Equity & The Every Student Succeeds Act: The Organizer’s Packet

Core information for organizers to start taking action for school improvement under ESSA
To Begin: A Vision for Our Children

Our school communities have the potential to make sure all children have everything they need to succeed, including:

- **great teachers**, thoughtful school administrators, and other excellent support staff, as well as ongoing training to support continual learning for staff and leadership;

- **support for families**, including parent organizing and leadership, classes, and regular access to the school’s leadership and classrooms;

- **opportunities for high quality learning** for all children, birth through 12th grade;

- **access to nutrition and healthcare**, including healthy meals, physical education and recess, and mental health services;

- **positive discipline practices**, like Restorative Justice practices, reduced suspensions, or reduced presence of police in schools; and

- **advanced and creative coursework**, including implementing a culturally relevant and culturally responsive curriculum, adding courses like arts and civics, or providing internship opportunities.

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) is just one tool for us to refocus our efforts to move toward equity and justice for all students: education is a human right!
Who is Part of a School Community?

All leaders — from students to parents, care-givers, and families to advocates to education agencies — should be involved in making your school a place where all children can learn and grow.

The School Community:

- Parents, families, care-givers, mentors, and peers
- In-school staff, health professionals, and youth program leaders
- Community centers, local businesses, health organizations, and programs for families and youth

The Broader Education Community:

Outside of your school community, national, state, and local education governing agencies and advocates are supporting schools and students. Use their resources!

As we talk about families throughout this document, we mean parents, care-givers, guardians, and other family members who are the primary adults in a child’s life.
What is the Every Student Succeeds Act?

- The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) is the United States' national policy for public education from pre-K through grade 12.
- **ESSA provides states with funding** to support students, teachers, and schools — for things like services for low-income students, English learners, and students with disabilities [and/or those with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)].

What’s New in ESSA?

- **ESSA gives state and local governments more flexibility** to decide how to measure student performance and school quality. For example, ESSA requires that all states adopt “challenging academic standards,” but allows states to choose what those standards will be.
- In exchange for that flexibility, ESSA requires that state and local government leaders *engage* with their communities to make decisions that best fit their needs.
- ESSA has kept in place many important policies and opportunities that matter to our country as a whole, including tracking how students are doing academically, looking at the gaps in performance among groups of students, and making sure that those who need support receive it.

What is a State ESSA Plan?

- The first decisions under ESSA have happened at the state level, where state leaders engaged with the larger state education community to develop state ESSA plans, which outline how states plan to meet the requirements of the law. **These state ESSA plans include:**
  - **Standards** for what children should learn in each grade
  - **Assessments** for finding out if children have met those standards
  - **Long-term goals** for schools and students
  - **A way to measure** if schools are on track to meet those goals
  - **A system of support** for all schools, especially those that are struggling the most

What Does ESSA Mean for My School?

- Every state’s ESSA plan is required to support schools and districts as they write their own local plans for *school improvement* and plans for *use of federal funds*. These local ESSA plans will describe how schools will support students and improve over time.
- In some states, only schools that are identified by the state as lowest performing will be required to submit plans for school improvement. **All schools** that receive federal funding must submit applications for those funds.
- Under ESSA, all local ESSA plans *must* be written in consultation with families and communities — called “stakeholder engagement” — and should be designed to support *education equity*.

Learn more about the new law and your state’s ESSA plan at [CheckStatePlans.org](http://CheckStatePlans.org)
A Timeline of ESSA’s Local Impact

All states have submitted their ESSA plans to the U.S. Department of Education, following two years of working with communities to answer the important questions asked in ESSA. Decisions made by the state will now be implemented at the local level. **What can you expect?**

- **April/May 2017 or September/October 2017**
  States submitted their ESSA plans.

- **Starting School Year 2017-18**
  Schools and districts collect data/information about schools and students. States communicate with the state education community about expectations.

- **By Spring 2018**
  U.S. Department of Education reviews and approves ESSA state plans.

- **End of School Year 2018-19**
  States identify schools for “Support & Improvement” based on the state rating system.

- **June 2018 (and each year)**
  Districts submit applications for federal funds (e.g. Title I) to the state.

- **Summer 2019**
  Schools must communicate their ratings to families/communities.

**School Year 2019-20, ongoing:**

**School Improvement**

Districts and schools engage with their communities and write and implement local improvement or strategic plans.

**Find out More From Your State**

Your state will have more information about when schools will be identified under the law for “Support and Improvement” (lowest performing schools) and what that means for you and your school and district. Find out more in your state’s ESSA Plan and on your state’s website. You can also work with a local organization to learn more!
What Is School Improvement?

- **School improvement** is the process of learning about a community and working to make it better for all students. **School improvement means student success.**
- School improvement requires that district and school administrators and communities — including students and families — **work together.**

### 3 Ways Your School Is Planning for School Improvement

#### 1. Support and Improvement Plans

- **ESSA Says:** Required for schools identified by the state as low-performing
- **Learn More:** Check out your state’s ESSA plan

Find out if your school has been identified as low performing — called “Comprehensive Support and Improvement,” “Targeted Support and Improvement,” or “Additional Targeted Support and Improvement” schools under ESSA — by checking your school’s report card, starting in Summer 2019. You can find report cards on your state education department’s website.

#### 2. Funding Applications & Consolidated Local ESSA Plans

- **ESSA Says:** Required by all districts with schools receiving federal funds
- **Learn More:** Check out the US ED website: ed.gov/ESSA

#### 3. Local Strategic Planning

- **ESSA Says:** Not required for all districts or schools in all states
- **Learn More:** Check out your state’s ESSA plan or state strategic plan

### What this Means for Your School

- These three processes may be three parts of the same document or be entirely separate efforts. No matter the format, they should be connected and aligned.
- Keep in mind that school improvement processes are different school to school and district to district, as well as for charter schools, alternative schools, and schools in “turnaround,” which may include mayor, governor, or other state office involvement.

For more, check out our fact sheet: School Improvement Under ESSA
It’s Your Right to Be Involved

What is Stakeholder Engagement?

➔ Under ESSA, state and local officials are required to engage with community members around decisions that impact schools and students. Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement is a process of communicating, learning, and partnering with school communities that acknowledges the unique needs and strengths of those involved.

What is Equity?

➔ All students have the right to schools that are safe, healthy and nurturing environments where every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

➔ Some students need more and different resources than others — resources like funding, excellent educators and mentors, positive behavioral support, and opportunities for engagement.

➔ Equality means that all students get the same resources. Equity means that all students have the resources they need to be successful:

Equality

Equity

Justice: No Barriers

➔ We must push for schools that promote equity for all students, including low-income students, students of color, English learners, LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities.

Engagement for Equity:

➔ All community members have the right to take part in decision-making to improve the schools they serve and that serve them. It is essential that local administrators and leaders move away from simply informing stakeholders about decisions, and move toward involving a diverse, inclusive group of school community members in active leadership and decision-making.

For more on engagement, check out What Does an Engaged School Community Look Like?
Getting Involved in School Improvement

These steps are part of every school improvement process. Remember: This is your school community — You can be a part of every step!

1. Learn & Share
   Share Your Story
   Assess Need
   Ask Questions

2. Set Goals
   What Does Success Look Like?

3. Make a Plan
   Decide What Matters Most & Choose The Right Supports

4. Write it Down
   Write it in the School Handbook, Local ESSA Plans, Funding Applications, and Halls of Your School

5. Make it Happen
   Organize Volunteer Work

6. Evaluate
   What Needs to Change?

7. Make Changes to Get Better
   How is it Going?

Check out our fact sheet on Needs Assessments

Check out Examples of meaningful engagement in action from New York, Ohio, and Massachusetts

Check out Improve Your School: What to Advocate

Check out Improve Your School: Where to Write it Down

For a deeper dive with school community members, check out our fact sheet: School Improvement Under
1. Learn and Share

Find out how your school and school community are doing and share that information with your peers and larger community.

Where to Start:

✓ Check out your school’s report card. Report cards are available online and can usually be found on your state education department website. Report cards contain information about your school and district that is collected statewide, like demographic data about students.

✓ Find more information about your district and state online through: the federal Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC); national foundations, like the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Kids Count Data Center; and advocacy groups like the Education Trust and the Dignity in Schools Campaign. You can also submit a Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, request at foia.gov. This is a way to ask for any public information from your government officials.

✓ Build coalitions and collaborative relationships to build up the community’s voice. This helps to create an environment for sharing.

✓ Help to package and distribute information to families and students: distribute flyers; develop email or social media campaigns; or host a Q&A with your school community.

Add your own action steps:

✓

✓

Moving Forward:

✓ Information should be collected, aggregated, and analyzed regularly. Your school will collect data annually, but that should not limit you. You can affect what information is collected, when, and how to make sure it is useful and accurate by connecting community members with school officials and staff, and by making information digestible. As you advocate for change, advocate for accurate and actionable information!

Include Students!

Remember that in order to best serve students, students themselves must be included in the conversation!

Check out educationdive.com/news/schools-creating-new-structures-to-encourage-student-voice/509849/ for examples of how communities are doing this!

Check out our fact sheet on Needs Assessments for more information about how school leaders “Learn More”!
2. Set Goals

Decide what you want your students and school communities to learn, experience, and achieve

Where to Start:

✓ Look in your state’s ESSA plan for state goals for all students and student subgroups (e.g. low-income students). Help your community understand how these goals apply to your school.

✓ Co-host family input meetings to share the state goals, as well as and the school goals (look for these in your school handbook) and update them to better reflect what the school community wants.

✓ Help community members to turn their broad vision into actionable next steps for a school to take and help school and district administrators connect current data to long-term goals.

✓ Keep your goals simple and easy to communicate.

✓ Help community members articulate their values so that the goals you create together reflect what the community cares about. Again, be sure to include students!

Add your own action steps:

✓

✓

Moving Forward:

✓ Your goals can and should change over time. Support regular meetings to revisit and update your goals to accommodate changes in your school’s performance and the needs of your students.
3. Make a Plan

Find out what programs and services are available to students and communities (in and out of school) and choose strategies that will work based on your goals.

Where to Start:

✓ Learn what strategies are available and relevant to your school community. Organizations like the Intercultural Development Research Association (idra.org), Evidence for ESSA (evidenceforessa.org), the Dignity in Schools Campaign (dignityinschools.org), Understood (understood.org), the Center for Parent Information and Resources (parentcenterhub.org/category/topics/eseaessa), and others can also help!

✓ Work with local community groups and national advocates to build a menu of possible programs and strategies for school improvement, and speak with families, in-school staff, and other community members about their vision for how these programs might work.

✓ Engage directly with school and district administrators to push for the practices and policies you want.

✓ Collaborate with other community organizers to raise funds and implement programs outside of schools (e.g. after school literacy workshop at your local library).

Add your own action steps:

✓

✓

Moving Forward:

✓ While you must give strategies time to be implemented fully and correctly, it is important to also update your plans over time to meet the changing needs of your students. Ask for regular feedback about what’s working and stay informed about new and innovative ideas by continuing to build relationships with advocates, researchers, school staff, and families.

Check out Improve Your School: What to Advocate for for more ideas!
4. Write it Down

Once you have determined which strategies to focus on, seek out and help school and district officials to write down these ideas into action

Where to Start:

✓ Your school community’s goals and priorities, as well as the strategies used to improve, should be written in the places that matter most: funding applications, local strategic plans or school improvement plans (ESSA), and school handbooks or mission statements (like on the school website). Write sample language and meet with school and district officials to make sure this happens!

✓ Help to ensure that priorities match budgets by working with your local school board.

✓ Talk to other families, students, and the school’s leadership to find out what funding is most needed and help school and community leaders secure additional grants for ambitious projects.

✓ Write down the process! Community members that helped to shape the plans will want to see it documented, and new families and community members will see that their voices count!

Add your own action steps:

✓

✓

Moving Forward:

✓ Make sure that policies, vision, and budgets are aligned and updated regularly.

✓ Remember that there are many documents that can be edited to support the goals and describe plans, and that changes should always be documented so that school leaders can be held accountable to their promises.

✓ It can also be helpful to put up flyers or posters inside schools to reinforce values and remind communities of their plans and goals.

For more about what you can affect in writing, check out our resource Improve Your School: Where to “Write it Down”
5. Make it Happen
Recruit and inform community members and work together to implement the programs and strategies that you have chosen.

Where to Start:

✓ As with every step in this process, see yourself as an organizer. Help new community members be a part of the process by sharing what you have done to-date and helping them to see how they can be a part of the process moving forward.

✓ Show up on school campuses to take tours, talk with students and staff, and to see the school facilities. Help students to know that their community is present and caring.

✓ Volunteer or work at the school site: Ask your school administrators what would be most helpful or offer your talents directly (e.g. work with a teacher, volunteer as an assistant coach, or help to decorate the teachers’ lounge with relevant literature each month).

✓ Join your school’s leadership teams like school site councils, stakeholder engagement teams, teacher leadership committees, etc. If a team is full or does not exist, consider creating a peer leadership role for yourself or others to develop a stronger voice and a body ready for action where needed.

✓ Work together. The strongest coalitions are intersectional - demonstrate solidarity for our human right to education through collective action!

Add your own action steps:

✓

Moving Forward:

✓ Engagement, like organizing, is not one-and-done. Our students need sustained support to continue to meet their varied and changing needs. Commit to staying involved and help others to do the same.


For examples of Meaningful Engagement in Action, read stories of success in New York, Ohio, and Massachusetts
6. Evaluate
Measure how strategies or programs are working (or not working)

Where to Start:

✓ Find a trusted messenger to give you the information you are looking for. Program leaders (e.g. school nurse, counselor, or social worker) may have the most recent and relevant information about attendance, involvement, and outcomes.

✓ Look at data from multiple months or years to find trends in improvement. Be honest about what is and is not working.

✓ Share out what you learn to other families and community members by making the data easy to understand and present at meetings and events where families, students, and community members can ask questions about it.

Add your own action steps:

✓

✓

7. Make Changes to Get Better
Make efforts over time to change and improve

Where to Start:

✓ Set aside time to visit schools, talk with other students, families, and staff, and make an effort to build your understanding over time.

✓ Organize community meetings to review new information and data and discuss any changes and what improvements are needed, be involved in recruitment efforts for new staff, hold or take part in trainings for existing staff, and keep your community up to date with new research, etc.

✓ Help to connect families and school staff with the right change-makers going forward.

✓ Make sure that it is clear to all community members when and how to engage. Help to connect process to outcomes: show what is working over time and help community members to support those successful efforts.
Find more Resources at partnersforachandeverychild.org/engageforedequity
What Does An Engaged Community Look Like?

The whole school community must be involved in and lead education policy implementation efforts. Use this set of community goals to get started with a vision of what meaningful engagement looks like to you!

**1. Communities Build Trust**

School communities must *deliberately build* trust in order to support student success and dignity. A system of trust includes:

- **Competence**
  - hard work, the right resources, and safety

- **Compassion**
  - go the extra mile to support students

- **Integrity**
  - follow-through on agreements and feedback

- **Respect**
  - a culture of listening, participation, and genuine care

- (fill in your own!)

**2. Community Participation is Inclusive**

Those who are involved in administration and decision-making must *reflect the political, racial, income/wealth, language, gender, sexual orientation, and cultural diversity* of the school community that they serve.

**Ensure that:**

- Administrators invite participation
- Community members take leadership roles
- Processes are transparent
- All community members collaborate with compassion
- There is time made for feedback

**Ask Yourself:**

- How can I speak up, and make my voice heard?
- How can I lift up the voices of those whose, thus far, have been left out?

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“Imagine this: A community comes together to set a vision for its public schools. In local libraries, neighborhood associations, school cafeterias, and places of worship, families sit down together and share their hopes and dreams for their children… Together they talk about what they love about their schools and what they’re worried about. They articulate their long-term vision for success — not just for their school or school system, but also for their young people.”

- Read more at TNTP.org/Walking-Together

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*This is a Tool from the Engage for Education Equity Toolkit. Find more at partnersforeachandeverychild.org/engageforedequity*
3. Communities Are Empowered to Engage and Lead

Meaningful engagement means sharing responsibility, power, and voice:

- All members of the school community have the right to participate in decision-making.
- To invite participation, school administrators must build shared language around programs and policy.
- Decision makers at all levels must educate themselves about the needs and assets of their communities, including race and culture.

Students, families, and advocates know their communities; their empowered participation in impactful decision-making is essential, especially when the conversation focuses on policy, budget, or strategic planning.

What does empowerment mean to you?

4. Engagement is Strategic and Responsive

**Strategic Means:**

- Funded
- Regularly scheduled (e.g. quarterly meetings)
- Run by competent leadership
- Connected to the strategic plan or long-term goals of the school, district, and state
- Inclusive of all stakeholders

**Responsive Means:**

- Guided by agendas/goals that play to the strengths of participants
- Small enough for individual voices to be heard
- Held at times and in places that make it easy for members to participate
- Connected to relevant issues facing the students and school

5. Community Members are Involved in Every Part of the Policy Process!

This means that school community members are involved in understanding information, planning, writing policy and fundraising, budgeting, and implementation of new policy and existing practice.

What is one thing you can do to be involved right now?

To learn more about what process you can be involved in and how, check out The Organizer’s Packet. This is a Tool from the Engage for Education Equity Toolkit. Find more at partnersforeachandeverychild.org/engageforedequity.
Sample Meeting Agenda 2
Building Better Engagement in Your School

60 minutes; 5-25 Participants
Parents, Families, Students, and/or Other Community Members, including school officials/administrators or teachers

We encourage you to change this agenda to suit your interests (topic, advocacy issue), your audience (families, teachers, students, etc.), and your needs (timing, information level, and space).

- **Introduction: Who are the presenters/facilitators?** [10 minutes]
  - Introductions (Who are you? Why you are here?)
  - Poll participants (Who is here? Why/what matters most to you?).
  - Set group meeting norms.

  USE: Sample Meeting Norms

- **Engagement: What is engagement? Why is it important?** [5 minutes]
  - Engagement means meaningful community involvement in decision-making.
  - Engagement is important! It is both legally required under ESSA, and essential for meeting the needs of our children.

- **Your Role in Engagement** [30 minutes] **
  - The job of engagement: We must engage ourselves and each other. This is our house! You belong in the room.
    - Ask participants to answer: What are the ways that you have engaged so far in your school?

  USE: The Organizer’s Packet, page 7

    - In small groups (2-5 people), read and together fill out the worksheet.

  USE: The What Does an Engaged School Community Look Like? worksheet

  - Write down a list of ways that you could help build a more engaged community starting today (e.g. Set up a meeting with the principal! Host a dinner with parents to share and talk about these materials!).

- **Share out:** [10 minutes]
  - Share out additions/modifications to the worksheet, and offer one thing that each of your group members (or the full room) will do to support better engagement going forward.

- **Closing:** [5 minutes]
  - What’s next for this group?
    - Make sure everyone knows when they will hear from you again and how, and that those who want to learn more have a way to do so.
How to Make Your Meetings Accessible

All meetings should be sensitive to the needs of the people who will participate. In order to promote greater representation from your community, consider the following suggestions for how to make meetings more accessible to all, and ask school and district administrators to ensure that they do everything they can!

The Checklist

✓ **Target outreach** to those whose voices often go unheard
✓ **Make informative materials available:**
  • Ahead of the meeting (including questions to consider)
  • In multiple languages and formats in consideration of varied levels of literacy and proficiency
  • In a format that is easy for all stakeholders to understand
  • Online
✓ Host events in a central location that is accessible to people with disabilities [see the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)], with transportation assistance
  • We recommend hosting events in places where community members feel safe. Consider that school grounds may not be the best choice
✓ **Invite interpreters**, including American Sign Language
✓ **Provide food**, and include options for those with dietary restrictions
✓ **Hold multiple meetings**, held at times when families and teachers can attend
✓ **Provide childcare**
✓ Provide access to **homework help** at the meeting
✓ Send out **multiple reminders** via email, text and on paper
✓ **Record** and/or live-stream the event
✓ Where money is available, offer to **financially support travel**
✓ Ensure that multiple **experts on the issues are present**, with time for Q&A

Moving Forward

Provide a [platform to continue to engage](#) with the issues following the meeting (e.g. a website and email for questions). You may also consider providing a [physical place for stakeholders](#) to go to provide ongoing input (e.g. Parent Center).
Sample Meeting Norms

Meetings with families and community members are all opportunities to build greater trust and a lasting, informed, and involved community. Take every opportunity to do it right!

What are Meeting Norms?

• Meeting norms are ways that your group agrees the meeting will go, how participants will behave, and what you hope to get out of the event.

How to Use Them

• Begin meetings with students, families, and community members by offering a few basic meeting norms for all members to follow and ask for community input to complete the list.
• This list should include norms for how you will engage together during this meeting and should be flexible to meet the needs of the community members in the meeting.
• Meeting norms should be written in large text and remain visible throughout the meeting.

Sample Norms:

• We will treat each other with respect
• We will be present both physically and mentally
• We will ask questions when in doubt
• We will encourage the participation of all participants
• We will keep what is said anonymous, unless otherwise specified
• We will be sensitive to different perspectives and experiences
• We will keep to our agenda, and finish on time
• We will take notes and share back what we hear with the group

Check out Learning Forward’s tool for building meeting norms for more, at learningforward.org!
Sample Meeting Exit Survey

Use this survey at the end of a meeting to learn more about how it went for those who participated so that you can learn more going forward. Modify it to suit your needs.

[Your Event Title]
[Date & Time]

Please fill out the following questions so that we can learn from you and improve going forward.

Name (optional): ___________________________
Contact (optional): ___________________________

On a scale from 1-5, how engaged did you feel in this activity/meeting?

1 2 3 4 5

What part(s) of the conversation and/or material were most useful? Why?

What part(s) of the conversation and/or material were least useful? Why?

What is one thing you learned today? What is one thing you still want to learn/know?

Would you be interested in following up with us or doing more in the future?

yes   no

Any additional comments?

Thank you for participating!
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.
Engagement Strategies: Advice for Administrators

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!