



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS & STAFF

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Hello Teachers and Staff,

We hope this message finds you all safe and well. During the COVID-19 closure period, the Engagement Office is working to ensure that school-based staff has access to tools and resources to continue efforts to help families become stronger partners in the education of their children.

As a central resource for family engagement, our team is here to support families and staff during the closure period and beyond around the following focus areas:

- **Building capacity**—providing virtual training and learning opportunities for principals, teachers, staff, parents, and families around effective family engagement practices
- **Decision making and advocacy**—creating virtual opportunities to lift the voices of parents and families through listening tours, school family councils, and organized parent groups
- **Two-way communication**—fostering meaningful and welcoming opportunities for ongoing communication with parents and families

We recognize and value the efforts of teachers and staff to stay connected with our families during this uncertain time. **We see you**—and we're dedicated to partnering with you to continue the work you're leading to support our families and students. In the coming weeks, our team will be sharing with you a list of family engagement supports to include best practices, toolkits, and virtual learning opportunities for school teams.

For more information about our office supports, please email [engagement@bpcs.k12.md.us](mailto:engagement@bpcs.k12.md.us). Thank you for all that you do to support our students and families.

Best,  
The Family Engagement Team

Check out this welcome message with important updates.

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# BUILDING CAPACITY

01



Family engagement is a shared responsibility— and an essential component for improving the academic achievement of our students. Positive relationships and strong collaboration are the cornerstones to engaging all families in our district, regardless of their background and needs. If there are positive relationships and opportunities for strong collaboration around academic priorities, then school communities will be engaged in partnerships that support student success.

## BUILDING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that schools are equipped with the tools and resources to strengthen family engagement, our supports are guided by the Dual Capacity-Building Framework (DCBF) for Family-School Partnerships, an evidence-based strategy for building strong academic partnerships with parents and families.

Strong parent-teacher partnerships have been shown to improve children's academic achievement, social competencies, and emotional well-being. When parents and teachers work together as partners, children do better at school and at home. The result is not a series of activities or events for parents, but is instead, local ownership from stakeholders in support of academic success for students. Now more than ever, it is important that our teachers and staff feel supported and confident in their efforts to engage parents as partners during the remote learning period.

Please find listed below resources and training opportunities that build the capacity of staff and educators to cultivate and sustain strong parent-teacher partnerships linked to student success during the COVID-19 closure period.

### Virtual Professional Development, Training, and Resources

- [Introduction to Family Engagement in Education w/ Karen Mapp, Senior Lecturer at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education](#)

Learn about the DCBF, the research, and the connection between family engagement, and improved outcomes for students. Through our partnership with Harvard's Family Engagement Institute, the fees for registration have been waived. Please register right away to reserve your space. A certificate of completion will be provided to all that finish the course.

- [Wide Open School](#)

An online platform developed in response to COVID-19's disruption to our children's learning due to the closing of schools across the nation. Designed for educators and families that include a free collection of PreK–12 resources curated by Common Sense Media around English Learner supports, family engagement, and more! This resource is available offline and via smartphone apps.

- [Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project \(PTHVP\) – Stay Home, Stay Connected](#)

A teacher-created interactive resource guide that includes tip sheets, scripts, and strategies for teachers and staff to maintain the relational ties with parents and families during the COVID-19 closure period.

- [National Center on Parent, Family & Community Engagement: Using Social Media to Engage Families – Guidance and Planning Tool](#)

If you're looking for ways to reconnect with your families, this guide can help! Learn more about social media strategies that produce real results for engaging parents and families. Use this tool to work collaboratively with your team to develop a social media action plan to stay connected.

- [The Flamboyant Foundation—Guidance and tips for school staff to connect with families around wellness and self-care](#)

Learn best practices and tips for school staff and educators to connect with families around wellness and self-care.

- [Scholastic's Family and Community Engagement for Educators Free Webinar Series](#)

Join Dr. Karen Mapp, teachers and principals from across the nation to share best practices for partnering with families to support learning at home and sustain the growth and development of children during these unprecedented circumstances. Registration is required.

- [Teaching for Tolerance – Family Engagement Supports](#)

A self-guided online learning tool that includes workshops, webinars, podcasts, and tip-sheets for educators to build trusting relationships with families linked to learning and the unique needs of school communities.

For more information about family engagement training and resources for educators and staff, please feel free to join us for our Virtual Office Hours or contact us at [engagement@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:engagement@bcps.k12.md.us).

[To learn more about the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School-Partnership visit:](#)  
[www.dualcapacity.org](http://www.dualcapacity.org)



## TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION INCREASES ENGAGEMENT

Communication acts as a bridge to engagement and, ultimately, strong parent partnerships. When you try to contact parents, you're saying that you value their insights and believe in their ability to support their child's education. Parents who might otherwise feel uncomfortable reaching out then know that they're welcome to do so. Once families and teachers establish that first connection, they can work together to help students reach their academic potential.

Not only does district policy elevate the importance of meaningful communication, but parents have expressed the need for it through surveys and ways we collect feedback. There's plenty of research that shows positive communication between parents and teachers helps improve academic performance. While teachers are experts in teaching, parents are the experts on their children and together the two make an awesome team! Our office wants to ensure that teachers and school-based staff are confident and comfortable with initiating this two-way communication.

Please access the following links as helpful resources along your journey as you build and nurture trusting relationships with families via two-way communication:

- [How Two-Way Communication Can Boost Parent Engagement](#)
- [Learn How Everyone Benefits](#)
- [Parent Communication Resources and Guides](#)
- [How to Reach Out to EL Families](#)
- [Check Out Two-Way Communication Tools](#)
- [Five Keys to Successful Parent-Teacher Communication](#)

If you have questions or would like support with developing a robust two-way communication plan for your families, please contact your FCE Specialist.



"City Schools will develop and use effective communication methods to ensure that all families, regardless of income, ethnic background, or language, whose children attend Baltimore City Public Schools, share and receive school-to-home and home-to-school communications about the district, school and classroom programs, and student progress. Information on school and parent programs will be provided in a format and language that parents can understand."

- City Schools' FCE Board Policy



## SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Strong school-family partnerships provide opportunities for parents and families to effectively work together and participate in making decisions at all levels in support of improved academic performance for students. Supporting and promoting your school's organized parent group and School Family Council are examples of strategies to elevate the voices of all stakeholders--parents, teachers, staff, and students. Children's learning is enhanced when teachers and parents both form strong partnerships, share information effectively, and make decisions together.

Below are links to helpful information and strategies to support your efforts to promote decision-making and advocacy for your families.

- [Parent Engagement in School Decision-Making](#)

Learn more about strategies and tips to engage parents in decision-making, governance, and advocacy.

- [From Volunteer to Decision-Maker: How Parents can Play a Greater Role in Schools](#)

Examine the role of parents and teachers in decision-making and advocacy through an equity-based lens. Learn more about tactics to dismantle race- and class-based power structures.

- [How Organized Parent Groups Have Responded to the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

Emergency school closings have upended school parent groups' spring plans, but organized parent groups are responding with creativity and compassion. Click here to learn how groups across the country are responding.

- [Adapting Your Organized Parent Group to a New Normal](#)

As parent groups are more and more affected by coronavirus this spring, they're having to find ways to do business differently and adjust to a new, or for now, reality. Click here for some of the most asked questions from leaders about how to do parent group work while schools are closed.

- [Online Voting Tips for Organized Parent Groups](#)

The school closure period has suspended many areas of normal organized parent group life but making your officer elections virtual can help keep business moving along. Click here for videoconferencing tips and tools for online voting.

- [Organized Parent Group Leaders: How to Use Facebook Live](#)

Learn how Facebook Live can help organized parent groups stay connected and get tech tips to make your broadcast successful.

- [How You Can Take Action During this COVID-19](#)

Tell Congress to Meet the Needs of Students and Families During COVID-19, National PTA

Tell your members of Congress to Provide Emergency Funding for Family Engagement, National PTA

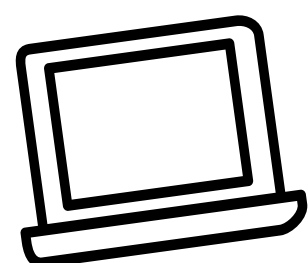
For more information or to connect with our team, please email [engagement@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:engagement@bcps.k12.md.us).

# CONNECT WITH THE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

## Family Engagement Virtual Office Hours: Get Answers, Share Resources, Feel Supported

We are excited to announce a new level of support: Virtual Office Hours! School-based staff will have an opportunity to ask questions about family engagement and supports. Staff will be available to answer your questions, provide guidance and support.

No questions are too small! We are here for you.



### Monday

9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.  
to 5:00 p.m.

Access to Link and Details

+1 443-961-1488 United States,

Baltimore (Toll)

Conference ID: 935 555 572#

### Wednesday

9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.  
to 5:00 p.m.

Access to Link and Details

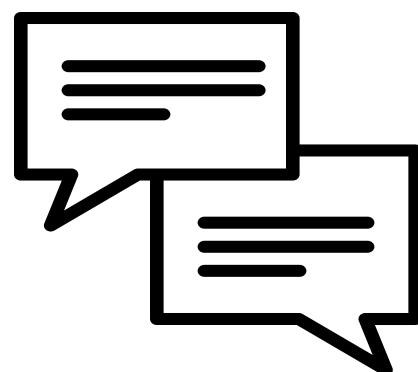
+1 443-961-1488 United States,

Baltimore (Toll)

Conference ID: 821 327 950#

To help us provide the right supports, please complete this quick survey to help us prepare for your questions/needs in advance: <https://forms.gle/MwGuxJns7879BSV38>

Can't join during the office hours? Send us an email: [engagement@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:engagement@bcps.k12.md.us) or contact the FCE Specialist assigned to your school directly for support. We look forward to connecting with you.



**Connect with your school's FCE Specialist  
to learn more about our supports and  
resources.**

Thank you

