



# Pathways to Postsecondary Education: Engaging Families of Students in Grades 6-8

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# Executive Summary

**Are you thinking about the ways you might connect with parents to support student success?** In this handout, we will explain what parent engagement is and why it's important, and we'll outline the steps you can take to develop and evaluate your own parent engagement programs!

## What is parent engagement and why is it important?

Parent engagement is important! The research tells us that when parents get involved in their children's learning at any age, it improves students' academic performance, high school completion, and participation and retention in postsecondary studies (Hamilton Community Foundation, 2015).

There are many ways we can support parents with the educational development of their school-aged children. A variety of terms are used to refer to these supportive activities and strategies, such as **parent involvement** and **parent engagement**.

<b>Parent Involvement</b>	Gathering parent support for the agendas and goals <u>developed by others</u> that will impact their children's lives (e.g. goals developed by school boards).
<b>Parent Engagement</b>	Parents actively <u>participating in developing</u> agendas and goals for teaching and learning that will impact their children (Hands, 2013).

In this report, we use these terms interchangeably, to recognize the many ways that parents are involved and engaged in their children's lives and the beneficial impacts of all forms of participation.

## What does parent engagement look like?

Parent engagement can take many different forms! The goal is to find something that works for your organization, community, parent group, and students.

<b>Parent Education</b>	<p>The phrase "knowledge is power" gets right to the heart of this concept. <b>Parent education</b> involves familiarizing parents with the pathways to postsecondary education, including information about opportunities, supports, and financial planning. This knowledge helps parents make the best decisions about the future with their children.</p> <p>Parent education can take several forms, such as:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “College nights”: Info sessions that provide a forum for parents to talk with and learn from college or university representatives (Wimberly &amp; Noeth, 2004).</li> <li>• Exposing parents and children to a wide array of vocational pathways, including those typically associated with a different gender (e.g. encouraging girls to pursue science and technology programs and careers) (Jason, Boden, Keane, Moreton &amp; Schluz, 2016).</li> <li>• One-on-one discussions between parents and staff to explore family-specific paths to postsecondary education (Wimberly &amp; Noeth, 2004).</li> </ul>
<b>Parent Involvement at Home</b>	<p>It’s important that parents communicate the value of education to their children and their expectations for their children’s participation in education. (Hill &amp; Tyson, 2009). <b>Parent involvement in the home</b> refers to these family-focused education-related activities and discussions, as well as parents guiding their children in developing career aspirations and setting specific career goals.</p> <p>Some strategies for parent engagement in the home include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online modules, toolkits, and handbooks to facilitate family discussion about classroom activities (Council of Ontario Directors of Education, 2012; Epstein, 1992; Kids2College, 2016).</li> <li>• Parents exposing their children to science activities (e.g. visiting outdoor nature areas, attending activities at the library, or going on a trip to a museum/zoo) (Stone, 2014).</li> </ul>
<b>Parent Engagement at School</b>	<p>There are numerous ways parents can get involved in their children’s school, from attending school events to offering feedback on school programs. Increased parent involvement at school can lead to enhanced parent support of children's learning at home (Harris &amp; Goodall, 2008).</p> <p>Some parent engagement activities at school may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents starting and facilitating Code Clubs at their children’s school to encourage computer-related careers (UK Code Clubs, 2016).</li> <li>• Encouraging parents to accompany their children’s class on a field trip.</li> <li>• Offering alternative engagement activities for parents with busy schedules, such as donation requests for a school charity or letter-writing to support community resources (Nanavati &amp; Doane, 2013).</li> </ul>

## How do I get started?

There are many things you can do to develop and support effective parent engagement strategies!

### Step 1: Identify Community Needs and Interests

There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to school-family relationships (Chabot, 2005). Parents have different perspectives about the purpose of parent engagement and what it might look like. Programs intended to increase access to postsecondary education are more effective and sustainable when they are generated out of, and adapted to, the specific needs, strengths, and interests of a community (Deller & Tomas, 2013).

#### Questions to Consider

- How are your parents already involved in their children’s education? *Cast a wide net here that respects how parents understand their own current involvement.*
- How do parents want to be involved in their children’s education and career planning?
- What barriers get in the way of parent involvement and how might they be reduced? *Identify broader societal barriers (e.g. barriers created in the school system). Resist locating barriers in individual parents (e.g. income, language).*
- Do parents want support with anything? How do they want access to this support? What role can my organization play in offering this support?
- What parent engagement initiatives have occurred in the past with regards to this community? What worked well? What didn’t work? *Ask your community partners!*

### Step 2: Determine Your Role/Scope/Goal and Seek Alignment

It is important to find alignment between what parents value, what teachers/staff/agencies/funders value, and what parents and organizations are able to provide (Frank, 2010). An organization’s mandate, scope, and infrastructure and a community’s self-identified goals must be taken into consideration.

#### Questions to Consider

- What forms of parent engagement does your organization/funder want?
- What is your organization able to offer parents? What resources are available?
- How does your organization’s goals/resources mesh with parents’ self-identified hopes and needs?

### Step 3: Plan a Varied Engagement Strategy

Based on the information you’ve gathered in Steps 1 and 2, and the alignment of parent and organization goals, it’s now time to plan your engagement strategy! To make relationships

between parents and schools/community partners more accessible and inclusive, it is best to use diverse engagement and participation methods.

#### **Questions to Consider**

- If I am sharing information with parents, have I developed a message that is inclusive and relevant to my audience? Have I planned several ways for this to be communicated (e.g. individually, in groups, online, sent home with students)?
- If I am hosting an event, have I planned for different parent and family needs so that visitors are able to attend and feel welcome and comfortable (e.g. transportation, food, parking, child care, interpreters, accessibility)? Is there an alternative for those unable to attend?
- If I am ..., have I ...

### **Step 4: Build Capacity and Resources**

As you're developing your parent engagement activities, it's important to remember that you're not just meeting the needs of your specific parent population. You're also contributing to the collective infrastructure of post-secondary and career planning across Hamilton! It's important to consider how you might exchange and share resources with other organizations and participate in building our city-wide capacity to support parents, families, and students.

#### **Questions to Consider**

- Are you connected with other community organizations that have the same values around parent engagement as your organization? Are there resources/information that can be shared between organizations?
- What infrastructure might you build around parent engagement in your organization or between organizations (e.g. dedicated parent engagement staff or committees, parent councils, communication technology, grants, evaluation tools)?

### **Step 5: Celebrate, Evaluate, and Share Success!**

**Celebrate:** When you launch a parent engagement program, take time to celebrate with parents and students! Recognize and value the many ways families, communities, schools, and organizations work to support our children and youth.

**Evaluate:** It's critical to evaluate your parent engagement activities to determine their effectiveness. This will help you adapt and enhance your strategies in the future. There are

many ways this evaluation can happen. We encourage you to explore measures and methods that will work well for your parent population, staff, and activities.

**Share:** Sharing information about parent engagement activities will help build connections between organizations in Hamilton. We have much to learn from each other!

**Questions to Consider**

- How will you know that your program has worked? How would parents and community members define “success”?
- What did the parents think of the program? What about the students? Teachers? Etc.
- What are the strengths and limitations of your parent engagement approach? What can be improved?
- How will you let other organizations know what you did and how it went?

I want to learn more! Where can I go for further information?

Keep reading! The rest of this report offers examples of successful parent engagement initiatives that have been developed in other places.

We hope that knowing what’s out there will help us imagine and initiative new strategies and activities for our parents and families in Hamilton!

**Good luck! Thank you for your contributions to student success.**

# Introduction

**Overview:** This report has been prepared by Research Associates from the McMaster Research Shop at the request of the Industry Education Council (IEC). It is intended to review best practices for engaging parents of children in Grades 6-8 in conversations about pathways to postsecondary and career opportunities for their kids.

There is clear and abundant evidence that the engagement of parents in the educational lives of their children from early childhood to secondary school is important and effective; it improves academic success, high school completion, and postsecondary attendance and retention (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, & Sandler, 2005; Leonard, 2013; Stepaniak, 2015; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

**Scope:** This report draws on academic and grey literature about parent engagement from largely Canadian and American contexts to offer suggestions for how Hamilton groups may want to proceed with parent engagement. While broadly focusing on engaging parents of middle school kids, this report also draws some attention to pathways into the Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) sector and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields more broadly. It emphasizes the engagement of parents who have had little to no access to postsecondary education themselves, including low-income, Indigenous, and racially diverse families, and those that schools struggle to reach.

**Terms:** In this report, we will use the phrases parent “involvement” and “engagement” interchangeably to refer to strategies that schools and community groups might use for encouraging and supporting parents in the education and career planning of their children.

**Roles:** There are roles for all stakeholders (e.g. funders, school boards, postsecondary institutions, teachers, community organizations) in enhancing parent resources and information. We encourage our readers to pay specific attention to the best practices below that are most congruent with your mandate, feasible with your infrastructure, and attentive to your local community’s needs.

**Organization:** The report is organized in the following way:

- **Background**: This section outlines 7 approaches to parent engagement and several considerations for engaging parents of middle school kids.
- **Methodology and Limitations**: This section maps some parameters for better understanding the meaningfulness and thoroughness of the material gathered here.
- **Best Practices**: This section outlines 9 key considerations as organizations move forward with parent engagement plans.



- **Interventions, Infrastructure, and Interpretations:** This section illustrates an array of middle school parent engagement strategies. These have been divided into the following sub-categories:
  - **Parent Education:** Informing parents about postsecondary pathways and supporting them in early planning for their children
  - **Parent Involvement at Home:** Nurturing ‘academic socialization’ by encouraging parent involvement and commitments to education at home
  - **Parent Engagement at School:** Facilitating the attendance and participation of parents in school-based activities
  - **Building Resources and Infrastructure for Parent Engagement:** Infrastructural support that can help inspire and sustain parent engagement activities
  - **Confronting Assumptions about Parent Engagement:** Ensuring our approaches to parent engagement are culturally appropriate, respectful, and free from prejudice

**Focus Group Inclusion:** To confirm the relevance of the academic and grey literature to Hamilton, the Industry Education Council hosted a focus group in September 2016. Insights from this gathering are embedded within the report below in purple boxes like this. A full record of focus group findings is also available in **Appendix C: Focus Group and Survey Summary**.

## Background

### What is parent engagement?

The examined literature uses a variety of terms to refer to activities and strategies that target the parents, guardians, and family members of children and youth attending school. Some scholars differentiate “parent involvement” from “parent engagement” as follows:

<b>Parent Involvement</b>	Gathering parent support for the agendas and goals developed by others (e.g. school boards)
<b>Parent Engagement</b>	Parents actively participating in developing agendas and goals for teaching and learning (Hands, 2013)

Epstein (1995) describes parent participation as broadly fitting into 6 different categories that range from “informing” parents of relevant school activities to “involving” them in the school and “engaging” them in decision-making. These are described below.

<b>Parenting</b>	Help all families establish home environments that support children as students
<b>Learning at Home</b>	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning
<b>Communicating</b>	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school-related events
<b>Volunteering</b>	Encourage parents to volunteer in their children’s school; recruit and organize parent help and support
<b>Decision Making</b>	Involve parents in school decisions; develop parent leaders and representatives (e.g. parent organizations, councils, committees)
<b>Collaborating with the Community</b>	Offer community resources and services to assist school programs, family practices, and student learning and development

According to Hill and Tyson (2009), “**academic socialization**” is another significant form of parent engagement that, in their meta-analysis of middle school parent involvement literature, demonstrated the strongest impact on achievement among middle school children. This form of parental involvement is also most directly linked to postsecondary and career planning.

<b>Academic Socialization</b>	Parents communicating the value and usefulness of education to their children, nurturing educational and career aspirations, discussing learning strategies, linking school to current events, and developing plans for their children’s future
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## Why engage parents of middle school kids?

While parent involvement in their children’s education at any age is positively correlated with academic performance and postsecondary attendance, involvement at an early age is encouraged (Hamilton Community Foundation, 2015). This is because adolescent middle school children continue to be impressionable and receptive to learning scientific content (Solar Dynamics Observatory, n.d.; Trundle, 2009), and are often still willing to participate in activities with their parents (Solar Dynamics Observatory, n.d.). Moreover, the Hamilton Community Foundation (2015) has focused on the middle school years because postsecondary education

requires significant academic and financial planning that is most successful when initiated long before youth enter high school.

## Methodology and Limitations

### Methodology

To locate peer-reviewed literature, we relied heavily on Google Scholar, Web of Science, and JSTOR research databases and used specific search keywords such as ‘parent involvement’, ‘parent engagement’, ‘STEM’, ‘science’, and/or ‘education’ (see Appendix A for a more comprehensive list of search terms). We focused on articles published in the last 10 years that were about middle school students in North America.

We also searched for federal and provincial grey literature (reports, policies) and relevant program websites using Google and JSTOR. For example, we extracted information (e.g. annual reports, program descriptions, newsletters, etc.) from the Government of Ontario website, as well as websites of education-based programs.

Our goal was to gather a broad selection of materials in order to illustrate the varied ways Hamilton-based groups can approach parent engagement.

### Limitations

**Broadening our search:** It was challenging to find specific resources about engaging parents of middle school students in Ontario, engaging parents with regards to ICT education and career pathways, or engaging parents in ways proven to impact postsecondary outcomes. We suspect that there are few longitudinal studies that follow middle school children until the start or completion of their postsecondary education. In response to these challenges, we broadened our focus to include the outcomes of enhanced middle school academic performance and high school completion which correlate with postsecondary participation. We also looked for general models that could apply to ICT and STEM pathways and the middle school context in Ontario.

**Generalizing across groups:** Hamilton has recently become home to many newcomer families, including Syrian refugees. While we have searched for North American literature about engaging parents who are recent immigrants, refugees, and non-native English speakers, these sources may not directly translate to the Hamilton context. Several more specific reports could be written about parent engagement with a particular demographic of parents (e.g. families living in poverty) or parents of a particular demographic of students (e.g. students with disabilities). In this report, we are only able to offer a broad and general array of examples focused on engaging disadvantaged parents of middle school children rather than a comprehensive list of practices for specific demographics.

**Descriptive, not prescriptive:** While we located dozens of parent engagement models, we found few sources that actively evaluated and compared strategies to each other to determine which

were more effective. As a result, this report does not aim to suggest that some practices are better or more effective than others. Each of the practices we list has been used successfully in some context and may be adaptable to a specific community within Hamilton. We offer them to map the range of parent engagement possibilities rather than provide a prescriptive list of required activities. Our general impression from the literature is that there is a need to more fully document and evaluate parent engagement strategies.

## Best Practices

When moving forward with parent engagement strategies, we recommend keeping the following considerations in mind:

1. **Be Attuned to Family and Community Contexts and Needs:** There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to school-family relationships (Chabot, 2005). Instead, these need to develop out of a family’s needs, strengths, and interests. Programs intended to increase access to postsecondary education tend to be the most effective and sustainable when they are generated out of, and adapted to, the specific needs of a community (Deller & Tomas, 2013).

Our focus group participants also emphasized the importance of ‘getting to know your community’. Organizations need to understand each community and school they work with and un/successful engagement practices used in the past, and then develop strategies to meet specific needs and priorities.

2. **Gather Parent Feedback:** At our focus group, community partners were interested in hearing directly from parents about what their needs are, which kinds of support they would like from schools and communities, and barriers parents may face to involvement. Moving forward, it will be important to seek local parent input when developing and enhancing parent engagement approaches.
3. **Seek Alignment Between Stakeholder Values and Resources:** It is important to find alignment between what parents value, what teachers/staff/agencies/funders value, and what parents and organizations are able to provide (Frank, 2010). An organization’s mandate, scope, and infrastructure and a community’s self-identified goals must be taken into consideration.

For instance, if parents are wanting to be actively involved in school decision-making, but administrators only want to inform parents or get them to volunteer, there will be a misalignment that can significantly impact outcomes. Similarly, if a school wants parents to attend an open house, but hosts this open house at a time when parents are working, then parents will not be able to engage in the ways desired by the school.

4. **Recognize Diverse Perspectives and Involvement:** Parents, guardians, families, teachers, and students have different perspectives about the purpose of parent engagement despite all of them often agreeing that it is a “good thing” (Harris & Goodall, 2008). These perspectives and the different ways that parents are involved in the education of their children need to be acknowledged and respected.
5. **Identify and Address How Schools Get in the Way:** School practices can play a more significant role in cultivating parental involvement than the educational background, family size, or socioeconomic status of the parents (Chabot, 2005). It’s important to examine the barriers erected by schools and community organizations that limit parent involvement rather than identifying the barriers as within the parents.
6. **Use Multiple Engagement Methods:** To make relationships between parents and schools/community partners more accessible and inclusive, we recommend using diverse engagement and participation methods such as the range of activities identified by Epstein (1995). Organizations are positioned differently and thus able to successfully offer different forms of connection.
7. **Evaluate Your Work:** There’s a real need to evaluate parent engagement programs to determine their effectiveness, strengths, and limitations, and so that they can be constantly improved. There are many ways this evaluation can happen. We’d encourage organizations to explore evaluation formats that will work well for your parent population, staff, and activities.
8. **Share Your Work:** In their promotional materials, many programs targeted at children mention involving parents, but they routinely fail to describe in detail what they have done in this regard. Keeping and sharing information about parent engagement activities will help build connections between organizations in Hamilton. We have much to learn from each other!
9. **Build Resources and Capacity:** To be successful, parent engagement activities require resources. We encourage Hamilton organization to work together to further develop infrastructure that will enhance and support parent engagement activities. This might involve: funding sources, parent councils, dedicated staff, technologies, evaluation measures, etc.

## Interventions, Infrastructure, and Interpretations

Below we offer examples from a range of parent engagement approaches, including: (1) parent education, (2) parent involvement at home, and (3) parent engagement at school. We also identify resources and infrastructure that can help support parent engagement and list several strategies for confronting assumptions about parent engagement.

## Parent Education

While almost all parents hope that their children will be able to attend postsecondary education, many parents do not have the necessary information to help their children make the important early choices (e.g. academic planning, college financing) that will allow them to pursue their postsecondary dreams (Cunningham, Erisman, & Looney, 2007).

Parents can be informed through tool kits, online resources, information sent home with their children, workshops, events, and other activities. As group events are not always accessible or comfortable for parents, opportunities for individual consultations are also important.

### Addressing Parental Preconceptions about Girls and Computing

In the adolescent years, the participation of girls in computing dramatically declines. This report makes several recommendations for encouraging girls to participate in computing from Kindergarten to grade 12. One key recommendation is to address parental preconceptions by informing parents about opportunities for women in computing careers. This could happen through workshops or articles in parent magazines and school newsletters that feature female university students and young professionals in computing positions.

Jason, Z., Boden, M., Keane, T., Moreton, B. & Schluz, K. (2016). Girls and computing: Female participation in computer in schools. *Digital Careers*. Retrieved from <http://digitalcareers.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Female-Participation.pdf>

### Parent-Focused College Planning Strategies

This report describes successful college planning strategies used at two high schools in the United States. These include:

- Providing handbooks to parents that detail the process of postsecondary planning
- Holding a “college night” info session and inviting representatives from institutions to talk about their schools
- Highlighting the scholarship potential of enrolling children in college prep programs
- Hosting “parent nights” where parents who have already been through the application process talk about their experiences and offer tips
- In situations where personal or economic circumstances pose additional challenges, counselors meet one-on-one with parents to help them navigate these barriers.

Wimberly, G. L. & Noeth, R. J. (2004). Schools involving parents in early postsecondary planning: ACT policy report. Retrieved from [http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/involve\\_parents.pdf](http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/involve_parents.pdf)

### Family Workshops, Open Houses, and Individual Meetings

The College Crusade program of Rhode Island facilitates family workshops in both English and Spanish that cover a variety of topics: middle to high school transition, planning for college life, financial literacy, and financing higher education. At the end of every workshop session, parents fill out a survey on the usefulness of the information offered. This feedback helps to ensure future workshops meet the identified needs of parents. In addition, new Crusade families are invited to an annual open house that introduces them the program. They can also set an individual meeting with a Family Engagement staff in order to learn about different programs and services suitable for them.

The College Crusade of Rhode Island. (2016). *Family engagement: A welcome to family engagement*. Retrieved from <https://thecollegecrusade.org/tccri/family-engagement/>

## Parent Involvement at Home

A lot of parent involvement happens in the home in ways that can often go unnoticed and undervalued. Despite this lack of attention, “at home” engagement has the most significant positive influence on a child’s aspirations and educational achievement (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2008). This is because the home environment can foster academic socialization, where parents communicate their value of and expectations for education (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Research confirms that students will be much more likely to pursue education and careers in STEM fields if their parents talk to them about career goals early on and the importance of taking science courses (Let’s Talk Science, 2015). Parent involvement at home may also be more accessible, private, and culturally relevant to marginalized families.

### Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Interactive Homework

TIPS is a program that promotes teacher-parent partnerships, specifically in language arts, science, and health for middle school students. The goal of the program is to help families stay informed and involved in their children's learning activities at home. In a study of more than 12,000 students, over 85% of parents reported that teachers had the same goals for their child to succeed and that TIPS helped to build on these common goals.

TIPS features homework assignments that require students to talk to someone at home about something interesting that they are learning in class. The teacher includes a note with directions and objectives for the parent and makes sure that the activities don’t require subject-matter familiarity. There is also a section at the end of the assignment for parents to write comments for the teacher. For example: One science assignment asks the child to choose a family member with whom to discuss the following question: “What happens when oil is mixed with water?”

Epstein, J. L. (1992). *TIPS, teachers involve parents in schoolwork: Manual for teachers: Language arts and science/health interactive homework in the middle grades*. Baltimore, MD:

Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Johns Hopkins University.  
Retrieved from [https://archive.org/stream/ERIC\\_ED355032?ui=embed#page/n4/mode/1up](https://archive.org/stream/ERIC_ED355032?ui=embed#page/n4/mode/1up)

### **Tool Kit: A Parents' Guide to Careers in STEM**

This report aims to dispel parental misconceptions of STEM disciplines (including: low salary expectations, a high level of difficulty and sense of irrelevance), promote the increasing importance of STEM to the future economy, and highlight the many joys and benefits of careers in STEM. It offers many examples of how parents can support their children in cultivating an interest in science and STEM pathways. For instance: Parents can bring science into everyday conversations with their kids; expose their kids to exciting science activities by taking them to museums, science centres and zoos (see Appendix B: Scientific Excursions in Hamilton for a list of free, low-cost, and local places to explore); keep up with what their children are doing at school; and stay in touch with their children's teachers. The report provides numerous resources including several online tools, games, and other activities to inspire both parents and children.

Stone, M. (2014). *A parents' guide to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics*. EuropeanSchoolnet. Retrieved from [http://www.ingenious-science.eu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=ff04ce70-ec5f-48c6-9b66-960ef9b3bba0&groupId=10136](http://www.ingenious-science.eu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=ff04ce70-ec5f-48c6-9b66-960ef9b3bba0&groupId=10136)

### **Parent Tool Kits Developed by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education**

This website hosts a variety of downloadable tool kits for parents on topics like engaging their children in math and discussing healthy relationships. The goal is to provide parents with research-based information that will help them support their children's learning and growth at home. There are specific modules for middle school children.

Council of Ontario Directors of Education. (2012). *Parent engagement is important to student success*. Retrieved from [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html)

### **Family Communication about Postsecondary Options: Kids2College Program**

This program is designed to raise awareness about the importance of postsecondary education among low-income middle school students (especially racialized and first generation students) by connecting them with staff and students from local colleges and universities. Over the course of six weeks, program participants are given information on study skills, high school course choices, and preparation for college and careers.

Participants are provided a handbook that is used to facilitate the program and family discussion, and students are encouraged to talk to their parents about the material. The



program successfully links educational programming for kids to parenting and academic socialization at home. At the end of the program, students visit one of the partner colleges with their parents.

Kids2College: The Sallie Mae Fund. (2016). *About Kids2College*. Retrieved from <http://www.kids-2-college.org/howitworks.cfm>

## Parent Involvement at School

Parent involvement at school can take many forms and has been shown to be beneficial to children's educational achievements (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Some examples include: offering feedback on school programs (e.g. via questionnaires); suggesting topics for parent meetings; participating in school governance; or attending school events like fundraisers, field trips, or educational workshops.

During our focus group, community partners described several barriers that get in the way of establishing and maintaining relationships with parents. They also proposed a variety of strategies to mitigate these barriers.

Barrier	Strategies to Mitigate
Establishing trusting relationships between organizations and parents is difficult and takes time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on building a positive school climate/culture where there is trust between parents and the principal/administration.</li> <li>• Parent engagement should begin, if possible, as early as kindergarten so that trusting relationships between schools and parents can build over time.</li> <li>• Give parents specific feedback about their children. Tell parents about the skills and talents their children have and about postsecondary and career opportunities they may want to explore with their kids.</li> <li>• Encourage staff retention so that relationships with parents do not need to be recreated over and over with new staff.</li> </ul>
A lack of communication between middle school children and their parents results in children not telling their parents about school events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use technology, such as automated calls and teacher blogs to keep parents informed of school events, rather than relying on student-parent communication.</li> <li>• At the beginning of a program, directly invite parents to a culminating program event at the beginning of a program.</li> <li>• Encourage teachers to develop and maintain a relationship with parents to facilitate communication.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give parents and kids talking points to start a conversation about what their children are learning in school.</li> </ul>
Many children in grades 7 and 8 do not want their parents involved and are often embarrassed when parents attend school events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer novel and hands-on activities that will generate excitement.</li> <li>• Host a “showcase” night to celebrate project progression after a multi-week learning process. The hope is that children will be more inclined to share their excitement with their parents and want them to attend events. Include food and prizes.</li> </ul>
Good parent attendance at events is difficult. Children can be disappointed if other parents attend and not theirs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting events after school and/or after dinner is probably the best time.</li> <li>• Provide dinner, bus tickets, and childcare.</li> <li>• Thank parents for attending events.</li> </ul>

#### Involving Parents in Schools: Tips from the Council of Ontario Directors of Education

This report provides numerous tips for schools as they work to engage parents. These range from offering workshops, newsletters, guest speakers, student presentations, online resources, and community events, to gathering parent feedback through satisfaction surveys.

Council of Ontario Directors of Education. (2012). *Planning parent engagement: A guidebook for parents and schools*. Retrieved from [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent\\_Engagement/PA%20Downloads/34919\\_CODE\\_Guide\\_book-ENG\\_sm.pdf](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent_Engagement/PA%20Downloads/34919_CODE_Guide_book-ENG_sm.pdf)

#### Engaging Parents in a Brampton, Ontario School

Researchers affiliated with the Peel District School Board identified several effective parent engagement strategies that they used in a Brampton high school. These strategies bolstered both School Council participation and attendance at evening arts and culture events.

- **Parents engaging parents:** Parents already involved with the school acted as the point of contact for parents who might be interested in joining the school council; making phone calls or bringing friends along to council meetings adds a personal touch that parents respond to.
- **Relevant topics for parent meetings:** They surveyed parents to find out what was important and relevant to them and hosted parent meetings on these topics. In the

Brampton school, math and science presentations were always included early in the year because this is what their parents were interested in.

- **Varying time commitments:** Providing opportunities with varying levels of time commitment meant parents with tight schedules could still get involved: “Busy parents can make a donation to a school sponsored charity, write a letter of support when needed and act as helpful conduits of community resources that support students. Parents with a bit more time available can help with various special events, assist with committees, help with clubs and participate in a discussion forum” (p. 12).

Nanavati, M. & Doane, J. (2013). *Working from the outside in: Succeeding at parent engagement*. York Centre for Education and Community. Retrieved from <http://ycec.edu.yorku.ca/files/2012/11/Mary-Nanavati-OPCRegister-Parent-Involvement.pdf>

## Parent Volunteering in Schools

### Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ)

This is a pipeline program in Central Harlem focused on families living in poverty that begins when children are born and continues until students graduate from college. Parents can get involved by attending educational workshops designed to help them support their children and by volunteering at the school throughout the school year (e.g. attending field trips and special events, helping with fundraising). HCZ found that increases in parent involvement at school also tend to increase parental support of children's learning at home. In 2015, 13,812 parents were involved in the school and students had a 93% college acceptance rate.

### Code Clubs in the UK

The UK network of Code Clubs actively encourages parents from all walks of life, including those without a tech background, to volunteer with starting and running Code Clubs for their children. Volunteering is a way for parents to gain confidence with computers, develop coding skills, participate in their school community, and encourage pathways to computing professions for their children.

Harlem Children’s Zone: <http://hcz.org/our-programs/>

UK Code Clubs: <https://blog.codeclub.org.uk/2016/01/11/become-a-parent-volunteer/>

## Building Resources and Infrastructure for Parent Engagement

Successful parent engagement requires resources, tools, infrastructure, and staff. We’ve highlighted some illustrative examples below.

### Parent engagement funds

The Ontario Ministry of Education’s *Parents Reaching Out* grant program supports school-based initiatives focused on engaging parents who may

	<p>experience barriers due to language, recent immigration, poverty, lack of familiarity with Ontario's school system, and other factors.</p> <p>Ontario Ministry of Education. (2016). <i>Parents Reaching Out Grants</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/reaching.html</a></p>
<b>Parent engagement committees</b>	<p>Glogowski and Ferreira (2015) recommend establishing a parent engagement committee dedicated to scheduling and planning activities and events specifically for parents. These committees can work in two directions – reaching out to other parents as well as reaching in to support the school.</p> <p>Glogowski, K., &amp; Ferreira, M. (2015). <i>Parental engagement: Research evidence, practitioner knowledge, effective implementation</i>. Toronto: Pathways to Education Canada. Retrieved from <a href="http://blog.pathwaystoeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/Parental_Engagement_Nov2015_FINAL.pdf">http://blog.pathwaystoeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/Parental_Engagement_Nov2015_FINAL.pdf</a></p>
<b>Parent engagement staff</b>	<p>The College Crusade's Family Engagement Team assists parents as they support their children's academic decisions, career exploration, college preparation, and social development. Dedicated staff roles ensure that parents have access to good support.</p> <p>The College Crusade of Rhode Island. (2016). <i>Family engagement: A welcome to family engagement</i>. Retrieved from <a href="https://thecollegecrusade.org/tccri/family-engagement/">https://thecollegecrusade.org/tccri/family-engagement/</a></p>
<b>Parent engagement technologies</b>	<p><b>Scholar Success Program:</b> This program promotes postsecondary education among low-income students attending middle school and above. It involves an online portal called Scholar Track where parents can check their children's progress on specific activities that make them eligible for scholarships and encourage postsecondary planning.</p> <p><b>ParentSquare:</b> Project Appleseed, a national American campaign to promote parent involvement, offers an easy-to-use, accessible, and affordable software platform to improve communication between parents and school staff and help parents keep track of their children's education. ParentSquare allows parents to receive event reminders and notifications by email, text, or direct phone call. The software also provides metrics to track and quantify parent engagement rates at participating schools.</p> <p>Indiana Commission for Higher Education. (2015). <i>The Scholar Success Program at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars</i>. Indiana Commission for Higher</p>

	<p>Education. Retrieved from <a href="http://scholars.in.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/25th_Anniversary_Brochure_11-18-15_Final_pages.pdf">http://scholars.in.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/25th Anniversary Brochure 11-18-15 Final pages.pdf</a></p> <p>Project Appleseed. (2016). <i>Project Appleseed: The national campaign for public school improvement</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.projectappleseed.org/premium-toolbox">http://www.projectappleseed.org/premium-toolbox</a></p>
<b>Parent engagement research tools</b>	<p>Karacop, Akilli, &amp; Aksu (2015) assessed the effectiveness of the “Parent Involvement in Students’ Home Based Science Learning Activities Scale” for determining parent involvement in children’s science learning at home. Survey instruments such as this can be a helpful tool when trying to gather some information about the local climate of parent engagement and which strategies may work best.</p>
	<p>Karacop, A., Akilli, M., &amp; Aksu, F. F. (2015). The Parent Involvement in Students’ Home Based Science Learning Activities Scale (PI-SHBSscienceLAS): Validity and reliability studies. <i>International Journal of Educational Sciences</i>, 8 (1), 57-77. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.iojes.net/userfiles/Article/IOJES_1815.pdf">http://www.iojes.net/userfiles/Article/IOJES_1815.pdf</a></p>
<b>Community support for parent engagement</b>	<p>Community organizations can offer many programs that support parent engagement. As one example: In 2006, the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) arranged a “Family Science Night” (FSN) to promote fun and interactive STEM learning for middle school kids and their families. The FSN pilot proved extremely popular and was filled to capacity every month.</p>
	<p>Mitchell, S.E., Drobnes, E. Colina-Truljillo, S. M., &amp; Noel-Storr, J. (2008). NASA Family Science Night: Changing perceptions one family at a time. <i>Advances in Space Research</i>, 42(11), 1844-1847. Retrieved from <a href="http://nasamissionepometrics.org/fsn/">http://nasamissionepometrics.org/fsn/</a></p>

## Altering Assumptions About Parent Engagement

When approaching any parent engagement activity, it is important to reflect on what the strategy assumes about parents and what “engagement” should/does look like. Sometimes our approaches can emerge from pathologizing, inaccurate, or disrespectful biases that locate the problem of disengagement in the parent and in their socioeconomic or cultural context. We can fail to recognize the different ways family members are engaged in their children’s learning and contribute their knowledge and values to children’s education. We can ignore the ways our schools and communities get in the way of parent involvement. We can forget to consider what schools can do to reduce the barriers they erect (Chabot, 2005).

At our focus group, attendees resisted pathologizing parents. They refused to assume that a parent's lack of "visible" participation in their child's education or absence at school events necessarily means a lack of involvement. There are many invisible or hidden ways parents are doing their best for their kids and there are many reasons why "visible" participation is not possible or desired.

### Identifying and Challenging "Deficit-Based" Explanations

Researchers looked at 11 Ontario schools in areas affected by poverty to identify successful strategies for working with their students and families.

One key finding highlighted the importance of respectful engagement. A staff member of a school that served many First Nations students quite bluntly expressed the pitfalls of failing to check common negative assumptions about this marginalized group. The school's attempt to put on a "Literacy Night" for these parents was perceived as a critique of their parenting capabilities, and few showed up. When staff switched gears to put on a "School Showcase Night" that focused on students' talents, turnout was much greater.

Identifying "deficit-based explanations" (p. 30) for barriers faced by these communities and challenging them, was a central starting point for productive thinking and planning about parent engagement. Schools were thus encouraged to think about which structures in their institutions might impact or prohibit parents' ability or motivation to get involved.

Flessa, J., Gallagher-Mackay, K. & Ciuffetelli, D. (2010). "Good, steady progress": Success stories from Ontario elementary schools in challenging circumstances. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 101. Retrieved from [https://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/pdf\\_files/flessa-et-al.pdf](https://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/pdf_files/flessa-et-al.pdf)

### Valuing Cultural Understandings of Education Systems

Immigrant parents reported that parental participation programs often fail to listen to their needs and vision of education, leading them to feel disrespected and confused about the school's cultural world. When teachers and principals were interviewed, they were not aware of how these immigrant parents felt about their experiences of engagement.

One way to move the parent-school dialogue forward in a meaningful manner is to encourage parents' life experiences and cultural capital to inform the cultural worlds of schools. It might be helpful to engage in broader discussions about cultural interpretations or understandings of education systems and parent engagement.

Carreon, G. P., Drake, C., & Barton, A. C. (2005). The importance of presence: Immigrant

parents' school engagement experiences. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(3), 465-498.

### **Increasing the Involvement of Families Learning English**

This article reviews the challenges that parents of English language learners face in the Canadian school system – especially parents from Latino and Chinese communities. According to Guo (2006), cultural beliefs and/or practices influence parent involvement in their children's school. For example, some parents may view parent involvement in their children's education as negative, since parents traditionally meet with teachers only if the student has been misbehaving. Others may regard the teacher as a professional figure and view parent "interference" as disrespectful. It is important to emphasize that the parent's culture is not the problem. The problem is a school system that excludes this cultural knowledge.

To involve parents, Guo (2006) recommends that:

- Schools must acknowledge unconventional methods of parent involvement in children's education, such as parents bringing their children to work to show them the value of hard work and attaining an education.
- Translators should be available for parent-teacher interactions to eliminate language barriers and encourage parent involvement in school events and meetings.
- To emphasize that parents can provide valuable cultural contributions to their children's education, students' cultures should be incorporated into the school curriculum. This is especially important in the case of multicultural and Indigenous language maintenance programs. The authors suggest asking parents for their feedback on the incorporation of material into the curriculum.

Guo, Y. (2006). Why didn't they show up? Rethinking ESL parent involvement in K-12 education. *TESL Canada Journal*, 24(1): 80-95. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ847416.pdf>

### **First Nations Parent Club**

British Columbia's First Nations Parents Club is an effective example of engaging First Nations parents. The Club promotes school success through best parenting practices, improving communication between schools and families, and developing children's leadership skills at school. The Club's programs and resources may be adaptable to other First Nations communities.

First Nations Schools Association of British Columbia. (n.d.) *First Nations parents club*. Retrieved from <http://www.fnsa.ca/parents-club>

## Conclusion

Overall, this report advances the notion that a diverse and community-specific parent engagement strategy is best. We imagine that it will be helpful for schools, community organizations, and parents to gather information about what is already happening in Hamilton so that a further variety of opportunities can be offered. Are our practices working and how do we know? What else do parents in Hamilton want and need?



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# Appendix

## Appendix A: Parent Engagement Language and Search Terms

Parent Engagement Terms	School Terms
Parent engagement Parent involvement Parent participation (parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences; parent volunteering) Parent outreach Family engagement Carer engagement School, family, community partnerships Parental leadership (in schools) School, family, community connections Pipeline programs Parent-school partnerships Parent organizations (and schools) Parent participation and partnership Community engagement for student success Civic engagement and schools Early intervention programs (also called pre-college access programs or college outreach programs)	Middle school Middle school and high school High school Elementary school Grades 6-8 Grades 7-8 Grades 5-8 Transition to grade 9 Ages 12-14 / 12-15 / 11-14 / 11-15 Higher education Postsecondary Trades Apprenticeship College University

## Appendix B: Scientific Excursions in Hamilton

Unfortunately, museums, science centres, and zoos can be expensive, making regular science excursions a bit unrealistic. Below, we've gathered some examples of free and low-cost activities in Hamilton that can nurture children's curiosity in science. Other free and low-cost science programs in the City could be added to this chart.

Excursion	Description
Hamilton Waterfalls <a href="http://www.waterfalls.hamilton.ca">http://www.waterfalls.hamilton.ca</a>	The City of Hamilton is home to more than 100 waterfalls, most of which are on or near the Bruce Trail as it winds through the Niagara Escarpment. The geological landscape that makes up the Niagara Escarpment offers a great opportunity for kids to explore fossil-rich formations in Hamilton.
The Hamilton Ontario Aviary <a href="http://www.friendsoftheaviary.com">http://www.friendsoftheaviary.com</a>	The Aviary is an educational facility and sanctuary that aims to improve awareness of nature among the general public. It hosts a mixed collection of birds, including parrots, peacocks, finches, and pheasants.
The Royal Botanical Gardens <a href="http://www.rbg.ca/subsidy">http://www.rbg.ca/subsidy</a>	The Royal Botanical Gardens boasts "one of the most biologically diverse natural areas in Canada." They offer a Green Angels Financial Assistance Program for children and families living on low incomes.
W.J. McCallion Planetarium <a href="https://www.physics.mcmaster.ca/planetarium/index.html">https://www.physics.mcmaster.ca/planetarium/index.html</a>	The planetarium facilitates live shows on stars, planets, moons, and other objects in the sky. During the show, the audience has an opportunity to interact with the presenter and ask questions.
Environment Hamilton's INHALE Project (Initiative for Healthy Air & Local Economies) <a href="http://www.inhaleproject.ca/">http://www.inhaleproject.ca/</a>	Borrow an air monitor from Environment Hamilton and walk around your neighborhood to evaluate air quality. A short and easy training about how to use the air monitor is provided.

## Appendix C: Focus Group and Survey Summary

*In an effort to clarify parent engagement experiences and priorities in Hamilton in relation to the research literature, a focus group was facilitated with 8 community partners on September 28, 2016 at the Industry Education Council. Three attendees also contributed written notes through a follow-up survey. **We wish to thank all contributors for their valuable input.***

This summary is organized into the following 4 themes:

1. Definitions and Demographics
2. Barriers
3. Knowledge and Resources
4. Evaluation

### **Definitions and Demographics**

<b>Defining Parent Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One community member defined <i>parent involvement</i> as a parent taking an interest and showing support for their child (e.g. attending information nights), while <i>parent engagement</i> is co-ownership of how parents are involved.</li><li>• Another community member stated that parent engagement and involvement exist on a spectrum. This spectrum allows for parents to choose where they want to be on the spectrum or where they have the time and ability to participate.</li></ul>
<b>Parent Engagement During Middle School Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One organization has experienced a similar level of engagement from parents with kids in elementary school vs. middle school. The main difference is that middle school children may not be as welcoming of their parents attending events as elementary school kids.</li><li>• Another member noted a difference between elementary and middle school parent engagement. They said that there may be a perception that middle school children are self-sufficient, so parent involvement is not needed as much. However, the opposite is true. Families can help support their children as they transition from elementary to secondary school. A challenge is helping families navigate and understand the transition process.</li></ul>

### **Barriers**

**What challenges or barriers have you encountered in engaging parents/families? How have you addressed them?**

	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Successes and Mitigation of Barriers</b>
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<b>Communication</b>	<p>Decreasing communication with parents during middle school years. Students in grades 7-8 are often embarrassed by their parent's involvement and do not keep parents informed of events.</p> <p>Uneven access to technology (e.g. internet, phone)</p>	<p>Communicate with parents directly (e.g. at the beginning of a program), in multiple ways, and using technology (e.g. blogs, automated calls) in order keep them informed about school events and obtain feedback.</p> <p>Be aware of and address barriers to technology access for parents.</p> <p>Communicate with community partners to better understand the strengths and priorities of a community and how resources can be best used and shared.</p>
<b>Trust</b>	<p>Many community partners agreed that in order to engage parents, a trusting relationship needs to be established. This can be time consuming and difficult to sustain given high staff turnover within schools.</p>	<p>Work to develop relationships between organizations and parents as early as possible (e.g. kids in kindergarten). Since there is a high turnover of staff, teachers and principals need to be constantly building relationships with parents.</p>
<b>Attendance at Events</b>	<p>Many things get in the way of attendance at events: parent's work schedule, child care, lack of transportation, a prior negative school experience, negative experiences with teachers being condescending, not feeling comfortable.</p> <p>Parents can find it really difficult to navigate the education system and have said that they do not know how to be engaged.</p>	<p>Hold events in the evening to accommodate work schedules. Provide dinner, child care, and bus passes.</p> <p>Hands on activities and programs that track a child's progression over time (e.g. swimming, visual arts) generate excitement among children and parents and interest in attending a "celebration" at the end. Families are more likely to attend an event or project showcase where their child's achievement is exemplified.</p>
<b>Language/ Translation</b>	<p>Language was a significant barrier this year due to the influx of Syrian newcomers in Hamilton.</p>	<p>Reach out to the community and within the school (to both staff and students) to obtain interpreters.</p>
<b>Finances</b>	<p>Some desired parent engagement programs require financial resources.</p>	<p>The HWCDSB has been addressing this barrier by relying on community partnerships and grants.</p>

## ***Knowledge and Resources***

### **Where do you go to learn more about parent engagement?**

<b>Colleagues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reach out to colleagues and other organizations.</li><li>• One member said that it would be useful for organizations to produce compilations of failure and success reports that can be circulated. This would enable groups to learn what others have tried, what has and has not worked, and why strategies have not worked.</li><li>• An attendee mentioned learning about a resource during the focus group that they were previously unaware of. This highlighted the need to better share information between organizations.</li><li>• Organizations may be working with different definitions of parent engagement and success. It's important to keep this in mind when discussing parent engagement with colleagues.</li></ul>
<b>Parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several organizations learn a great deal about parent engagement (especially barriers) through parents themselves.</li><li>• One community partner said that it would be useful to invite parents to a focus group in order to learn more about their perspective on parent engagement.</li></ul>
<b>Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A member from Rising Stars explained that organizations can learn a lot about parent engagement by talking with communities.</li><li>• It is important to ask communities what they have done so far, and what has and has not worked. Through these discussions, organizations can obtain an understanding of what they can do to build on a community's strengths.</li><li>• This point was important because it highlighted that each community and school is unique and will require unique solutions.</li><li>• One attendee raised the concern that community groups often do not have easy access to resources on parent engagement. We need to find ways to share ideas with communities as well, not just go to them for information.</li></ul>

## ***Evaluation***

### **What have you done to gather feedback from parents about how they would like to engage or be engaged?**

<b>Event Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the community partners used attendance at events (e.g. showcase nights) to gauge the success of their parent engagement strategy. Higher attendance rates indicate success.</li> <li>• Members from HWCDSB and Rising Stars emphasized that organizations should be cautious when interpreting the success of these events solely using numbers. Just because parents may not attend an event, does not mean that they do not want to be engaged. Engagement may be occurring in the child's home or with extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Qualitative Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rather than using numbers as a (sole) indicator of successful parent engagement, one community partner suggested using a qualitative approach to feedback, such as setting up a graffiti wall (to write comments), using journals, or observing who is active, involved, and talking during events.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The HWDSB has a Parent Involvement Committee, where parents give feedback during meetings and through surveys.</li> </ul>



## Appendix D: Focus Group Agenda

### **Focus Group on Parent Engagement**

Industry Education Council

Wednesday, September 28, 2016 from 9:30-11am

Welcome and introductions

#### Question 1: Outcomes and Barriers

- What has successful parent/family engagement looked like at your organization?
- What challenges or barriers have you encountered in engaging parents/families? How have you addressed them?

#### Question 2: Knowledge and Resource Needs

- Where do you go to learn more about parent engagement? What sorts of information/knowledge would you want access to?
- What resources/supports do you have or need to continue and enhance your parent engagement strategies?

#### Question 3: Evaluation

- What have you done to gather feedback from parents about how they would like to engage or be engaged?
- How have you evaluated your parent engagement activities?
- What might you like to do in the future?

#### Wrap-up questions:

- What jumped out to you (as important, interesting, surprising) during this conversation?
- What is 1 next step for you or your organization?

## Appendix E: Survey Questions

1. How do you understand/define "parent engagement" at your organization? Which language do you use? What does your parent engagement include/involve?
2. How is parent engagement different at the middle school level compared to elementary or high school? What are the unique opportunities and challenges?
3. Do you have anything else to add about the successes or challenges you've experienced as an organization while working to engage parents/families?
4. Do you have anything else to add regarding the information/research, supports, or resources you have or would like access to in order to continue and enhance your parent engagement activities?
5. Do you have anything else to add about how you've gathered feedback from parents or evaluated your parent engagement activities? What forms of feedback gathering/evaluation do you plan to do in the future?
6. Do you have anything else to add regarding what jumped out to you (as important, interesting, surprising) during our conversation?
7. What are some steps forward for your organization?
8. Do you have any other comments, ideas, or suggestions?