

Collaborating

Engaging Families in Meaningful Conversations

When school staffs are presenting to families, care should be taken to present in a family-friendly manner.

Presenters should be friendly, respectful, and patient—families do not know the educationese that school and district staffs speak. Acronyms should also be avoided.

During presentations, presenters should engage families in dialogue and continually pace themselves in regards to audience needs.



Families as Partners in Education

Families want what is best for their children—especially concerning their future.

In an effort to support families, schools can personally welcome them to events—calls by advisory or homeroom teachers inviting families to events encourage attendance in a way that communicates how important they are as part of their children’s educational team and success.

Data, standards, and achievement exams provide opportunities for schools to partner with families.



Family Engagement & College Readiness

Schools partnering with families
*to successfully transition students from
high school to college.*

Nevada Department of Education
Office of Educational Opportunity
Office of Family Engagement

Monie Byers mbyers@doe.nv.gov

700 East Fifth Street, Suite 110 Carson City, NV 89701

www.nevadapife.com

Two-way Communication



Schools and districts use multiple modes of communication to provide information to families and students: websites, newsletters, auto-dialers, fliers, etc. The question to ask is: *How do the families and students communicate with the schools and districts?* All of the aforementioned methods are one-way communication—from the schools and districts out. They do not provide opportunities for families and students to offer feedback and ask questions. And, they may be limiting if families and students do not have continual access to a telephone and the Internet.

Remember: two-way communication is the platform for authentic family engagement.

A Basic Format for Family Engagement Events

The Power of Surveys

Schools and districts can garner family input on a variety of education issues through surveys, the results of which can provide data for School Improvement Plans, Accountability Reports, and evaluations. This information can help schools and districts continue to improve family engagement.

Surveys should be relatively short: five questions is ideal. They should be aligned with school improvement and family involvement in data interpretation. And, they should be offered in multiple forms (paper, electronic) and in a variety of locations (school offices, laundromats, events, etc.)

Once families have received personal invitations from school staff and understand the importance of an event, and, family friendly staff members are leading the event, there are a few tips to always keep in mind:

- ✓ When families are participating in activities, have staff and students work with them in a smaller ratio than the entire group to model, provide information, and answer questions.
- ✓ Check in often to see if the pace is too fast or too slow, or if additional information is needed.



- ✓ At the conclusion of any event, survey families to check for understanding, ask them what was helpful, ask for suggestions, check to see if additional training is necessary, and ask them to provide current contact information.
- ✓ Conclude every training with a specific school contact (a person—not a title or an office) should they have any questions and need further assistance.
- ✓ Express appreciation for their attendance and participation.