



# Family & Community Engagement Newsletter



## Welcome Back!

My deepest hope is that you all are as excited as I am about the start of a new school year. A new school year brings the promise of new goals, celebrations, growth, and relationships. In this issue you will find some celebrations from the summer, strategies to welcome your families back-to-school routine, and more. Please note, that sharing of resources does not equate to an endorsement by the USBE.



## Upcoming Events

September 5

[Board Meeting](#)

September 13

[Back to Basics: Introduction to Family Engagement Virtual Training](#)

1:30 - 5:30 pm

September 14

[Welcoming Week Virtual Event: Strengths-Based Family Engagement](#)

4:00 - 6:00 pm

September 20

[Ohio Family Engagement Leadership Summit](#)

September 27

Book Study Ch.

1-2

[Dealing with Difficult Parents](#)

2:00 - 3:30 pm

Register [here](#)

## Indicator 8, Parent Involvement Highlights

The Indicator 8, Parent Involvement survey reflects the percentage of parents with children in special education who feel their schools are supporting their involvement.

In celebration of the Indicator 8 survey, 68 of 79 LEAs met or exceeded their response rate goal! Congratulations to **Salt Lake Arts Academy, Piute School District, American Preparatory Academy, Canyon Rim Academy, Mountain View Montessori, Wasatch District, Lakeview Academy, and Highmark Charter School** for receiving a 40% or higher response rate!

## Utah Parent Center's Family Festival

The Strategy 1D team focuses on the [USBE goal](#) related to early learning by supporting the engagement of families with young children in early learning experiences.

This includes supporting inclusion of students with disabilities! The [Family Festival](#) is hosted yearly. You can find the Strategy 1D team distributing resources, facilitating activities, and offering free items to support at-home learning.

For more information on early family engagement contact [susie.estrada@schools.utah.gov](mailto:susie.estrada@schools.utah.gov)



The Utah State Board of Education is looking forward to hosting a second Family and Community Engagement Summit!



## SAVE THE DATE

April 11, 2025  
Family and Community  
Engagement Summit

Building Bridges: Strengthening Connections Between Schools & Communities

## Welcoming Families Back to School

Families are preparing for back to school and have many things on their mind. The first item, is preparing to purchase all of the school supplies their student(s) will need for the upcoming year. According to a June 2024 [Back-to-School survey](#) administered by JLL, parents plan to spend 21.8% more on back-to-school shopping this year. More parents are planning to buy fewer products or purchase secondhand.

The survey also found that inflation will be impacting lower-income families the most. For these low-income families, they will be planning on cutting their back-to-school budget by 18.3%. One strategy to ease the burden and build relationships with families prior to the official start of the school year is by hosting an event where families are able to receive classroom essentials from their school or school district. With schools also managing a tight budget, community partnerships are often a great way to meet the needs of families while reaching a common goal and staying within budget for the school and the community partner.

## GRANT ALERT: PROMISE NEIGHBORHOODS

The U.S. Department of Education will be awarding a total of \$4 million for new grants this year. This program is authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

This grant intends to support the academic and developmental outcomes of children and youth living in the most distressed communities of the United States including ensuring school readiness, high school graduation, and access to a community-based continuum of high-quality services.

For more information, click [here](#).

Intent to apply is optional.  
Application deadline:  
09/10/2024

***This announcement is informational only. This grant is not awarded, managed or endorsed by the Utah State Board of Education.***

## Welcoming Families Back to School Continued

One example of a community partner supporting a local school district is Discover. Discover partners with Granite School District to provide a community event where students are able to receive a free haircut, meal, and access to school supplies including back-to-school clothes! Discover allocated funds per student so that they could purchase clothes from the Kohl's with help from a Discover mentor. In 2023, Discover sponsored **425 students from Granite School District** and in total collaborated with 18 community partners who helped to provide 225 Discover volunteers to support the event.



Families are also coming to schools with a lot of questions especially as new rules or policies may be implemented to comply with the 2024 legislative session.



**Consider the following strategies to welcome families and students back to school.**

- 1. Start building the relationship early:** Make sure that your families feel seen and heard. Home visits are a great way to provide families with more personal interactions that help deepen our understanding of who they are and help them learn that school professionals are trusted individuals who care and are ready to offer support.
- 2. Involve Your Stakeholders:** During the break, your LEA might have reviewed data and set goals. This should happen on an ongoing basis, but the start of the year is an opportune time to share information and ask for input. Make sure that data used to inform your schools goals and strategies with families in a way that is easily digestible. An infographic using language that is at a 3rd-grade reading level is one effective strategy. Another option would be presenting the information and having the recording posted on your school website. For high-quality engagement, provide families and students with the opportunity to provide input on your goals for the year. This can be done through school surveys, exit tickets at events, a bulletin board where families can leave notes as they come and go, or even a drop box.

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**3. Event Calendar:** An event calendar helps families know when they will need to block their calendar or request time off from work. Remember, the most effective parent workshops are those that have been identified as need through community input and align with the school goals, which should have also been developed with community input. All events should be meaningful to families. Even celebrations with Santa should include take-home activities, materials or strategies that support at home learning.

**4. Set Clear & Concise Expectations:** Concise and explicit expectations help families know what to expect and plan for especially when it relates to expectations on how they will support student academic outcomes. A review of your LEA policies may be necessary. Make sure that policies are updated so that they are understood by all families (3rd-grade reading level) and share with families at a back-to-school event in a written format. Post these materials on your website in a logical, easy to locate tab. If possible, an audio or visual recording will help families with different learning needs.

*Knowledge Works also has a Back-to-School Culture for K-12 Leaders you can find [here](#).*

### **The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center will be hosting a 3-part seminar, Foundations of Family Engagement.**

You will first complete a self-paced online module to build your background knowledge related to family engagement. You will then join an instructor-led online workshop session to apply your knowledge to your school or program.

Full participation is required to progress through the seminar and receive a certificate of completion.

Cost: **FREE!**

Registration is via application. Learn more [here](#).

#### **Learning Block Dates:**

*Learning Block 1: Family Engagement—The Why & the How*

Module 1: July 30, 2024-August 5, 2024  
Workshop 1: August 6, 2024 from 1:00 PM-3:30 PM EST

*Learning Block 2: Trust, Power Dynamics, and Family Engagement*

Module 2: August 6, 2024-August 12, 2024  
Workshop 2: August 13, 2024 from 1:00 PM-3:30 PM EST

*Learning Block 3: Redesigning Family Engagement*

Module 3: August 13, 2024-August 19, 2024  
Workshop 3: August 20, 2024 from 1:00 PM-3:30 PM EST

## 2024 - 2025 School of Excellence Program Enrollment

Enrollment in the National PTA's 2024-2025 School of Excellence program is open May 1-Oct. 15, 2024 at [PTA.org/Excellence](https://pta.org/excellence). School of Excellence is a program for local PTAs and their school communities to identify and implement an action plan for school improvement based on [National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#). There could not be a more important time for families and schools to work together and develop strong partnerships to support students' success academically, socially and emotionally and promote learning environments where students feel safe, supported and ready to learn.

We encourage you to help us spread the word to local PTAs in your state about the opportunity to enroll in the program. Below are sample messages and graphics you can use. Thank you for your support of the School of Excellence program!

### Start the Year Strong: Building Intentional School-Community Partnerships







While budgetary confinements can often feel like the final game boss (or ultimate barrier) to providing students the supports they most need to be best prepared for higher education, future employment, and independent living, community partnerships are the golden feather to help LEAs offer these supports or programs.

Effective partnerships are established **intentionally**. They are established with a shared vision and goal in mind. They have a **shared-benefit** component and go beyond superficial collaboration. To partner with an organization means that they have a seat at the table, work collaboratively to discuss school and student goals, and share resources.

Strong school-community partners keep in mind that all decisions are done with the best interest of students and families **first**.

Learn more about establishing community partnerships [here](#).

#### Characteristics of Strong School-Community Partnerships

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
 Focus on Students	Districts, schools, and their partners approach their work with a commitment to putting students' needs first.
 Alignment of Vision and Goals	Districts, schools, and their partners agree upon common goals and establish shared expectations for the functioning of their partnership. Typically, these partnerships will aim to support a district's or school's work on previously outlined strategic priorities.
 Leveraging of Strengths	Districts, schools, and their partners identify their respective strengths and weaknesses, based on past experience and existing evidence, to provide a continuum of services and supports to students, staff, and families while minimizing duplicative efforts.
 Leadership and Oversight	Districts, schools, and their partners compose common memos of understanding and service agreements. They also outline a clear framework for overseeing their partnership, whether by designating individual personnel or forming a committee to guide the partnership.
 Open Communication	Districts, schools, and their partners build and maintain two-way communication channels and emphasize mutual trust, transparency, and a commitment to high-quality programs as key aspects of their collaboration.
 Sustained Duration	Districts, schools, and their partners commit to multi-year partnerships to support continuity of programming and guide sustained progress toward partnership goals.

Source: National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, Aspen Institute<sup>3</sup>

## Information to Share with Families

For families who are new or experienced with navigating receiving special education services for their student in the K-12 public education setting, the Utah Parent Center (UPC) is an excellent resource to share! The UPC is Utah's Parent Training and Information Center, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. Families can contact the UPC for:

- One-on-One Consultations: Work with a UPC Consultant and their child's school to advocate for appropriate services, understand your rights and responsibilities, find resources through information and referral, make connections with other families and resources in their community, and receive support.
- Workshops and Presentations
- Events

Families can learn more about the UPC [here](#).

## Alliance for a Healthier Generation Resources

Family engagement is about establishing a partnership. As LEAs plan how they will implement high-quality family engagement strategies and welcome families back to school, families should also be preparing to engage with their school(s) and ensuring their students are school ready! Alliance for a Healthier Generation has [6 Ways to Build a Network of Support for Your Child at School](#).

Additionally, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation offers the Kohl's Healthy at Home text messaging service for free (carrier charges may apply). This service provides action-oriented tips to help families learn and develop skills for a healthy life. Families can learn more and sign up [here](#).

## The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Want to Know!

As the USBE explores different ways to provide the opportunity for families to share what their experiences in the K-12 public education setting has been, the privacy of all families and students remains at the top of the agencies priorities. The USBE would like to know how families would feel about receiving a survey link via their cell phone as a text message.

We are asking for input from the community to gauge interest or disinterest in receiving text messages for surveys they might currently be receiving in paper form via mail or electronic form via email. Please share the link and/or QR code. The survey will close on November 1, 2024.

**Link:** <https://bit.ly/USBEtext>

