

GEAR UP Professional Development



TOPIC

Strengthening Family Engagement

GEAR UP “R”

Reaching Higher Rigor Relevance Relationships Raising Awareness

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Learning Communities Leadership Resources Data
 Learning Designs Implementation Outcomes

learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning

OUTCOMES

Educators will examine the characteristics of effective family engagement programs and identify strategies their school can use to strengthen family engagement.

MATERIALS & SET UP

- *Family Engagement* research brief: oregongearup.org/files/research-briefs/familyengagement.pdf
- *Partnership with Parents to Promote Postsecondary Enrollment* research brief: oregongearup.org/files/research-briefs/familyengagement.pdf
- *Family Engagement Planning Template*: [page 3](#)
- Flipchart, whiteboard, or something to write on
- Markers
- Post-it notes

PRIOR TO THE MEETING:

Arrange the room so that groups can meet and talk with one another. Tables or other inclusive organization works best. Provide each group with copies of the two Research Briefs, the planning template, a flipchart and markers. Adapt the number of groups based on the size of the faculty.

AGENDA

Time: 45-70 minutes

5-10 minutes

Discuss as a group:

- **How are we doing on family engagement? What are our strengths? What opportunities for improvement exist?**

Depending on the size of the group, this could be a table discussion and then a share out to the larger group.

5-10 minutes

Distribute copies of the *Family Engagement* research brief and ask participants to read the first page and a half. Ask them to focus on the six components of family engagement programs (p. 1) and the six types of family involvement (p. 2). Also ask participants to read a section of the *Partnering with Parents* research brief beginning with “Be a Myth Buster” on page 4.

15-20 minutes

Ask each table group to discuss how your school can strengthen family engagement using the six components and six types of family involvement. Ask participants to use the handout, *Family Engagement Planning Template*, to organize their work.

10-15 minutes

As a total group, use a round-robin approach to report out the ideas that each group identified. Record ideas on a flipchart or white board. Then ask each table to briefly discuss the ideas and identify one thing they can commit to doing to increase family engagement.

5-10 minutes

Ask each participant to respond to this prompt.

- I came expecting . . .
- I got . . .
- I value . . .
- I commit to . . .

Invite participants to share their commitment on a post-it-note and place it on a flipchart as they leave the meeting. Use these “notes” to guide further work on a family engagement plan and for discussion at a follow-up meeting.

You might also ask for one volunteer from each table to review the suggestions and work with you to plan a follow-up discussion.

5 minutes

Have all participants complete an online evaluation form: bit.ly/gearup-pd-eval. E-mail [Jennica Vincent](mailto:Jennica.Vincent) to receive the results.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships: csos.jhu.edu
- Harvard Family Research Project: hfrp.org
- Oregon Dept. of Education 21st Century Community Learning Center Family Engagement Resources: ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=4133
- Washington State Family and Community Engagement Trust: wafamilyengagement.org
- Oregon GEAR UP Parent Engagement Toolkit (oregongearup.org/resource/parent-engagement-toolkit)

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TEMPLATE

Use this handout to organize your thoughts about strengthening family engagement.

Looking Out the Window: First, consider those things that your families and community might do to strengthen family engagement. What community resources are available? What groups or individuals should become partners? How might you talk with key individuals to work on securing these resources and partnerships?

Looking in the Mirror: Now, look internally to your school, district, and the individuals who work there. What can the staff do to strengthen family engagement? How can your school become a more inviting and welcoming place for families and community? How might you use individuals and groups in your community to strengthen your instructional program?

This activity is adapted from: DuFour, R. (2004). Cutting edge: Are you looking out the window or in a mirror? *Journal of Staff Development*, Summer 2004.