

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

OCTOBER 2021

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Illinois Administrative Rule Part 24, Section 24.50

[HTTPS://WWW.ISBE.NET/DOCUMENTS/24ARK.PDF](https://www.isbe.net/documents/24ARK.pdf)

Introduction

These trainings are intended to help participants gain an understanding of the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and how to embed practices aligned to the standards into their practice. Culturally responsive teaching and leading benefits all students by improving their ability to learn and process information, and by helping students to feel safe and connected to their school community. These trainings are designed to cover foundational and introductory content aligned to the Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading standards.

The table below lists the three training topics and the standards that align with each topic.

TOPIC	STANDARDS
Self-Awareness and Systems of Oppression	Self-Awareness and Relationships to Others Systems of Oppression
Curriculum and Learning Environment	Systems of Oppression Students as Co-Creators Leveraging Student Advocacy Content Selections in All Curricula Student Representation in the Learning Environment
Students, Families, and Communities	Students as Individuals Students as Co-Creators Family and Community Collaboration

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Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards

(a) Self-Awareness and Relationships to Others: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders are reflective and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and how they impact others, leading to more cohesive and productive student development as it relates to academic and social-emotional development for all students.

(b) Systems of Oppression: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders understand that there are systems in our society, especially, but not limited to, our school system, that create and reinforce inequities, thereby creating oppressive conditions. Educators work actively against these systems in their everyday roles in educational institutions.

(c) Students as Individuals: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders view and value their students as individuals within the context of their families and communities.

(d) Students as Co-Creators: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders (who fundamentally believe all students are capable) center learning around students' experiences and position them as co-creators, with emphasis on prioritizing historically marginalized students.

(e) Leveraging Student Advocacy: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders will support and create opportunities for student advocacy and representation in the content and classroom

(f) Family and Community Collaboration: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders will partner with families and communities to build rapport, form collaborative and mutual relationships, and engage in effective cross-cultural communication.

(g) Content Selections in All Curricula: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders intentionally embrace student identities and prioritize representation in the curriculum. In turn, students are not only given a chance to identify with the curriculum, they become exposed to other cultures within their schools and both their local and global communities.

(h) Student Representation in the Learning Environment: Culturally responsive teachers and leaders ensure the diversity of their student population is equally represented within the learning environment.

Our Agreements

Our agreements	What they look like in action
Be engaged and maintain confidentiality	Make the personal commitment to remain emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue. Seek to understand, not to agree. Honor privacy by avoiding "who said what."
Speak to and listen for one's own truth	Be open about your feelings and experiences – not just saying what you think others want to hear. Be open to the experiences of others, not comparing them to your own. Consider your own power dynamics and how it shapes what you see/hear and what you do not see/hear.
Experience discomfort	Stay focused on disrupting institutional oppression and building inclusive leadership skills. It is through dialogue — even when uncomfortable — that awareness happens and change begins.
Expect and accept non-closure	This work is ongoing. Be willing to take risks, sit through silence, and accept that this is about changing yourself and not others.

Avoid communication roadblocks

Problem-Solving “Have you tried x, y, or z?”

Blame “Do you think it might be because of the way you ...?”

Coldness “It’s for your own good” “You’ll be better for it”

False Assurance “Oh, I’m sure it’s nothing.” “It will all turn out fine.”

Judgment “You’re being overly sensitive.”

Questioning “Did that really happen?” “Are you sure you heard him correctly?” “Are you sure you are remembering that correctly?”

Silence Breakers* are prompts we may use to address common challenges in cross-racial discussions.

- 1 Talking about race makes me feel...

- 2 From my experience/perspective as (identity) ...

- 3 This perspective is new to me, but I'm wondering if it is accurate to say that...?

- 4 I'm still working through / processing this, but right now where I am at is...

- 5 Can you help me understand whether what I'm thinking right now might be problematic?

*Excerpt from Sensoy and DiAngelo. Adapted from Anika Nailah and DiAngelo.

Reflection Questions

How does (perspective shared) challenge or expand the way I see the world?	
How does this issue relate to my own experience? How have I been shaped by the issues being addressed?	
Why is it hard for me to accept this as true? What about my life in relation to my race/class/gender might make it difficult for me to see or validate this new perspective?	
What are my reactions? What do my reactions reveal about what I perceive is at risk were I to accept this information?	
What do I need to do differently? If I were to accept this information as valid, what am I called to do?	

Objectives

- Describe authentic engagement and collaboration and how they benefit students and school communities.
- Investigate and discuss how to build relationships with students, families, and communities.
- Develop strategies for effective communication with students, families, and communities.
- Explore community assets and learn to leverage them for student success.
- Plan to proactively engage with students, families, and communities.

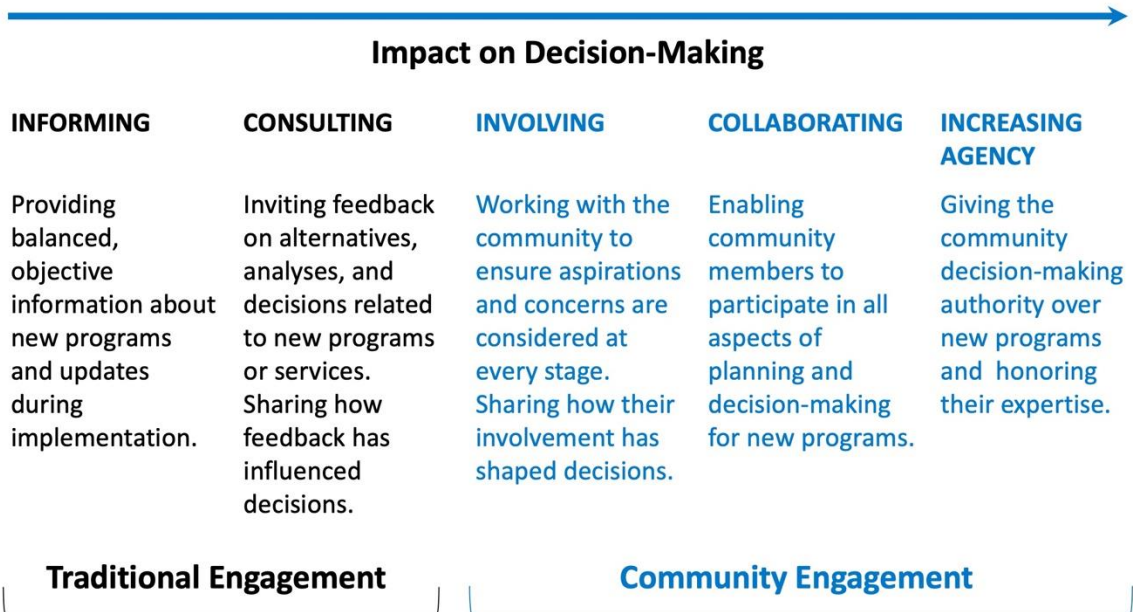
Authentic Engagement

Increased family engagement in education is linked to improved school readiness, higher grades, higher test scores, better attendance/less tardiness, decreased suspension and expulsion rates, and the increased likelihood of high school graduation.

A 15-year study of 400 Chicago schools found that schools with strong family and community ties, regardless of any other factors, were four times more likely to improve in reading and 10 times more likely to improve in math.

In a study of Title I schools, teachers who were “especially active” in engaging families and sharing resources to support learning at home saw larger gains in student achievement, regardless of other factors.

True Engagement



Authentic engagement rests on four key ideas



SHARED VISION

Work with families to develop a common vision for student success.



AUTHENTIC COLLABORATION

Share resources and data to help families support student learning.



INTENTIONAL CULTURE & DIVERSITY

Build trust by addressing bias and understanding the unique community context.



360-DEGREE COMMUNICATION

Prioritize ongoing communication and transparency and develop a healthy feedback loop.

Everyone will reap the benefits when teachers, school leaders, and district leaders engage students, families, and communities as true partners.

Authentic collaboration with families: Share resources and data to help families support student learning

Critical Shifts

Negative mindsets about families and communities.



We share a belief that families and communities are critical for student success.

Engagement efforts integrate the values of families and the school community.



Engagement is designed with the diverse identities of students and families in mind.

Engagement efforts are limited to special events and/or fundraisers.



Engagement efforts are aligned closely with academic goals.

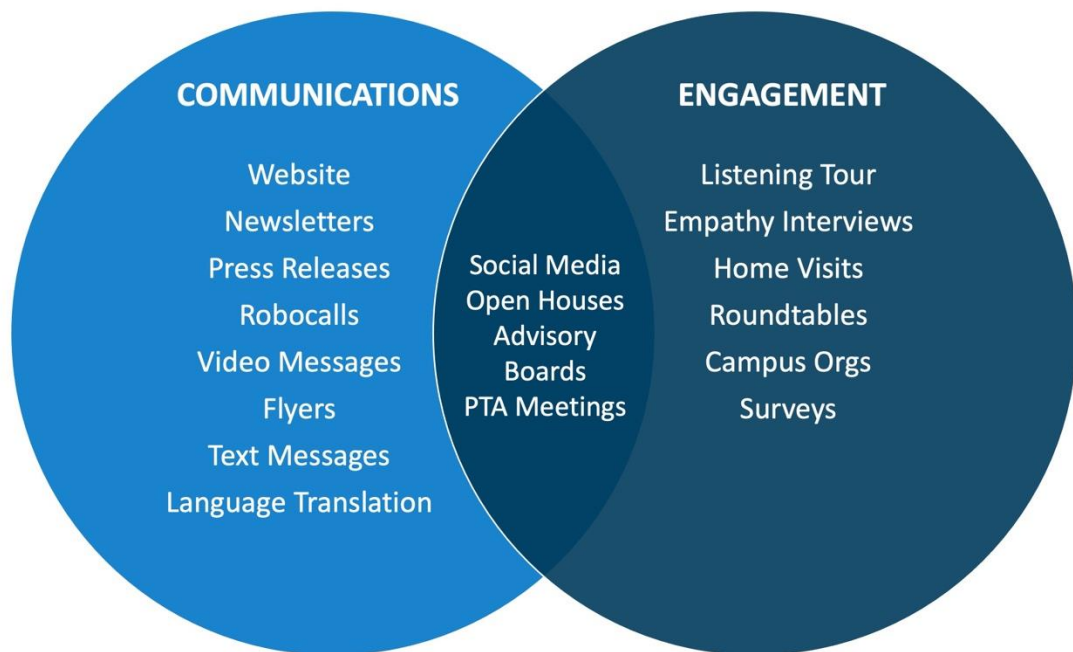
What are some ways that you engage with families that align with academic goals?

Conscious Choices: Building Relationships with Families

What perceptions do the teachers in the video have of families?

Based on what you heard and any previous experience, what do you think it takes to build a bridge between classroom and students' homes? What do you think you will do when you have your classroom to build that bridge?

Communication is not in itself engagement, but strong engagement will need to be supported by effective communications



Proactive communication with families promotes collaboration and a shared understanding about the issues affecting a student's education

REACTIVE

The teacher typically only responds to parent-initiated contact.

The teacher follows up when more information or clarity is needed.

Communication is focused on finding solutions.

PROACTIVE

The teacher consistently reaches out to families.

The teacher provides information before it is requested by families.

Communication is focused on preventing problems.

Independent Reflection and Share Out

When would be a good time to communicate ***proactively*** with families?

When might you have to communicate ***reactively*** with families?

How does reactive and proactive communication relate to ***360-degree communication***?

Exploring, tone, “ed-speak,” and actionable information

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

The support of student learning from parents/guardians is crucial to a student’s success. Some identified responsibilities include:

1. Go over the school’s handbook with your child to ensure that he/she is well aware that you support these rules. Talking negatively about teachers, principals, and school policies in front of and to students only leads to students becoming confused, frustrated, and uncooperative in school.
2. Ensure that your child is at home early on school nights and gets plenty of rest.
3. Ensure that the school has current telephone numbers and addresses.
4. Send your child to the school where he or she is zoned to attend unless you have permission from the school board at the beginning of the school year to attend another school based on reasons outlined in the 1976 court decree.
5. Continually monitor your child’s behavior, completion of homework, and dress.
6. Do not support your child if he or she violates a rule. Schedule a conference to discuss the issue with the person who identified the violation as he/she should have the pertinent information.
7. Speak to teachers, principals, and school employees in a tone and with words that you would want used when being addressed. Persons who use profanity or attempt to intimidate school employees or students will be asked to leave the campus, and may be subject to arrest.
8. Follow the protocol included in this handbook to handle concerns regarding your child.

Avoiding Ed Speak

A memo sent home to kindergarten families about kinder to elementary requirements.

In the space below, please describe any additional placement considerations or policies required by the LEA. Include the name of any required assessments and explain how results will be used.

In order for a child to enter Grade 1, he/she must have attended a full year of kindergarten and met parish standards for promotion or demonstrate mastery of those standards tested upon entrance to Grade 1. A checklist of 18 reading skills and 18 math skills is used to chart student progress. As skills are mastered, they are marked with an (S) the checklist. Any skills that the student is having difficulty with are marked with an (N) on the checklist. Any skills not mastered are marked with a (U). In order for a student to be promoted from kindergarten to Grade 1, a student must have an average of 78% or above on reading skills and 78% or above on mathematics skills. This average is based pm the second semester. The second semester consists of the 4th, 5th, and 6th six weeks. If the district/school is not able to obtain applicable documentation to determine progression on kindergarten skills, the Kindergarten Exit Test will be utilized.

Avoiding Ed Speak

Rephrase in a positive and more clear way for families.

Avoiding Ed Speak

A memo sent home to kindergarten families about kinder to elementary requirements.

In the space below, please describe any additional placement considerations or policies required by the school district. Include the name of any required assessments and explain how results will be used.

For a child to enter Grade 1, he/she must have attended a full year of kindergarten and have the skills needed for success in grade 1. A checklist of 18 reading skills and 18 math skills is used to determine readiness. As skills are mastered during kindergarten, they are marked with an (S) on the checklist. Any skills that the student is having difficulty with are marked with an (N) on the checklist. For a student to be placed in Grade 1 following kindergarten, they must have at least 14 math and 14 reading skills marked S by the end of the year. Students will have multiple opportunities to practice and demonstrate their skills throughout the year. If a student attends kindergarten outside of the school district and the skills checklist is not completed by the outside entity, school district staff will test the student on the checklist skills to determine if the student can be placed in Grade 1. A copy of the checklist is available [here](#) (link).

Communication Channels

Channel	Audience	Frequency of Use	Reason for Use	Last communication
Website	Families, Community	Weekly	Organizing information	Schedule Update

Communication Strategies

Which audience(s) am I trying to reach?

What is the format of my message? Is it simple or complex?

By what time does the message need to be shared?

What resources — money, staff time/capacity, etc. — do I have available?

What worked/didn't work in past communications?

Strategies for Effective Family Communication

Be Consistent — Quality over quantity. Research indicates that quality actionable outreach is more effective than the total number of messages sent.

Consider schoolwide/systemwide norming on family outreach to avoid overwhelming families.

Be Timely — Include ample time for families to ask questions or send a follow-up message.

Consider sending messages when families have the best access to various mediums like weekends and evenings.

Be Action Oriented — Offer families actual information or guidance to support their child's education.

Consider strategies such as sending a text message with reading goals for the week or one-sentence text messages to families sharing how they can motivate their student during the week.

Strategies to Avoid

Avoid using punitive language.

Consider sending simple language that informs families rather than calls out concerns.

Avoid using heavy “ed speak.”

Audit outreach for common education jargon.

Avoid bias and assumptions.

Be aware of how deficit perceptions and stereotypes might guide your expectations for family engagement and outreach.

Avoid waiting until the “end.”

Consider sending key action steps and messages to families prior to the end of a quarter, semester, or transition period.

Intentional culture and diversity: Build trust by addressing bias and understanding the unique community context

Critical Shifts	
Limited emphasis on relationship-building.	➡ Building (and repairing) relationships is prioritized.
Family engagement on sporadic initiatives through proxy organizations.	➡ We create multiple, ongoing opportunities to engage all families.
Using one-size-fits-all engagement strategies.	➡ We tailor engagement strategies to specific audiences.

Redefine Family and Community Engagement



By: DAHAB HAGOS-FEWELL

On foot and by every mode of transportation, people have been moving toward opportunity, crossing borders, oceans, and hemispheres for as long as it has been possible. One of the primary reasons people immigrate to North America is opportunities related to education. That's why my parents emigrated to Canada in 1983. Six months pregnant with me, my parents, who are from a northeast African country on the Red Sea coast called Eritrea, boarded a plane to Canada so their children would have access to high-quality education.

Our parents were so dedicated to our education that they helped us with our homework every night. They would borrow or buy next-grade-level textbooks for us to study before we started school in the fall. We had to learn to type 70 words per minute before we could go out to play with our friends, and we weren't allowed to have a job — doing well in school was our job. When my parents found out that our neighborhood school wasn't high-performing, we traveled 45 minutes (two buses and a 15-minute walk) every day to a better school.

Yet, if you asked my teachers about my family, they would have told you they assumed my parents didn't value education. Why? Because they didn't attend my fifth-grade graduation or school bake sales. What my parents were doing to support my education didn't fit the traditional, one-dimensional profile of an engaged parent — someone who shows up and volunteers. Now, it's my mission in life to change both how we view and how we do family and community engagement in education.

I am a member of the ATL Leadership Network team, a five-year school transformation partnership between TNTP and two Georgia school districts: Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and DeKalb County School District (DCSD). The ATL Leadership Network is at the forefront of an important shift in the focus of engagement — a shift toward engaging families and communities as the partners they are. In my role, I engage family and community committees and school leaders in professional learning, and coach these groups toward increasing shared decision-making on school priorities and initiatives that support student learning.

Our goal is to connect engagement to academics and shift the perception that learning only happens in classrooms while family and community engagement only happens in cafeterias after school. The ATL

Leadership Network focuses on harnessing the collective power of educators, families, students, and community members in meaningful ways. Common goals and trusting relationships take root as school leaders and teachers see how engaging families and the community can support their academic priorities. And as families and communities understand children's learning and how to advocate for it outside of school, a collaborative, community-based approach to sustaining school improvement takes shape.

In the context of COVID-19, for ATL Leadership Network schools and schools across the country, aspirations for engagement turned into an imperative. Overnight, schools and families turned to each other as partners; the shared responsibility of educating students intensified. This fall, in both APS and DCSD, family and community engagement were part of remote learning strategies. DCSD's school reopening plan calls for families to have the opportunity to participate in virtual empowerment workshops to support work with students in the digital space. A key part of the APS school "care team" intervention strategy is coordinating problem-solving conversations with families to ensure students are matched to the academic, wellness, and engagement interventions they need.

This moment has served as a call to action to remove traditional barriers to family and community engagement—to expand our definition of engagement and redefine it in terms of partnership and empowerment. If my teachers had adopted this view of engagement, they would have understood what I always did: My parents were engaged, and they valued education. They invested in my academic success because they saw my successes as theirs, a validation of the sacrifices they made in pursuit of opportunity for their children.

Risk of Unchecked Bias

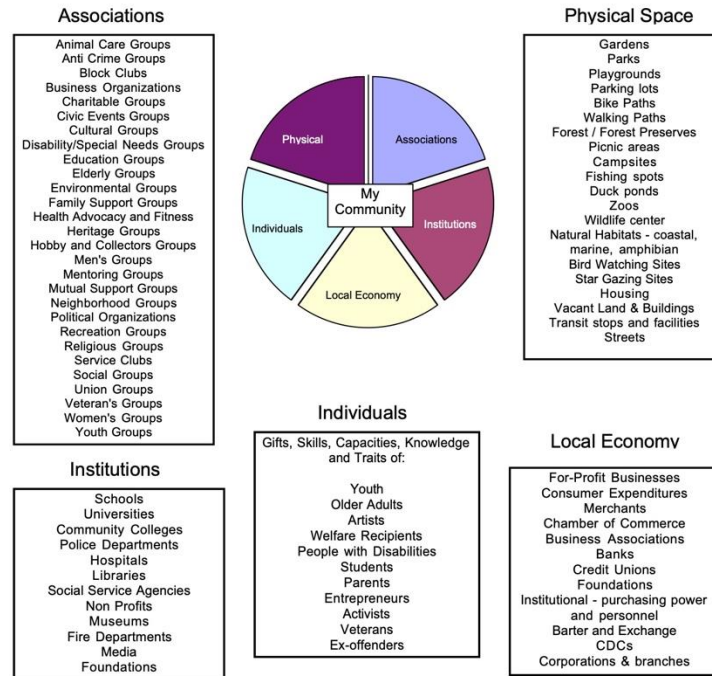
- Both families and teachers reported that school personnel often hold stereotypes and **deficit perspectives about families' willingness and ability to help their children** succeed academically.
- Dominant culture norms have a very narrow definition of family engagement and do not acknowledge or appreciate the many ways families of other cultures support and engage with their students' learning.
- Legacies of discrimination and marginalization in schools and inequities in access to high-quality education undermine trust in ways that shape the possibilities for family engagement.
- Legacies of discrimination and ongoing bias are rightly associated with **families' concern that school personnel will judge or criticize their parenting practices**, and this undermines parents' sense of agency and efficacy in supporting their children.
- Our bias impacts the level of trust between families and schools. The level of trust between families and schools is an underlying predictor of outcomes ranging from the efficiency of communication to resource access and student performance.

Bayside High School Case Study

Reflection Questions

How does (perspective shared) challenge or expand the way I see the world?	
How does this issue relate to my own experience? How have I been shaped by the issues being addressed?	
Why is it hard for me to accept this as true? What about my life in relation to my race/class/gender might make it difficult for me to see or validate this new perspective?	
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What do I need to do differently? If I were to accept this information as valid, what am I called to do?	

Each community has assets to offer, especially in helping us reach more of our students and families



Source: <https://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/tool-ABCD-capacity%20bldg.pdf>

What is Community?

How do we define the concept of community, specifically in the context of neighborhood or city where you teach?

- "Community" means not only the neighborhoods/areas where students' homes and schools are located but also any places that influence their learning and development.
- "Community" rated not only by low or high social or economic qualities, but by strengths and talents to support students, families, and schools.
- "Community" means all who are interested in and affected by the quality of education, not just those with children in the schools.

What is community 'asset mapping' in the context of education?

"Asset mapping" is when teachers identify the tangible and intangible resources in communities. These resources could be people, institutions, businesses, natural resources, organizations, and physical structures. Asset mapping allows us to identify opportunities and resources to enhance teaching and learning for our students.
(Teaching Tolerance)

Using asset mapping as a technique is most likely to be successful if the individuals, organizations, and communities using this procedure truly believe that every community — no matter how small, or how poor — has a rich pool of assets.
(Kretzmann and McKnight)

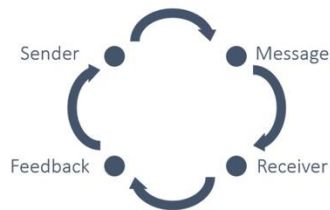
In classrooms across the country, we see three forms of communication being utilized

ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION



A straight line from sender to receiver, with no feedback. It serves to inform, persuade, or command.

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION



Always includes feedback that lets the sender know the message has been received accurately.

360-DEGREE COMMUNICATION



Incorporates a continuous and healthy feedback loop in which feedback is sought and learning is prioritized to make the best decisions for student.

In 360-degree communication, we collaborate with families, students, and community partners to establish an equal voice in decisions about education

360-DEGREE COMMUNICATION DO'S

- Create or utilize practices that promote strong relationships.
- Seek feedback and ensure families know how to and have opportunities to provide input. Listen and learn from families. They are the experts on their child.
- Take action and incorporate feedback into your structures and practices.
- Share back and help families understand how their feedback is being used.



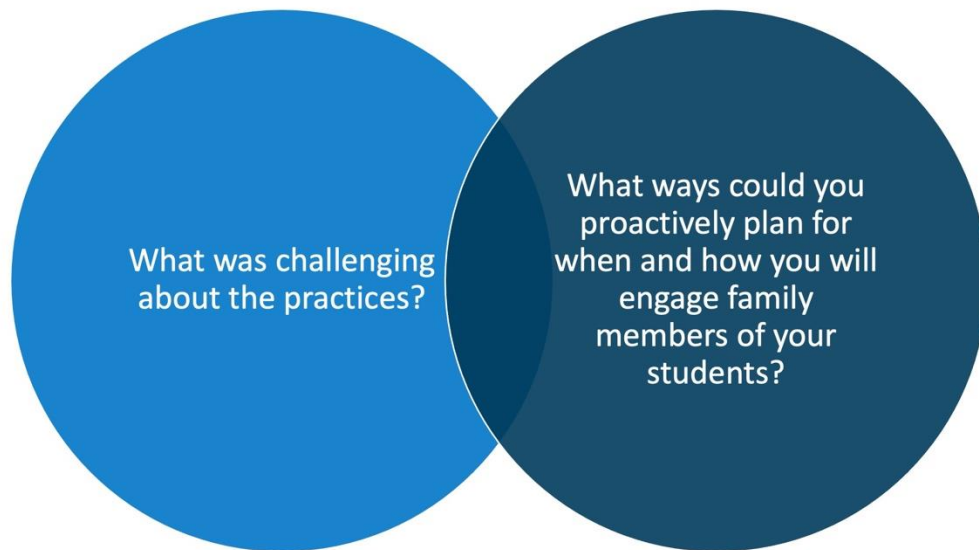
Community Voices

What impact did the relationship with Ms. Lucas have on Ms. Kaya?

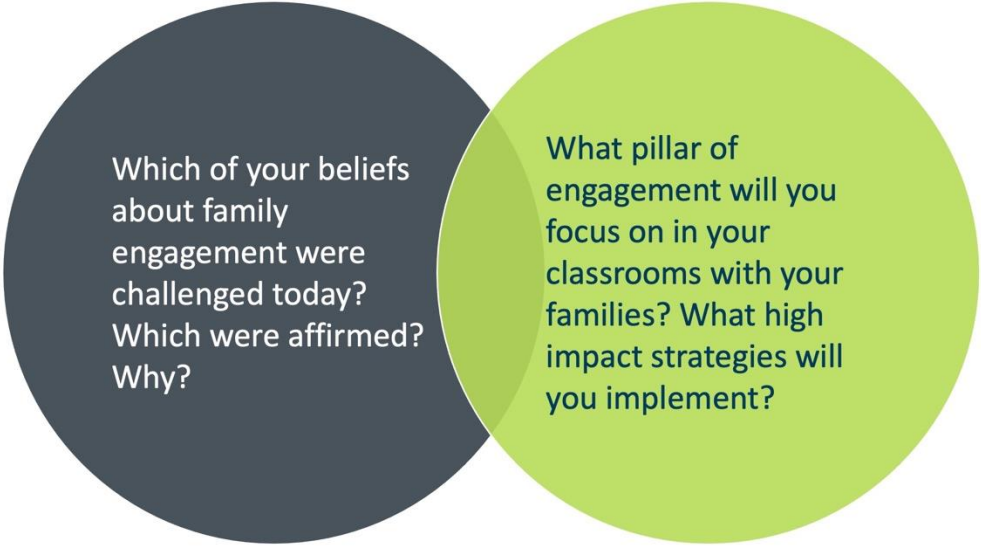
What impact can you infer that relationship had on her daughter's experience?

What specific things did Ms. Lucas do to build and maintain a relationship with Ms. Kaya?

Group Debrief



Independent Reflection



Which of your beliefs about family engagement were challenged today? Which were affirmed? Why?

What pillar of engagement will you focus on in your classrooms with your families? What high impact strategies will you implement?