often including updates in their weekly newsletter to offer transparency and build trust among families at the school.

When schools share information with families and make the school, staff, and classroom feel accessible, they:

- Gain an understanding of community needs
- Can better support students across school and home



Activities and Strategies that Demonstrate Transparency and Clarity



Avoid using acronyms and lingo in school communications. Simply said: families that quickly understand school activities and goals can better support their students.



Offer families access to simpler tools for engagement. This can include an easy-to-navigate website, an AI-powered chat buddy to answer their questions, simple log-in processes, and a clear display of student progress.



Make two-way messaging accessible to parents so that they can quickly reply to teacher comments on classwork or check in with teachers easily.



Hold schoolwide "open house" events or a monthly "office hour" where families can drop in or schedule time with school leaders.



Include updates from school board meetings and parent-teacher organizations in your weekly school newsletter.



Host "caregiver shadow days" that allow them to visit classrooms and attend a special "caregiver-only" focus group where they can give feedback on selected topics.

Improve Transparency for Families

MyPowerHub offers centralized access to school systems, reports, and student progress in just a few clicks.

Get the Guide

How PowerSchool Can Help



Engaging families is an ongoing process, and that's why we offer a comprehensive suite of solutions that help K-12 schools with effective family engagement. PowerSchool SchoolMessenger Communicate helps schools keep families informed through text, email, and phone updates in a single system. Caregivers can choose how they receive messages, and built-in translation ensures that all families stay connected.

With two-way messaging, communication is always a click away. MyPowerHub offers families unparalleled transparency into their child's success by providing a single place to check grades, attendance, and school updates. Instead of managing multiple accounts, users can quickly engage with their student's learning with an easy-to-use system.

In this eBook, we shared family engagement strategies to help strengthen the school-home connection. As families feel more welcomed into your school community, they can better support their child's long-term success.



PowerSchool

Personalized Education for Every Journey

www.PowerSchool.com

EB_CCLNV-1437835_031325