



Karen Wedding- Viola
Family Engagement Chair - Advocacy Team
Familyengagement@suffolkpta.org
kwv.suffolkparents@gmail.com

January 7, 2019

In this report-

- *Communication Vs. Engagement*
- *Just think 5- How to Engage in Your Child's Education*
- *AWARD Programs and Grants*
- *Key Dates to Remember*
- *Family Engagement Themes of the Month*
- *Advocacy Calendar*
- *Coming up in This Month and Next*
- *Resources and Links for parents and students*

Communication Vs. Engagement-

Communication in an educational setting, whether at the district or school level, has traditionally been one way. The goal of Family Engagement is in the name, engagement. This requires two way communication. It is not always important, necessary, or desirable to have two way communication because sometime the district, school or teacher just needs to get the information out. For example, the football game is on Friday. No discussion needed. In other cases, buy in and input are not just valuable but necessary; think bond vote.

With families and caregivers more busy and committed than ever, what can a school/PTA do to not just communicate, but engage their stakeholders? What technology can you use more of to not just reach, but converse with parents and guardians? What technology are you already employing that you could utilize more effectively? Every environment may be a bit different because the demographics are going to be slightly different. I invite you to take a fresh look at what you have in place and evaluate where you can add and/or tweak your use of technology to bring in more parents, teachers, guardians, and administrators into productive conversation about the education of your students.

The spectrum of communication flow from low engagement to high engagement looks something like this

Community / Family Involvement /Engagement

Low-----High

Newsletter-Website--Blog--Email/Text--Phone App--Facebook--Live FB-Twitter- *

The Newsletter is a great way to announce information either digitally or in print or both. It is low engagement and one-sided. The website, again is mostly one sided. It is a

placeholder of information for reference and announcements. It can be a little interactive, but not really in real time. A district or school blog can be a great place to highlight wins and discuss topics of interest to the school community. It has some interaction. Email and text are different and depend on the end user as to which they prefer. Both email and text are two way with email having a little more lag time. They can also have long threads if they are used with groups. The phone apps such as Member Hub are not yet fully functional but will allow engagement. Twitter, can be a source of engagement as long as parameters are set for the group followers. (see shared agreements below). Of course, whether you use a particular platform, and there are many more than listed here, depends too on your District's technology and social media policies. Check with your individual district for guidance before implementing any new technology.

Productive conversation is key and structure that is agreed upon by all participants sets expectations and also gives a means to course correct, if needed later. Shared Written Agreements about how and what to engage about on the platforms should be spelled out and signed off on by anyone entering your school or district platform. For instance, everyone has experienced the person who posts copious amounts of trivial or ranting content. This does not engage other people in a conversation. On the contrary, it causes people to disengage. If the expectation is written out and agreed upon before the person ever posts the first post, it makes engagement easier and helps everyone feel better about participating. Likewise, long monologues about personal incidents that do not pertain to the group, do not belong in a school social media group that strives to engage all families. Lastly, vitriol can not be allowed.

Some Suggestions to include are as follows:

1. Only use civil language
2. Keep comments brief
3. Make comments or suggestions that are related to the school community, not a personal request which should be addressed individually in another space
4. Keep the focus on solutions and improving the educational experience of the students
5. Incidents between two or more parties are not discussed here
6. No attacking others' comments or personally attacking anyone for any reason

If a person violates the shared agreements, it is the option of the administrator to warn the person, explain the infraction or to remove them from the group.

In the 2016 Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning which included the authentic, unfiltered views of 514,351 K-12 students, parents and teachers from around the world asked :

What is the most effective way for teachers to communicate information to parents about class activities or academic progress?

<u>Means of Communication</u>	<u>Principals</u>	<u>Parents</u>
Personal email	65%	70%
Text Message	45%	52%
Face to Face meeting	67%	37%

Personal Phone calls	70%	36%
Handwritten Notes	22%	28%
Push thru mobile app to phone	22%	24%
Auto Phone message	29%	21%
School Portal	34%	20%

There was a disconnect on website and social media effectiveness. Only 24 % of parents said that Facebook was effective, while more than half the principals thought it was effective. Again, on website effectiveness, almost half the principals thought it was effective, while only 19% of parents agreed.

Grade level also impacts the type of communication to use and whether it is well received or not. While 66% of parents are satisfied with teacher to home communications, it depended on the grade level.

<u>Parents of students in:</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Somewhat satisfied</u>	<u>Very satisfied</u>
Elementary school	14%	11%	33%	42%
Middle School	21%	18%	38%	23%
High School	24%	23%	35%	19%

While these results are useful in general terms, your school demographic may be slightly different based on access to certain technology, language barriers and other demographics specific to your school or district. Ask your parents and teachers what is working and what can be added. What is important in going from Communication to Engagement is to remember technology is useful and different applications are evolving that can further the dialogue in the community and school. Nothing replaces face-to-face time in a community. However, two-way technologies can keep the connection and communication going.

Just think 5- What You Can do to Engage in Your Child’s Education in 3 Key Environments- There are three Environments that affect your child’s education: Home, School, and Community:

Here are 5 things in each area that National PTA recommends to help you engage your child’s education.

5 Actions At Home:

1. Develop a consistent routine for studying and homework
2. Discuss your child’s school day and homework daily
3. Provide a quiet, well lit place with basic school supplies for studying
4. Assist with homework, but avoid doing for your child

5. praise your child's efforts and encourage them to serve in student leadership positions

5 Actions In School:

1. Meet your child's teachers, principals and school nurse. Attend parent-teacher conferences and make appointments as needed to discuss your child's progress.
2. Establish the best way for your child's teachers to contact you (phone, email, backpack notes) to help reinforce school rules and expectations.
3. Attend your PTA meeting or start a PTA to voice support or concerns.
4. Visit your school's website to stay informed on important information and events.
5. Attend school meetings on learning expectations, assessments and grading procedures.

5 Actions In the Community:

1. Meet your child's friends and get to know their parents.
2. Learn about school district policies and practices that affect your child.
3. Raise awareness with local agencies and businesses about events taking place at your school.
4. Recruit parents and community members to be PTA volunteers.
5. Write, call, or visit local state decision makers to support or oppose proposed legislation that affects your child.

Pick one action that you aren't currently doing in each area. Or pick one key area and implement these 5 easy actions. Engagement in your child's education pays off for your child in better grades, less absences, higher likelihood of post-secondary education and a better school experience for them in general.

New ESSA website:

see Commissioner MaryEllen Elia's letter here:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/FMfcgxwBTsXXqxCRwWHpSPdTQJSTtFdJ>

Award Programs and Grants-

Do you know of a high school junior or senior who is an outstanding humanitarian? Nominate them for the [Youth Humanitarian Award ~ In Memory of Stanley Marcus](#).

Send your nominees to your region director by January 31, 2019.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and the application.

Video Contest-Operation Prevention -details at :

<https://www.operationprevention.com/#about>

Reflection Winners to be Announced

The winners for the various categories and age groups will be announced after January 14, 2019. Those entries that are progressing on to the State competition will be mailed

prior to the 14th. Any entry that is remaining is to be picked up by the Reflections Chair for their school at Winter Workshops January 31, 2019. If for any reason, the Reflections Chair can not attend Winter Workshop, they must designate someone from their school to pick up the entries. Thank you

Key Dates to Remember

- **Reflections** - PICK UP AT WINTER WORKSHOPS 1/31/19- all district/ school art submissions that are not going on to State competition MUST BE PICKED UP at Winter Workshops. If the school or district organizer can not attend, you must designate someone else to pick them up. We cannot store them.
- **January 17, 2019** Register for Legislative Summit / Lobby day
<http://www.cvent.com/events/legislative-summit-lobby-day-2019/event-summary-45729afa05f149ad942c43000d77fb43.aspx#>
- **Thursday, January 17, 2019- Presidents and Principals Dinner**
- **Sign up for Winter Workshops by January 19, 2019. Find the form here: http://suffolkpta.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/PP_registration_2018.344160058.pdf**
- **Thursday, January 31, 2019- Winter Workshops AND REFLECTIONS PICKUP**
- **Sunday, February 10, Monday February 11, 2019- Legislative Summit and Lobby Days in Albany, NY- see above and under links to register**

Monthly Theme to Engage Parents around-

January is National Blood donor month. consider holding a blood drive at your school.

Important Advocacy Calendar Notes

February 10-11, 2019 Legislative Summit /Lobby Days- Albany New York (see below)

RESOURCES and LINKS-

Winter Workshops link for registration-

http://suffolkpta.org/registration_payment_info

Legislative Summit/Lobby Days Registration-

<http://www.cvent.com/events/legislative-summit-lobby-day-2019/event-summary-45729afa05f149ad942c43000d77fb43.aspx#>

Apps for building Resilience in Children and Adults-

Pacifica Stress and Anxiety -4.4stars

Mindfulness Coach-gives tools for getting to sleep- 4.6 stars

HappiMe- 5.0 Stars- free and in app purchases

Other Resources-

NYSED updated ESSA website:

<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2018/state-education-department-announces-updated-resources-every-student-succeeds-act>

Child's Plan-Improving the Social and Emotional Well Being of New York's Children and Their Families

https://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/5013/7962/7099/childrens_plan.pdf

Parent Partnership Kit-

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/booklet.pdf>

Link to PTA Leadership webinars-

<https://nyspta.org/home/pta-leaders/trainingmaterials-webinars/>

Parent Workshop toolkit link-

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/planning-a-parent-workshop-toolkit-for-parent-engagement>

Link to Common Core Standards-

<http://corestandards.org/the-standards>

Prevent Opioid abuse

<https://www.operationprevention.com/#about>