



# Listening Sessions for District-Level Family Engagement Staff with School Principals

To gather valuable insights for elevating family engagement in schools and to document the progress schools are making, district-level family engagement staff should conduct one-on-one listening sessions with school principals. District staff should focus on the principals' perspectives, challenges, and needs related to family engagement. The following is a breakdown of how to approach these listening sessions.

## 1. Purpose and Objectives:

### **Identify Barriers and Opportunities:**

Determine the current challenges and opportunities for family engagement within the school.

### **Gather Principal Perspectives:**

Understand the principals' experiences, successes, and areas for improvement in family engagement.

### **Inform Future Strategies:**

Use the data collected to inform and refine family engagement strategies and initiatives.

### **Build Relationships:**

Establish a collaborative relationship with principals, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for family engagement.

## 2. Planning and Preparation:

### **Define Scope:**

Clearly outline the focus of the listening sessions, ensuring they align with the overall goals of the family engagement program.

### **Develop Guiding Questions:**

Create a list of open-ended questions that encourage thoughtful responses and in-depth discussion.

### **Promote Participation:**

Inform principals about the purpose and benefits of the listening sessions, encouraging their participation.

## 3. Sample Guiding Questions:

- What are your school's greatest strengths when partnering with families?
- What are the most effective strategies you've used to engage families?
- What are the biggest challenges you face when trying to engage families?
- What resources or support do you need to better engage families?
- How can I, as district staff, best support you in your efforts to engage families?



- What are the biggest challenges to family engagement in our district?
- What do you see as the strengths of our district's current family engagement practices?
- What are the needs of our diverse families in our district?
- What are some ideas for improving family engagement in our district?

#### 4. Facilitating the Sessions:

**Active Listening:**

Pay close attention to the principals' responses, asking clarifying questions and summarizing their points. Approach the listening session with empathy and a genuine desire to understand the principal's perspective.

**Document Key Insights:**

Take detailed notes of the discussions, identifying recurring themes and areas for action.

**Provide Follow-Up:**

Share a summary of the key insights with the principals and provide updates on how their feedback is being used. Recommend school-level tools, such as the [School Implementation Plan](#).

