

Start Strong:

Relationships First: Building Family Partnerships From Day One



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TalkingPoints

Webinar Guidelines

- **Q&A Button:** Questions are highly encouraged! Use the “Q&A” button to share yours. Our presenters will try to answer the questions live at the end.
- **Chat Button:** We'll use chat to share and gather your feedback during the webinar.
- **If you're having trouble connecting,** refresh your browser or reload the Zoom app.
- **Close other applications** that use bandwidth or resources on your device.
- **For audio issues** you can also dial into the Zoom webinar using your phone.
- **We will share the recording and resources** via email after the event.



The Trust Effect:

***Communication That
Leads to Student
Success***

Communication builds trust.



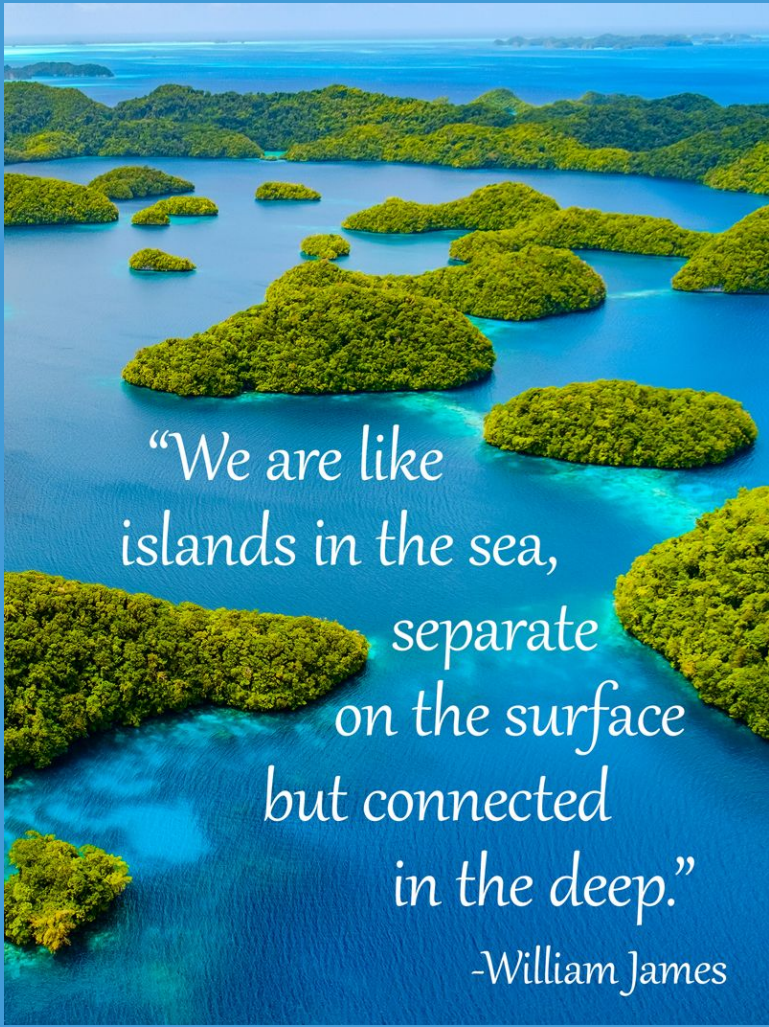
Trust builds relationships.



Relationships lead to student success.



TalkingPoints



*“We are like
islands in the sea,
separate
on the surface
but connected
in the deep.”*

-William James



**We may work in different places, but we
influence the same system.**





**Relationships reveal the connections that
already exist.**



**Students live within the connections
between adults.**

Three truths. One throughline.
Family partnerships aren't built later -
they start with relationship, from day one.



Introducing Ari Gerzon-Kessler

- *Nationally recognized family engagement expert*
- *Trusted partner to districts across the country*
- *Champion for stronger school-family relationships*
- *Passionate advocate for student-centered partnerships*
- *Inspires educators to build trust, connection, and impact*

We are thrilled to welcome Ari as our keynote speaker today!



“Family and community engagement is not just another thing teachers need to do, it’s a way to be.

If you don’t know your students’ families, you don’t know your students.

If you don’t know your students, how are you going to reach them, motivate them, and be that important other adult in their life?”

- *Anne Henderson*



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“When asked by researchers what facet of their role they most lacked confidence in, both teachers and principals identified family engagement...

Less than one in five teachers received training on family engagement in their pre-service programs.”

-On The Same Team:

**Bringing Educators and Underrepresented
Families Together**

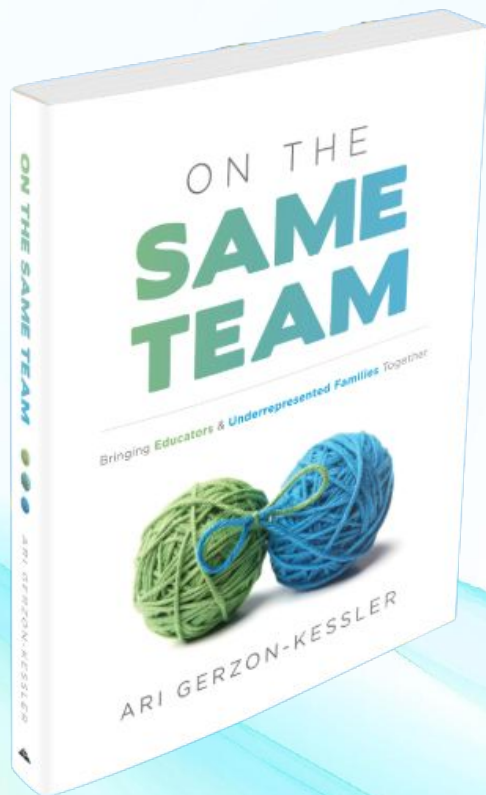


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Where Families and Educators Grow Together





GOLD MEDAL IN THE EDUCATION CATEGORY

2024 AWARD WINNER



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Six Key Guiding Questions

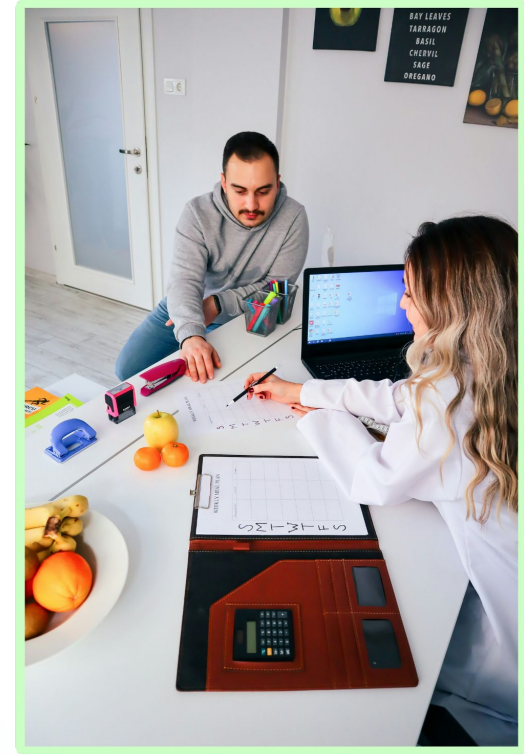
- Where is your school succeeding – and struggling – in pushing beyond an events focus?
- Do you have systems that embed family engagement best practices, or are you relying on “random acts of family involvement”?



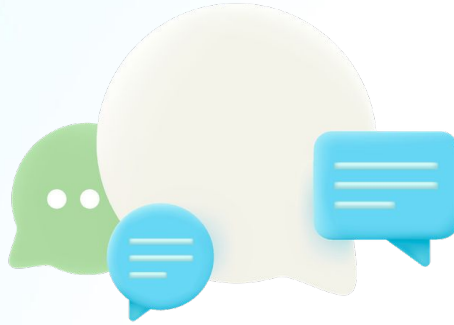
- Are staff prioritizing authentic relationship-building with families, or primarily focused on transactions, logistics, and content?
- How are educators and families actively deepening communication, trust, and relationships?



- How intentionally are staff challenging status quo approaches and engaging families as true partners?
- In what ways is your school expanding the number of family engagement champions, rather than relying on a few people to carry the work?



SHARE IN THE CHAT



As you strive to start strong with your family engagement efforts this new school year, which question feels most important to you?



Six Key Guiding Questions

- **Where is your school succeeding – and struggling - in pushing beyond an events focus?**
- Do you have systems that embed family engagement best practices, or are you relying on “random acts of family involvement”?
- **Are staff prioritizing authentic relationship-building with families, or primarily focused on transactions, logistics, and content?**
- How are educators and families actively deepening communication, trust, and relationships?
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START WITH WHY:

The Benefits of Elevating Our Family Engagement Efforts



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The Current Reality

- More than 60 percent of K-12 parents and caretakers said there was “**room for improvement**” in the helpfulness, timeliness, and courteousness of the customer service experience with their school district.
- 66 percent of parents with children under the age of eighteen reported some level of **parental burnout**.
- The majority of educators do not feel “**treated like professionals**” by the public” and are thinking about leaving the profession



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Parent participation is the leading predictor that supports students' academic success, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or cultural background.

Schools with strong family involvement were 10 times more likely to substantially improve in math and 4 times more likely in literacy.



Mapp, 2023



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Family Engagement is a Strategy to Support Every Outcome

1. Stronger academic achievement
2. Higher graduation rates
3. *Improved attendance, reduced absenteeism, and higher enrollment
4. Better student attitudes towards learning
5. Stronger social skills
6. Fewer discipline issues
7. Students, families, and staff feel a stronger sense of belonging
8. Better student-teacher relationships



The Benefits of Strong Partnerships: What the Research Says

9. Stronger levels of cultural competence for staff
10. Improved image of the school throughout the community
11. Increased interactions and participation for community partners
12. Greater longevity and morale for educators
13. Higher levels of trust, belonging, and shared ownership with families
14. A more inclusive and connected school community



The Five Keys to Moving from a Good to Great School

- Effective leaders
- Collaborative teachers
- **Strong ties with families**
- Ambitious instruction
- Supportive environment



from Anthony Bryk's in-depth study of Chicago Public Schools



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FAMILY INVOLVEMENT VS. AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIPS:

Changing Mindsets & Shifting Practices



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“In a garden, if you get the conditions right, everything grows.
If the vegetables don’t grow, you don’t blame the vegetables.

How often do you see students and parents being
blamed for low achievement versus us [educators]
asking ourselves: Did we create the right conditions?...

Too many schools believe they can do this work in
spite of the parents or without them, and it never
works.”

- **Pedro Noguera**



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GAME TIME:

Involvement vs. Partnerships

Which One Is Misplaced?

Involvement

1. One-way, do “to” or “for”
2. Transactional and Events focused
3. Exclusive
4. Co-created events
5. Surface-level trust

Partnerships

1. Two-way, do “with”
2. Relationship focused
3. Inclusive
4. School-designed events
5. Deeper levels of trust



GAME TIME:

Involvement vs. Partnerships

Which One Is Misplaced?

Involvement

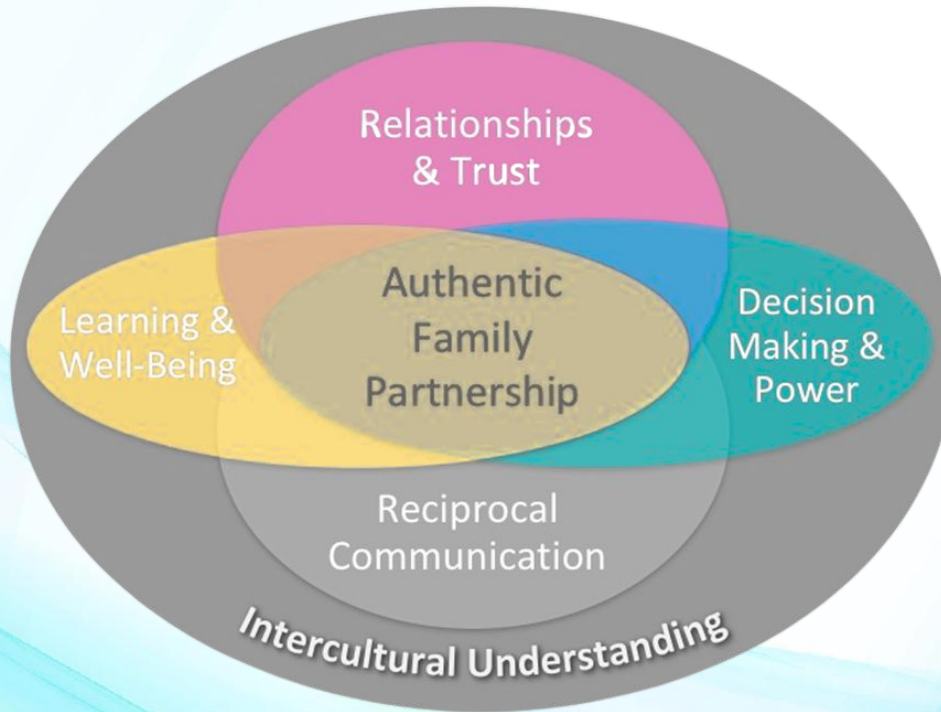
1. Sporadic opportunities for families to engage
2. Emphasis on academics, student behavior, logistics
3. Everyone holds expertise and power is shared
4. Meetings focused on what families should do
5. “Leads with its mouth”... *to* you

Partnerships

1. Regular and engaging gatherings across the school year
2. Emphasis on connection and mutual learning
3. Educators are the experts and exert their positional power
4. Meetings focused on how staff and families can work together
5. “Guides with its ears” ... *for* and *with* you



Five Pillars for Authentic Partnerships



Self-Assess Your Current State to Chart Your Path Forward

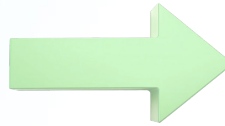
Moving Toward Authentic Family Partnership				
	Undeveloped Family Partnership	Developing Family Partnership	Traditional Family Partnership	Authentic Family Partnership
Two-Way Communication				
Two-way and reciprocal	Communication for most families is limited to informing them of major shifts in school programs and structures or emergencies.	- Almost all communication goes from school to home. - There are limited times and ways for families to communicate with the school.	Families give input in some contexts, such as on committees, through surveys, at parent-teacher conferences, or with key staff.	- Families communicate with the school in multiple ways. - School staff and families listen to each other in multiple settings.
Consistent and accessible	Communication is sporadic and not always translated to languages other than English spoken in the community, or is not translated well and in accessible language.	Communication is somewhat regular with some translated materials, but families must make an effort to access information, especially in languages other than English.	Communication is consistent through key methods (such as newsletters, weekly folders, email, key school staff), with important (but not all) communication translated and understandable.	- Communication with families occurs on a consistent basis in understandable language. - Communication occurs through a variety of methods based on families' preferences (such as phone calls, texts, auto dialers, in person, email, and social media).
Relationships and Trust				
Welcoming and affirming community spaces	- Families do not feel welcome in the school building. - The front office may feel intimidating or unfriendly.	Families feel welcome in some spaces, such as specific classrooms, but not others.	- Families feel welcome in multiple places in the school. - The school reflects multiple cultures and many staff are bilingual, friendly, and helpful.	- There are spaces in the school for families to access or contribute to resources. - There are spaces for marginalized families to take on leadership roles. - The school acts as a resource for families, in partnership with community organizations.
Authentic care	Educators make little effort to learn family members' names and other information about the students' families.	There is a perception that formally educated parents are more involved in their children's education.	Families give input on particular decisions and in traditional settings (such as school committees, surveys, and parent-teacher conferences).	School staff and families get to know each other in multiple ways (such as home visits, community dialogues, caring everyday interactions, opportunities for listening at school events, and so on).





Institutional Care

- Emphasis on ideas and things (assessments, grades, dress code, attendance)
- Technical language
- Talking to you



Authentic Care

- Emphasis on nurturing relationships (knowing people, sharing personal aspects)
- Expressive language
- Listening to you





**“Authenticity is a collection of choices we
make every day.”**

- Brene Brown



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Start Strong:

Prioritize Relationships & Trust



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“I’ve learned that people with forget what
you said, people will forget what you did, but
**people will never forget
how you made them feel.”**

- *Maya Angelou*



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“Understanding the distinction between service and hospitality has been at the foundation of our success.

Service is the technical delivery of a product. Hospitality is how the delivery of that product makes its recipient *feel*.

Service is a *monologue* - we decide how we want to do things and set our own standards for service. Hospitality, on the other hand, is a *dialogue*. To be on a guest's side requires listening to that person with every sense...”

- *Danny Meyer*, founder of restaurants that have earned
21 James Beard awards



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Top Work Places 2026

“Service over sales.”

“People over transactions.”

“Culture isn’t a poster on the wall. The ones that get it right make it tangible.”

“Listening isn’t enough – acting on it is.”

“A culture built on trust and accountability.”



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**“Change happens at the speed of trust.
Trust moves at the speed of relationship.”**

- Stephen Covey

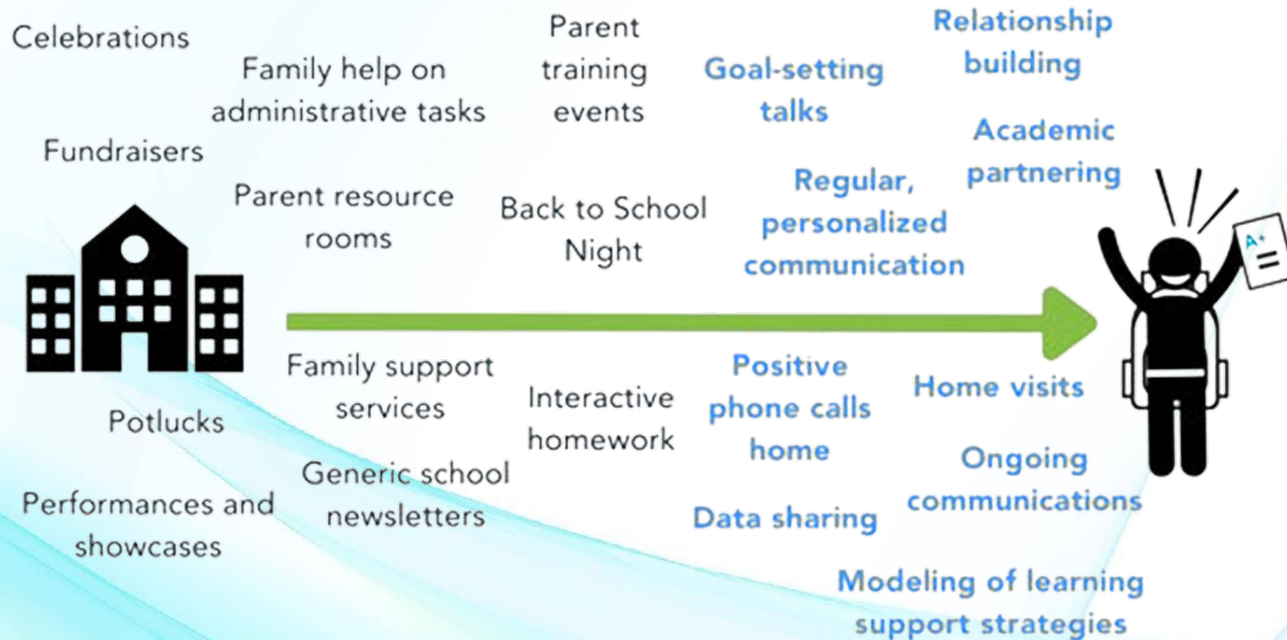


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Two-Way Communication as a
Pathway to Stronger
Relationships:
High Impact
Family Engagement Strategies



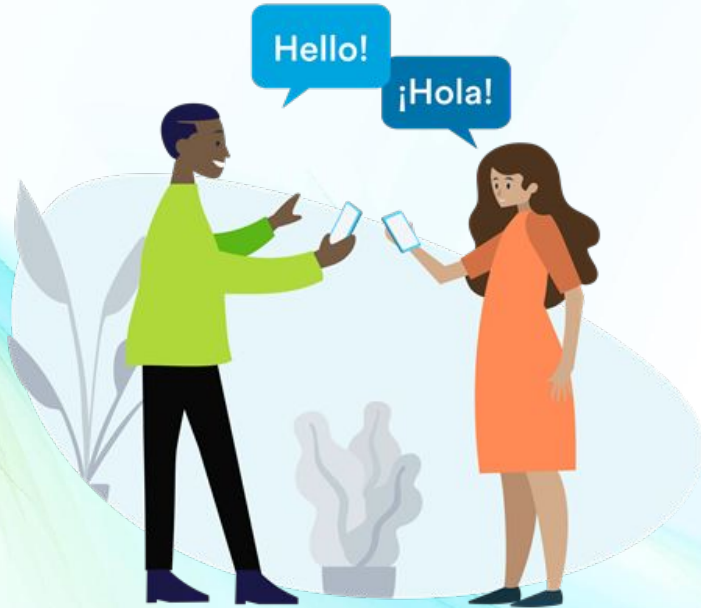
Impact of Family Engagement Strategies on Student Learning



Source: Flamboyant Foundation



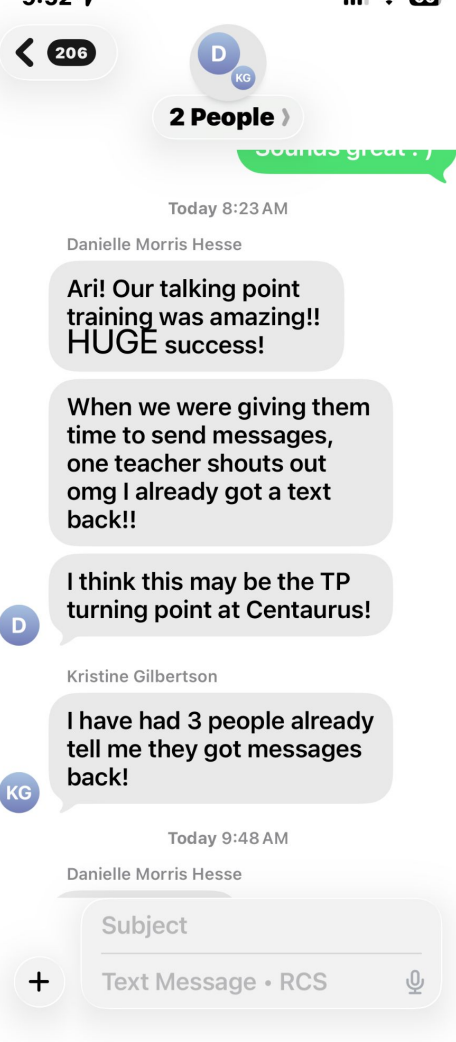
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Implement more consistent
two-way communication via apps
such as TalkingPoints



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Fri, Nov 17, 2023

MD

Hello, thank you very much. I love going to the meetings. I already received your gift, I loved it

From: Mother · 5:01 PM

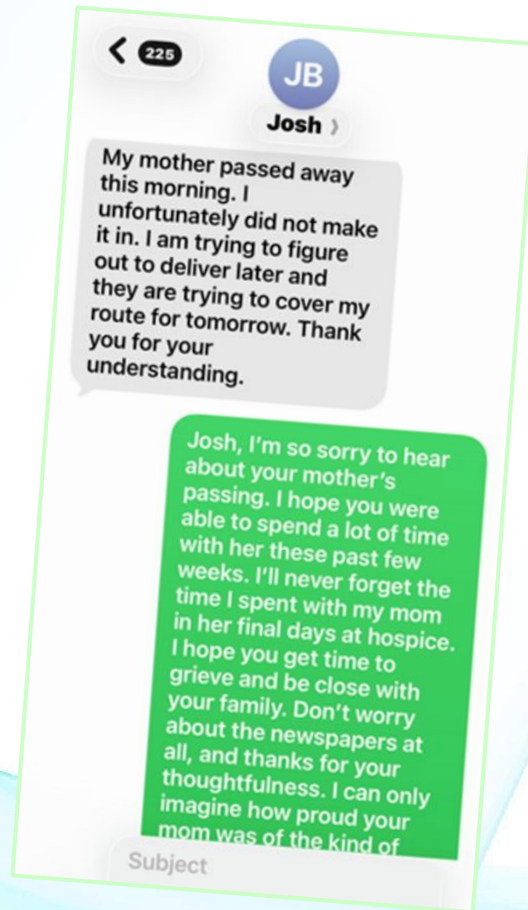
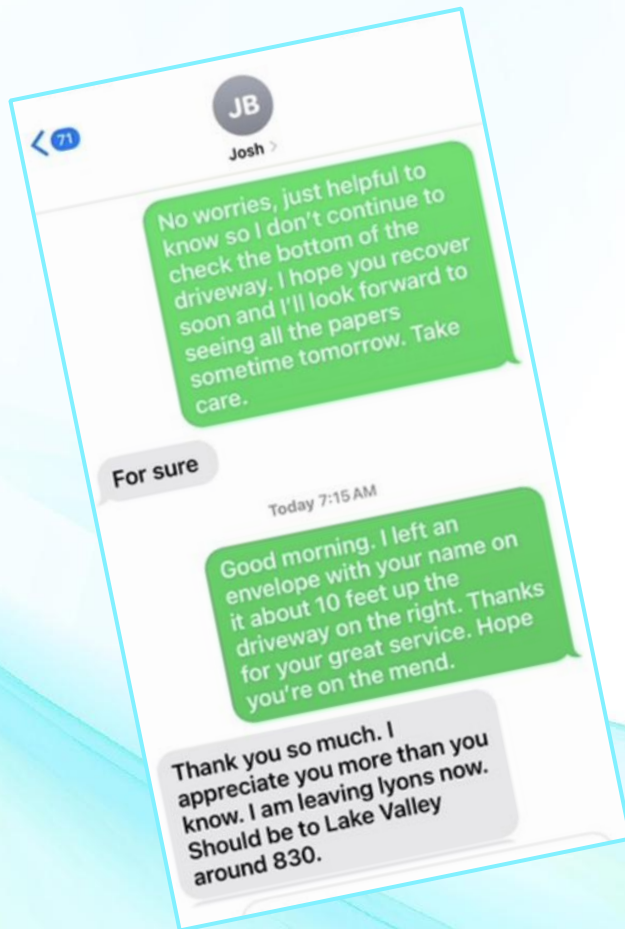
Fri, Nov 17, 2023

That makes me so happy. We love spending time with you all! ❤️

To: Mother · 8:01 PM · [Read](#)

Complaint?
Text me so I
can fix it.
720-~~888-1111~~ ~~1111~~
Your carrier
mandi 😊







**“Greatness is a bunch of
small things, done well, that
stack on top of each other.”**

- Michael Phelps



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Priorities and Systems:

Getting Clear on What Matters Most &
Building in the Time



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“Real possibilities for partnerships emerge when educators move from just thinking differently about engagement to permanently transforming their practice.”

- Dr. Karen Mapp and colleagues, *Everyone Wins*



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The Power of Prioritizing

“Successful organizations mobilize themselves to be ‘all over’ the practices that are known to make a difference.”

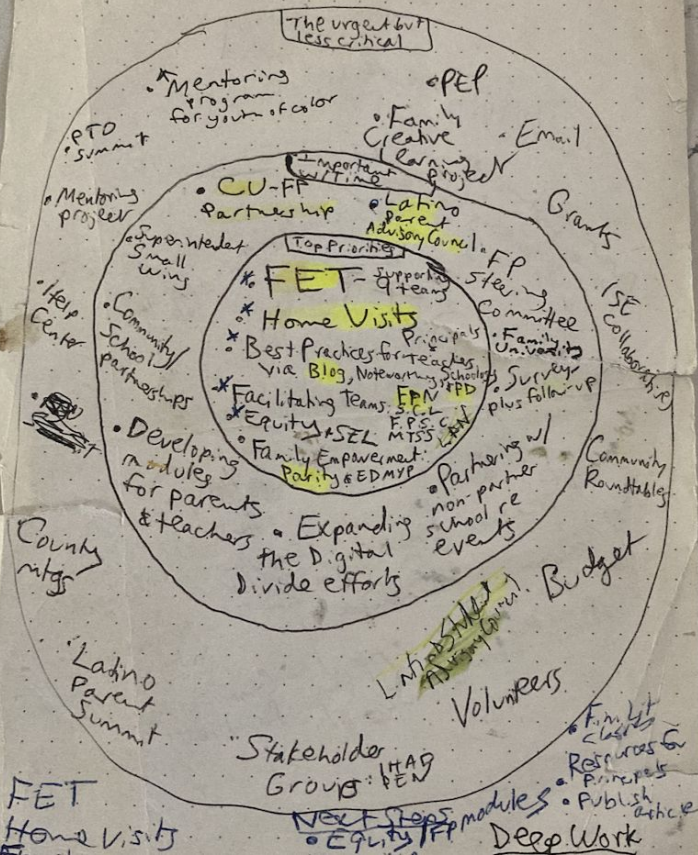
- Michael Fullan, author of *The Six Secrets of Change*

**“20 percent of our efforts produce
80 percent of results.”**

- Vilfredo Pareto, 1896



2018-19



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Build in Time for Staff To Engage in Best Practices:

- Increases Buy-In
- Honors Educators' Heavy Load
- Builds Capacity for Educators & Families
- Creates Sustainable Systems
- Deepens Engagement





“If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.”

- African proverb



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Thank you for the vital role you play building stronger bridges with your students and their families.

Please reach out for support around any of your next steps!

Email: arigerzon@gmail.com

[LinkedIn](#) profile

[Same Team Consulting Website](#)

[Free Reproducibles](#) from *On the Same Team*

[Ari's Family Engagement Playbook](#)



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It can begin with one interaction.

One positive message.

One question asked with genuine curiosity.

One moment where a family realizes, “This educator sees my child.”

Those moments add up.

And when they happen consistently, they create something much larger than communication.

They create partnership.



Poll Question

Would you like to request follow up to learn more about the TalkingPoints platform and how it can help you build strong family-school partnerships?

- **Yes, please have someone contact me**
- **No, thank you**

The background of the slide features a grayscale photograph of three children in conversation. A girl with curly hair is in the center, smiling broadly. To her left, another girl is seen from the side, looking towards the center. To her right, a boy is also looking towards the center. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter. Decorative elements include a large yellow circle on the left, a blue circle and a white circle in the top right, and a green circle on the bottom right.

Questions?





Connect with us & learn more:



talkingpts.org



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[TalkingPoints](https://www.linkedin.com/company/TalkingPoints)



info@talkingpts.org



Thank You!