FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

A Resource for School Administrators

TEA Texas Education Agency

SPEDTEX Special Education Information Center

Partners Resource Network
Empowerment Through Education

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**A collaborative project of the Texas Education Agency,
Special Education Information Center (SPEDTex), and Partners Resource Network.**

Introduction

Purpose of the Family Engagement Framework

The Family Engagement Framework outlines six key elements of family engagement derived from the Texas Education Agency's Review and Support Self-Assessment Tool and the Effective Schools Framework. For each of the six elements, activities and resources are presented that serve as points of reference for school administrators when school teams plan, implement, and evaluate family engagement practices that directly impact outcomes for students with disabilities.

This Family Engagement Framework includes each of the following elements: 1) Partnerships with Families, 2) School Climate, 3) Build Capacity (Professional Development), 4) Enhanced Communication, 5) Community Connections, and 6) Implementation.

As an opening discussion for school leadership teams, the following probing questions from TEA's Special Education Self-Assessment - #22 (Family Engagement) and #23 (Connection to Community and School Climate – Family Engagement) may be considered:

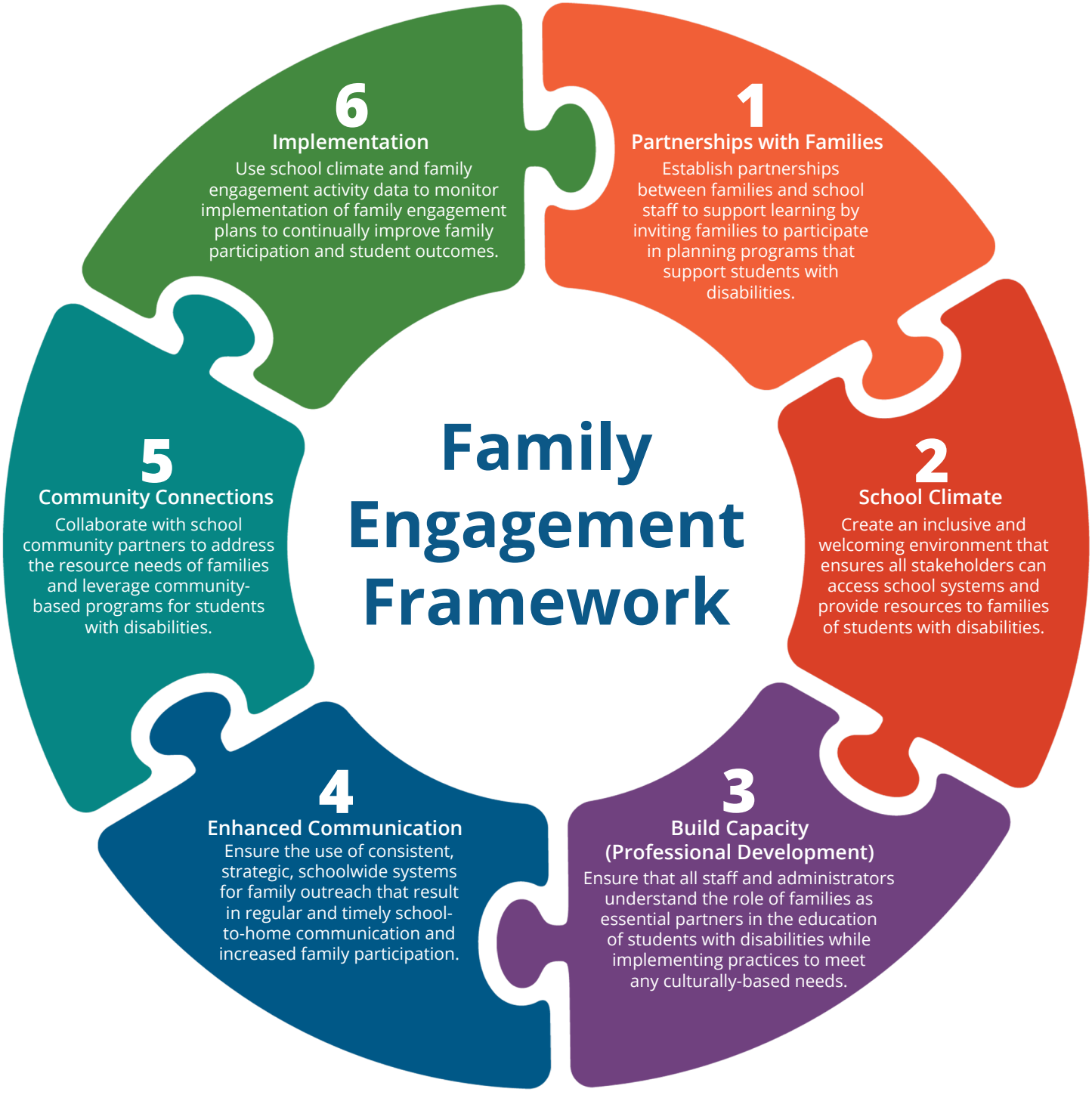
- How is parent/guardian participation in the development or review of the student's individualized education program (IEP) documented?
- What procedures are in place at the school to facilitate and improve parent/guardian involvement in the special education process?
- What systems are in place to build a strong school climate?
- Who is responsible to ensure school activities and communications are inclusive for all stakeholders?
- What types of community experiences are facilitated by school staff?
- How does the school communicate community-based opportunities to students and families?
- How does the school provide opportunities for community-based programming involving students with disabilities?

On page 11 of this resource, a connection is made between The Family Engagement Framework and educator evaluations systems, as well as the Title 1 Parent Compact in an effort to align overarching purpose and perspective in engaging this important work.

Please share this resource with professional stakeholders and other critical partners in the interest of supporting Texas students with disabilities and their families.

Six Elements of the Family Engagement Framework

This framework outlines six key elements of family engagement that can make a positive difference in the education of students with disabilities.



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1. Partnerships with Families

Establish partnerships between families and school staff to support learning by inviting families to participate in planning programs that support students with disabilities.

Achieving Results

- Invite families to participate in improvement planning concerning the design of programs that support the needs of students with disabilities.
- Exercise good listening skills to understand family aspirations and concerns for their children.
- Develop student goals in partnership with families that reflect high expectations built upon the student's strengths and address areas for improvement.
- Discuss plans for major transitions such as enrollment at a new school, start of a new school year or a change of teacher with families. Identify how families can help the student with the transition.
- Involve families in promoting learning experiences, school events, and activities that enable students with disabilities to access and participate on the same basis as other students.
- Encourage parent/guardian participation in the development or review of the student's IEP.

Resources

- Building Strong Partnerships with Students' Families
- Family Engagement: Collaborating with Families of Students with Disabilities

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2. School Climate

Create an inclusive and welcoming environment that ensures all stakeholders can access school systems and provide resources to families of students with disabilities.

Achieving Results

- Assess the school culture to gain a perspective on beliefs, values, assumptions, attitudes, actions, and the needs of both families and school staff.
- Ensure families can access school systems by providing translation and/or interpretation for all families with a home language other than English and involve a culturally responsive staff member when possible.
- Schedule information sessions for families that focus on supports that enable students with disabilities to engage, participate, and succeed. Provide families with contact information for staff who can help to resolve concerns.
- Post signs in home languages to guide visitors to important places on campus and make your website easy to navigate for everyone.
- Set up a family resource center (on-site and virtual) with school/community resource information and encourage families to visit these resource centers.
- Ensure that systems are in place to support a positive school climate.

Resources

- What Do You See? Perceptions of Disability
- Getting Off to a Good Start: Positive Interactions with Diverse Families
- Sample School Climate Surveys

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3. Build Capacity (Professional Development)

Ensure that all staff and administrators understand the role of families as essential partners in the education of students with disabilities while implementing practices to meet any culturally-based needs.

Achieving Results

- Provide annual trainings to all school staff and administrators focusing on the essential role of families as partners in planning programs for students with disabilities.
- Collaborate with general education staff and promote best practices in family engagement schoolwide.
- Provide training for all educators on their respective special education roles and responsibilities in service provision.
- Ensure staff are aware of transition requirements for all special education students and emphasize the importance of early planning.
- Ensure school personnel are aware of the wide range of resources and programs that are available to support students with disabilities and how families can access them.

Resources

- Technical Assistance: Child Find and Evaluation
- Technical Assistance: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development
- What is Child Find?
- Quick Guide: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth Secondary Transition

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4. Enhanced Communication

Ensure the use of consistent, strategic schoolwide systems for family outreach that result in regular and timely school-to-home communication and increased family participation.

Achieving Results

- Provide opportunities for families to give updates on their child's well-being and how this may impact learning.
- Communicate any concerns to families in a timely and respectful manner and in person whenever possible.
- Plan outreach to families through a variety of methods (e.g., school events, newsletter, website, student handbook, parent teacher conference, parent-teacher organizations, classroom communications) using the home language(s) of families.
- Use wording in communication (oral and/or written) that is clear, easy to understand, and free of educational terminology (use plain language) that results in regular and timely school-to-home communication to increase family participation.
- Develop procedures at the school to facilitate and improve parent/guardian involvement in the special education process.
- Ensure that multiple communication strategies with families are integrated into teacher and administrator roles and responsibilities.

Resources

- Inclusive Listening: Building Understanding, Supporting Collaboration

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5. Community Connections

Collaborate with school community partners to address the resource needs of families and leverage community-based programs for students with disabilities.

Achieving Results

- Engage community partners in planning and implementing community-based programs that support student IEPs, transition plans, and programs (e.g., volunteer opportunities, internship, employment, recreation, and service learning).
- Provide families with information about access to community-based resources, as appropriate.
- Collaborate with school community partners to define and address the resource needs of families.

Resources

- Secondary Transition: Interagency Collaboration
- Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education

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6. Implementation

Use school climate and family engagement activity data to monitor implementation of family engagement plans to continually improve family participation and student outcomes.

Achieving Results

- Create systemic processes to monitor the effectiveness of family outreach and family engagement.
- Develop procedures to ensure that school staff are providing the families of students with disabilities access to appropriate resources.
- Engage in public outreach activities to disseminate information on resources and services.

Resources

- Effective Family Engagement Can Look Like This
- Texas Education Agency's Self-Assessment Rubric, Review and Support
- Texas Education Agency's Root Cause Analysis Form
- Texas Education Agency's Strategic Support Plan Form

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Alignment Across Systems

Teacher and campus administrator evaluation systems such as T-TESS, T-PESS, and the Title I Parent Compact include family engagement expectations that are noted below under each framework element to aid in providing a foundation for the alignment of efforts across systems as well as fostering continuous improvement.

1. Partnerships with Families

- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.4 Involving Families and Communities, page 14.
- ESSA Public Law 114-95 Sec. 1116. Parent and Family Engagement (Title 1 Parent Compact). Sec.(a)(2) (A, F).
- T-TESS Rubric. Data and Assessment (1.2), Professional Demeanor and Ethics (4.1), pages 2, 13.
- ESSA Public Law 114-95 Sec. 1116. Parent and Family Engagement (Title 1 Parent Compact). Sec.(c)(4).

2. School Climate

- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.4 Involving Families and Communities, page 14.
- ESSA Public Law 114-95 Sec. 1116. Parent and Family Engagement (Title 1 Parent Compact). Sec.(a)(2) (A, F).
- T-TESS Rubric. School Community Involvement (4.4), page 16.

3. Build Capacity (Professional Development)

- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 2.4 Professional Development, page 10.
- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.3 Proactive and Responsive Student Support Services, page 13.
- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.4 Involving Families and Communities, page 14.

4. Enhanced Communication

- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.4 Involving Families and Communities, page 14.
- T-TESS Rubric. Data and Assessment (1.2), Professional Demeanor and Ethics (4.1), pages 2, 13.
- T-TESS Rubric. School Community Involvement (4.4), page 16.

5. Community Connections

- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.4 Involving Families and Communities, page 14.
- T-TESS Rubric. School Community Involvement (4.4), page 16.

6. Implementation

- T-PESS Principal Rubric. Indicator 3.4 Involving Families and Communities, page 14.
- ESSA Public Law 114-95 Sec. 1116. Parent and Family Engagement (Title 1 Parent Compact). Sec.(a)(2) (A, F).

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School, Family and Community Engagement Initiative

The School, Family and Community Engagement (SFCE) Initiative is designed to provide programs, resources, and an overall strategy for fostering authentic collaboration among schools, families, and communities in Texas around topics in special education and special populations. By establishing strong, internal processes with strategic and timely cross communications, we will increase knowledge and understanding of special education services while improving buy-in and support from all stakeholders.

The Special Education Information Center (SPEDTex) provides resources and interactive features for increasing family awareness of disabilities and special education processes, with the goal of improving partnerships between schools and families.

Highlighted Resources

- **Family resources:** Information and resources to help families understand special education processes
- **Educator resources:** Tools for educators to support implementation of strong and effective practices
- **My SPEDTex:** Track important dates for your student and view resources of interest
- **Resource Locator:** Tailor your search of special education resources by topic, audience, language, and type

For more information and additional resources, please visit:

SPEDTEX
Special Education Information Center

www.spedtex.org

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