

Family and Community Collaboration Spotlight: Strengthening the Feedback Loop

Key Strategies

Districts can strengthen the feedback loop with families and communities to support student outcomes by:

- **Valuing collaborative two-way communication**, where both the district staff and the family share the roles of speaker and listener
- **Obtaining ongoing feedback from families**, especially those from marginalized groups
- **Responding to feedback in a timely manner**, while the information is still relevant and actionable

Authentic family and community collaboration requires communication to be a two-way street. This means districts should work hard to reach all caregivers — especially those from marginalized backgrounds and those with different language needs — to ensure that decisions are centered on the voices, perspectives, and needs of all families. To do this successfully, school districts need systems for engaging and responding to families. One system is feedback loops. In a feedback loop, families provide regular feedback to districts, which then process the feedback and respond to the families.

For feedback loops to be effective, school districts should provide multiple, ongoing opportunities for caregivers to provide meaningful feedback throughout the year and for districts to respond in a timely manner. Having ongoing feedback loops that help caregivers feel heard fosters trust between families and districts and provides opportunities for authentic collaboration.



Strategies in Action

Feedback Loops in Action: Houston Independent School District

Houston Independent School District (ISD) is a large district in Houston, TX, with nearly 200,000 students. In 2023, Houston ISD began rolling out a strategic feedback loop using Possip, a tool that sends families multilingual surveys. Houston ISD then uses these surveys, which it calls “pulse checks,” to elicit feedback from their students’ families biweekly. Houston ISD also hired additional family and community engagement staff so their families could receive individual follow-up.

By implementing pulse checks, Houston ISD is working to ensure that family voices are heard and incorporated into the district’s decision-making. Houston ISD serves as an excellent example of how districts can elevate their feedback loops between districts and families. Implementing authentic improvements to feedback loops not only fosters trust and collaboration between families and the district but also leads to more targeted and responsive support for students. In turn, families feel empowered knowing that their feedback is valued and acted upon.



About the Connected & Engaged Initiative

This initiative investigates common barriers to achieving authentic partnerships between school districts and families and offers research-based strategies to address those challenges. This initiative aims to support school districts, community-based organizations and caregivers as they consider their own challenges and work to nurture and promote a connected and engaged school community.

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