

Beyond Intention to Impact: Purposeful Examination of Effective Family Engagement Strategies



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Organizing Schools for Improvement

“The disconnect between local school professionals and the parents and community that a school is intended to serve is a persistent concern in many urban contexts. The absence of vital ties is a problem; their presence is a multifaceted resource for improvement. The quality of these ties links directly to students’ motivation and school participation and can provide a critical resource for classrooms.”

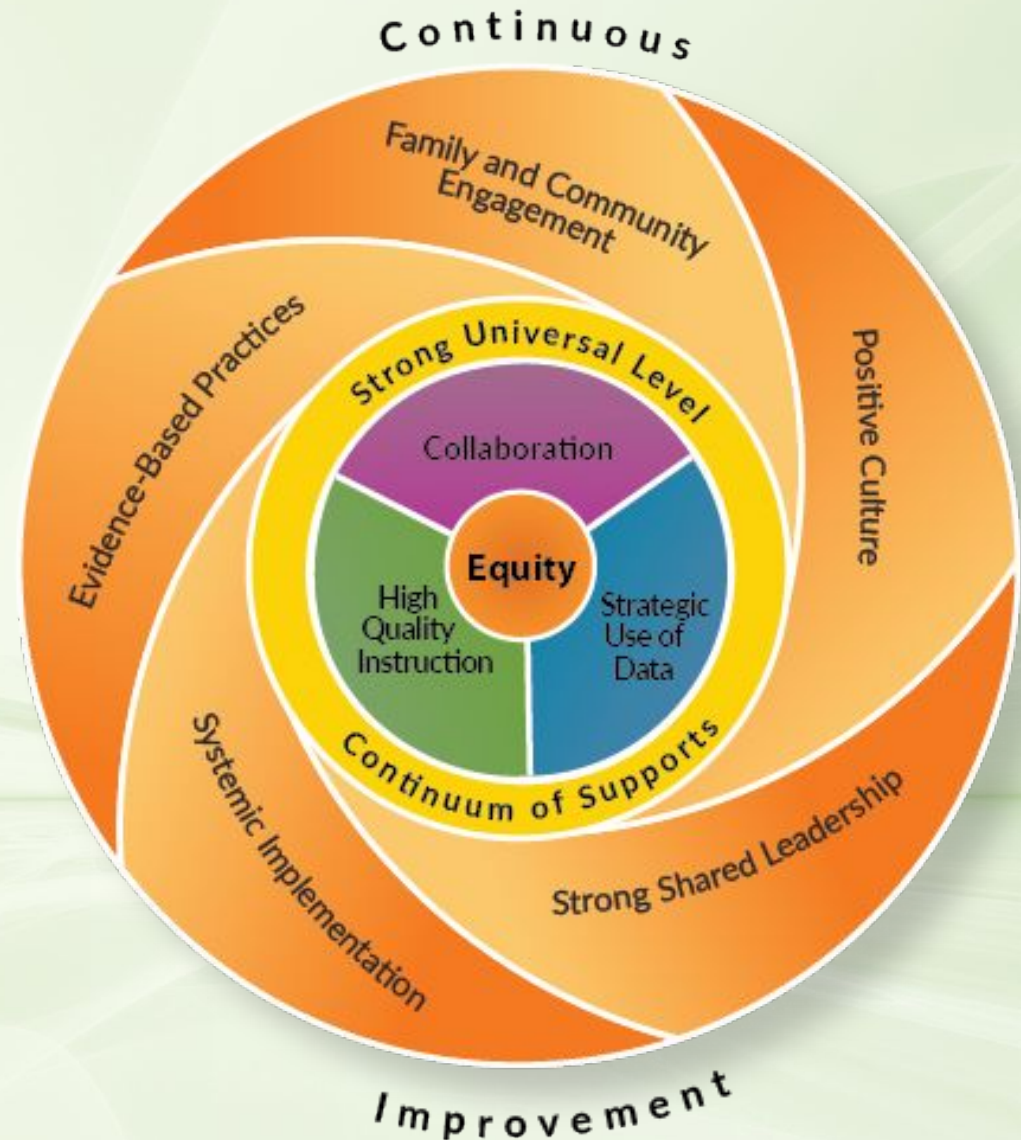
(Bryk, 2010)

An Equitable, Multi-Level System of Supports

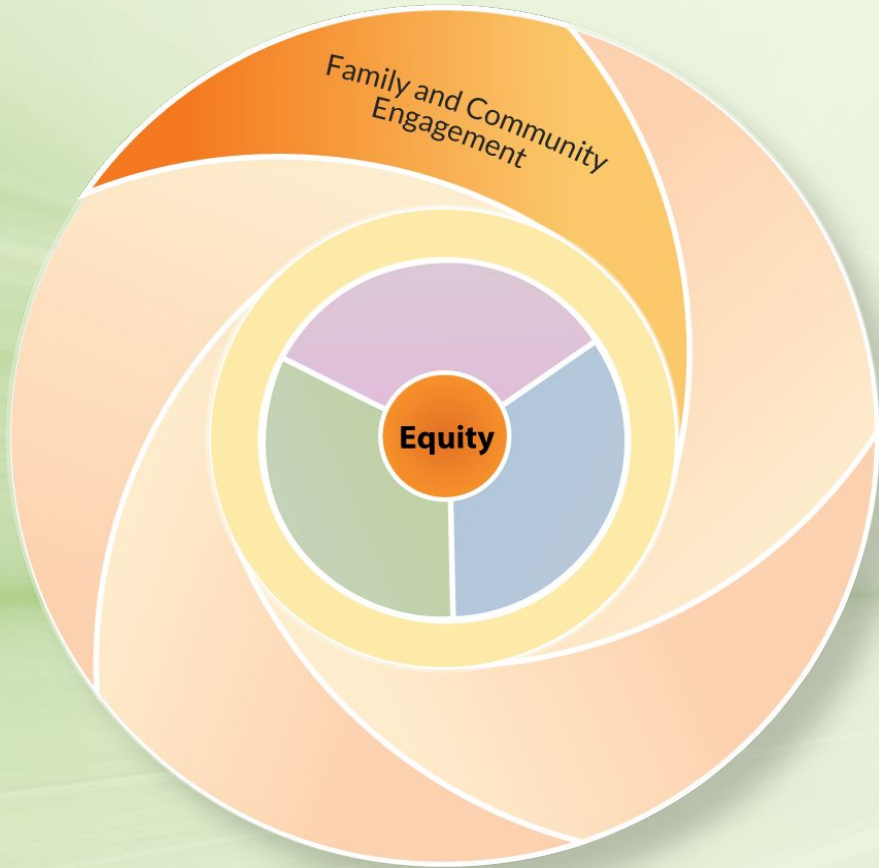
Wisconsin schools and districts are tasked with equipping every student with the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for success beyond high school.

To do this, we must offer developmental, academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports. Additionally, every learner's needs are different, so supports must be provided at varying levels (or tiers) of intensity.

How can schools and districts set up their educational systems to meet these needs? The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Rtl Center's vision is that schools and districts implement equitable, multi-level systems of supports.



Wisconsin's Framework For Equitable Multi-Level System of Supports



Family & Community Engagement:

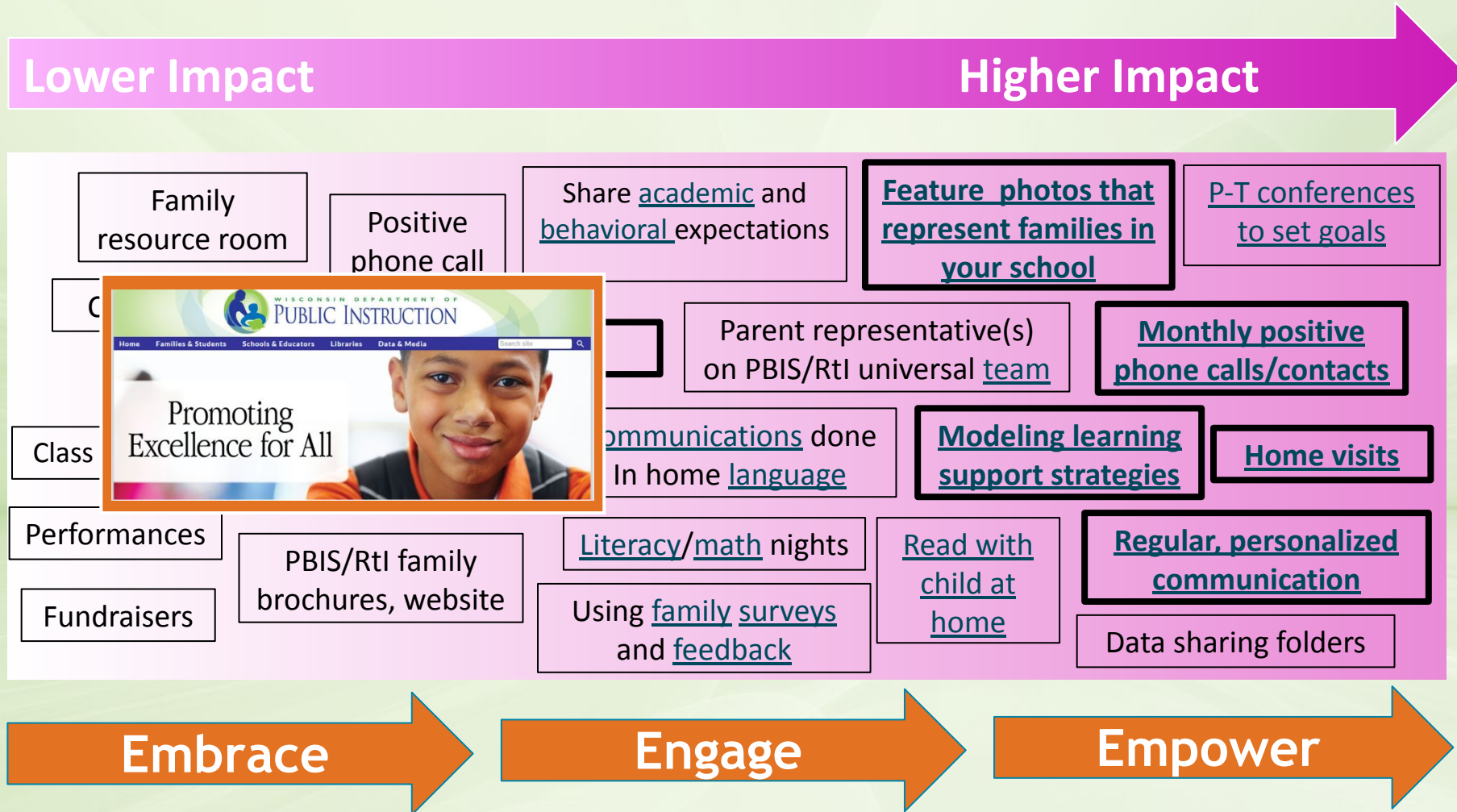
Embrace: Through words and actions, staff convey a welcoming environment, respectful of families' home cultures, values, and languages. Schools recognize families as the first teachers of and foremost experts on their child.

Engage: Families participate meaningfully in school and district level decision making. ***Family perspectives are intentionally sought through two-way communication, paying particular attention to family input from populations underserved by the school and district.***

Empower: As children proceed through the system, schools and districts involve families as active partners in their child's learning. ***Schools and districts empower families: through respectful relationships, with information and resources, and by connecting families with community assets***

Partnering with Families

Within an Equitable Multi-level System of Supports



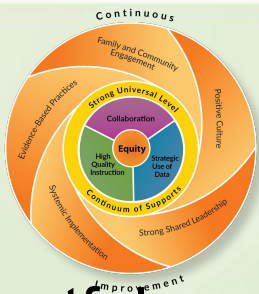
**Where do you see most of
your school or district
family engagement
practices landing?**



**Embrace, Engage or
Empower?**

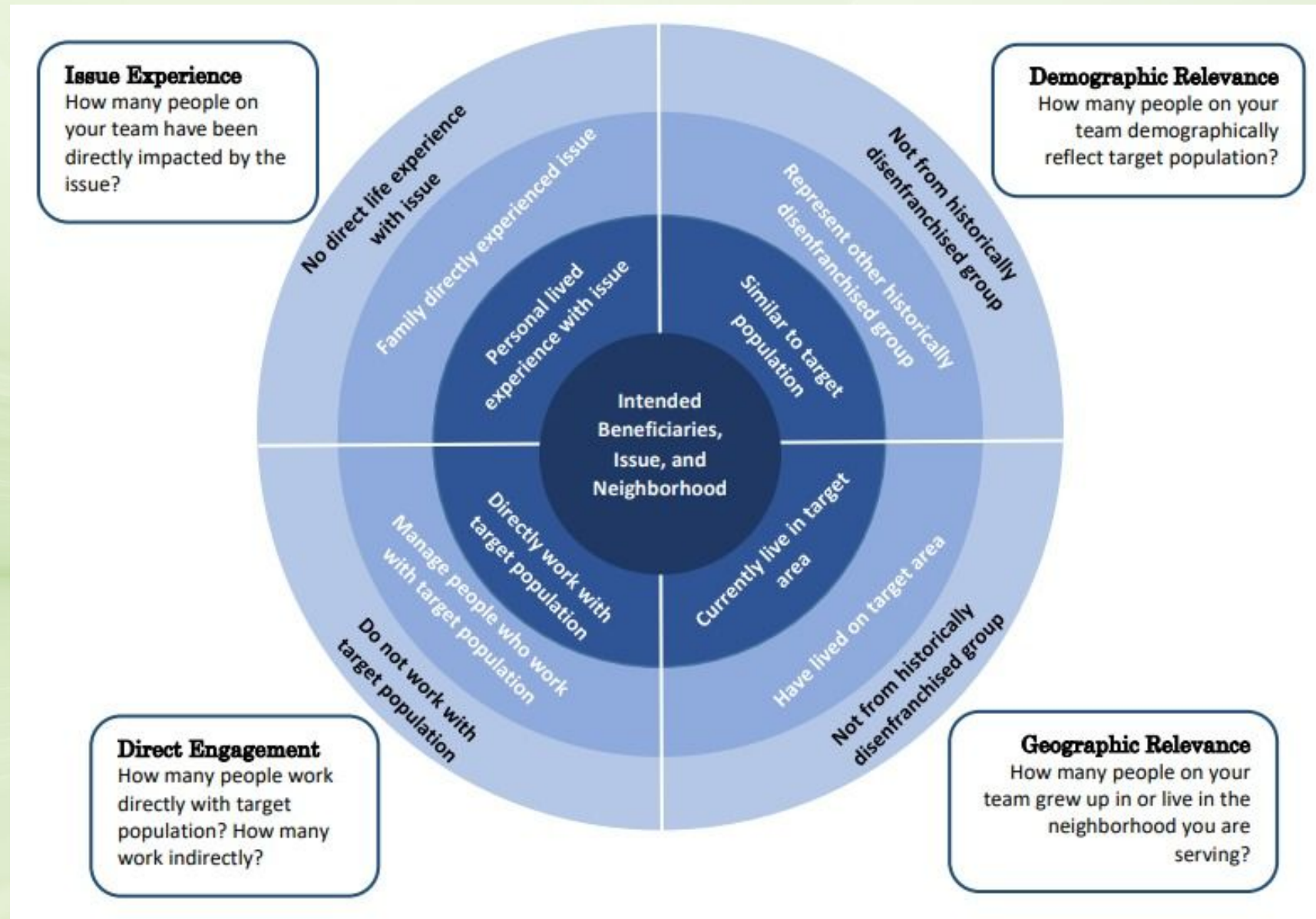


Defining Elements of Family & Community Engagement



- Create a welcoming environment
- Be respectful of families' home cultures, values & languages
- Recognize families as the first teachers of and foremost experts on their child
- Include families of meaningful participants in school-level decision making
- Seek out family perspectives through two-way communication, especially from underserved populations
- Partner *authentically* in finding solutions and making decisions that impact their child's learning
- Empower families through respectful relationships, information and resources, and by connecting families with community assets
- Partner with community agencies to create more comprehensive and accessible supports for learners and families, beyond the limits of the school day and school year
- Build cultural & linguistic bridges between families and the system

Stakeholder Engagement Guide (NIRN)





Family Engagement in the time of Covid-19

With students in an unpredictable setting of in person, cohort-based, and remote learning, family engagement is absolutely critical for meaningful learning to take place.

“Family Engagement is not about ways that families should partner with schools, but about ways that districts, schools, and educators must partner with and see families as assets for teaching and learning.”

(CRSFE in the time of Covid-19, n.d., 1)

Benefits of Partnering with Families

In the chat:

- Enter a few words or phrases on the benefits of Partnering with Families



Importance of Family Engagement

Students

- Increased Achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001)
- Increased Attendance (Simon, 2001)
- Reduced School drop-out rates (Barnard, 2004)
- Improved Social behavior (Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs, 2004)
- Improved Peer affiliations (Garbacz, Zerr, Dishion, Seeley, & Stormshak, 2018)

Parents and Teachers

- Increased Parent efficacy and role construction (Semke, Garbacz, Kwon, Sheridan, & Woods, 2010)
- Improved Parent trust of teachers (Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016)
- Improved Teachers job satisfaction and fewer transfer requests (Christenson, 1995)

Consistent 3 Year Suspension Trends for Sustaining Schools



1

Statistically
significant overall
suspension rate
decrease.

2

Statistically
significant
suspension rate
gap decrease
between Black
and White
students.

3

For all other student groups:
results have been varied.

(Sometimes positive, sometimes
negative, often not significant. Some of
this was due to small sample sizes.)

How can we take traditional family engagement practices and make them more engaging?

11 Easy Tips to Really Engage with Families

Hint: It's more than pizza...
but pizza is part of it!



Barriers to (authentic) Family Engagement

1. Conflicts with Family Life Logistics
2. Poor timing and Methods of Communication
3. Discomfort in the Building
4. Priority Given to Traditional Involvement

Involvement → Engagement: PT Conference

- 1. Start with a question!** (i.e. “What are the things you hope that [name] learns by the end of the year?”)
- 2. Provide conference materials early** (we regularly send out meeting agendas a few days in advance, so why not do the same with our families?)

Involvement → Engagement: Newsletters

- 1. Provide space for comment:** “What should I know from you or about your child?”
- 2. Share School-wide behavior and academic data:**
Share the data wins with families to highlight the hard work of staff

Involvement → Engagement: Curriculum Night

1. **Record administrator presentations:** With the pandemic, video conferencing has become more ubiquitous in schools, so use it for other school activities.
2. **Survey families:** Not only survey their opinions, but also make sure you know *HOW* they would like to be contacted and to *INFORM* the school on their thoughts and opinions.



Annie E. Casey Foundation

“There is a difference between stakeholder engagement and empowerment. Engagement may simply involve getting input or limited participation. Empowerment involves ***taking leadership, making decisions and designing solutions and strategies at every phase of social-change efforts.***”

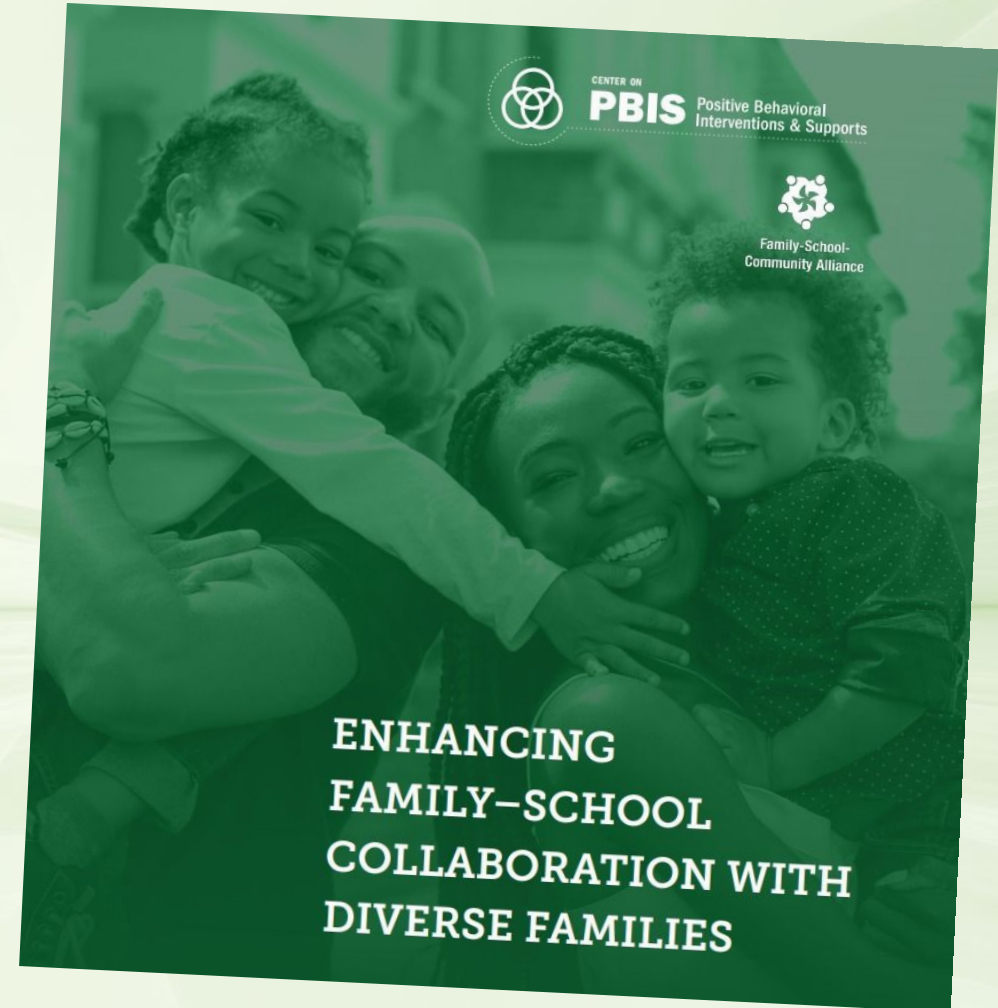
Enhancing Family-School Collaboration

Fundamental Attitudes for Creating Equity:

- Educating Children is a Privilege
- See Parents/Families as Partners

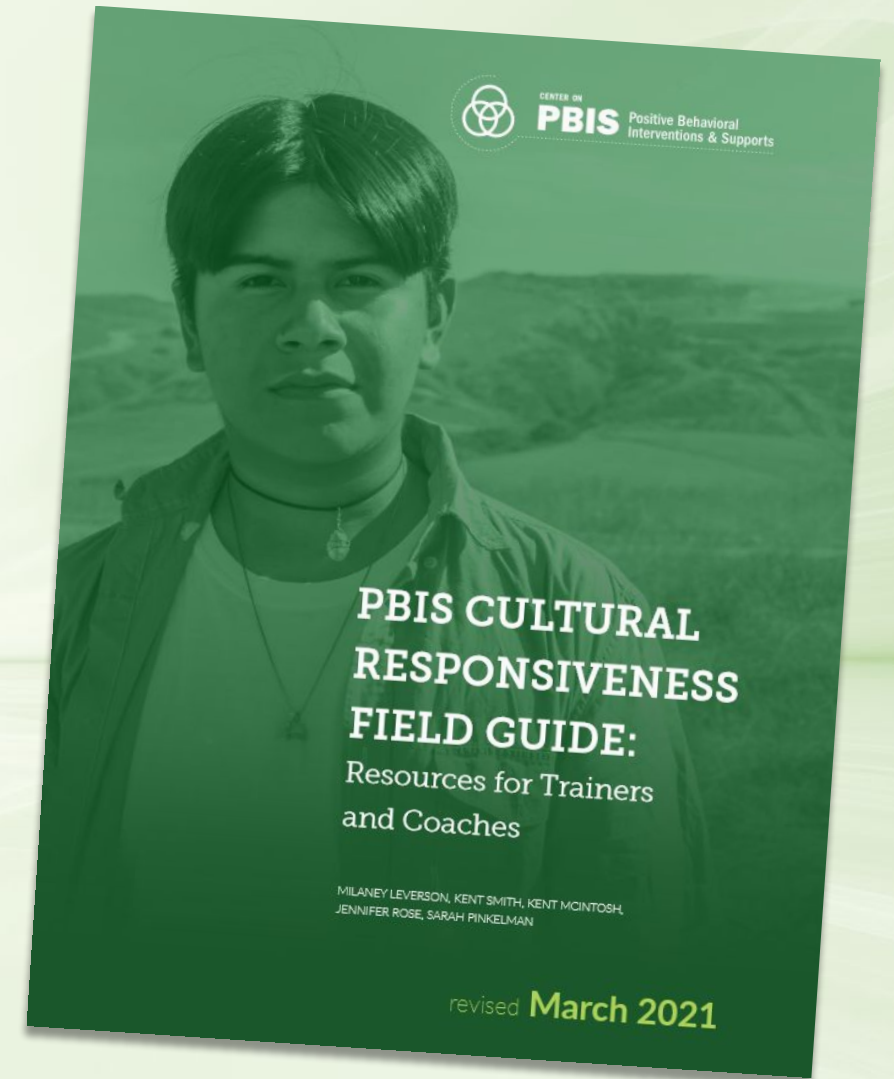
Key Strategies for Family-School Collaboration Equity in an Equitable Multi-Level System of Support:

1. Develop Positive Relationships
2. Commit to Meaningful Home-School Communication
3. Develop Systemic Processes for Shared Decision-Making



PBIS Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide Resource

This resource can also be
viewed online [here](#).



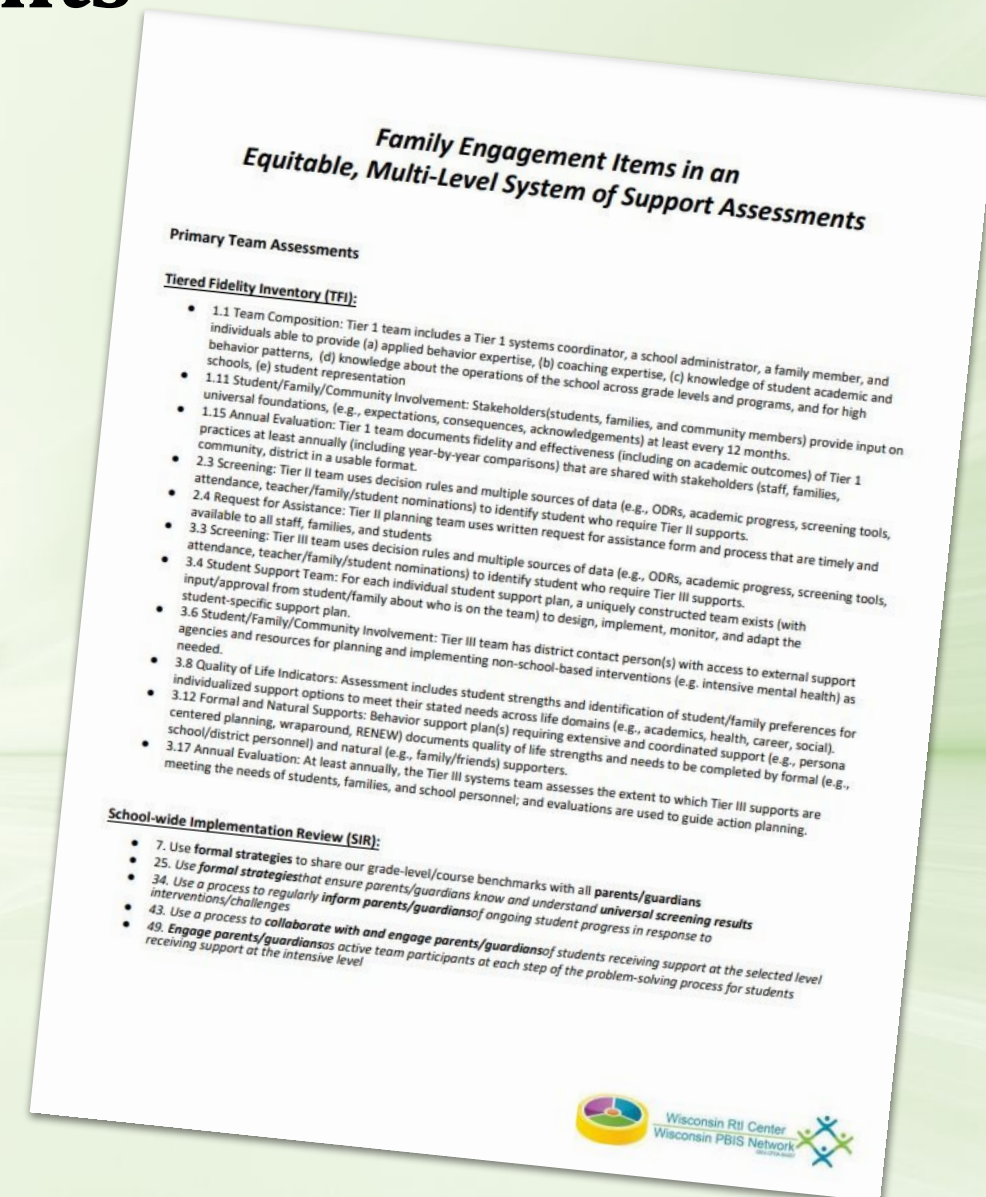
Family Engagement on PBIS and RtI Self-Assessments

Family Engagement items are on all PBIS and RtI self-assessment tools.

- **TFI:** 11 items (1.1, 1.11, 1.15, 2.3, 2.4, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.8, 3.12, 3.17)
- **SIR:** 5 items (7, 25, 34, 43, 49)

Resources available at:

<https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Family-Engagement-Items-in-an-Equitable-Multi-Level-System-of-Supports-Assessments-a.pdf>



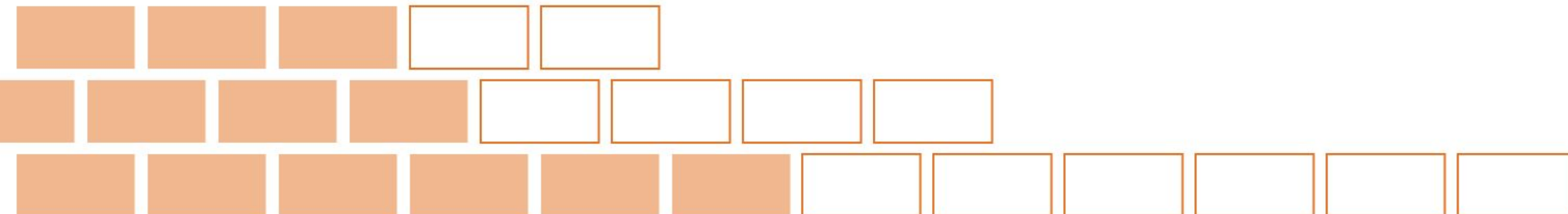
BUILDING FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Why is “fidelity” important?

Fidelity = when schools accurately and consistently implement supports as designed and those supports achieve their intended results.

High implementing school = A school implementing an equitable, multi-level system of supports with fidelity

Sustaining school = A school implementing an equitable, multi-level system of supports with fidelity for 3 or more consecutive years



EMLSS Outcomes



1. Over 70% of sustaining schools increased reading achievement scores on their report card (from year before fidelity to third year at fidelity).
1. Sustaining schools see statistically significant improvements for all students overall and for some student groups (Hispanic students, students with IEPs) in ELA proficiency on their report card.

Continuous Improvement of Family Engagement

What is a practice that your school or district used during remote learning, that engaged families?

- What worked?
 - For whom?
 - Under what circumstances?
 - How do you know?
- How can it be improved?
 - How can this be used to establish partnerships with families?
 - In what ways can it can be co-developed with families?
 - How can it be scaled up to be systemic?
- Gather stakeholder input?
 - survey/interview/
 - Feedback is a gift!



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