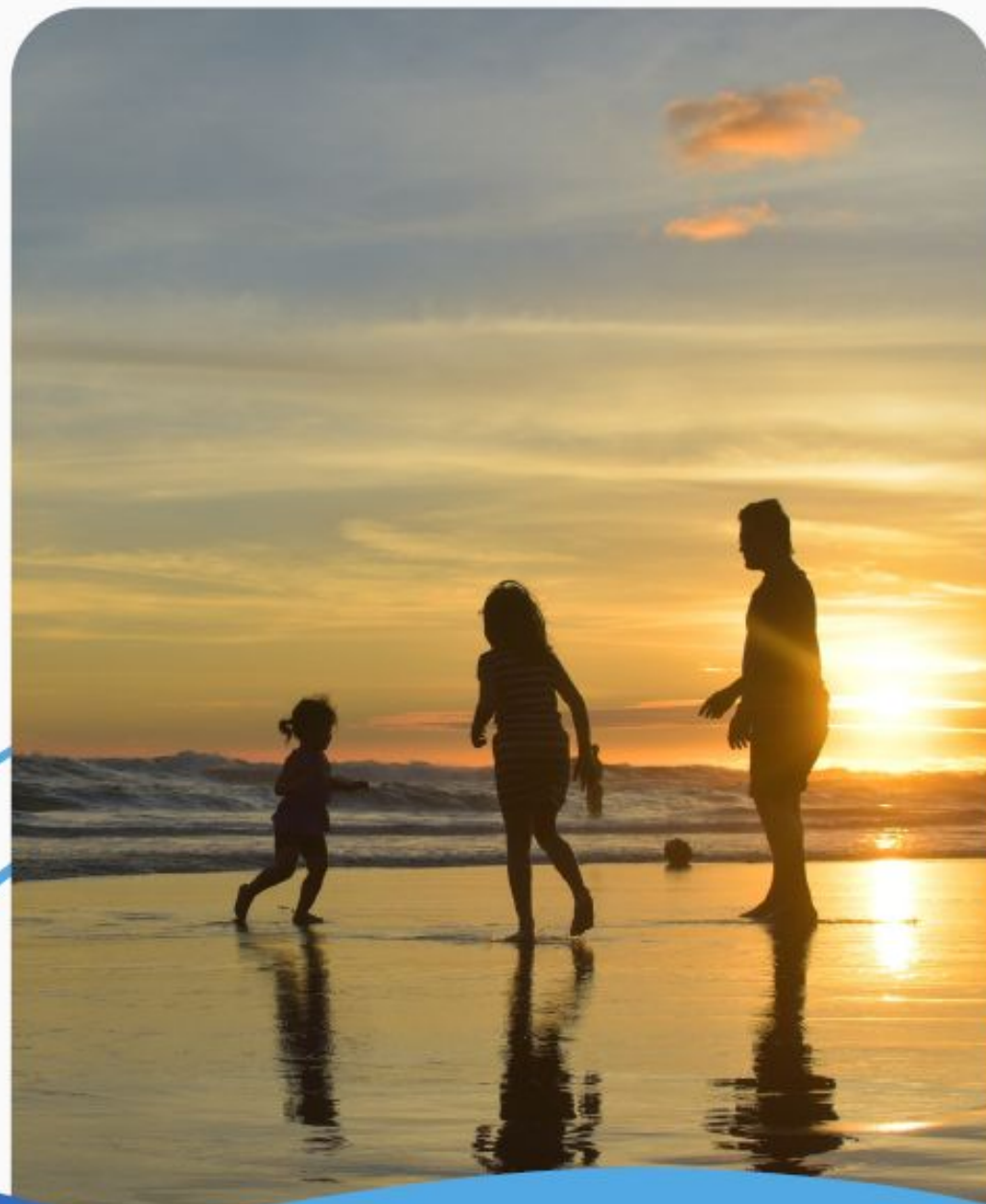




Foundations of Family Engagement

Prepared by Angela Matian





Learning Outcomes




1. Define family engagement and why it matters.



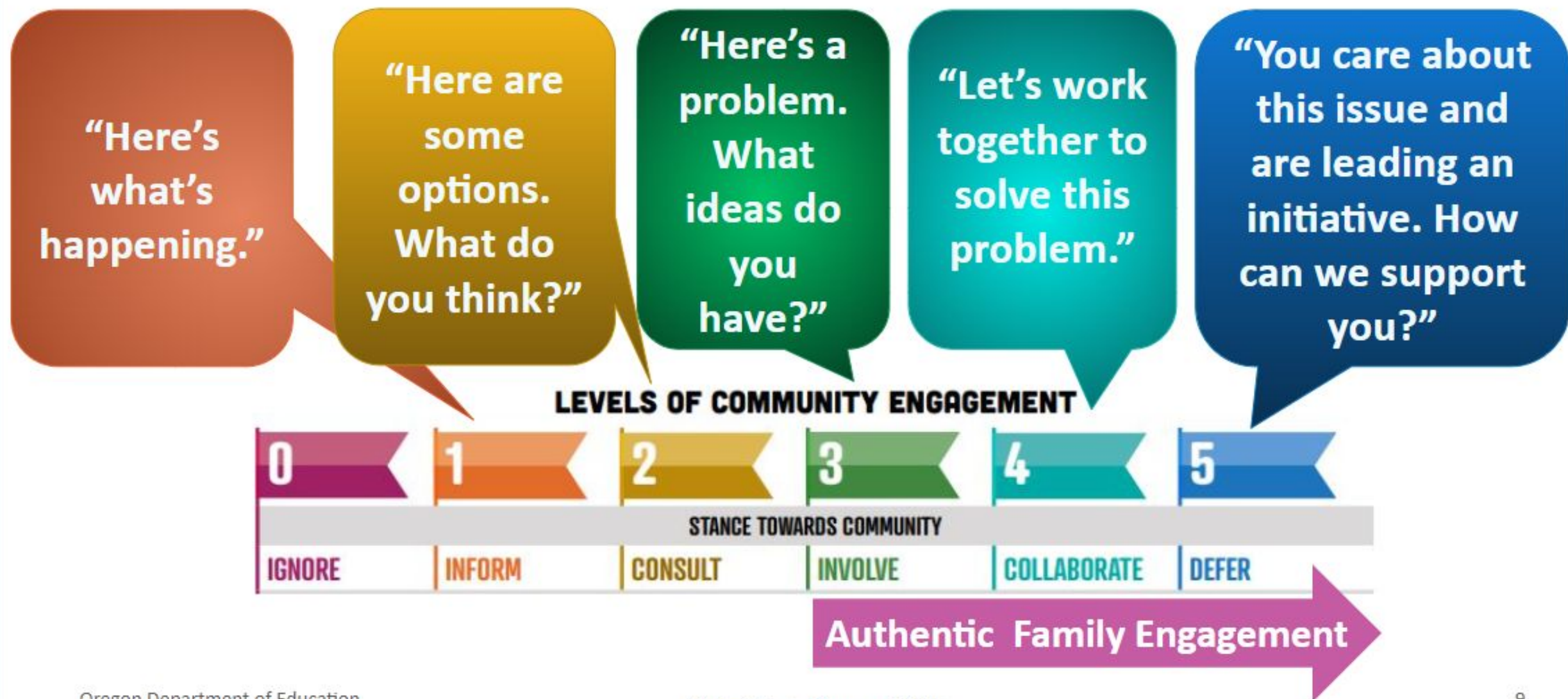
2. Value knowing how core beliefs shape relationships with families.



3. Understand the link between family engagement and student achievement.



Community Engagement Spectrum








Defining Family Engagement

Involvement versus Engagement


- Focuses on individual responsibility
 - Communication to families is one-way
 - Focuses on programming
 - Relationship is transactional
- Focuses on collective responsibility and partnership
 - Communication with families is two-way
 - Focuses on collaborative practice
 - Relationship is transformative



Larry
Ferlazzo,
author and
public school
teacher




“A school striving for **family involvement** often leads with its mouth—identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. A school striving for **family engagement**, on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears—listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about. The goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners.”



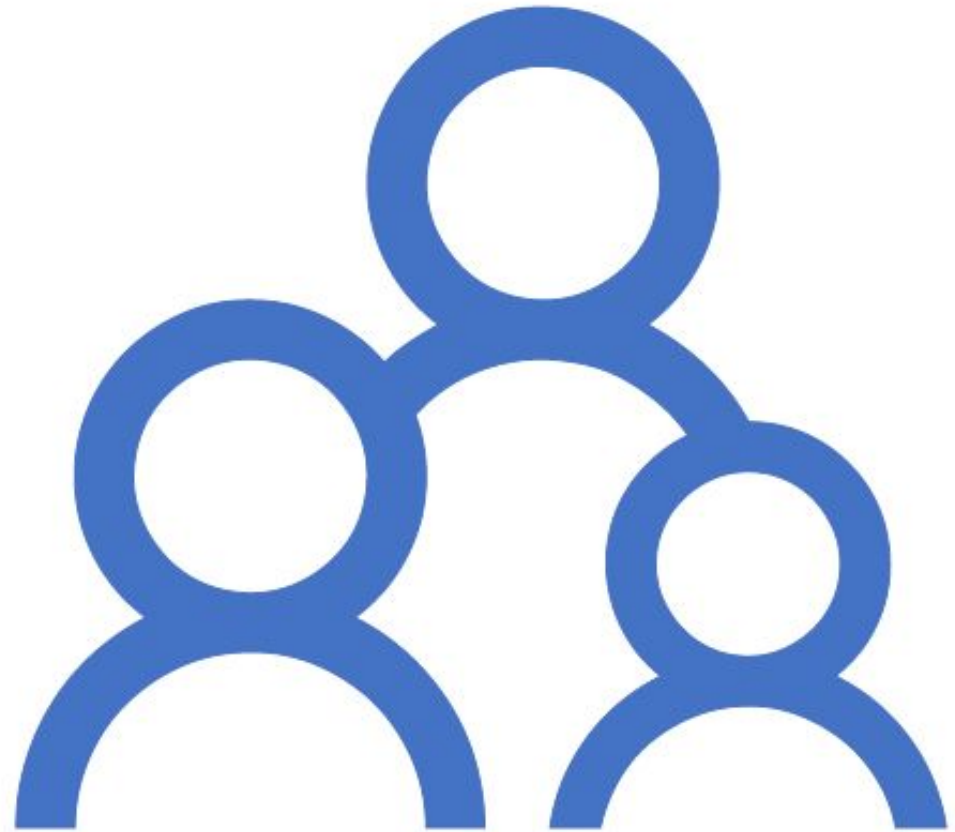
Definition of Family Engagement

Family Engagement is a ***full, equal, and equitable partnership*** among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career.



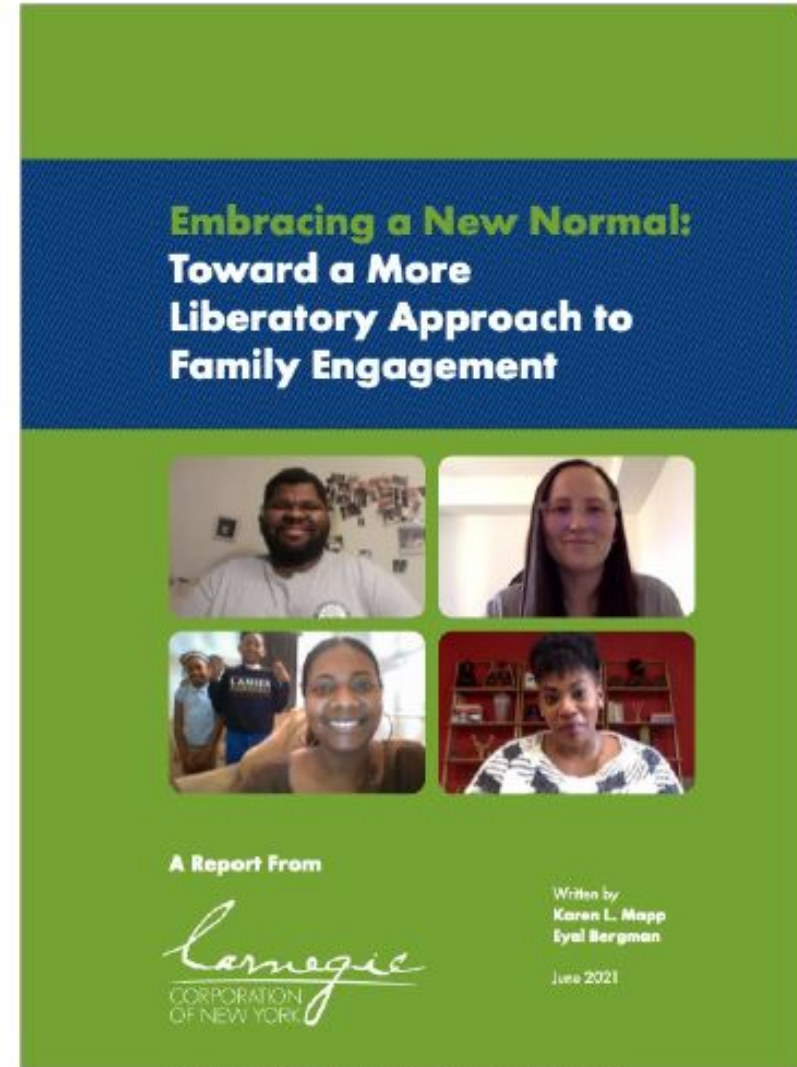


What kind of practice
do we need to
embrace to have full,
equal and equitable
partnerships with
families?



The New Normal of Family Engagement is:

- Liberatory
- Solidarity-driven
- Equity-focused



Interactive Exercise

At your tables, discuss:

- What do these terms mean to you?
- What comes to mind?
 - Liberatory
 - Solidarity Drive
 - Equity-Focused





Different Notes, Same Tune

Racialized scripts vary but families who depart from white, middle class norm are often framed as deficient.

Conventional systems-centered family engagement approaches often:

- **"Train"** parents to be deferent supporters of schools' agendas and expectations
- **Assume** schools are neutral spaces untouched by historical, racial & power inequities
- **Assimilate** nondominant families and communities to white, middle class norms, values & behaviors

Teachers with a deficit view of Black students & families take less responsibility for those students' learning. - Diamond et al., 2008



What makes this “new
normal” of family
engagement practice
difficult?

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents

Isabel Wilkerson

“As we go about our daily lives, caste is the wordless usher in a darkened theater, flashlight cast down in the aisles, guiding us to our assigned seats in a performance. The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about **power** — which groups have it and which do not. It is about resources — which caste is seen as worthy of them and which are not, who gets to acquire them and who does not. It is about respect, authority, and assumptions of competence — who is accorded these and who is not.”



What have we
learned about
the impact of
Family-School
partnerships?



Wins for Students:

- Higher grades and test scores
- Better attendance and engagement in class
- More positive attitudes and behavior
- Greater sense of efficacy and self-esteem
- Higher graduation rates and college/postsecondary attendance



Wins for Educators:

- Shift from deficit-to asset-based thinking about students and families
- Increased multicultural awareness and appreciation
- Greater success motivating and engaging students
- More support from families
- Stronger morale and professional satisfaction



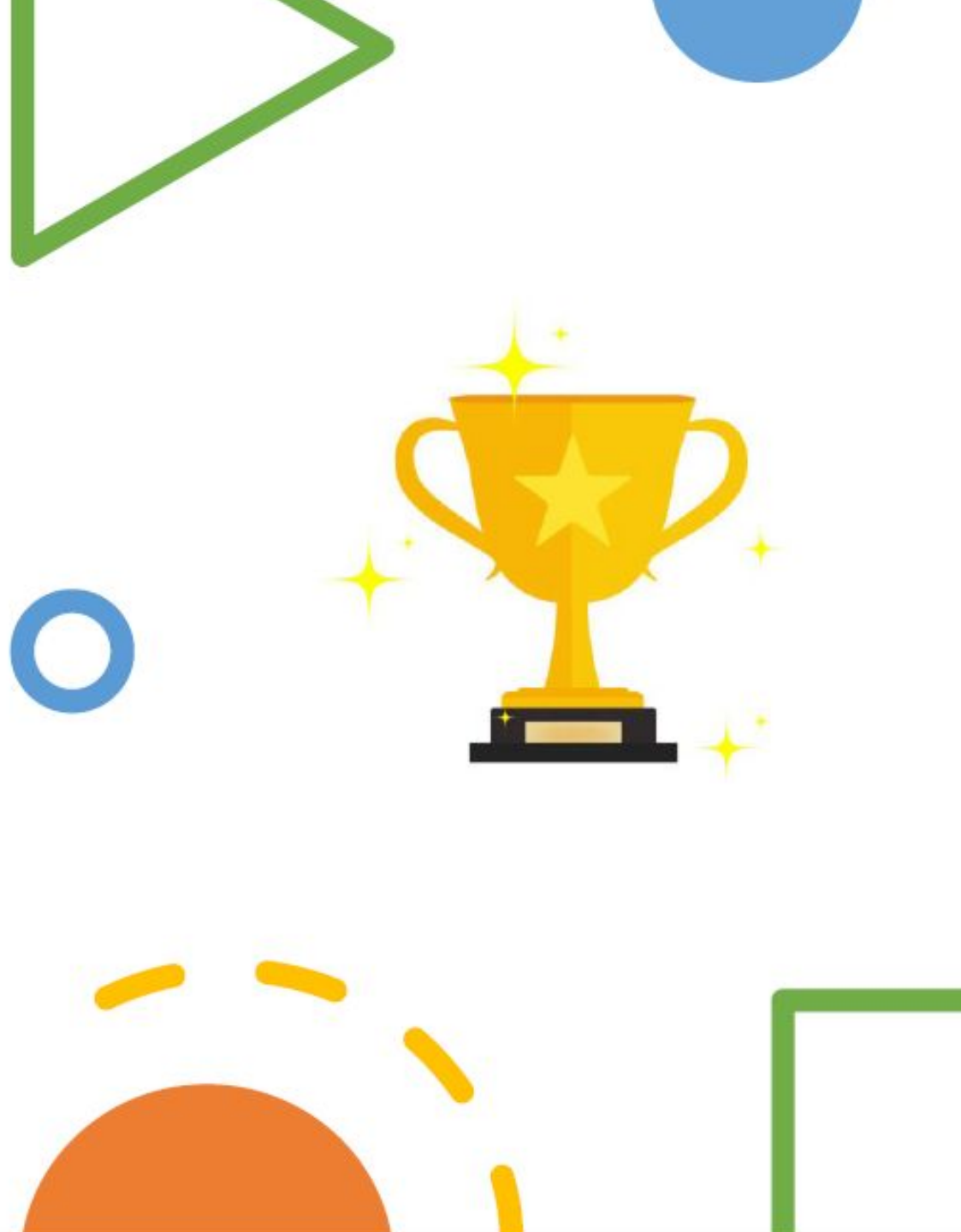
Wins for Families

- Stronger parent-child relationships
- Better rapport with teachers and school staff
- Greater understanding of child's progress and how to help
- More knowledge and skill in advocating for their child
- Increased deep and supportive social connections



Wins for Schools

- More positive school climate
- Higher morale and greater retention of teachers
- Improved facilities, better curriculum, and higher-quality programs
- More responsive to community concerns
- Better reputation and more support from the community



Wins for Districts and Communities

- Reduced suspensions and high-risk behaviors
- Increased family and youth involvement in site-based decisions
- Expanded mental and physical health resources leading to improved health
- High levels of participation in afterschool programs
- Increased high school graduation rate





The Way Forward




“The two pandemics, the global COVID-19 crisis and the crisis of systemic racism, are forcing a recalibration of the family-school partnership.” (Mapp and Bergman, in press 2021).



Emerging Themes Coming out of the Two Pandemics


- Relationships Matter! Schools and classrooms that developed strong relationships of trust with families prior to the pandemic:
 - found the pivot easier than schools that had not prioritized partnerships.
 - report smoother transitions and less-than-expected learning loss.
- Families know more, understand more, and do more than educators gave them credit for before the pandemic.
- Educators want and need capacity building on how to build and sustain effective partnerships with families.

A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

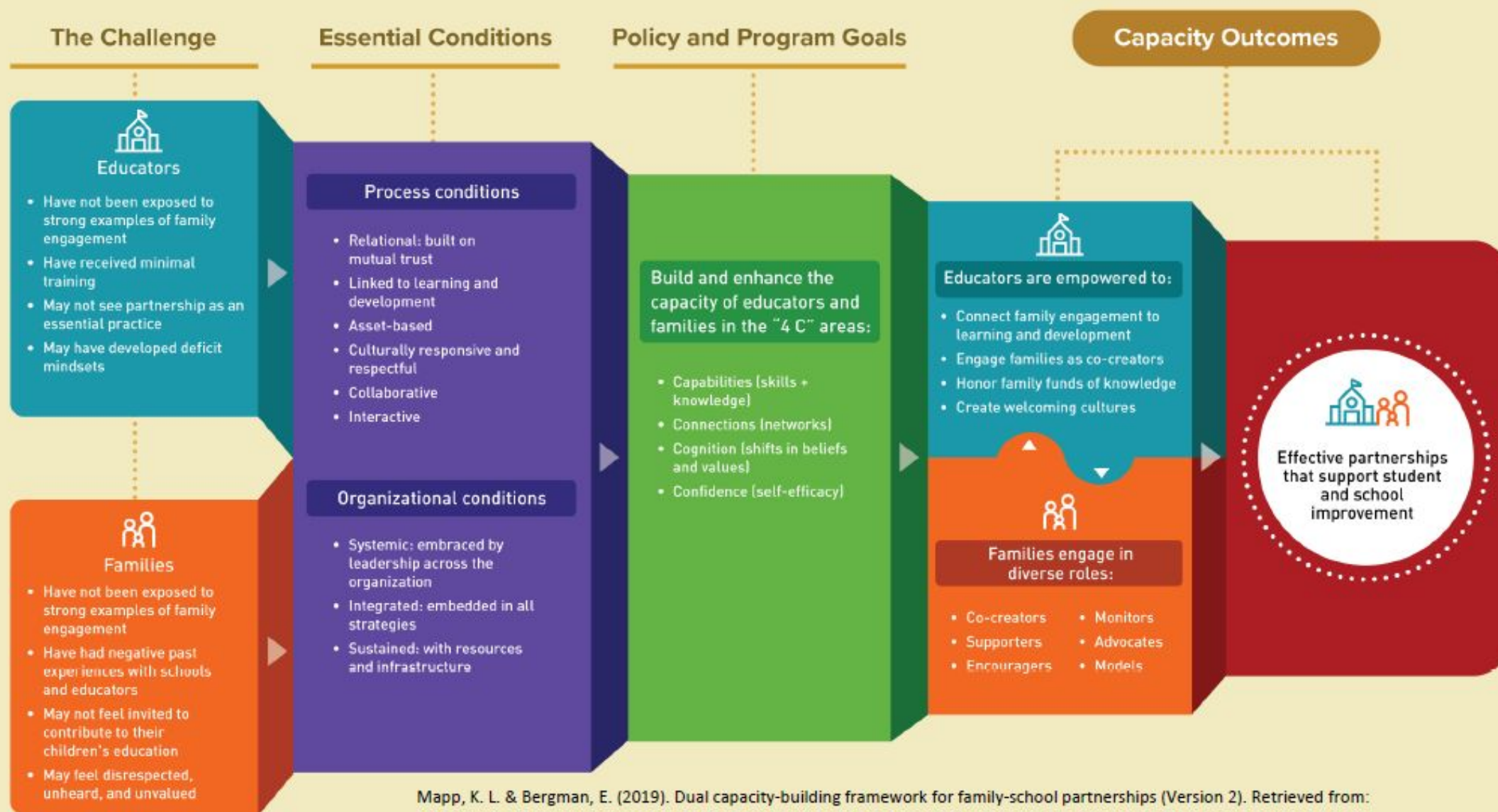
*Christina Armas,
English as a New
Language
Teacher, Pioneer
Academy, P.S.
307, in Queens.*

This experience has been a lesson for educators like me. We talk about meeting our students where they are, academically and emotionally, by building on their strengths and assets. But we don't talk enough about families, one of students' biggest assets.

I hope we can find ways to allow parents to showcase their best practices from home so teachers can learn what the learning process looks like in a different context and plan accordingly, especially for teaching students with disabilities.

A series of yellow dashed lines in the bottom right corner, forming a curved, upward-pointing shape.

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2)



Relational Trust-How Do You Know?

Elements of Relational Trust: Respect,
Competence, Integrity, and Personal Regard.

Am I showing trustworthiness to this parent?

- Am I seeking input and listening carefully to what families have to say? (Respect)
- Am I demonstrating to families that I am competent and that I think they are doing a good job as parents? (Competence)
- Do I always keep my word with families? (Integrity)
- Do I show families that I care about them as people versus objects? (Personal regard)





Where do
we start?



Shift the conditions for family engagement within your sphere of influence.



Q and A

3

INVOLVE

Voice & Power Shift



Reflection Questions

Questions meant to help move deeper along the spectrum and foster meaningful community engagement

- How are you creating expectations about participation and decision-making for clarity on role/involvement for students, families, and community?
- How are you creating opportunities in existing structures (e.g. school site councils) for traditionally marginalized groups to participate?
- How are you learning to listen deeply to different voices, perspectives, and ways of knowing (e.g. culturally responsive trainings for participating staff)?
- How are you creating space/opportunity to name, address, and heal from historical harm inflicted by the district/school system?
- How are you demonstrating a commitment to change historical practice and policy?

Resources and Actions Towards Growth

Resources and key actions that could deepen intentionality at each level or spark movement along the spectrum.

Key Resources

- [Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships](#)
- [Patch on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform](#)

Key Actions

- Partner with local CBOs, faith-based organizations, or other local partners who already engage these communities through their leadership programs
- When engaging parent leadership groups, make sure they reflect the student population
- Before you make a decision or take an action, consider using a tool like the ODE decision tools to ensure you have engaged the right partners and voices

Key SIA Example

Key example from previous SIA applications and consideration to push thinking further

In one district, the SIA team worked directly with the Tribal Education Agency as well as the Tribal Cultural and Heritage Program as part of their community engagement process to get input from tribal members. Another district worked with tribal leaders to hold SIA community engagement opportunities at tribal facilities.

Just because target focal groups are at the table doesn't mean that the table is set evenly. Consider how the backdrop of colonization and settler colonialism creates uneven dynamics for engagement and what forms of acknowledgment, accountability, and follow-through are needed.

Sharing strategies and best practices based on the [Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships](#).

[Appendix A](#) of the Integrated Guidance (page 106)

The Big 3 Questions:

- What their child ***should know and be able to do*** by the end of the year.
- How their child is doing ***now***.
- How they can support their child's learning ***at home***.



Linked to
Learning/Development
Exercise

- List at least five events/activities that schools currently have for families (think across the entire school year)
 - Circle the activities which fit the following criteria:
 - Families leave knowing more about what their child should know or be able to do (the learning/developmental goals) at that grade/age level
 - They leave knowing *how* (through practice) to employ a new tool or activity at home to support those goals
 - Families have had the opportunity to share shared learning strategies and knowledge about their child
- 