



Position Paper:
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING AND EVALUATION FOR
TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Background

Family Engagement is a full, equal and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career.

In 2017, The New York State Board of Regents adopted the Next Generation Learning Standards, which are designed to standardize curricula and improve student achievement. The Board of Regents has also approved revisions to the teacher Professional Development Standards that incorporate elements of family engagement and require ongoing training for both teachers and administrators.

Education Law 3012-c requires a performance evaluation system for instructional staff and administrators for school districts and BOCES known as Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). This evaluation system is designed to measure teacher and principal effectiveness in the areas of pupil achievement, educational effectiveness in meeting the NYS teacher or administrator standards, and evidence of family engagement.

Research demonstrates that family engagement in a child’s education improves student achievement and performance, improves attendance, reduces drop-out rates, and improves the emotional and physical well-being of children. These are indicators of school, district, and community effectiveness. Research conducted by Dr. Heather Weiss and the Harvard Family Research Project supports this principle, suggesting that families play a significant role in supporting their child’s learning by advocating for high-quality education and successfully guiding them through a complex school system. Dr. Weiss has developed a definition of effective family engagement that has been adopted by the Family, School and Community National Working Group:

“First, family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children’s learning and development.

Second, family engagement is continuous across a child’s life and entails enduring commitment but changing parent roles as children mature into young adulthood.

Third, effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn at home, in pre-kindergarten programs, in school, in after-school programs, in faith-based institutions, and the community.”

National PTA has stated: “Family engagement in education is a critical strategy for ensuring students’ academic achievement, graduation from high school and overall success in life.” With this in mind, promoting the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships is a top priority for both National and New York State PTA. The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships provide a framework for strengthening family engagement programs, activities and policies. The National PTA Standards shift the focus from what schools should do to involve families to what families, schools and communities can do together to support student achievement.

The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships are:

- Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community
- Standard 2: Communicating effectively
- Standard 3: Supporting student success
- Standard 4: Speaking up for every child



Standard 5: Sharing power

Standard 6: Collaborating with community

At the federal level, the Family Engagement in Education Act of 2015 (H.R. 1194) provides incentives for schools and districts to engage families to close the achievement gap. Specifically, this legislation is designed to empower communities by increasing Title I funding dedicated to family engagement. It proposes requiring local education agencies to develop and implement standards-based policies and practices for school-family partnerships, create Family Engagement Centers, improve professional development, build national-level capacity, and improve existing laws and funding regarding family engagement.

The NYS PTA affirms and supports the National PTA position.

The Role of NYS PTA

We are at a critical juncture in public education with strong momentum at both state and national levels to increase student achievement and teacher/principal accountability at a time when fiscal support has diminished. Given this reality, NYS PTA strongly supports meaningful, culturally competent family engagement in the process of improving student achievement and success.

Specifically, we must influence the New York State Board of Regents to adopt National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships. NYS PTA, therefore, urges teacher preparation programs to include instruction in meaningful, culturally competent family engagement, particularly the concept of ongoing, two-way school/family communication. NYS PTA also supports family engagement training as a component of ongoing professional development for all teachers and administrators. Regarding APPR, NYS PTA advocates that any future revisions include an evaluative component related to family engagement for all non-tenured and tenured teachers and administrators. Lastly, NYS PTA encourages the New York State Legislature to provide adequate funding for the development and implementation of the revised APPR processes and ongoing professional development.

For more information about the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships and National and NYS PTA programs that promote family-school partnerships, visit www.pta.org or www.nyspta.org. For more information regarding APPR, visit www.nysed.gov or www.nysut.org.

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