

Louisiana Believes

Family Engagement Policies and Best Practices

Agenda

PARENT ENGAGEMENT:

What is good practice?

What is required?

What tools and resources are available?

What is a school that families *love*?



COMMITTED	COLLABORATIVE	RESPONSIVE	RESPECTFUL
It is fully focused on understanding and helping families achieve their goals for their children; it embraces these goals as its own.	It actively and authentically engages families as full partners, not service recipients. Everyone is focused on helping student achieve their learning goals.	It anticipates families' priorities and needs, responds quickly to their concerns, and communicates effectively.	It treats every family as worthy and important, acknowledging diverse perspectives and varying abilities.

Being Committed Means...

- Taking time to understand what families and students want
- Effectively communicating student expectations, learning goals and performance
- Responding urgently to signs that a student is struggling
- Creating a school culture where kids feel safe, are respected, and can be themselves
- Thinking about student success holistically, not just in terms of academics



IN PRACTICE

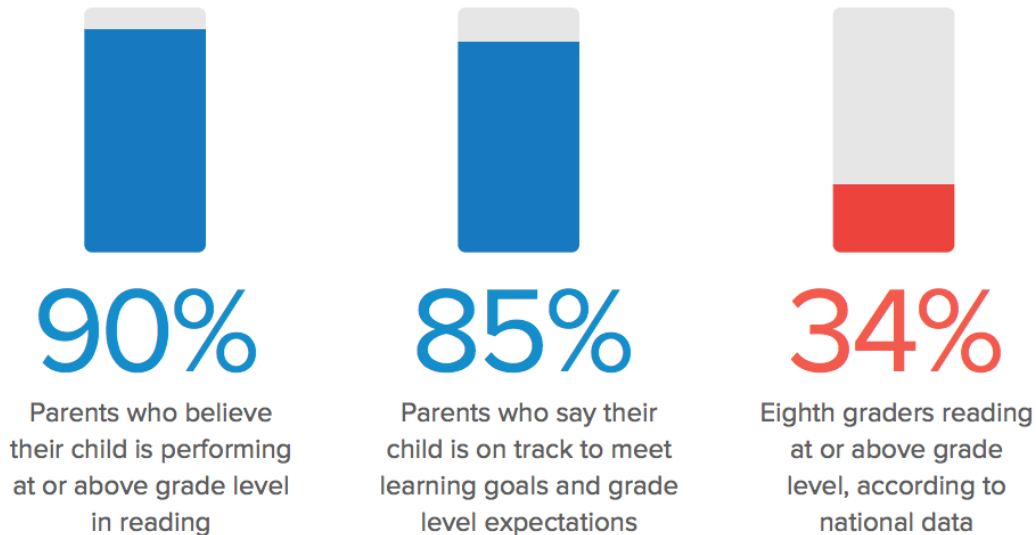
Give parents report cards they can easily understand.

Track whether course grades match test scores.

Ask families about their long-term goals for their children and tell them honestly whether students are on track to meet them.

The Challenge: Parents' perception is not always reality.

Parents' perception of how kids are performing in school lags behind national data.



Reading performance data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress 2015

Source: Learning Heroes, 2016

Problems Ed Navigators see:

- Test results are not interpreted or explained to parents
- Parents trust teachers more than test scores
- Teachers sometimes use soft language that fails to convey level of student struggle
- All parents want to believe their children are doing well and hear selectively

Being Collaborative Means...

- Treating families like allies and welcome guests
- Providing families with the information and supports they need to engage in their child's education
- Understanding how a decision will affect parents before making it (e.g., start times, calendar, etc.)
- Asking parents about how the school can help them, not just explaining how they can help the school
- Approaching problems and challenges as issues to be addressed together



IN PRACTICE

Start the year with conversations about student learning goals, and how parents can play a role in achieving them.

Offering alternative ways to participate in conferences

Tell families *how* to help with homework

The Challenge: Parents want more information about student performance and progress.

“What information are you most interested in receiving from your child’s teacher?”	Elementary	Secondary
Updates about how my child is doing in school and how I can help him/her do better.	83%	74%
Timely notices when my child’s performance is slipping.	67%	76%
Information about my child’s behavior and how he/she gets along with other students.	61%	37%
Information about what my child is expected to learn during the school year.	55%	43%
Homework and grading policies.	38%	48%
Classroom events calendar.	39%	33%
Best ways for communicating with the teacher (e-mail, phone, meetings, etc.).	27%	43%
Descriptions of daily instructional activities and how they meet the needs of my child.	36%	26%
Opportunities for parents to volunteer or be involved in the classroom or grade-level activities (field trips, special programs, etc.)	30%	16%

Source: National School Public Relations Association, Communications Survey. July 2011.

Being Responsive Means...

- Communicating with families regularly
- Making it easy for families to find contact information for teachers and staff
- Taking families' concerns seriously and addressing them quickly
- Publishing a clear calendar before the year begins and sticking to it
- Giving families regular opportunities to provide input and feedback



IN PRACTICE

Adopt a 24 hour responsiveness standard

Call with good news, not just bad.

Conduct an annual student and family survey

The Challenge: Parent and school interactions can be difficult.

- **When do parents hear from school?** Are teachers sharing the good news? Or do most phone calls home concern bad news?
- **What happens when they walk in?** Who greets families? How long are they typically asked to wait? What look do they have on their faces when they walk back out?
- **What happens when they call or email?** Is it common for families to ask for the same thing more than once before it happens?
- **What happens when there's a problem?** When a student is struggling, are educators reaching out to families to work toward solutions, or do educators wait for families to raise the alarm themselves?
- **What happens after a meeting?** How do families know whether next steps have been taken and are yielding positive results?

Being Respectful Means...

- Making *every* family feel like they belong
- Being attentive to basic priorities that can have a big impact on families, like bus scheduling and dependability, meal service, after school care
- Valuing and respecting parents' time by scheduling school events that are adaptive to their schedules
- Reducing the burden on parents whenever possible (extensive paperwork, or expensive uniforms)
- Taking into consideration cultural and educational diversity of parents when designing communications and events



IN PRACTICE

Allowing families to bring children to meetings after hours.

Translating key documents into the language parents speak.

Scheduling meetings that don't require parents to miss work, if possible.

Summary/Questions

There are plenty of schools that parents **like**, but it takes true, deep engagement to create a school that parents **love**.

- **Are there practices your school is not using today that you would like to see it adopt?**
- **What barriers exist to implementing some of these practices in your school(s)?**

Agenda

PARENT ENGAGEMENT:

What is good practice?

What is required?

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Parent and Family Engagement in ESSA

Parental involvement always has been a centerpiece of Title I, however [ESSA](#) provides greater clarity and direction to school systems on what meaningful parent engagement should look like, particularly around:

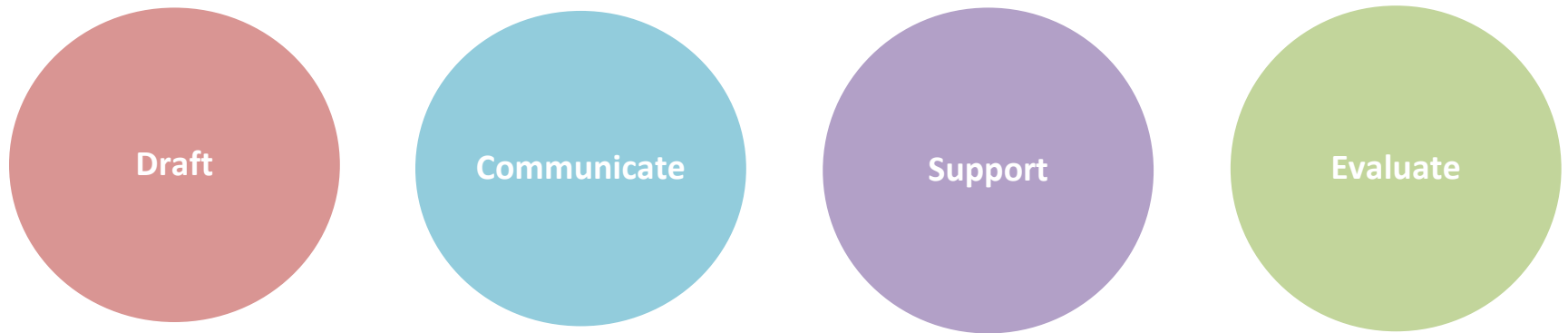
- conducting ongoing parent outreach;
- developing parent and family engagement policies that are grounded in evidence-based strategies;
- coordinating and integrating parent services and resources; and
- removing language, learning, or other parent involvement barriers.

Parent and Family Engagement: School System Responsibilities

Title I school systems and schools must:

1. Conduct outreach to parents and family members and implement programs for involving parents and family members in Title I programs in consultation with parents.
2. Create a written parent and family engagement policy that shall be incorporated into the school system improvement plan under section 1112. The plan must identify expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement.

The law identifies four key steps in developing this policy:



Developing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy: Draft

Draft

Section 1116 (a)(2)

School systems **shall** develop a written parent and family engagement policy jointly with families that establish expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement. The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, and shared with families.



Section 1116 (a)(1)

A school system may only receive funds if their plan is developed and implemented with the inclusion of ALL families and reaches beyond barriers of culture, language, disabilities, and poverty.



Section 1116 (a)(2)(C) and Section 1116 (e)(4)

School systems should coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies, programs and activities, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs.

Developing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy: Communicate

Communicate

Section 1116 (c)(4)

Requires school systems to provide parents with:

- timely information about parental involvement policies and programs;
- a description and explanation of each school's curriculum and assessments, and **the achievement levels of the state academic standards**; and
- opportunities for regular meetings (when requested) to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.



Section 1116 (d)(2)(D)

Ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language or format that family members can understand.



Developing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy: Support



Support

Section 1116 (a)(2)(B)

School systems should provide the support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.

School systems **shall** provide materials and training to help parents support student learning at home and foster parental involvement such as literacy and technology training.



Developing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy: Evaluate

Evaluate

Section 1116 (a)(2)(D)

Conduct, with the **meaningful** involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of **all** schools served under this part.



Section (a)(2)(D)(i)

Evaluation method and tools need to identify the type and frequency of family interactions and the needs families have to better support and assist their child's learning at home. This includes ensuring that barriers to family engagement activities are removed from the evaluation process.



Section 1116 (a)(2)(E)

School systems should use the findings from the evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and revise, if necessary, their existing parent and family engagement policy.



Activity

Take 10 minutes to review the school system family engagement template and think through the following questions:

- **What are the distinct changes in the requirements of the new policy versus the previous version?**
- **How do these changes impact your current family engagement policy?**
- **What steps will you need to check to make these changes happen?**
- **How can you ensure families have the opportunity to participate in the process?**

Agenda

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What is good practice?

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Tools to Support Family Engagement Policy Development

General:

- [List of Required and Optional Parental Involvement Activities](#)

School System Policies:

- [Checklist](#)
- [Template](#)

School Policies:

- [Checklist](#)
- [Template](#)

Family Support Toolbox



WELCOME.

Louisiana Believes starts with the premise that all children can achieve high expectations and that parents know best how to prepare their children to succeed in college and careers. Our goal is to empower you with information so you can decide the best education for your child.



FAMILY
SUPPORT
LIBRARY



CONTACT
SOMEONE



SCHOOL CHOICES

- [2017 School and Early Childhood Performance Scores](#)
- [District Directory](#)
- [Louisiana Scholarship Program](#)
- [School Choice for Certain Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Charter Schools](#)
- [Parent Petition](#)
- [Home Study](#)



ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

- [Parent Guide to LEAP Student Reports \(Available in English, Arabic, Spanish, and Vietnamese\)](#)
- [Translated LEAP Student Performance Text](#)
- [LEAP Practice Tests](#)
- [Technology Readiness](#)
- [Practice with Online Testing Tools \(use Google Chrome only\)](#)
- [Assessment Calendar](#)



ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- [2017-2018 Parent Back-to-School Guide](#)
- [Louisiana Student Standards](#)
- [Homework Help](#)
- [Gifted and Talented Students](#)
- [PTA Guides](#)
- [Review Instructional Materials](#)



COLLEGE & CAREER PREP

- [Advanced Placement](#)
- [ACT](#)
- [High School Diploma + Transcript Copies](#)
- [Find a College](#)
- [Financial Aid for Students](#)
- [JUMP START Career Education](#)



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- [All Guidance + Forms](#)
- [Accommodations](#)
- [Guidance for High School Students](#)
- [Career Diploma Pathway for Students Assessed on the LAA 1 - Recorded Webinar](#)
- [Dispute Resolution](#)
- [Special Education Parent Survey](#)

www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/family-support-toolbox

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Louisiana Believes

Appendix: Family-School Compact

Family-School Compacts in ESSA

Section 1116(d) of ESSA states that schools must have a Family-School Compact.

As a component of the school-level family engagement policy, each school shall jointly develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement.

Such compact shall:

- (1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children to meet the challenging State academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; and*
- (2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis.*

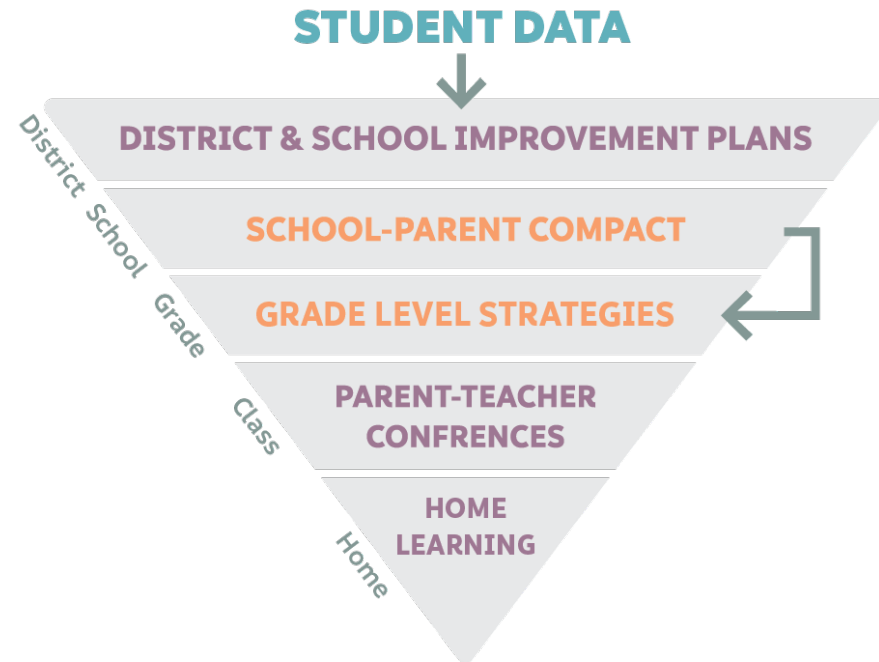
Family-School Compacts

A Family-School Compact is an agreement that families, students and teachers develop jointly, and explains how they will work together to make sure all students reach or exceed grade-level standards.

Compacts are what makes the work of parent engagement policies concrete and actionable for families, as well as schools. They also bring laser-like focus to school improvement goals.

Effective compacts:

- link to goals of the school improvement plan;
- focus on student learning skills;
- explain what teachers will do to support student learning;
- share learning strategies parents can use at home;
- explain how teachers and parents will communicate about student progress; and
- describe opportunities for parents to volunteer, observe, and participate in the classroom.



Steps to Creating An Effective Family Compact



SET THE STAGE



LINK TO LEARNING



ROLL IT OUT

Steps to Creating An Effective Family Compact: Set the Stage



SET THE STAGE

Step 1: Motivate and Get Buy-In from Staff

- At a staff meeting with teachers and members of the school leadership team, explain what a compact is and how it can contribute to student success.

[Watch the Video](#)



LINK TO LEARNING

Step 2: Designate a Leader

- Pick the best person for your school: principal, assistant principal, literacy/math coach, teacher leader, or home-school coordinator with effective leadership skills.

[Watch the Video](#)



ROLL IT OUT

Steps to Creating An Effective Family Compact: Link to Learning



SET THE
STAGE

Step 3: Align Family Engagement Goals with School Improvement Plan

- Review and analyze school-wide data and the goals of the School Improvement Plan to determine a specific area that the compact should focus on for the year.

[Watch the Video](#)



LINK TO
LEARNING

Step 4: Grade-Level Input

- At data team meetings, grade-level teachers will develop grade-level goals (no more than three) and specific home learning strategies which will engage families in home learning to support the goals of the school.

[Watch the Video](#)



ROLL IT
OUT

Example: Grade-Level Goals

School Student Learning Goal: 75 percent of students will meet or exceed their growth target in reading.

To reach this goal, 1st grade teachers will:

- conduct daily small-group reading instruction.
- read aloud each day to students.
- provide take-home reading materials.
- provide homework that supports topics learned at school.
- take weekly trips to school library.
- keep families informed of children's reading progress and ways to support learning at home.

Steps to Creating An Effective Family Compact: Link to Learning



SET THE
STAGE

Step 5: Engage Families and Students

- Through two-way conversations, share the grade-level goals with families and discuss how they can work with teachers to accomplish them. (What strategies should they use and how can they support each other to do them?)
- This can be done in workshops, class meetings, or parent nights.
- Develop home learning strategies families can use on a regular basis.

[Watch the Video](#)



LINK TO
LEARNING

Step 6: Engage Students

- Ask students how they will take responsibility for their learning and what do they want their teachers and families to do to support them.

[Watch the Video](#)



ROLL IT
OUT

Example: Family and Student Goals

School Student Learning Goal:

75 percent of students will meet or exceed their growth target in reading.

1st grade teachers will:

- conduct daily small-group reading instruction.
- read aloud each day to students.
- provide take-home reading materials.
- provide homework that supports topics learned at school.
- take weekly trips to school library.
- keep families informed of children's reading progress and ways to support learning at home.

1st Grade families will

- make reading a daily part of family time.
- ask children questions about books they are reading.
- visit the local library on a regular basis.
- complete homework assignments with students.
- attend family literacy events.
- stay in touch with teachers about reading progress.

Steps to Creating An Effective Family Compact: Roll it Out



SET THE STAGE

Step 7: Pull it All Together

- Create an attractive family-friendly document. View [sample compact](#)
- Design a “roll out plan” for introducing the compact to families

[Watch the Video](#)



LINK TO LEARNING

Step 8: Align All Resources

- Determine your professional development needs based upon your compact goals.
- Allocate funds to support school ad home learning with speakers, parent workshops, supplies, and technology/apps
- Identify volunteers and community partners

[Watch the Video](#)



ROLL IT OUT

Example: Pulling it All Together

- Recruit parents to fun event -- then break into grade level groups with translators (if needed) to share student goals.
- Ask: How can the school help YOU support your children's learning?
- Type up and circulate parents' ideas.
- Teachers meet at each grade-level to respond, determine funding needs and draft Compact plan.
- Parents approve.

Example: Family-School Compact

What's a Connection Kit?

This kit is a cooperative plan to increase student achievement by focusing on specific skills required in each grade level. It outlines how parents, teachers and students will work together to support the goals of the district, Verplanck School and the standards and expectations of the Common Core for Learning. This document was a collaborative effort from the parents, students and staff at Verplanck Elementary. The goals of each grade level were identified, teachers offered specific strategies to parents for home support, and families offered ideas on how they can support the grade level focus.

School Connection Kit

Verplanck Elementary

"Hear Us R.O.A.R.!"

Building Partnerships

Activities:

Is reading going to the DOGS? Verplanck students participate in Pet Therapy to gain confidence in reading to animals

GO HUSKIES!! Parents and students travel to UCONN to celebrate reading progress and athletes visit Verplanck as guest readers and tutors

Local pride... come attend the fun activities in our neighboring Squires Community **NEWS FLASH!!!!** Join us for Flashlight Night where you can cuddle on a blanket with your child and leave with a great book

WE ARE THE WORLD!! Our multi cultural night in March celebrates the diverse community that we are...experience new customs, music and great FOOD!!

Communication: Weekly communication folders, newsletters, open house, report card conferences, school and teacher websites, curriculum nights, School Messenger, and our Family Resource Center.



Verplanck Elementary School
126 Olcott Street
Manchester, CT 06040

Achievement Goals

Grade 4 District Literacy Goals:

- Identifying parts of a story
- Proper use of grammar, capitalization and punctuation
- Telling a story using relevant and organized facts
- Writing stories with dialogue and description

Grade 4 District Numeracy Goals:

- Understanding place value for multi digit numbers
- Adding/subtracting whole numbers to 1,000,000
- Measuring angles, lines, segments
- Solving multi step word problems involving measurement
- Converting fractions to decimals

School Goals

- In the Verplanck School Improvement Plan, two of our major goals are as follows:
- 75% of all scholars will meet or exceed grade level expectations in literacy
- A constant focus on fact fluency in numeracy to increase confidence and achievement in all mathematical operations.

In The Classroom

The specific areas of focus in literacy and numeracy are fluency and continuous practice.

The connections to families include:

At Open House and via newsletters and conferences, provide families with ongoing tips to strengthen their child's ability and understanding when they read. (monitoring, questioning, understanding vocabulary)

Share the way math stations work in the classroom by having parents visit and participate. Provide parents with baggies of math items and activities which they can practice with at home.

Provide a video of the teacher's teaching the various math concepts which can be viewed on YouTube Refer to district curriculum guide at Open House and parent conferences



Students

- Ask for help when I don't understand what a word means.
- Show my family samples of my written work before I pass it in and ask for suggestions.
- When watching a movie or TV show, I will try to make predictions about what the outcome will be. I will also try to use the terms the teacher uses to complete my work.



At Home

Some of our key at home activities to support student success in literacy and math are:

Read my child's book before he does or with him for the first time. Ask questions about the story as you are reading, stop and go back to read a favorite passage, ask him to describe the setting and what the main idea of the story is.

Set up a math focus in our home similar to math stations in the classroom. Ask my child for help with measuring, have them count out money before depositing in the bank, do math drills in the car, play games when driving (Are there more billboards on the left side or the right side? How many more?)

Use the math items sent home by the teacher and do one activity per week .

Watch the YouTube videos of the teacher demonstrating how the different math skills are taught in the classroom.

If you have questions about your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher by phone (860-647-3383) or email your child's teacher by visiting our website for individual addresses.

Steps to Creating An Effective Family Compact: Roll it Out



SET THE STAGE

Step 8: Market the Compact

- Seize the opportunity at every event to keep the goals of the school in the forefront with families.
- At conference time, discuss the goals/strategies with parents. Offer suggestions to modify the strategies if necessary to meet their child's individual needs.

[Watch the Video](#)



LINK TO LEARNING

Step 9: Review, Revise and Celebrate Progress Each Year

- Pull your compact team together toward the end of the year to review progress. What were your big successes? What could have been better?
- Draw up a plan for the process next school year based on your review.
- Ask students to show off what they've learned and how they took responsibility.
- Announce your successes at end-of-the year events and congratulate everyone involved!

[Watch the Video](#)



ROLL IT OUT

Research-Based Family Engagement Models

[Connecticut School-Parent Compact Center](#): is an entire website dedicated to helping schools develop meaningful parent engagement policies and compacts. Within this website you will find:

- Sample [School-Parent Compact](#) and ESSA crosswalk
- [Videos](#) to support each step of the compact development process
- Tools to support each step of the compact development process such as a [guide to aligning your compact to your SIP](#), [parent](#) and [student](#) surveys, and [tips for engaging parents](#) in the compact process and how to [evaluate your compact](#) year after year.

[Parent Teacher Home Visits Model](#): connects the expertise of a student's family with the classroom expertise of their teachers through at home or in the community meetings.

[USDOE's Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships](#): is a framework for designing family engagement initiatives that build capacity among educators and families to partner with one another around student success. It acts as a scaffold for the development of strategies, policies, and programs.