Enhancing Family Engagement

March 27, 2014

**The models and information shared within this webinar are for informational purposes only.**
Webinar Protocol

• Close any open windows/programs on your computer and actively participate in the webinar as appropriate.

• Place your phone/microphone on mute during the webinar.

• Use “Question Box” for questions/comments. There will be designated times that the facilitator asks for participant feedback and/or questions.

• Minimize your “Dashboard” in order to enhance viewing of the presentation.
Introductions

• Dr. Julia Rafal-Baer, Executive Director of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, Policy and Programs
• Courtney Jablonski, Project Coordinator, Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, Policy and Programs
• Marianne Litzman, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Hicksville Public Schools
• Susan Guiliano, Director for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessments, Hicksville Public Schools
• Mara Jorisch, Principal, Hicksville Middle School, Hicksville Public Schools
• Chris Scardino, Principal, Fork Lane Elementary School, Hicksville Public Schools
• Maureen McMorrow, Fifth Grade Teacher, Lee Avenue Elementary School, Hicksville Public Schools
• Theresa Eccher, Parent, Hicksville Public Schools
Session Objectives

- Importance of home-school communication
- Hear concrete examples of parent-engagement work happening across the state
- Start to develop an enhancement plan for your classroom/school/district partnership with families
Session Overview

- Examination of Current Reality
- Foundations to Family Engagement
- Exploration of Available Resources
- Examples of Diverse Methods for Cultivating Family Engagement
- Close-Up on Hicksville’s Family Engagement Efforts
- A Snapshot of South Huntington’s Work With Families
- Strategic Action Planning
What do you see as the strengths and limitations to the methods used at the district, building and/or classroom levels to engage parents and families?

What area(s) would you like to focus on that could expand and/or enhance your efforts to engage more families in an educational partnership?
Why Family Engagement?

“Parents will always be a child’s first and most important teacher.”

-Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education
Family Engagement Foundations

• Garner a deep understanding of the diverse needs, cultures, and backgrounds of students and families within the community

• Use multiple avenues to communicate how the academic goals of the school align with the aspirations caregivers have for their children

• Clearly communicate and regularly revisit expectations for both the school and families to ensure all parties have the proper resources to fully support students
Impact on Students

Academically

- Higher graduation rates
- Deeper engagement in learning
- Improved attendance rates
- Higher rates of homework completion
- More successful transitions from one grade level to the next
- Greater likelihood of plans for a future beyond high school

Socially/Emotionally

- Increased sense of self
- Motivation to succeed becomes intrinsic
- Strengthened student-teacher relationship
- Strengthened student-parent relationship
- Stronger ability to maintain positive peer relationships
Examples of Proactive Steps from Districts

1. Districts and schools work with families to create a shared vision for parental involvement
2. Administration models and sets clear expectations for staff behavior when communicating with families
3. Schools align instructional goals with the interests and aspirations of the community, soliciting input from multiple stakeholders
4. Schools find several avenues to communicate with families that reflect an understanding of families’ needs, cultures and backgrounds
5. Districts and schools work with teachers and caregivers to find efficient and effective ways in which to regularly communicate with families
Available Resources on EngageNY

- Planning a Parent Workshop Toolkit
- Planning a Parent Night Checklist
- Parent’s Backpack Guide to the Common Core
- What Parents Can Do To Help Their Children
Available Resources on EngageNY

Links to Planning Tools

- Event Checklist for Planning a Parent Night
- Annotated Agendas:
  - Two-Night Parent Session Part I
  - Two-Night Parent Session Part II
  - Consolidated One-Night Parent Session
- Slide Presentations:
  - Two-Night Parent Session Presentation Part I
  - Two-Night Parent Session Presentation Part II
  - Consolidated One-Night Parent Session Presentation

• Planning a Parent Workshop Toolkit
• Planning a Parent Night Checklist
Available Resources on EngageNY

- **Parent’s Backpack Guide to the Common Core**
- **What Parents Can Do To Help Their Children**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s the shift?</th>
<th>What will students have to do?</th>
<th>What can parents do to help?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read as much fiction as non-fiction</td>
<td>Read more non-fiction</td>
<td>Supply more non-fiction texts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand how non-fiction is written and put together</td>
<td>Read non-fiction books aloud or with your child</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy and discuss the details of non-fiction</td>
<td>Have fun with non-fiction in front of your child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn about the world by reading</td>
<td>Learn more about science and social studies through reading</td>
<td>Supply series of texts on topics that interest your child</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use “primary source” documents</td>
<td>Find books that explain how things work and why</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Get smarter through the use of texts</td>
<td>Discuss non-fiction texts and their ideas</td>
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Reflection

- What is your district’s vision for parental involvement? How is this vision communicated at the district, building, and classroom level?
- How well do your instructional goals align with the interests and aspirations of the community? How do you know?
- Which families are most engaged in your school(s)/district? Who are those that are least engaged?
- How could you enhance your work to encourage more family engagement?
Diverse Methods of Family Engagement Across NYS

• Informational Forums
  – Bethlehem CSD

• Interactive Sessions
  – Sandy Cohen Family Math Day

• Online Videos
Additional Examples of Family Engagement Across NYS

• Online engagement: Massive open Online Courses (MOOC)
  – East Moriches UFSD
• Parent Universities
  – Rochester CSD
• Dedicated parent web pages
Reflection

• What types of communication/outreach do you use most often at the district, building, and classroom levels?

• How are you able to determine who is accessing opportunities for engagement?

• What are the strengths and limitations to your current methods?

• How can you expand your efforts to engage more families in the educational programs?
Hicksville Public Schools: 
*Strengthening Family and School Partnerships*

Shared vision:  
- To strengthen relationships between home and school  
- To improve student achievement  
- To increase understanding of the “Instructional Shifts” and what that looks like in the classroom and in student work  
- To provide resources for parents to better support their children at home
A Closer Look at Hicksville Public Schools

Two Year Use of STLE Grant Funds

• Purchase of iPads for all 6th grade students
• Partnership with BOCES for professional development integrating technology into the curriculum
• Professional Development for teachers in grades K-8 implementing Teachers College Writing Project
• Selection, purchase and implementation of Common Core aligned Math program
• Leadership opportunities for Home School Connection Teachers to strengthen home school connections through the use of instructional videos
Hicksville Public Schools Implementation Plan

Goal – *To develop a series of parent workshops to build parents’ understanding of the Common Core*

- District Planning Committee
  - School building leaders
  - Curriculum supervisors
  - Classroom teachers representative of all levels

- District Presentations
  - Held at each school site
  - Uniform district presentation
  - Highlighting Common Core strategies aligned to grade levels
Hicksville Public Schools Implementation Plan

• Parent Notification
  • District Flyers
    • elementary backpacks
    • secondary mailing
    • request for parents to RSVP
  • Parent Link District Telephone Notification
  • Individual Teacher Invitations & Reminders
  • District & Building Web Pages
  • Parent Teacher Association Announcements
Hicksville Public Schools
Common Core Parent Workshop Series

• *Understanding the Common Core State Standards: You and Your Child*

• *Understanding the Common Core State Standards: Exploring the Eight Mathematical Practices*

• *Go Math & Think Central: Supporting Your Child at Home*

• *Understanding the Common Core State Standards: Evidence Based Reading and Writing*
Hicksville Public Schools

Strengthening Family and School Partnerships

What does CC look like in the classroom?

Class discussions...

Use of text-based evidence...

What does CC look like in the classroom?

Problem solving

Excitement...

Independence...

What does CC look like in the classroom?

Engagement...

Use of digital resources...
Hicksville Public Schools
Teacher Perspective

• Teacher Leaders
  • ELA or Math grade specific strategies
  • What Common Core looks like in the classroom
  • Interactive break-out sessions for parents
  • Opportunities for Q & A www.hicksvillepublicschools.org
  • Online parent resources – i.e. Think Central

• Communication
  • Teacher web pages
  • Weekly newsletters
  • Agenda books/homework
  • Extra help sessions
Hicksville Public Schools
Parent Perspective

• Prior to engagement activities
  • Nervous/Anxious
  • Unclear, conflicting information

• Post engagement activities
  • Relaxed, relieved
  • Understand children are happy in school
  • Know where to find resources

• Positive impact for their own children
  • I know what questions to ask “How did you know?”
  • I know where to find support

• Communication has been helpful
  • Teacher web pages
  • Parent workshops - FAQ

• Suggestions for continued support/information
Hicksville Public Schools

• Challenges
  • Scheduling of workshops
  • Meeting the needs of all parents
  • Language barriers
  • Understanding mathematical concepts
  • Getting parents involved during the workshops
  • Reaching all parents
  • Sustaining involvement of secondary parents

• Successes
  • Consistent message
  • Topics specific to the subject matter
  • Beginning with overview workshop
  • Teacher presenters
  • Hands-on activities modeled by teachers
  • Q & A
  • Hosting in home buildings
  • PTA Meeting presentations
  • Useful handouts
Hicksville Public Schools
Next Steps

• Home School Connections Teacher Academy
  • Training
  • Record & Broadcast
  • Implementation of School YouTube Channel to access teacher videos

• Survey parents to identify needs

• Reconvene planning committee
  • Review parent surveys
  • Plan/adjust workshops

• Schedule and plan workshops for next year
Hicksville Public Schools

Advice for Parents

- Attend PTA meetings
- Attend parent workshops
- Check backpacks/agenda books daily
- Check progress of homework
- Visit the school/district website regularly
- View online grade book
- Model inquiry and reading for information
- Talk with your children about their interests, projects, homework
- Provide print rich homes
- Access the public library
- Resources for matching books to readers
  www.scholastic.com/bookwizard
- Visit educational websites recommended by your child’s teachers
- Encourage children to make persuasive arguments
Hicksville Public Schools

Advice for Schools

- Include administrators and teachers in the planning and presentation
- Teacher representation from multiple levels
- Plan interactive workshops with hands-on activities for parents
- Elicit the support of the Parent Teacher Association
- Utilize the district website and teacher web pages
- Use mass calling system
- Hold presentations at home buildings
- Include presentations during PTA meetings
- Multiple written communication/invitations
- Multiple presentation opportunities
Second District Spotlight

South Huntington Union Free School District has successfully utilized Teacher Leaders, funded through STLE, to engage families in the conversation around Common Core implementation.

Enhancing Family Engagement in South Huntington
Question & Answer
## Strategic Action Planning

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Areas of Current Family Engagement Strategies to Revisit/Enhance</th>
<th>Examples/References Worth Noting From Webinar</th>
<th>Possible Next Steps</th>
<th>Necessary Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where can you focus your efforts to extend the reach of your family engagement activities?</td>
<td>What have you seen/heard that would help you to enhance your efforts?</td>
<td>What are immediate actions that could be taken to act upon these reflections?</td>
<td>What do you have in place that can serve as a foundation? What additional resources are needed? This would include key personnel and stakeholder involvement.</td>
</tr>
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Please send samples of your own strategic planning to: [STLERFP@MAIL.NYSED.GOV](mailto:STLERFP@MAIL.NYSED.GOV)
Thank You/Next Steps

To contact your STLE coordinator: STLERFP@MAIL.NYSED.GOV
Don’t forget to share your stories with us and follow others through Twitter #STLE