

# Family and Community Engagement Timeline and Context in California

February 2020



# Family and Community Engagement Timeline

Over the past 30 years, research has demonstrated a connection between family engagement and improved education outcomes in terms of student attendance, academics, social emotional skills, graduation rate, college and career readiness, teacher satisfaction and school improvement. Consequently, legislators, school officials and education researchers have tried to describe parent engagement. Initially referred to more broadly as parent programs in schools, references then evolved to embrace parent involvement and family engagement. Today, “family-school partnerships” is a common phrase used to describe how we might most effectively include the critical parent voice in school operations. Moreover, current research frameworks identify root causes that prevent family-school partnerships and the necessary conditions that will help achieve it.

Since the 2000s, California has added a distinctive perspective to this dialogue, building upon the research and legal foundation that was laid since the 1990s. In many cases, state legislators have expanded laws further to better meet the needs of its diverse student population. Further, the California State Board of Education has implemented policies in support of family engagement, such as the English Learner Roadmap approved in 2017 (the first principle outlines the need for educators to value and build strong family, community and school partnerships) and the revised self-reflection tool for family engagement approved in 2019.

The following timeline highlights key research and legislative decisions shifting the work and illustrates where California is in the family and community engagement movement.

# Key Family and Community Engagement Research and Legislative Decisions



## 2020

### Focus on Family Engagement Pre-Service Requirements for Teachers and Administrators

- The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) launches a family engagement consortium on pre-service educator preparation. The consortium will create a pre-service framework to inform policy and practice. California, represented by San Diego State University and PON, is selected to participate along with five other states. For more information visit: <https://nafsce.org/page/preserviceconsortium>
- PON and Public Advocates release a report on teacher and administrator credentialing requirements in California. For more information, visit our website: [www.parentnetwork-la.org](http://www.parentnetwork-la.org)

## 2019

### Relationship Building and Cultural Competence are Prioritized in the Framework's 2nd Version

The new version of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships is unveiled along with a website with resources to support implementation. This version continues to affirm the need for dual capacity-building for school staff and parents and prioritizes relationship building and cultural competence as pre-requisites for the framework to work. For more information visit: <https://www.dualcapacity.org/>



2019

### State Tool Assesses Dual Capacity-Building for Staff and Parents on Relationship Building, Partnerships, & When Seeking Input

The self-reflection tool developed by the California Department of Education Ad Hoc Family Engagement Workgroup is presented to and approved by the State Board of Education in March 2019. By November 2019, all school districts are using the new tool to assess family engagement. To see the tool, visit:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/documents/priority3tool.pdf>



2018

### CA Law Expands Family Engagement Description & Highlights Evidence-Based Practices

AB 2878 –A bill sponsored by California State PTA expands the description of LCFF: Priority 3 (parent involvement) to family engagement. It adds research-based family engagement guidance to provide schools, districts, and parents access to best practices for family engagement. To learn more, click here: [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB2878](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2878)



2013

### Law Changes School Funding, Prioritizes Parent Involvement, and Requires Stakeholder Engagement

Governor Brown signs the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) into law, changing the way education is funded by providing additional funds based on the enrollment of low-income students, English learners and foster youth learners and prioritizing all high needs students. It also identifies parent involvement as one of eight LCFF priorities and requires stakeholder engagement in districts' planning and overall budgeting process. To learn more, visit:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>



2014

### CDE Develops an Administrator-Friendly Framework to Assess Implementation and Progress on Family Engagement

The California Department of Education's Family Engagement Framework compiles family engagement research-based practices and state and federal legal requirements. This framework addresses five domains: capacity building, leadership, resources, progress monitoring, and equity. To learn more visit:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/famengageframeenglish.pdf>





## 2018

### California Approves Funding for the Community Engagement Initiative

AB 2878 – A bill sponsored by California State PTA expands the description of LCFF: Priority 3 (parent involvement) to family engagement. It adds research-based family engagement guidance to provide schools, districts, and parents access to best practices for family engagement. To learn more, click here: [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB2878](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2878)



## 2017

### The Toolkit Prioritizes Relationships, Family Activities Linked to Learning, and Equity

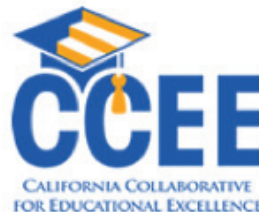
California Department of Education’s Family Engagement Toolkit is informed by research and best practices and provides a step-by-step strategic planning process to assess family engagement practices and equity to then lead continuous improvement across a district. The toolkit advocates measuring success on two domains: 1) improving trust levels between families and educators; and 2) linking family engagement activities to student learning. To learn more, click here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/documents/family-engagement.pdf>



## 2015

### ESSA Section 1116 Title Changed to Parent and Family Engagement; Funds to Be Used for Dual Capacity-Building

December 2015 – President Obama reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). “Parent involvement” is replaced by “parent and family engagement” to acknowledge that there may be other family members or adult figures caring for children at home. Also, ESSA continues to affirm the need for districts and schools to have a written parent and family engagement policies. This version explicitly describes using the funds (section D) to carry out



## 2017

### State Agency Sponsors Four Professional Learning Networks on Family and Community Engagement

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) sponsors 57 two-year Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) to promote innovative thinking and use continuous improvement science to improve student outcomes. Four PLNs, facilitated by PON, Families In Schools, and Alameda County Office of Education are focused on family and community engagement. For learn more visit: <https://www.ccee-ca.org/professional-learning-networks.asp>



## 2013

### Framework Highlights the Need to Build a System to Foster Family-School Partnerships that Includes Building Capacity of both Parents and Staff

The U.S. Department of Education adopts a systemic approach to family engagement, publishing the “Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships”. The Framework acknowledges the lack of opportunities for school staff to learn how to partner with families emphasizes the importance and identifies organizational and process conditions to establish partnerships. This framework can be viewed as a root cause analysis for the field of family engagement. For more information visit: <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/framework/> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/famengageframeenglish.pdf>



## Late 1990s and 2000s

### Framework Establishes Foundation for Parent Programs in Schools

Joyce Epstein’s Six Types of Parent Involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community) established a foundation for family engagement work that many schools still use today to plan activities for families and to lead the work through Action Teams.

## 2010 to present

### County Offices of Education Create Family Engagement (or Involvement) Networks

County Departments of Education create Family Engagement (or Involvement) Networks. These networks involve site and district practitioners, and often community members and representatives of local government and community-based agencies. The networks meet monthly or quarterly to share promising practices and resources as well as engage in professional learning.

Alameda County Office of Education:

<https://www.acoe.org/Page/833>

Orange County Department of Education:

<https://ocde.us/EducationalServices/StudentAchievementAndWellness/FIN/Pages/default.aspx>

Riverside County Office of Education:

<https://www.rcoe.us/leadership-innovation-outreach/family-engagement-network/>

San Diego County Office of Education:

<https://www.sdcoe.net/lls/MEGA/Pages/PFE/engagement.aspx#Family>

Ventura County Office of Education:

<https://www.vcoe.org/Leadership-Support-Services/Family-Engagement/fins>



## 2007

### Standards are Developed to Assess Family-School Partnerships

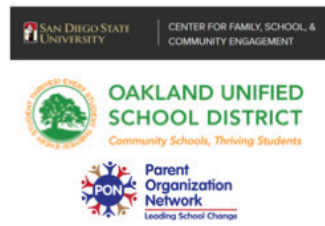
- “Beyond the Bake Sale” offers a four-level rubric for schools to assess their family-school partnerships in five domains: building relationships, linking to learning, addressing differences, supporting advocacy, and sharing power. Each level describes a school’s readiness to work with parents: 1) a fortress school, 2) come-if-we-call school, 3) open-door school, and 4) partnership school.
- PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide is a rubric that identifies six domains: welcoming all families, communicating effectively, supporting student success, speaking up for every child, sharing power, and collaborating with community; and three proficiency levels: emerging, progressing and excelling. Click here to learn more: <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/National-Standards-for-Family-School-Partnerships>



## 2001

### NCLB Adds Mechanisms for Parents to Hold Schools Accountable

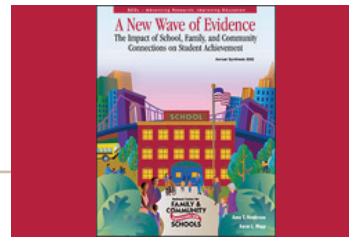
President Bush signed No Child Left Behind into law which continued parent involvement requirements from previous Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) versions (such as parent-school compacts, parent involvement policies and plans), defined parent involvement, and added new roles and opportunities to hold schools accountable. For more about the history of ESEA refer to: “The Handbook on Family and Community Engagement” published in 2011.



## 2008-2010

### Other Groups Develop Their Own Parent Engagement Standards. PON Finds that Low-Income Families of Color in LA Identify Health & Safety as a Standard.

Other organizations adapt or develop their own family engagement standards including, San Diego State University’s Center for Family, School, Community Engagement; and Oakland USD’s Standards for Meaningful Engagement. PON differs in that low-income parents of color in Los Angeles identified issues of health and safety as a standard. While families report feeling unwelcomed and/or unequipped to address academic issues, they are more ready to address school climate issues and prioritize doing so.



## 2002

### Connections Between Family Engagement and Student Achievement are Established

This book “is a synthesis of 51 studies about the impact of family and community involvement on student achievement and effective strategies to connect schools, families and community.” The field often cites their key findings which include “families of all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels can, and often do, have a positive influence on their children’s learning.” For more information click: <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam33.html>

## **Shifts in the Family Engagement and Community Movement**

The research and legislation referenced above, have influenced these shifts in the movement:

- From parent involvement to family engagement;
- From what is family engagement to how to do it;
- From activity-driven to systemic engagement;
- From training for parents to dual capacity building for families and staff;
- From parenting and technical skills to relationship building, cultural competency, partnership for student outcomes, and providing input on decisions;
- From compliance-driven plans and actions to continuous improvement;
- From mandates to local control through community engagement;
- From schoolwide meetings and events to differentiating outreach, programming, and strategies to engage all families;
- From solely measuring parent participation at meetings to using more comprehensive metrics aligned to research and best practice; and
- From isolation to integration into district's structure, plan, budget to achieve student goals.

## **Implications**

Accomplishing these shifts in the family and community engagement require changing practice. For this reason, recent state and national initiatives aim to update and bridge the theory and practice of family engagement in education. However, policy initiatives cannot make these shifts alone. School districts and county offices of educations play a critical role in helping shift practice in schools. Some actions to be considered to effect change include:

1. Prioritizing, investing in, and providing family engagement training for all staff including administrators, counselors, family engagement staff, educators, and classified staff;
2. Designating an administrator to oversee the school district's engagement system.
3. Strengthening knowledge and practice of continuous improvement science to move toward systemic engagement; and
4. Evolving the role of family engagement staff from event coordinators and workshop facilitators to systems thinkers and process facilitators whom together with families and other staff, develop or update policies and structures for dual-capacity building, including building systems for data collection to ensure continuous improvement along the way.

## **Conclusion**

The family and community engagement movements are rooted in the belief that parents and students must be active participants and equal partners in the educational process for student success. To be sure, family engagement advocates for many years have stressed that we will be successful only if families are meaningfully engaged. But achieving and sustaining this type of engagement means that all involved in this process – legislators, educators and families – must be in it for the long run. This means investing adequate resources (e.g. staff, programs, systems) and maintaining a positive mind-set that success is possible and insisting on the resolve required to see it through to the end. Once we sustain this non-negotiable level of investment of resources, time, and individual and collective efforts, we will all win.



