

# Family-School Connections for Student Success

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## Essential Question(s)

- How do schools create strong partnerships with families that support students' future success?

## Summary

This professional learning session equips educators with practical strategies for building strong family-school partnerships that support student success and postsecondary readiness. Participants explore why family engagement often declines in secondary schools, identify effective practices from their own classrooms, and envision a family booster club that could increase school-wide support. This session also introduces the K20 Center's QUEST app, which is an accessible tool that can be used to engage families remotely and extend learning beyond school. Participants will leave this session with actionable ideas and resources to increase meaningful family involvement in the school.

## Learning Goals

## Attachments

- Activity Sheet—Family-School Connections for Student Success.docx
- Activity Sheet—Family-School Connections for Student Success.pdf
- Family Recruitment Plan—Family-School Connections for Student Success.docx
- Family Recruitment Plan—Family-School Connections for Student Success.pdf
- Presentation Slides—Family-School Connections for Student Success.pptx

## Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Activity Sheet handout (attached; one per participant)
- Family Recruitment Plan handout (attached; optional; one per participant)

10 minutes

# Engage

Use the attached Presentation Slides to facilitate the session. Display **slides 3–4** and introduce the essential question and learning objectives to participants.

Pass out one copy of the attached **Activity Sheet** handout to each participant. Direct participants' attention to the page with the note catcher. Tell participants that they should use this portion of the handout to take notes throughout the session about anything they find insightful or useful.

Inform participants that they will reflect on family engagement within their schools. Transition to **slide 5** and invite participants to respond to the prompt on the slide: "In 1–2 words, describe the impact that active parent and family presence has had in your school."

Have participants share out their words. As they share, record these words in a visible location for all participants to see. Highlight positive words and use these words to set the tone for the remainder of the session. Call attention to words that also point toward the benefits of an active family presence in a school.

### Optional Technology Integration

Consider using the Mentimeter tech tool to facilitate this part of the session.

Navigate to mentimeter.com, log in or sign up for an account, and create a Word Cloud activity using the prompt, "In 1–2 words, describe the impact that active parent and family presence has had in your school."

Create a QR code or link that participants can use to access the prompt. Insert the QR code into slide 5. As participants respond to the prompt, display the Word Cloud for participants to watch as positive words are added.

Display **slide 6**. Ask participants the following questions on the slide:

- How does family presence in your school and classroom impact your students?
- How does a lack of family presence in your school and classroom impact your students?

Invite participants to share out their responses. Facilitate a whole group discussion.

Move to **slide 7** and introduce the Think-Pair-Share instructional strategy. Present following prompt:

- What are some family engagement strategies that you currently practice in your classroom and school that have successfully increased family presence?

First, have participants individually think about their responses to the question. Then, have participants find a partner or small group and discuss their responses with other participants. Finally, invite participants to share out any inspiring thoughts or effective strategies with the whole group.

Encourage participants to take notes over any strategies they could use in their schools or classroom.

10 minutes

# Explore

Display **slide 8** and ask participants to think about the following prompt:

- It is common for parents and families to be present in the classroom and school during elementary school. Once students move to secondary schools, this participation seems to decline.
  - **Why do you think this happens?**

Ask participants to share their responses with a partner.

Ask participants to think about the spaces they do see parent and family presence in. Allow time for them to discuss in their table groups.

Transition to **slide 9** and ask participants the following questions:

- Do you have booster clubs at your school?
- What is the purpose of booster clubs at your school?
- Who typically leads booster clubs at your school?

Invite participants to share their responses out loud with the whole group.

Display **slide 10** and have participants look at their Activity Sheets. Introduce participants to the Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like instructional strategy.

### Facilitator's Note: Adding Context

Consider providing participants with additional context by mentioning the following statement:

- "Considering that booster clubs are parent led and created to gain support for student clubs and groups, think about what having a booster club to support student success might look like, sound like, and feel like."

Walk participants through the following prompts on the slide and ask them to record their responses on their handout.

- What does a family booster club look like to you?
- What does a family booster club sound like to you?
- What does a family booster club feel like to you?

### Facilitator's Note: Guiding the Conversation

When having participants respond to the prompts on slide 10, consider asking guiding questions to help them respond.

- **What does a family booster club look like to you?** Who is involved? What are they doing?
- **What does a family booster club sound like to you?** What is the club promoting? What are the club's goals?
- **What does a family booster club feel like to you?** How could this booster club impact the teachers, leadership, and school climate as a whole? How could this club impact students?

5 minutes

# Explain

Display **slide 11** and have participants find an Elbow Partner. Have participants work with their partners to discuss and respond to the following questions on their Activity Sheet:

1. Imagine you're creating a family booster club made up of key members of your school and community. What would be the overall goal of your club?
2. Which key people or roles would you include in your club?
3. In what ways can you or your school connect with families to encourage them to be a part of this club?
    1. For example: flyers, emails, conferences, etc.

Encourage participants to take notes on the "Note Catcher" portion of their Activity Sheet handouts.

30 minutes

# Extend

During this portion of the session, present testimonials and examples from surrounding districts related to strategies that work for engaging families. Encourage participants to reflect on these strategies.

### Alternative Activities

If you do not have other examples or testimonials, consider facilitating alternate activities using the attached **Family Recruitment Plan** handout.

Give each participant one copy of the Family Recruitment Plan handout. Guide participants through the process of creating a plan to engage families using the four steps on the handout. Provide time for participants to work with each other to complete their plans.

As participants complete the handout, walk around the room and offer support as needed.

10 minutes

# Evaluate

Display **slide 12** and introduce the K20 Center's *QUEST* application. Pass out the attached **QUEST Flyer** handout to each participant.

Express to participants that *QUEST* is a mobile app that delivers quick, interactive lessons designed to inform and engage busy families. Highlight that the app is convenient and easy to navigate. Explain that *QUEST* can be used to reach families that participants may not see frequently and can help with remotely engaging them.

**Facilitator's Note: Provide Examples**

Consider providing a few examples of courses that are on the *QUEST* app so that participants understand what type of content is available.

Play a screen recording of the *Family and School Partnerships* video so participants can gain an understanding of how the application is formatted. Pause and explain different parts of the video as participants watch.

Transition to **slide 15** and invite participants to scan the QR code to download the *QUEST* app. Spend a few minutes answering any questions that participants may have.

# Research Rationale

Research rationale for this resource is provided in the literature review Family Leadership and Engagement.

## Resources


- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). *Family leadership and engagement*. Literature Reviews. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/literature-review/5122
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Looks like, sounds like, feels like. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/88
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139