

NORTH DAKOTA FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

SUPPORTED BY



A KEY FACTOR IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Many federally funded programs managed through the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI) carry an expectation of family engagement plans and actions. To aid local schools in meeting these requirements, ND DPI and ND Regional Education Association staff work together to identify and offer quality supports.

Learn more about the ND DPI's focus on family engagement at www.nd.gov/dpi/familiescommunity/families/family-engagement.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?



Family engagement in schools contributes to positive student outcomes, including improved child and student achievement, decreased disciplinary issues, improved parent-teacher and teacher-student relationships, and improved school environment.
(youth.gov)



When families and teachers join together to support children's learning and development, children are more likely to succeed in school, graduate and stay on their path to college or a career.
([National PTA & Global Family Research Project](#))



Teacher-family communication is linked to better homework completion, attention during instructional tasks, and class participation rates, as well as improved teacher-student interactions and student motivation.
([American Institutes for Research](#))

WHO ARE THE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS THAT ND TRUSTS?

Over the last several years, national experts in family engagement approaches have been consulted and contracted to provide this support throughout North Dakota. While each expert has areas of emphasis, the core of their work promotes overlapping values including communication, supporting student outcomes, partnerships and approaches that honor families. Resources and ideas from each expert can be combined to develop a unique local approach.

Both Dr. Joyce Epstein and Dr. Steven Constantino have provided training and guidance to state and local leaders in North Dakota. These two experts agree that students achieve better outcomes when families and communities are invited into the educational experience alongside educators. Epstein and Constantino have each developed a model of effective family engagement components.

Patricia Weinzapfel has assisted our state's educators in bringing schools and families together through improved communications; messages that prioritize relationships and convey clear information.

Angela Maiers' message of Parents Matter is a call to action for educators, to ensure parents within our schools know they matter by noticing them, helping them to feel valued, and letting them know they're essential.

For more information about ND family engagement partners and resources go to WWW.NDREA.ORG (STATEWIDE INITIATIVES ➔ FAMILY ENGAGEMENT)

HIGH-QUALITY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



DR. JOYCE EPSTEIN

KEY MESSAGE: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT STUDENT OUTCOME GOALS

Joyce Epstein and collaborators developed the “Framework of Six Types of Family Involvement” in the 1990s. It has been an influential model since that time. Working with the Center for Social Organization of Schools in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University, Epstein and team have developed an approach using Action Teams for Partnerships to focus on aligning family engagement with student outcome goals. North Dakota has built a team of trained leaders in this approach so each REA in the state has knowledgeable partners to support school growth in the area of family engagement.

The Six Types of Family Involvement are noted in the graphic above.

The NDDPI and NDREAs have worked together to develop professional learning for local communities to establish Action Teams for Partnerships based on guidance from Epstein. Those teams write goal-driven plans for family engagement. Teams that engage in this process can easily see how resources and information from various experts can be combined to support the work.

Resource:

Epstein, J. L., et al. (2019). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. Fourth edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

DR. STEVEN CONSTANTINO

KEY MESSAGE: ENGAGE EVERY FAMILY

Dr. Steven Constantino came to North Dakota’s attention as a keynote speaker on family engagement. In his popular presentation he shares his experiences as a high school principal in Virginia experimenting with groundbreaking approaches to open the school doors to families and work deeply on building relationships. His actions were inspired by research about the effects of family engagement on student learning. His professional roles, spanning several decades, have included teacher, principal, district superintendent, state superintendent, and associate professor in Virginia. He has authored five books about family engagement including, “Engage Every Family: Five Simple Principles.” Those principles are noted in the graphic above.

North Dakota has hosted keynote presentations and a series of workshops by Dr. Constantino with the primary emphasis on helping educators develop approaches that engage families through relationships.

Resources:

Constantino, Steven M. (2016) *Engage Every Family: Five Simple Principles*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The Logic Model for The Five Simple Principles™
<https://drsteveconstantino.com/family-engagement/>

CONSTANTINO AND EPSTEIN: HOW DO THE MODELS COMPARE?

At the core, both Steven Constantino and Joyce Epstein highlight the same message, that schools must make efforts to know, welcome, and support families to reach the best possible outcomes for students. Their models are strikingly similar. Both experts believe that building a school culture that welcomes and engages families is critical. Constantino promotes a welcoming culture as the first piece that must be put in place in a building and Epstein includes it as one of the three framing goals schools should aim for in their family engagement plans. In a side-by-side comparison of the two models, four more elements can be identified in both models: Communication, supporting learning at home, sharing decision-making, and including the wider community. Two additional elements Epstein identifies as core areas are volunteering and parenting. Although not specifically labeled as categories in Constantino's model, these items do fall under his main premise that every family must be engaged with the child's school experience.

Epstein's Framework: Six Types of Involvement		Family Engagement Attribute			Constantino's Model: Five Simple Principles	
Goal-setting process includes a focus on a Culture of Welcoming			Culture of Welcoming	➔	1	A Culture that Engages Every Family
Parenting	1	➔	Home Environment			
Communicating	2	➔	Communication	➔	2	Communicate Effectively & Build Relationships
Volunteering	3	➔	Volunteering/Attending			
Learning at Home	4	➔	Supporting Instruction	➔	3	Empower Every Family
Decision-Making	5	➔	Shared Decision-Making	➔	4	Engage Every Family in Decision-Making
Collaborating with Community	6	➔	Community	➔	5	Engage the Greater Community

HOW DOES NORTH DAKOTA USE BOTH MODELS?

While Constantino leans into the relationships that bring families into the heart of the learners' experiences, Epstein focuses on helping schools organize teams to create and execute a detailed, goal-focused plan to achieve desired student outcomes.

Over the past two years, North Dakota has adapted Epstein's Action Teams for Partnership approach. Schools build teams of stakeholders to develop their family engagement plans. Step by step they examine existing district strategic improvement plans, identify student outcome goals for culture, academics, and behaviors, and link those goals to the six types of family engagement outlined in Epstein's framework. During the planning process, North Dakota teams consult Constantino's body of work to draw examples and find inspiration from his deep experiences in building strong family engagement culture. Epstein's practical, and Constantino's relational approaches blend well in North Dakota local family engagement plans.

PATRICIA WEINZAPFEL

KEY MESSAGE: COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH FAMILIES

Patricia Weinzapfel uses her experience as a television reporter to help school personnel understand how to use simple, respectful language to communicate effectively with families face-to-face, on the phone and in writing. She worked with a school district in Indiana for a decade as a family and community coordinator. Weinzapfel helps educators examine current school messaging and improve it to build better communication with families. Her focus on the importance of communication development directly supports the models proposed by Constantino and Epstein. Weinzapfel has been a guest presenter in North Dakota.

Resources:

Weinzapfel, Patricia. (2022) Closing the Loop: A Powerful and Practical Guide to School-Home Communication. Hawley Street Publishing.

<https://patriciaweinzapfel.com/>

ANGELA MAIERS

KEY MESSAGE: PARENTS MATTER

Parents Matter was created in whole by Angela Maiers, whose transformative message of the importance of mattering has the power to unleash the genius in us all. Parents Matter It is NOT a curriculum, it is a change in our mindset. We are encouraged to move past activities and focus more on involvement and into building relationships and connections; what true engagement looks like. Parents need to be seen, be heard, and to feel that they matter. Maiers has been a guest presenter in North Dakota.

Resource:

<https://angelamaiers.com/about/>



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The NDREAs have trainers certified in the Epstein framework who can support schools in learning and implementing the Six Types of Parent Involvement through a goal-setting process aligned to their existing continuous improvement plans. Each REA may also provide additional supports and resources to aid schools' family and community partnership efforts.

REA Contacts:

- Central Regional Education Association - www.creand.org
- North Central Education Cooperative - www.ncec.k12.nd.us
- Northeast Education Services Cooperative - www.nesc.k12.nd.us
- Red River Valley Education Cooperative - www.rrvectnd.org
- Rough Rider Education Services Program - www.resp-k12-education.org
- South East Education Cooperative - www.ndseec.com/
- Western Education Regional Cooperative - www.gnwec.org/

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