

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL (FPC)

*recommendations to the
Kentucky Department
of Education (KDE)*



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N



Kentucky Family Partnership Council (FPC) Recommendations to KDE for 2024

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I. Who is the Kentucky Family Partnership Council?

The Commissioner’s Parent Advisory Council (CPAC) was established in 1999 and transitioned to its new title as the Family Partnership Council (FPC) in 2021. The vision of the council remains the same, which is outstanding family and community partnership practice that focuses on improving student achievement and that touches all students in every Kentucky school.

Its purpose is to serve in an advisory role to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and provide input regarding topics of interest to families, such as ways that families and communities can assist schools in ensuring that the achievement level of all students is increased. Essentially the FPC acts as an ambassador for KDE and the families and communities it serves. The FPC meets three times annually with the Kentucky Commissioner of Education and is comprised of 14 members serving two year terms. Members are selected through a process facilitated by the KDE’s Community Engagement and Support Branch, which ensures regional representation throughout the state and members must be a natural, adoptive or foster parent or other adult serving as a parent such as a close relative, legal or educational guardian and/or community or agency advocate of a student currently enrolled in a public school. Executive directors (or designees) of the Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSC), Kentucky Association of School Councils, Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance, Kentucky Parent Teacher Association,

Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network, and The Prichard Committee are standing members of the Council.

The council looks to [The Kentucky Family and School Partnership Guide](#) resource (formerly The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle) created by the Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools. This resource “helps school and district groups work together more effectively so our state can rise to proficiency in the practice of family and community engagement.” The council also aligns itself to KDE's mission to partner with districts, schools, families, students, business and industry, and communities to provide leadership and support to ensure success for each and every student.

II. Why is Family Engagement Important for Student Achievement?

The effectiveness of family-school partnerships has been extensively proven through various studies. Research publications such as "The Evidence Grows" (National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1981), "The Evidence Continues to Grow" (Henderson, 1987), and "New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement" (Henderson, 1994) have documented the long-lasting positive impact of well-planned and comprehensive family partnership initiatives especially for low-income and historically marginalized children.

Additionally, the bestselling book "Beyond the Bake Sale: The essential guide to family school partnerships" (Henderson and Mapp, 2007) summarizes multiple studies affirming the benefits of family partnerships. Other studies, such as "How Thirteen NYC schools bring low-performing ninth graders to timely graduation and college enrollment" (Ascher and Maguire, 2007), "Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago" (Bryk et al., 2009), and "The impact of family involvement in the education of children ages 3 to 8" (Van Voorhis et al., 2013), further emphasize the positive outcomes of engaging families in education. Recent research studies, including "Engaging families at the secondary level: an underused resource for student success" (Jensen et al., 2017) and "Everyone Wins! The Evidence for Family-School Partnerships and Implications for Practice" (Scholastic, 2022), consistently demonstrate improved academic achievement, graduation rates, reduced student anxiety, depression and aggression through effective family partnerships. These findings provide strong motivation for

schools to prioritize the development of effective family partnerships as an essential tool for reaching all students, especially those who have historically faced barriers to success.

Below is a summary of the influence that productive family partnerships have on students, teachers, families and schools. These impacts serve as strong motivators and highlight the importance of schools prioritizing the development of effective family partnerships. To ensure the success of all students, particularly those who have previously been underserved, the cultivation of productive family partnerships becomes an indispensable tool.

Effective Family-School Partnerships Impact¹:

1. Students

- a. Higher grades and test scores
- b. More positive attitudes and behavior in school
- c. Higher graduation rates and postsecondary attendance

2. Educators

- a. Greater success motivating and engaging students of diverse backgrounds
- b. More support from families
- c. Stronger morale and professional satisfaction

3. Families

- a. Better rapport with teachers and school staff
- b. Greater understanding of their child's progress and how to help
- c. More knowledge and skill in advocating for their child

4. Schools

- a. More positive school climate
- b. Greater retention of teachers
- c. Better reputation and more support from the community

¹“Everyone Wins! The Evidence for Family-School Partnerships” (2022) by Dr. Karen Mapp and Ann T. Henderson, and the U.S. Department of Education’s [Framework for Family Engagement](#).

Honoring Recommendations from the 2007 Commissioner’s Parent Advisory Council

Since 1990, Kentucky has been a leader in promoting parent engagement in education. Our state has implemented practices to ensure that families play an active role in decision-making processes within schools, such as the school-based decision-making (SBDM) councils and the Family Resource and Youth Service Center (FRYSC) Advisory Councils. These practices have been recognized as exemplary nationwide.

In 2007, the CPAC, now known as the FPC, built upon this successful legacy, and established specific objectives for schools to enhance their family partnership efforts. A scoring rubric was created to assess progress in meeting these objectives and thus creating meaningful partnerships with families. To ensure the objectives and rubric were implemented effectively, the council made recommendations to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), suggesting four primary actions to be taken.

Outlined below are the four main goals and the corresponding action steps initially proposed by the 2007 Council:

1. Set high expectations, measure performance and report progress.

- A. Adopt the Kentucky Family and Community Involvement Guide to Student Achievement as a scoring guide for measuring continuous improvement.
- B. This guide could be used in a similar manner as the culture, equity and school safety audits.
- C. It is recommended that these individual performance descriptors be incorporated into the KDE Standards and Indicators School Improvement (SISI) document.

2. Help schools improve relationship-building and communications.

- A. Make data on family and community involvement available on the KDE website and other media and formats.
- B. Implement a systemic, on-going statewide student, parent and community survey to yield required information for KDE and to build a database for further analysis.
- C. Establish Student, Family and Community Involvement Advisory Councils at all levels--local, district and state.

3. Provide Resources and Support.

- A. Offer incentives and recognition to schools for exemplary practice that has resulted in improved outcomes for students, including student achievement.
- B. Add a section to the KDE website that includes the work of the CPAC, research on parent involvement and effective practice in family friendly language.
- C. Identify and categorize state resources that could be used to facilitate coordination of family involvement, such as categorical funding programs including Title I, IDEA, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) and FRYSC.

4. Build capacity through professional development.

- A. Develop a parent education curriculum that parallels the student's progress from preschool to graduation.
- B. Add strategies for engaging families in improving student achievement to existing professional development programs for administrators and teachers.
- C. Include teachers in training programs for working with community resources and developing relationships with local families.

III. Did Kentucky make progress from 2007 to 2023? A Landscape Analysis

Kentucky has made significant progress in all four areas of recommendation. Particularly, from 2009 to 2011, The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle was mandated for all schools in persistently low-achieving status. Additionally, various state-level organizations, including KDE, now offer training, resources, support and recognition for best family engagement practices (refer to Table A below).

A pivotal moment for change in the field of family engagement occurred in 2013 when the U.S. Department of Education adopted the Dual Capacity-Building Framework as a guide for its efforts on family-school partnerships. This research-informed framework outlines the challenges, essential conditions, policy and program goals, and capacity outcomes for educators, families and students to ensure effective family and school partnerships.

In 2021, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence established the Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools with assistance from a U.S. Department of Education

Statewide Family Engagement Center Grant. A key project was to update The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle with the latest research, incorporating the Dual Capacity-Building Framework, and gathering input from Kentucky families, students, educators and community members. This publication was released under the revised name of "The Kentucky Family and School Partnership Guide." The updated guide also provides schools with the opportunity to earn a Family Friendly Certification by reaching Level 3 on the self-assessment component.

Table A highlights significant activities within each of the original Missing Piece recommendation areas:

Table A
1. Set high expectations, measure performance and report progress.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I, Part A requires parent surveys and school contracts with families. • School Report Cards have four family engagement metrics. • KDE Strategic Dashboard has one metric for family engagement which is the Family Friendly Certification • Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools Family Friendly School Self-Assessment and Certificate process launched in 2022.
2. Help schools improve relationship-building and communications.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many local school districts and equity councils organize out-of-school opportunities such as summer youth nights at the local parks. • FRYSC advisory councils include families as members. • School-based Decision Making (SBDM) encourages family members as co-leaders and training is primarily conducted by the KDE or through its endorsed trainers from around the state utilizing KDE created or KDE-approved materials. • Teacher preparation programs increased their focus on building meaningful relationships with families to include a baseline survey of all programs in 2022. • Kentucky Special Parent Information Network (KY-SPIN) hosts training, resource development and individual assistance for students with disabilities, their families, educators and community providers.

3. Provide resources and support

- Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has set Family Engagement Standards and provide coaching and training.
- Title I, Part A recipients are required to allocate a portion of its funds for family engagement efforts.
- Kentucky Educational Television (KET) provides SBDM and family support trainings.
- The Commissioner’s Local School Board Advisory Council (LSBAC) and other commissioner councils serve as a vehicle for hearing local issues and strategizing solutions on state level.
- Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools is a state council comprised of families, educators and community members. It also provides training, school coaching and parent leadership development through the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership.
- KY-SPIN has a focus on families of exceptional children through individual assistance, training opportunities and product development in a variety of formats.
- Full-Service Community School Coordinators across Kentucky are being established through two statewide scaling grants from the U.S. Department of Education (2023-2027; approximately \$100 million total for work).
- KDE and other statewide organizations provide monthly agendas and annual trainings on parent and family engagement for SBDM council members.
- The Kentucky Center for Statistics collects and links data to evaluate education and workforce efforts throughout the Commonwealth.

4. Build capacity through professional development- families, educators, collaborations, evaluation

- Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (Prichard Committee) provides a state fellowship opportunity, one-day parent basecamps, Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3) trainings, and other networking and parent voice opportunities.
- The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) works with communities in building a Learning Network Designation to include all three pillars of family partnership success: family engagement, family leadership and adult literacy.
- Multiple statewide organizations host annual conferences to build family engagement best practices and ensure families and educators attend.
- SBDM trainings and support for parent and teacher council members are conducted by KDE and KDE-endorsed trainers throughout the Commonwealth.
- Regional cooperatives provide training and support for families and educators related to family engagement best practices. There is also a designation cooperative for special education only.
- KY-SPIN provides professional development to families, educators and community providers on a variety of topics based on their current engagement needs.

We've made significant progress to date. It is important to recognize the valuable relationships that educators establish with families of students with special needs daily and the multitude of services we have established and expanded through KDE and districts to support these families such as KY-SPIN and the special education cooperations. The Kentucky Department of Education can take pride in the effective support and oversight provided to federally funded Title I, Part A schools and in ensuring that family voices are heard. Additionally, Kentucky's FRYSCs are renowned nationwide for their assistance to struggling families. However, a closer examination reveals some missing pieces in establishing effective family-school partnerships in all Kentucky schools. The availability of training for school staff, which is crucial for building respectful relationships with families, varies greatly across the state. Furthermore, there is currently no statewide rubric for schools and districts to demonstrate their progress in developing family-school partnerships. School districts differ significantly in their endeavors to enhance the capacity of all families. Building effective family-school partnerships will bring about positive

change for all students, their families, and their schools. Kentucky has a strong foundation on which to build. Now is the opportune time to bring all the components together to fulfill the original vision.

IV. Recommendations for the 2024 Family Partnership Council and KDE

After conducting an in-depth analysis of the latest research on family partnerships, including an evaluation of Kentucky's progress on the recommendations outlined in the 2007 Missing Piece report, the current FPC strongly suggests and enthusiastically recommends that KDE takes four significant actions in collaboration with the 2024-2026 Family Partnership Council.

These recommendations (1) would support every school's effort to form effective partnerships, (2) would promote greater alignment of KDE's and outside organizations' family partnership initiatives, (3) would set the goals of the FPC for the next two years.

1. Encourage districts and schools to develop local webpages that include more robust relationship-building and communication metrics regarding meaningful Family and Community Engagement.

A. Utilize the 4Cs for Policy and Program goals from the Dual Capacity-Building Framework as base for questions: Connection, Cognition, Confidence and Capacity. See dualcapacity.org.

Example metrics: Percentage of families who report that they have a trusting relationship with at least one staff member and/or the percentage of families that feel their students' teachers sought their advice and insights on how to be more successful with their student.

B. KDE's Full-Service Community Schools Manager highlights schools doing family partnerships well and what they are doing with a special focus on innovative practices that reach historically marginalized families and students.

2. KDE hires a full-time, full-service community schools manager which is fully funded by the Prichard Committee through December 2027.

A. Position focuses on gathering and distributing best practices for family and community engagement within KDE, streamlining measurement, data and stories of impact, and ensures strategic alignment between KDE and external family engagement state partners such as PTA.

- B. This position could streamline coaching and training for district level staff implementing family and community engagement initiatives i.e., FRYSC district coordinators, Title I, Part A Family Engagement, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) coordinators, etc.
 - C. Additionally, this person seeks advice from the membership on prevailing matters. This role establishes a robust feedback mechanism with the Family Partnership Council membership. The position offers valuable insights, guidance and support by delivering regular reports during FPC meetings. Additionally, seeking advice from the membership on prevailing matters is an integral part of this responsibility.
- 3. In 2024, the Family Partnership Council will make recommendations to local educational agencies (LEAs) and other state organizations on one or more tools that will support families in navigating educational options and rights within Kentucky’s educational system. In 2025, the Family Partnership Council will partner with KDE and other organizations to create an online, age-indexed, family-friendly guide that shares the most effective ways for schools to partner with families.**
- A. In 2024, the Family Partnership Council will work with KDE to create a one-stop webpage to the following: parental and student rights, SBDM information, legislative updates, specific English Learner (EL) resources, etc.
 - B. In 2025, the Family Partnership Council will work with KDE and other organizations to provide widely accessible, age-appropriate strategies for schools to enable families to be more actively engaged and effective in supporting their student’s success.
- 4. The Family Partnership Council’s work in 2024-2026 is to assist in the implementation of the three goals above and, most importantly, support many more schools’ adoption of the Kentucky Family and School Partnership Guide.**
- A. Within the two-year term, the Family Partnership Council with KDE leadership support, will identify strategies for districts and schools around family engagement tracking and continuous improvement, enhanced equity around parent leadership, and the integration and streamlining of required family and community engagement efforts in more meaningful ways (i.e. Title I, Part A,

Comprehensive District and School Improvement Plans [CDIP/CSIP], SBDM). This would include but is not limited to how district staff and schools can more fully utilize the Kentucky Family and School Guide, Self-Assessment and Certificate Process, additional support and training for staff and administrators on effective family partnership strategies, and improved relationship building and communications metrics in KDE School Report Cards and Strategic Dashboard.

- B. The Family Partnership Council will support understanding how the Kentucky Family and School Partnership Guide and supplemental resources are being utilized by schools and districts and sharing these best practices with other counties and schools. Members will also oversee recommendations for improving these materials in partnership with Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools Advisory Council.
- C. The KDE full-service community schools manager can support on-going trainings and support for current/future district and/or school level family engagement coordinators (e.g. Family Resource and Youth Service Center coordinators), or whole school/district staff efforts, on utilization of these tools and FPC recommendations and highlights from other schools.

V. Next Steps

The Family Partnership Council requests staff from the KDE's Office of Continuous Support and Improvement to acknowledge receipt of these recommendations and submit any comments, questions of clarification or feedback **by Nov. 20, 2023**.

The FPC will review comments and make any necessary edits and resubmit to KDE's Office of Continuous Improvement and Support **by Dec. 18, 2023**.

Ahead of the first convening of the 2024 Family Partnership Council, each member receives a copy of the recommendations **by January 31, 2024**.

The associate commissioner of the Office of Continuous Support and Improvement will ensure that the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) is aware of the report and agreed upon initiatives and that the KBE acknowledges support and approval for the FPC to move in this direction.

During the first FPC meeting of the 2024 term, members will review recommendations with an appointed KDE staff leadership present to support creating an action plan with tracking metrics and persons assigned from both the council and KDE to ensure implementation begins **by March 31, 2024.**

VI. FPC 2021-2023 Membership List

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing this report from the Family Partnership Council.

2021-2023 Membership:

Grace Absher

Elizabeth Ashley Bruce

Chris Medley

Brooke Gill

Melissa Goins

Tom Haggard

Amity Kukla

Rhonda Logsdon

Natasha Lucas

Lauren Mitchell

Mona Smith

Jennifer Travers Skidmore

Julie Staton