

**Culturally Responsive  
Teaching and Leading Standards:  
Students Families and  
Communities**

# **Illinois Administrative Rule Part 24**

## **Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards for All Illinois Educators**

### **Section 24.50**

#### **(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.

# **Illinois Administrative Rule Part 24**

## **Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards for All Illinois Educators**

### **Section 24.50**

#### **(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.

# Agreements help maintain a safe, supportive, and active learning environment

## 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?”

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

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

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

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**Judgment** “You’re being overly sensitive.”

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

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

- 1 Talking about race makes me feel...

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

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

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

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

# Reflection Question Framework

**How does (perspective shared) challenge or expand the way I see the world?**

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**How does this issue relate to my own experience?** How have I been shaped by the issues being addressed?

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**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 are my reactions?** What do my reactions reveal about what I perceive is at risk were I to accept this information?

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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?

# 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 has a real impact on school improvement and student success

- 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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>

# True Engagement



## Impact on Decision-Making

### INFORMING

Providing balanced, objective information about new programs and updates during implementation.

### CONSULTING

Inviting feedback on alternatives, analyses, and decisions related to new programs or services. Sharing how feedback has influenced decisions.

### INVOLVING

Working with the community to ensure aspirations and concerns are considered at every stage. Sharing how their involvement has shaped decisions.

### COLLABORATING

Enabling community members to participate in all aspects of planning and decision-making for new programs.

### INCREASING AGENCY

Giving the community decision-making authority over new programs and honoring their expertise.

### Traditional Engagement

### Community 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

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## Critical Shifts

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Negative mindsets about families and communities.



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

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



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

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



Engagement efforts are aligned closely with academic goals.

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

# Conscious choices: Building relationships with families



“You want to be an actual part of their life.”

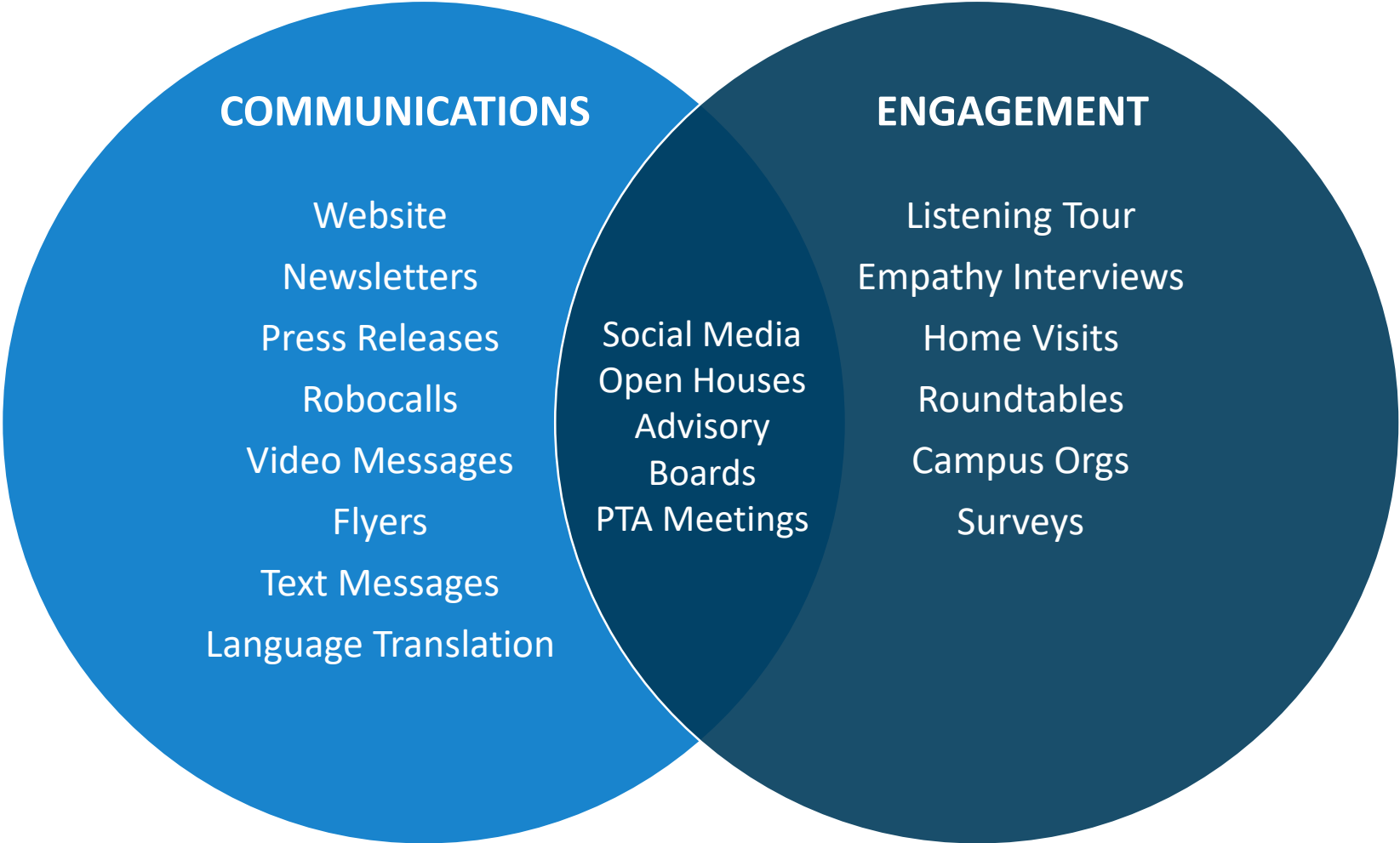
“What are some things that you want for your son? ... Her son had academic potential.”



**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

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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.

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## PROACTIVE

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The teacher consistently reaches out to families.

The teacher provides information before it is requested by families.

Communication is focused on preventing problems.

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# 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.

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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 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

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# **To effectively communicate, you need to first determine your *message*, and then pick the right *medium* — the way you choose to communicate your message**

Examples of media you could consider include:

- Websites
- Social media
- Traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)
- Mail
- Email lists
- Telephone calls/texts

**In many cases, you may use multiple media, especially if the message is complicated and/or very important.**

# Selecting the right medium for your message

Ultimately, you need to ensure that you are selecting media that will get your message to your target audience(s).

In order to decide, ask yourself:

- 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

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## Critical Shifts

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Limited emphasis on relationship-building.



Building (and repairing) relationships is prioritized.

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Family engagement on sporadic initiatives through proxy organizations.



We create multiple, ongoing opportunities to engage all families.

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Using one-size-fits-all engagement strategies.



We tailor engagement strategies to specific audiences.

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# Redefining Family Engagement

Read [It's Time to Redefine Family Engagement](#) and reflect on the following:

How does involving all families equitably benefit all stakeholders (teachers, students, admin, families)?

What potential biases could have been at play in the blog post? What parallels do you see in your own work?

How are you responding to the “call to action to remove traditional barriers to family engagement”?

# The 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**; 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.

**What are the “real-time” implications? How could this impact your work?**

# In your breakout groups ...

**1** Read the Bayside High School Case Study.

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Discuss the following:

- 2**
- Why are parents, especially parents of color, not engaged at Bayside?
  - What role does implicit bias play?
  - What could be done differently?
  - What guidance would you give Mrs. Brown?
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**3** Create an action plan.

# Reflection Question Framework

**How does (perspective shared) challenge or expand the way I see the world?**

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**How does this issue relate to my own experience?** How have I been shaped by the issues being addressed?

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**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?

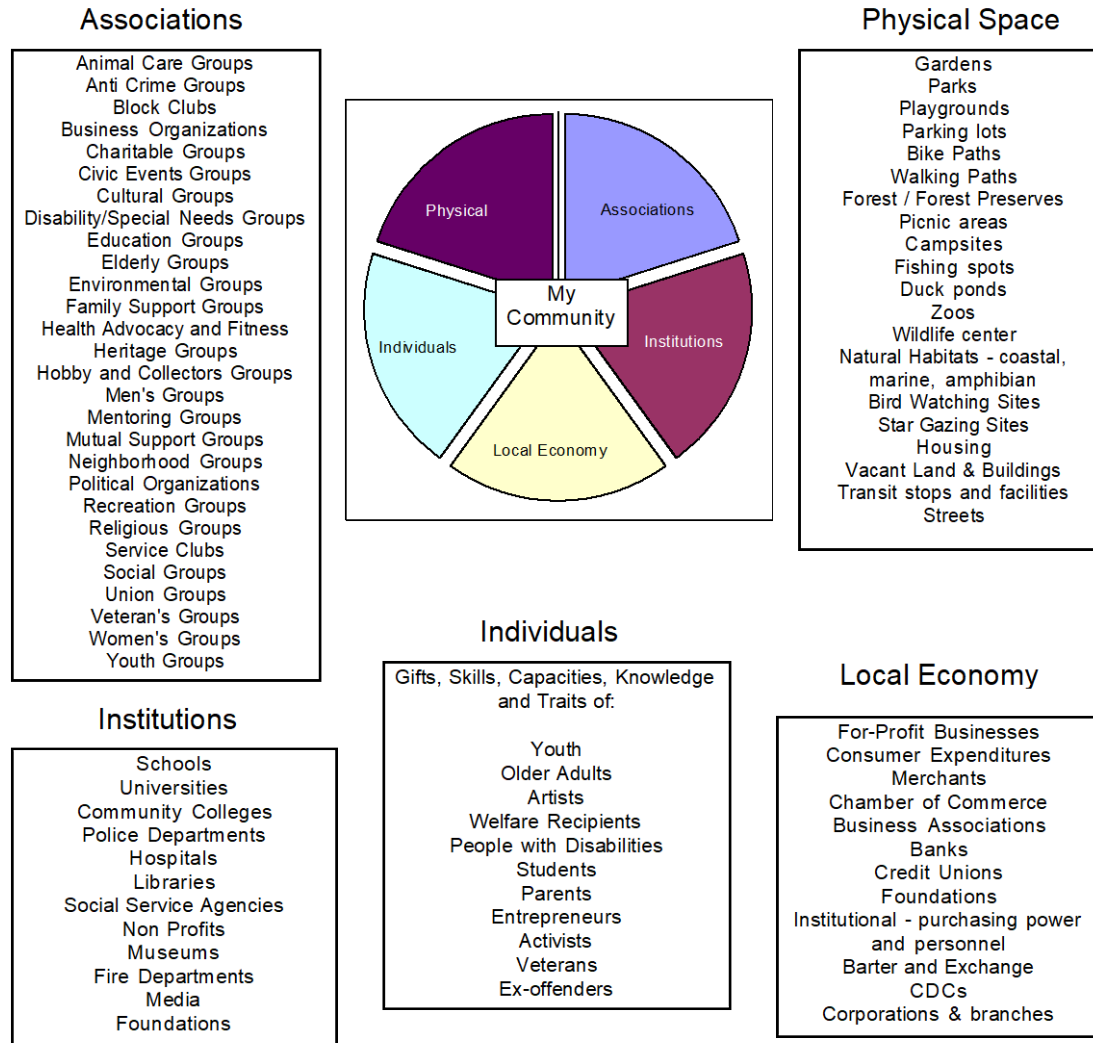
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**What are my reactions?** What do my reactions reveal about what I perceive is at risk were I to accept this information?

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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



# 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)*

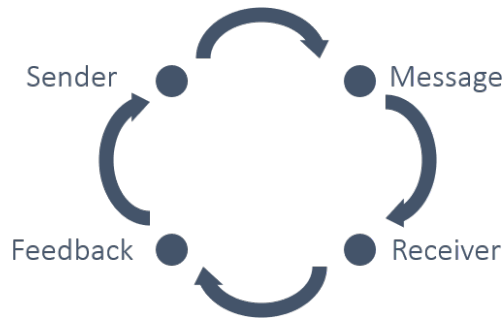
# In classrooms across the country, we see three forms of communication being utilized

## 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

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- 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.
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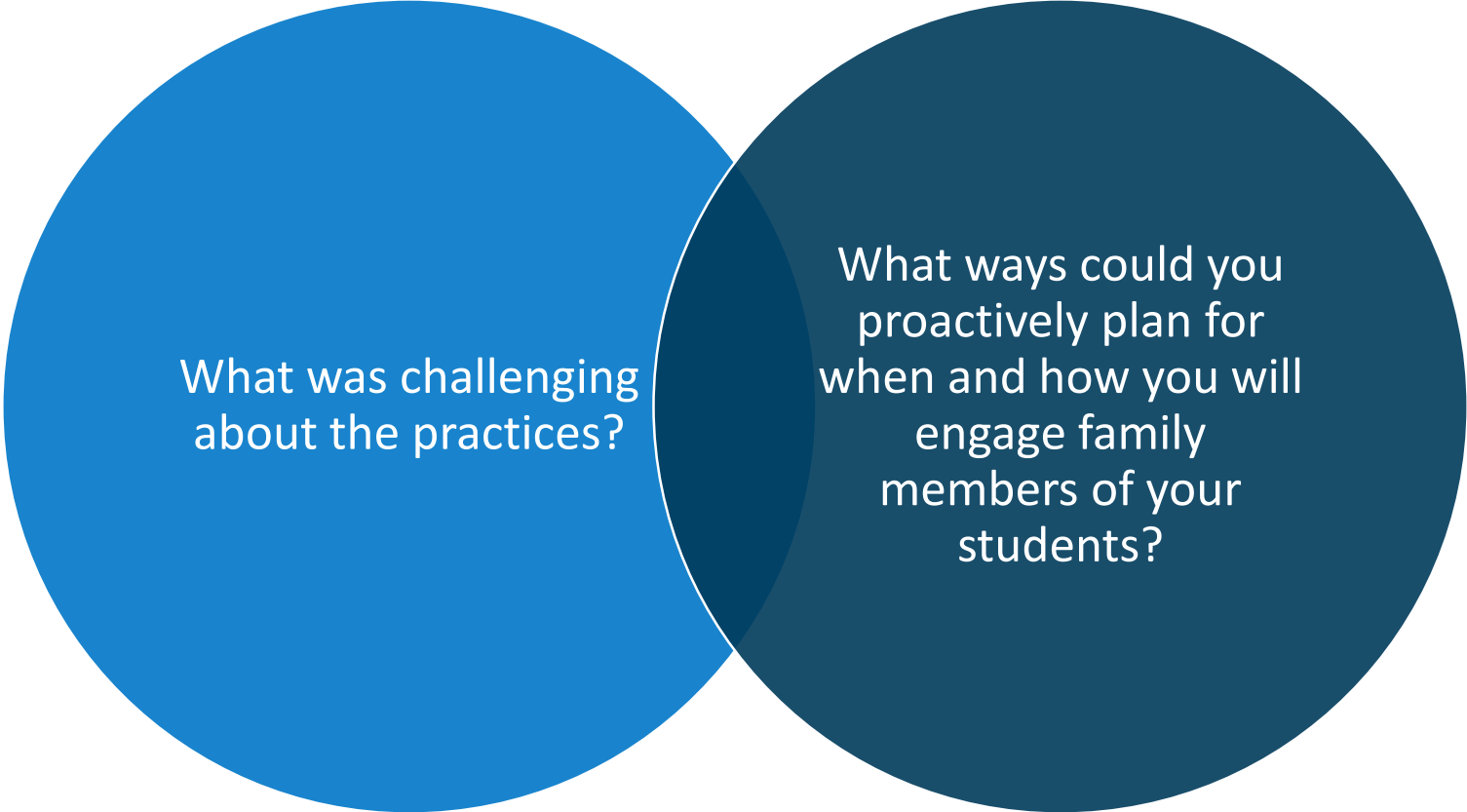
# Community Voices



## **As you watch the video, think about:**

- 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



What was challenging about the practices?

What ways could you proactively plan for when and how you will engage family members of your students?

# 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?