

The U.S. Department of Education established the Dual Capacity-Building Framework to guide state offices, school districts, and schools in establishing family and community engagement partnerships focused on student learning. The framework recognizes that in order for family-school partnerships to be effective, educational systems need to work in coordination with one another to build the capacity of educators and families. This work is facilitated by **opportunity conditions** that exist within schools, districts, and other educational agencies.

What are Opportunity Conditions?

Organizational Conditions:

Are needed that allow family partnership activities to be sustained and scaled up across schools and districts.

Process Conditions:

Must exist that focus adults on learning new knowledge, as well as the ability and will to apply this knowledge toward the engagement of every family.

The efficacy of these conditions has been established through research studies on school programs and school improvement.

(Bryk, et al., 2010; Jeynes, 2012)



For more information and partnering materials:

SACPIE

www.cde.state.co.us/sacpie

CDE

www.cde.state.co.us/resourcesforparents

Dual Capacity-Building Framework

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>

Questions

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CREATING OPPORTUNITY CONDITIONS TO PARTNER WITH FAMILIES IN STUDENT LEARNING



Research Findings about Organizational Conditions

Researchers have demonstrated several organizational structures and characteristics that are essential to the successful and sustained implementation of family and community engagement practices (e.g., Process Conditions).

School Characteristics

Leadership is essential to the development of family and community engagement programs.

- Lower principal turnover (Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004).
- Greater principal support for engagement (Auerbach, 2011; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004; Sheldon, 2005; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012).

Integration of family and community partnership practices into school improvement goals for students.

- Incorporate partnership practices into the school improvement plan (Epstein et al., 2009).
- Establish teams of teachers, parents, school leaders, and community partners to construct engagement plans (Epstein et al., 2009).

Evaluation of the implementation and impact of family and community engagement practices.

- Engage in a process of continuous improvement (Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004).

District Characteristics

Studies also indicate that partnership programs embedded within a systemic structure are more likely to meet the needs of families and students. District leaders need to assume the role of connectors (Honig, 2006, 2012) and facilitate the partnership efforts of schools and school leaders.

- Schools that report more support for family and community engagement report having more opportunity conditions in place (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2012).



Research Findings about Process Conditions

Researchers have identified actions, operations, and procedures that are essential for family and community engagement to support student achievement and school improvement. In a meta-analysis of 51 studies, school programs aimed at the following practices predicted higher student outcomes (Jeynes, 2012):

- Encouraging shared reading.
- Assigning interactive homework.
- Increasing and improving communication between home and school.



Implications for Practice

The following are relatively simple ways school leaders can set up the Organizational Conditions that integrate and systematize family and community engagement into school practice:

- **Create a team** to focus on engaging family and community partners to help improve student success.
- **Write annual family engagement plans** that are embedded in the school improvement plan.
- **Reflect** upon your family and community engagement events and program at least annually to understand what was implemented well and where improvement are needed.

At the district level, leadership can support LEA staff to work with school leaders, enabling them to collaborate with one another, and with the families they serve.

- **Help schools leaders to meet regularly** to discuss partnership challenges and best practices.
- **Provide evaluation support** for Opportunity and Process Conditions.
- **Share communication and homework strategies** with school leaders about how to engage families in students' schooling.
- **Provide professional development** opportunities related to family and community engagement practices.