



District Engagement and Outreach

Recommendations for Equitable Engagement

District Engagement Best Practices

The District seeks to operate with a mindset and working approach that is Community-Led and District-Supported. This requires us to:

1. Listen to understand
2. Work with community to build a plan
3. Communicate with community along the way
4. Build solutions collaboratively
5. Take action together
6. Follow up

Intent of Engagement at the District

District engagement and outreach must address demographic representation when reaching and working with students, families, and school leaders by using methods that are **culturally appropriate for each demographic group**. Engagement is fundamentally about building relationships and trust with community.

Engagement is necessary for the District to move forward **with the community** to collectively achieve improvements our students need and is **required at the school level by Board Policy** to ensure parents and schools are active academic partners. The best practices here are to create accountability for the District with community engagement.

Engagement Best Practices

District Planning

RELATIONSHIPS

- Engagement is about building relationships because we believe in the equal humanity of all people and know that healthy relationships get the right things accomplished.

TRANSPARENT

- We believe transparency includes sharing information in a timely way along with reaching out before and following up after decisions are made which helps build and maintain trust.

EQUITY

- We believe that people's needs are different and that everyone must be met with culturally responsive engagement practices that lift up all languages as an asset and amplifies typically unheard voices, including people of color and marginalized communities.

District Engagement: Building Trust

HEALING

- We believe that unresolved issues or unheard hurts hinder progress and we know that previous efforts and decisions that have sustained subjugation, oppression, and marginalization have hurt children and communities.

CO-CREATION

- We believe in the wisdom of the crowd, and we know that our best work will be done together. Working with the community and sharing how their feedback is used is critical.

Community means everyone connected to DPS: students, families, schools, partners, DPS staff, and elected officials.



Engagement in the 2020-21 School Year

Recommendations for Equitable Engagement

Family and Community Engagement (FACE) provides support in accessing resources so that students can thrive academically. We also provide guidance and strategy for what equitable engagement looks like where we listen to understand before decisions are made. We involve, on the front end, those that will be impacted by our decisions so we can take action together with community.

Our Recommendations: Equitable Engagement in Schools

Recommendations for the District for the 2020-2021 school year:

Require school leaders, teachers and central staff to review Board Policy KB and KB-R and create plans to reflect how they will achieve the Family Engagement Standards. FACE can provide tools and strategy to support.

Create a feedback loop so that schools that need engagement training reach out to FACE for guidance and strategy support.

Ensure DPS Departments participate in Engagement training from FACE that includes how equity shows up in engagement.

Utilize recommendations from the following efforts as a basis for engagement with families: the African-American Equity Task Force, Black Excellence Resolution, Consent Decree, Special Education Task Force, Success by Design, Reimagining the SPF and the Strengthening Neighborhoods Initiative.

Engage community early in any process where they will be impacted by a decision, such as Black and African American families in the Black Excellence Plans at schools.

Each school's engagement with Students and Families should incorporate Family Engagement Standards:

Maintain a Culture that Embraces Family and Community Engagement: School staff create an environment that values family and community engagement in student learning and is respectful, welcoming and responsive.

Empower Families through Volunteering, Decision-Making and Collaboration: The school shares responsibility, offers opportunities, and removes obstacles for families to be partners with the school.

Support Student Learning and Success: The school and families work together to help students achieve their goals for success. The school keeps parents informed about their child's academic and social-emotional progress and how the school is performing overall, and actively engages parents as partners. The school establishes avenues of two-way communication in order to keep families informed and to promote transparency and build trust.

Utilize Family and Student Engagement Strategies Outlined in Board Policies: Within Board policies KB and KB-R, standards regarding family engagement are spelled out for schools (including Title I Family Engagement). In these policy documents, schools will be able to see the specific expectations the Board has regarding district and school support of family engagement as well as goals for the parents themselves.

Ensure that Equity is at the Core of All Engagement: Schools strive to elevate the engagement of families so that parent voices that are reflective of the entire student population are represented by utilizing culturally responsive practices when engaging families.

It's critical for school leaders to build relationships with their students and families. FACE can support by offering tools to build healthy relationships which are rooted with the schools and their communities.

Tools:

See the [Family Engagement Standards and examples of implementation](#)

Apply the [Academic Partnership Event Rubric](#) to prepare engagement events and debrief afterward

[How To Guide for Engagement](#)

[Meeting-in-a-Box Tool](#)

[School Governance Compliance](#)

Take Action:

Contact FACE to get more information on steps to take action
FACEhelpline@dpsk12.org

Use our [Staying Connected guide](#) to support idea generation of how to support family engagement representatives at schools.

Use [Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships](#) to have actionable steps for schools in different stages of partnership with families.