
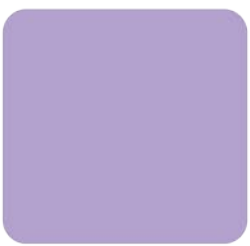


YouthForce
NOLA
Family
Engagement
Toolkit

Presented by  Urban League of Louisiana

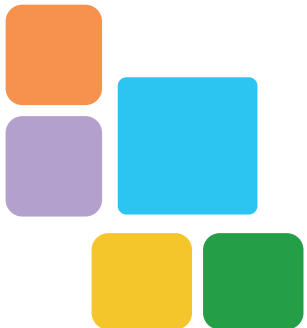


Welcome and Overview

The Urban League of Louisiana and YouthForce NOLA are proud to present the YouthForce NOLA Family Engagement Toolkit. This resource was created to assist schools in their efforts to engage families as partners in schools' career pathways programs of study (CPPS). However, this toolkit can be applied across schools' family engagement efforts.

The toolkit provides information on why family engagement is important to the development of children and youth and to the goals of the school. It also provides ideas and strategies that schools can implement to strengthen their existing family engagement efforts. Finally, this toolkit provides schools with concrete tools to facilitate this work, including family engagement surveys and focus group protocols, a survey to gauge families' perceptions of career and technical education, a family engagement checklist to help schools evaluate their family engagement strategies, and a family engagement planning template. These tools can help schools to create a comprehensive family engagement strategy that will elevate schools' CPPS and that can strengthen schools' partnerships with families in support of the children they serve.

We hope you reference this toolkit often and that it serves you well in your efforts to build stronger relationships and partnerships with families.



This toolkit was prepared by Dr. Rashida H. Govan of the Urban League of Louisiana for YouthForce NOLA.

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The Value of Family Engagement



Introduction

The following section provides schools with a review of literature on the value and benefits of family engagement. This information should help you make an informed case to your staff about the importance of family engagement in your school and should serve as a helpful resource when preparing proposals to funders/your board to support your family engagement efforts. The “Barriers to Family Engagement” section provides schools with direct feedback from families derived from an Urban League study on family engagement in which participants identified barriers they faced when engaging with their children’s schools in New Orleans. Use these resources to identify strategies to remove these barriers to engagement for families of children in your school.





The Benefits of Parental Engagement for Schools

- Parental engagement has a significant, positive relationship with children's academic achievement (Jeynes, 2016; Jeynes, 2012, Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Wilder, 2014).
 - ▷ Involving parents as partners in the education of their children will result in higher student achievement. Consider strategies to ensure that families can set educational expectations for their children.
- Student behavioral outcomes also improve with parental engagement (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2015; Hill, N. E., Castellino, D. R., Lansford, J. E., Nowlin, P., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E. and Pettit, G. S. (2004); Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Wang, Hill, and Hofkens, 2014).
 - ▷ Parental involvement and support from teachers leads to improved behavior from students. Using positive communication techniques with parents and students builds trust to deal with potential behavioral issues.
- Parental engagement is linked to improved emotional functioning in adolescents and students (Casper & Lopez, 2006; Wang, Hill, and Hofkens, 2014; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2013).
 - ▷ Parents' proactive communication with teachers is associated with decreased problem behaviors for adolescents. Engaging with parents before problems ensue increases the potential that students will experience positive behavioral outcomes.
- Children whose parents are engaged with their schools experience improved social functioning (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Hernandez, 2000).
 - ▷ Students with involved parents are more likely to exhibit cooperation, initiate positive peer interactions and exhibit self-control within the classroom.
- An additional benefit of parental engagement is increased student attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon, 2007).
 - ▷ Schools with parent-school partnership programs experienced higher student attendance rates. These partnerships were modeled after Epstein's (2011) typology of parental involvement.

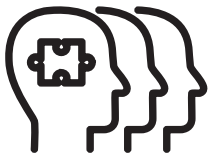


- Increased parental engagement is also linked to lower dropout rates (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999; Parr & Bonitz, 2015).
 - ▷ Dropout rates are tied to students' self-concept, and parental involvement helps to strengthen students' self image.
- Parental engagement is also positively correlated with higher college-going rates (Ou & Reynolds, 2014; Perna & Titus, 2005).
 - ▷ College-going rates are tied to parental expectations for their children, making families' roles integral efforts to promote college readiness and access. By providing information to parents early about college and career requirements, supporting them in the application (college and financial aid process), and by building a strong parent-teacher academic support team, schools will see increases in the amount of students pursuing postsecondary education.
- Parental involvement has the strongest correlation to student achievement if it is defined as parental expectations for academic achievement (Wilder, 2014).
 - ▷ Regardless of the type of parental involvement (e.g., parenting, communicating, volunteering, etc.), it had a positive relationship to student achievement. However, parents' expectations for academic achievement had the strongest positive relationship to student academic performance.



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Barriers to Family Engagement

According to parent participants in the Urban League of Louisiana's (ULLA) study on family engagement, families identified the following three barriers to family engagement:

Parents' Work Schedules

New Orleans families identify work-life balance as a major deterrent for family engagement. Families indicated that their work schedules make it difficult for them to be able to engage with schools. In addition, they note that schools do not give them adequate notice to make arrangements to be engaged in certain activities. Parents in the study suggest that schools be more cognizant of the responsibilities parents have when planning family engagement activities. They also indicate that school staff project negative attitudes when families cannot be involved. Parents suggest that schools improve the timeliness of their communication if they are invested in family involvement.



Distance Between Home and School

In the New Orleans education landscape, the variety of open enrollment schools from which families have to choose has resulted in many students going to schools outside of their neighborhoods. As a result, many families find it all the more difficult to get engaged at their children's schools. Families in the ULLA study indicate that they face challenges in engaging with schools due to the proximity of schools to their homes and in instances that children from the same family are enrolled at different schools. For those who rely on public transportation, this presents an additional issue. This unique issue in the New Orleans landscape requires schools to think creatively about how they design family engagement activities and the types of resources they are willing to allocate to ensuring families can be more involved.

School Policies and Appointment Requirements

According to parents involved in the ULLA study, some schools have policies that hinder family engagement. For instance, appointment requirements established by schools that require families to engage with teachers and administrators at determined times can be problematic if those appointments are not honored. Families express frustration with this experience and express an interest in being able to visit schools without notice in order to be the most responsive to issues as they arise. Unfortunately, unannounced visits pose significant challenges to schools. In addition, families indicate that some schools require background checks before parents can volunteer at schools. While this requirement helps to protect students and staff, it can also prevent well-intentioned families from engaging with schools. Schools should partner with families to craft policies that encourage family involvement and inclusion and that also protect students.



Conditions for Successful Family Engagement



Introduction

Reflect on your school culture and determine if the following conditions for successful family engagement are in place at your school. Talk with school staff, parents, and students to see if there is general agreement. After engaging in a community dialogue (e.g., staff meeting, PTA meeting, student government meeting, etc.) about these features of your school culture, complete the Family Engagement Checklist that follows.

The family engagement checklist is a tool that should be used by your team to examine your school's current family engagement practices. The items on this checklist coincide with the Conditions for Successful Family Engagement. When identifying evidence that a practice is in place, consider specific examples of how that condition is practiced, especially examples that are concrete and evident to your key stakeholders. For instance, for the “school environment is welcoming and friendly to families” evidence of this condition may be signs in the school welcoming families, built in visiting hours for families, and/or satisfaction data from family engagement surveys. Once you have completed the family engagement checklist, review the Strategies for Family Engagement and the Overview of Family Engagement resources. These documents will prepare you to create a comprehensive family engagement plan for your school.



Conditions for Successful Family Engagement



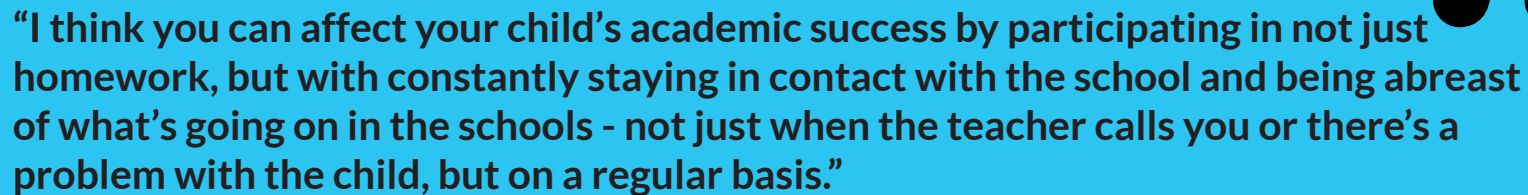
- Expectations for family and community engagement are clearly set and modeled by the school leader
- Families are regarded as partners with schools in the education of their children
- Family engagement efforts are linked to the broader academic goals of the school
- A family engagement plan is in place with complementary evaluation protocols to assess its quality and effectiveness
- Adequate resources and supports are allocated for family and community engagement efforts
- School environment is welcoming and friendly to families

The Role of Families

The Role of Families

This document outlines the roles families play in the education and development of their child/ren as described by families involved in the Urban League of Louisiana Parent Perspectives study. Their perspectives on their roles should help schools broaden their understanding of how families and schools can work together to support students and how schools can be more intentional in the design of efforts to improve student learning and development in their family engagement efforts.

Families as Partners



“I think you can affect your child’s academic success by participating in not just homework, but with constantly staying in contact with the school and being abreast of what’s going on in the schools - not just when the teacher calls you or there’s a problem with the child, but on a regular basis.”

Families regard themselves as partners with teachers and schools in support of their children’s learning and development. As partners, families believe they should work alongside teachers and school staff by building a positive rapport, working collaboratively to support student learning, and monitoring and communicating regularly with school staff about their children’s progress and about school events and information. School leaders, teachers and staff should respect families’ role as partners, and should engage them as such when communicating and engaging them at their schools.

Families as Advocates

“...If there’s a problem, we’re supposed to call them and be there and assist (with) the problem. We do it together.”

Families view themselves as advocates for their children. This role is not referenced in Epstein’s typology of parental involvement, but was frequently cited by families in the study. The role of advocate refers specifically to working on behalf of their child/ren to solve problems and address issues. This can be particularly useful in your school’s family engagement efforts, because families can work alongside school leaders and staff to advocate for resources for students at your school. They can also be strong advocates for your CPPS program if you are successful in getting buy-in from families for these courses at your school. From phone calls to testimonies, families can be very helpful in your efforts to get more support for your school’s work as it benefits their child/ren’s learning and development.

Families as Role Models

“Being that I finished school, I got my degree, I think that encourages my kids to do the same thing. I don’t have to tell them they’re going to college. They already know.”

In the Urban League study, families spoke expressly about modeling academic success and achievement for their children. However, the same principle applies to families as role models in the workforce. Whether families are employed or not, they are modeling skills and attitudes on a regular basis that are transferrable and important in the workplace. From financial management to problem solving, families are a great resource to help students begin to think about how the skills they are learning in school are applied in the “real world.” Finding unique strategies in your family engagement efforts to involve families as role models can be an effective way to involve them in the development of students’ employability skills.

Families as Enforcers

“Make sure that they know their school comes first. And if they can’t do what they need to do at school, that they can’t do the extra stuff.”

Families can be a terrific partner in reinforcing the expectations that schools have for students. By working alongside families to inform them about what is important for their child/ren’s success in internships and CPPS courses, families can hold students accountable to meeting those expectations. Families’ roles as enforcers give schools an important ally in ensuring students are meeting the expectations that both schools and the workplace have of them. It is important in your family engagement efforts that families are informed of the ways they can support and reinforce your expectations for their children at home and that you express explicitly your need (and expectation) for them to serve in this important role.

Families as Providers

“You can affect your child’s learning skills and everything at school when you don’t give a child a stable home...”

Families viewed this as one of their most important roles in the lives of their children. This role is consistent with the “parenting” role in Epstein’s typology. Families are well aware of the importance of providing a safe and stable home life for their children, but this is easier for some than others. Schools should connect families with community resources that support families’ goals of providing a safe and stable home life for their child/ren as part of its family engagement efforts. Likewise, schools should aim to fill in gaps where possible to make sure students’ needs are met with respect to their success in your CPPS program (e.g., transportation to internships or work-appropriate clothing).

Families as Motivators

“My involvement with my child’s education is... to show them that we’re involved in their education achievement and progress... They understand that we’ll be there to cheer them on with every accomplishment (and) each step they progress in. So, I think, personally, our involvement in my kids’ education is probably the most positive thing that we’ve done for our kids.”

Regarded as one of the most significant aspects of parent involvement, parent expectations and moral support are important to student success.

Families in the Urban League study viewed their role as “motivator” as important and spoke often about the importance of providing encouragement for students’ academic goals and success. Schools can leverage families’ role as motivator in their efforts to influence student engagement and behavior in their CPPS programs. Consider involving families in your efforts to incentivize student engagement by asking families to monitor, track and encourage their practicing of important skills or their involvement in career exploration activities outside of school. Keep families engaged in any events that celebrate student achievement in CPPS to continue to influence students’ quality of effort in CPPS.

Families as First Teachers

“I think parent engagement is not just school activities, it’s also what you do with your child at home.”

Families remarked often about their role as their child/ren’s first teachers. They expressed an eagerness to get support from schools in learning how to extend and expand student learning at home and talked a great deal about how they constantly pursue learning experiences for their children outside of school. Family engagement efforts should focus in part on “learning at home activities.” Schools should think of ways to provide families with learning activities at home and in the community that can help support student success.

Families as Monitors

“You’re involved with...making sure the teachers are doing what they’re supposed to be doing in school.”

Another role that families identified that is not included in Epstein’s typology is families’ role as monitors. Families in New Orleans feel it important to observe students in the school setting to ensure they are engaged and to monitor their interactions with instructors. They are particularly interested in observing teachers as they work. While this can be disruptive during the school day, schools may want to consider creating scheduled days that families can sit in “sample classes” to give families more insight into what occurs during CPPS courses and how those classes are delivered.

Families as Volunteers

“...Being more involved in your child’s classroom education as well as participating in volunteer programs to help educate other children.”

Volunteering is an important role of families in schools according to families involved in the Urban League study. This includes volunteering at school events, supporting classroom teachers and engaging other families. Schools can leverage the support of families to support their work with students and to connect to employers, community organizations, and other local partners. Families recognize this as a critical role they play in the support of their child/ren’s learning and development. However, families often face barriers to serving in this role. Schools can benefit from developing a variety of strategies for families to volunteer both in school and out-of-school (e.g., calling other families or getting materials for class projects).

Understanding how families see their roles in engaging with schools can help schools better shape their family engagement plans. Families and schools working together to support students in CPPS programs can generate better outcomes for students and improve the success of your CPPS initiative.

Family Engagement Satisfaction Survey

[Click here to view survey](#)

YouthForce NOLA Family Engagement Survey

YouthForce NOLA Family Engagement Survey

To what extent you agree with each of the following statements:

* 1. I feel welcomed at (NAME OF SCHOOL)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

* 2. The school offers an easy-to-navigate website with meaningful information.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

* 3. I am well informed about school activities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Family Engagement Checklist

(Note: a printable PDF is located in the Appendix)

1. Expectations for family and community engagement are clearly set and modeled by the school leader.		
Status (Y/N/D)	Evidence of Practice	Strategy to create, maintain, or improve
2. Families are regarded as partners with the school in the education of their children.		
Status (Y/N/D)	Evidence of Practice	Strategy to create, maintain, or improve
3. Family engagement efforts are linked to the broader academic goals of the school.		
Status (Y/N/D)	Evidence of Practice	Strategy to create, maintain, or improve

Key: Y=Yes; N=No; D= Developing

4. A family engagement plan is in place with complementary evaluation protocols to assess its quality and effectiveness.		
Status (Y/N/D)	Evidence of Practice	Strategy to create, maintain, or improve
5. Adequate resources and supports are allocated for family and community engagement efforts.		
Status (Y/N/D)	Evidence of Practice	Strategy to create, maintain, or improve
6. School environment is welcoming and friendly to families.		
Status (Y/N/D)	Evidence of Practice	Strategy to create, maintain, or improve
Key: Y=Yes; N=No; D= Developing		



Developing Your Family Engagement Plan

Introduction

This section will provide you with strategies and information that you can use to develop your family engagement plan. Now that you have completed your checklist, you can begin to think about ways to improve the school climate in support of stronger partnerships with families. The following section offers a deeper overview of parental involvement (i.e., family engagement) so that you and your team can rethink what family engagement means for your school. This framework pushes schools to think of family engagement beyond school events like parent/teacher conferences to a more thoughtful partnership model that envisions the relationship between families and schools as a tool to facilitate holistic student learning and development. This model helps educators to recognize the role of parenting and learning at home as part of the family engagement continuum and lifts up the importance of two-way communication as important components of family engagement. Moreover, it helps schools to think of meaningful ways to involve families in volunteering activities, in decision-making activities, and in supporting schools in building partnerships with community to enhance student learning. Finally, this model prepares schools to connect families with community resources to promote family stability, an essential element to student success. Specific strategies are offered that schools can incorporate into their plan or use as a reference to help develop original ideas. The section ends with a template that schools should use to capture and build out their family engagement plan.

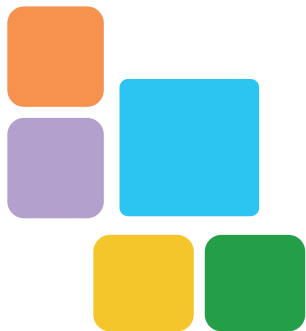
The Six Types of Parental Involvement

(Adapted from Joyce Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement)

The following is an overview of Epstein's Six Types of Family Involvement, as well as a list of strategies that fall within each category of involvement. Please review to give you insight on some of the strategies you can incorporate into your Family Engagement Plan.

Parenting: *Help families create a learning environment at home that supports children's career readiness.*

- Encourage parents to talk with their children about their interests and career plans.
- Encourage parents to express high expectations for their children's academic performance and postsecondary plans.
- Connect families with resources to promote general health and well-being for the entire family and to remove barriers to student success.
- Highlight the importance of parental support for student involvement in career readiness initiatives (e.g., career and technical education courses, internships, field trips, student clubs, etc.)



Communicating: *Develop tools and mechanisms to facilitate home-to-school and school-to-home communication regarding career readiness initiatives at school and student progress towards career readiness goals.*

- Collect multiple forms of contact information from parents (e.g., phone number, e-mail addresses, social media usernames, etc.) to aid in communication efforts with families.
- Use newsletters, social media and the school website to provide updated information on school programs, announcements and success stories
- Schedule frequent, positive correspondences with families to share information about career readiness initiatives.
- Host family orientation programs to establish shared expectations and understanding of career readiness programs at your school.
- Establish various channels to collect feedback from parents (e.g. emails, web inquiries, text messages, phone calls, surveys, etc.) on school programs



Volunteering: *Enlist parents to provide assistance and support for career readiness efforts at your school.*

- Enlist parents to serve as ambassadors for the school's CPPS program at recruitment events (e.g., Schools Expo, Open House).
- Invite parents to serve as chaperones for career-related field trips. Use parent voices in marketing materials for your school's career readiness efforts.
- Recruit parents to serve as mock interviewers, career speakers, and other roles at career exposure and readiness events.

Learning at Home: *Provide families with tools, resources and ideas to support children's development of goals, skills and strategies related to their long-term success.*

- Provide families with information on career-related volunteer opportunities for their children.
- Share information with families on career pathways related to the CPPS program offerings at your school.
- Host family information and education sessions about regional career pathways and opportunities aligned with your school's CPPS program.
- Establish a family information center at your school where families can acquire information on careers, postsecondary education options and resources to enhance students' college and career readiness.
- Share ideas for home-based activities families can implement with their children to strengthen students' soft skills.



Decision-Making: *Establish mechanisms to include families in decision-making processes at your school regarding career and technical education and career readiness efforts at your school.*

- Connect parents to leadership and advocacy training to build their capacity as parent leaders.
- Create parent leader councils (e.g., PTO/PTA) that help make decisions about school programs.
- Include parents in strategic planning sessions for the CPPS at your school.
- Use surveys, focus groups, and school meetings to solicit feedback from families on major decisions regarding your school's career readiness program.

Collaborating with Community: **Identify and connect the school and its families to community resources and organizations that help support school programs (e.g., career readiness programs) and overall well-being of students and their families.**

- Identify community partners that can serve as CPPS champions for your school.
- Establish partnerships with service providers (e.g., youth development programs) that support the school's broader career readiness goals.
- Develop a community resource guide that highlights agencies, organizations and resource to support families' health and well-being.
- Partner with community organizations that can provide adult basic education and workforce programs to families at your school (e.g., Urban League of Louisiana).
- Expand partnerships with local professionals and businesses to lead career exposure activities for your school.





Strategies for Family Engagement

Here's a list of strategies schools can enact in order to remove these barriers to family engagement:

- **Address transportation challenges for parents.** Consider implementing car pooling program to encourage family engagement, provide public transportation vouchers, or utilize ride share programs to get families to schools for important events or meetings.
- **Provide childcare and food at important school functions to encourage family involvement.** These resources can make it more feasible for families to attend events, particularly on weekends and evenings. Often turnout is higher at events where these resources are available, and families are able to redirect energy they spend on planning for childcare and meals to school activities or events.
- **Provide ample notice to families about upcoming events in which you expect their participation.** A school calendar of events should be released at the start of each semester with important dates and should be disseminated through a variety of channels (e.g., mass text messages, website, newsletter, mailers, via student).
- **Open numerous communication channels to engage with families.** Families are using a variety of tools to communicate these days, so the possibilities are endless. Use social media, email, web announcements, newsletters, emails, text messages, mailers, etc. to communicate with families. Home visits or meet-ups are another strategy to engage families on important issues. Families can also be transient and phone numbers and addresses change frequently. Make sure to get information for family members that are most stable in the event a change occurs (e.g., grandparents). Introduce families to options like Google Voice numbers to provide them with an alternative to pay-based phone options.



- **Ask families how they want to be engaged at your school and satisfaction with your current family engagement efforts.** (See Parent Surveys) Include short surveys with any important paperwork completed by parents during orientation, field trip permission slips, and other paperwork that has a higher rate of return from parents. Take advantage of events that have high attendance to survey parents. Invite a handful of parents to participate in focus groups to get their perspectives on how to design family engagement efforts. Keep surveys short and focus groups to 90 minutes or less. Incentivize participation in all these information gathering activities (e.g., gift cards or school-based rewards).
- **Establish “office hours” for meetings with families.** Schedule family/parent meetings during established office hours that school staff can honor with minimal chance of interruption. This will create an expectation and understanding between school staff and families about your availability and establishes a reliable window of time for when families and school staff can engage. In the event that families are not available during that time, work with them to determine how other communication channels can be used.
- **Establish a 24-hour follow-up policy for all school personnel.** Whenever families reach out to school staff regarding any matter, school staff should get back to them within 24 hours. This establishes a reasonable expectation for families and schools to manage their interactions.
- **Identify numerous volunteer opportunities for families that allows for engagement regardless of parents’ background.** Consider all the tasks that must be accomplished to execute work in a school and identify ways that families can help. This list should go beyond chaperoning trips and assisting in class. Families can help do outreach to other families, do prep work for bulletin boards or write thank you cards to school partners. Think of the myriad ways families can get involved and create pathways to do so. Also, remember to celebrate and acknowledge families’ contributions to further encourage engagement at your school. Work hard to send the message that families are welcome to your school and integral partners with schools in supporting student success.



Family Engagement Planning Template

(Adapted from Joyce Epstein’s Six Types of Parental Involvement) (Note: a printable PDF is located in the Appendix)

School: _____ District/CMO: _____ Date _____

Family Engagement Goal (overarching goal for activities/departments)

Engagement Activity Planning Chart

NOTE: Please develop 2-3 activities PER each type of parental engagement to add to your overall plan

Objectives:

Type I: Community Involvement

Activity Description	Responsible Partner (for completion)	Action Steps	Timeline	Success Measures	Resource Needs

Type 2: Communication

Objectives:

Activity Description	Responsible Partner (for completion)	Action Steps	Timeline	Success Measures	Resource Needs

Type 3: Decision Making

Objectives:

Activity Description	Responsible Partner (for completion)	Action Steps	Timeline	Success Measures	Resource Needs

Type 4: Learning at Home

Objectives:

Activity Description	Responsible Partner (for completion)	Action Steps	Timeline	Success Measures	Resource Needs

Type 5: Parenting

Objectives:

Activity Description	Responsible Partner (for completion)	Action Steps	Timeline	Success Measures	Resource Needs

Type 6: Volunteering

Objectives:

Activity Description	Responsible Partner (for completion)	Action Steps	Timeline	Success Measures	Resource Needs

Communications and Messaging



Introduction

Communicating with families and community partners about your new career and technical education initiative is important to generating support from these key stakeholders. This section provides tools to help schools communicate their work more effectively and to help schools get feedback from families and community partners on their perspectives on career and technical education. First, the toolkit offers a focus group protocol that schools can use to engage families in dialogues about their views on career and technical education. A survey instrument adapted from “Examining the Perceptions of Career and Technical Education (CPPS) in Nebraska” survey by the Nebraska Department of Education, is included in this section for schools interested in launching a larger scale effort to learn about families and partners’ perceptions of career and technical education. Talking points on YouthForce NOLA and CPPS are also included, as well as an elevator pitch activity to help schools key personnel associated with this work to create concise and effective messages for a variety of audiences you want to support your career and technical education work.



Family Focus Group Protocol

[Click here to view survey](#)



Parent Survey on Perspectives of CTE

(Adapted from the Career and Technical Education Public Perceptions Survey, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, 2010)

[Click here to view survey](#)



YFN Perceptions of CTE Survey

Perceptions of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

* 1. Career and technical education (CTE) courses are easy.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

* 2. CTE classes teach students the basic skill necessary for employment.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Talking Points

Workforce Opportunities in the Region

- New Orleans is experiencing rapid job growth in the region with more than 70,000 jobs being added to the labor market over the next ten years.
- Many of those jobs are high paying, “middle skilled careers” (i.e., require education/training beyond the high school diploma but less than a four year degree) in the skilled crafts, bio and health sciences and digital media and technology.
- Jobs in these industries have starting salaries ranging from \$32,000/yr to \$55,000/yr.
- Our children deserve more educational options that will prepare them to compete for jobs of the future.



Talking Points

Value of Career Pathways Programs of Study (CPPS)

- Students deserve CPPS opportunities that will expand their options rather than limit them.
- Without quality career and technical education, high paying workforce opportunities will remain inaccessible to many young people in our public schools.
- Expanded career and technical education will prepare our students with industry based credentials that will allow them to compete for regional jobs in the following fields:
 - ▷ Skilled Crafts:
 - Carpentry
 - Welding
 - Engineering
 - Electrical
 - ▷ Bio and Health Sciences
 - ▷ Digital Media & Technology [Include the pathways that will be offered at your school]
- Students can seek credentials in these career pathways that will help them compete for high paying jobs right after graduation and prepare them with skills to succeed in college (e.g., soft skills).
- Our students must learn about the variety of job opportunities in each career pathway, and the steps required to move up the career ladder.
- According to a study published by the Fordham Institute (Dougherty, 2016), students exposed to Career and Technical Education programs have higher graduation rates, higher college-going rates, earn higher wages and are more likely to be employed.



Talking Points

YouthForce NOLA – Preparing Our Children for the Future

- Schools, city government, community groups, businesses, and philanthropies came together to expand opportunities for New Orleans Public School students to provide them with “real-world skills for real-life success.”
- Our goals are to:
 - ▷ Increase the number of students from New Orleans public schools graduating with industry based credentials,
 - ▷ Help students acquire the soft skills necessary to compete for and succeed in college and careers,
 - ▷ Create opportunities for students to gain high quality internship experiences in high paying, fast-growing industries in the region.
- Twenty-one New Orleans public schools are currently participating in the YouthForce NOLA initiative. These schools offer their students:
 - ▷ Access to paid internships in the fastest growing industries in the region that give them a leg up when competing for jobs after high school
 - ▷ Expanded coursework options in the skilled crafts, bio and health sciences and digital media and technology leading to industry based credentials necessary to compete for high paying jobs in these industries
 - ▷ Soft skills development to strengthen student success in career and college
- Participating Youthforce NOLA schools provide students with the opportunity to gain college credits and/or certifications while still enrolled in high school.
- This year, almost 200 students from YouthForce NOLA participating schools will complete paid internship opportunities.





Talking Points

Why YouthForce is Valuable for Schools

- YouthForce NOLA schools offer students an advantage by preparing them with training, credentials and work experience for success in careers and in college.
- YouthForce NOLA schools prepare students to get credentials to help them compete for jobs in the fastest growing, high paying jobs in the region.
- Schools participating in YouthForce NOLA provide their students with access to paid internships in businesses in the region's fastest growing industries.
- Schools participating in YouthForce NOLA can offer students career exposure, an understanding of the career ladder in the three fastest growing industries in the region, and the skills, training and experiences needed to grow in their careers.

What YouthForce NOLA is Not

- Participating YouthForce NOLA schools DO NOT prevent students from attending college, they offer students expanded opportunities and a leg up in whatever pathway they choose.
 - ▷ Students who have completed industry recognized credentials have gone on to work in jobs paying a livable wage, and have gone on to college to pursue higher degrees of education. There's no limit to what our students can do!
- We DO NOT “track” students. Our priority pathways are high quality, rigorous, and open to all students that have an interest.
- We DO NOT exclude students with special needs (or any other type of student). There is something for everyone at YouthForce NOLA's participating schools.



Elevator Pitch Activity

Directions: Use this activity to help your staff develop messaging for families, students and community partners regarding your school's CPPS program.

The Elevator Speech

- Is a concise explanation of an organization/program's mission and vision
- Provides a snapshot of the organization/program's work
- Conveys importance of the organization/program's work to stakeholders
- Explains what makes the organization/program stand apart from others
- Sets up "The ask" (Should compel your stakeholders to act on behalf of your organization).

Start with "Why"

- What's the purpose of the organization/program?
- What's the core value?
- What are the organization/program's core beliefs?
- (Broad)

Issue/Problem

- How is this core belief being compromised?
- What's the problem?
- Why does your organization need to exist?
- (Specific)

Organization as the Problem Solver

- Describe the organization/program's body of work
- How does the organization/program solve the problem?
- What specific strategies are used? Highlight key initiatives
- (More specific)

Elevator Pitch Activity

“The Ask”

- What does the organization/program need from the stakeholder?
- How will the stakeholder’s support help the organization/program solve the problem?
- Think about the connection between the stakeholder and the problem being addressed
- Include “what’s in it” for the stakeholder

Activity Overview

- Create an overview for your organization/program
- No more than 30 seconds; No more than 80-90 words; No more than 8-10 sentences
- Identify your audience
- Make sure to include the steps for follow-up (I’d like to send you more information on our organization/program. What’s the best way to follow-up with you?)
- Use your own words

Example

“YouthForce NOLA is committed to preparing youth for careers of the future. There will be 70,000 available jobs in the region and the local workforce currently lacks the skills to fill them. We believe that all children deserve to get the skills, knowledge and experiences needed to be successful. YouthForce NOLA provides youth with career and technical education leading to certifications, internships, and soft skills that prepare them for high paying jobs and lifelong success. Please support us by encouraging your children to participate.”

There are many variations of an elevator pitch. Be sure to consider your audience and be clear about your goals for the outcomes of the pitch. Practice your pitch with people who are friendly to the message and also prepare for the dissenter. This is an important step in helping everyone on your team better understand the work your school is doing in CPPS and to help get buy-in from your most important stakeholders. Good luck!

Appendix

- [Family Engagement Checklist](#)
- [Family Engagement Planning Template](#)
- [Family Engagement Satisfaction Survey](#)
- [Family Focus Group Protocol](#)
- [Parent Perspectives on CTE Survey](#)

Acknowledgments

YouthForce NOLA Partner Steering Committee member organizations:

Baptist Community Ministries
City of New Orleans
Greater New Orleans, Inc.
JPMorgan Chase
Juma Ventures
Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans
New Orleans Career Center
New Schools for New Orleans
Orleans Parish School Board
Recovery School District
United Way of Southeast Louisiana
Urban League of Louisiana

Family Engagement Subcommittee

Rashida Govan, Chair, Urban League of Louisiana
Jason DeGruy, City of New Orleans
Todd Battiste, United Way of Southeast Louisiana
Erika Wright, JPMorgan Chase
Katie Moore, Orleans Parish School Board
Charmel Gaulden, Baptist Community Ministries
Torrey Fingal, Juma Ventures
Claire Jecklin, New Orleans Career Center
Carlin Jacobs, YouthForce NOLA
Cate Swinburn, YouthForce NOLA

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