



How to Help Your Administrators Better Engage with You

Here is a list of recommendations that you can share with school and district administrators to promote greater community involvement.

Reach the Unreached

Prioritize the needs, participation, and leadership of communities that have historically been marginalized and underserved by political decision-making processes.

- **Conduct leadership training:** Develop leadership trainings for school staff and the broader school community to grow existing and emerging leaders. For example, hold diversity and inclusion trainings for school administrators, families, and community groups.
- **Start with a question:** Begin by welcoming families and communities and inviting input, rather than beginning with workshops, information sessions, or take-home pamphlets. It can help to enlist the support of trusted messengers like widely known and liked family members, community organizers, teachers, and students themselves.

Show Your Work

Make your decision-making process transparent: all communities should be able to easily see when and how to participate, as well as how participation is valued and has real impact.

- **Gather trusted information:** Invest in evaluation and data efforts that include community members, researchers, and data experts: it is essential that decisions are made based on accurate and relevant information. For example, enlist the support and leadership of trusted families and community members to collect this information (e.g. conduct a school climate survey).
- **Check for understanding:** After input sessions, leadership team meetings, and other events, enlist a few leaders to make sure that the information learned and decisions made were accurately reflected in the notes and follow-up action.

Stick With It

Engagement efforts must begin at the earliest planning stages, continue throughout implementation in structured, regular ways, and occur at all levels (federal, state, and local).

- **Invite difficult conversation:** Do not sidestep the hardest conversations; conflict is healthy and addressing difficult issues is essential for breaking down the biggest barriers to trust, collaboration, and success. This might mean conducting a survey among teachers and families to learn more about grievances and holding a school-wide learning session where teachers and families are able to talk through their concerns in person with each other and school leadership. These conversations can benefit from outside moderation.



Check out the NEA's [Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education and Partners for Each and Every Child's Process and Protest](#) for more!

Stick With It - CONTINUED

- **Use/Create community centers:** Partner with community centers of all types (faith-based centers, libraries, community/youth centers, etc.) to expand reach for recruitment into leadership and to share back about progress. To go further, it can be helpful to create a family or community center within a school. Creating designated, safe, and inviting physical space for communities can go a long way to encouraging their involvement.

Maximize Your Resources

Work with outside partners to strengthen your engagement efforts. This can add resources, staff, intellectual capital, and new perspectives.

- **Ask community members for help in making materials:** Make materials with partners and community leaders that are accessible, available (in print), etc. Involve community members and families early in the process, and make sure that there are opportunities for revision of materials over time.
- **Focus involvement on student achievement:** Do not limit family, students, or community involvement to fundraising or chaperoning. For example, create an agreement among community members and leaders that is revisited over time that includes specific student, family, teacher, community partner, and school leadership contributions (*Check out [Project Appleseed](#) for more resources on family involvement at [projectappleseed.org](#)*)

Double Down

Pull together and analyze community feedback from separate and parallel efforts to identify areas of agreement, amplify the voices of the underserved, and build support for reform.

- **Set up a leadership team:** Develop inside/outside leadership teams with representation from the community, including students and families. Additionally, moderate leadership team meetings with third-party partners to promote balance.
- **Involve families and students in hiring:** Involve community members in staffing and leadership decisions. For example, invite parents to interview teachers that might teach their children and give them the opportunity to ask their own questions.



Add your own!



Check out our [Template: Letter to Decision-Makers](#) for what to say or write when you get in touch!