

# **Structuring Meaningful Home-School Partnerships With Families of Young English Learner (EL) Students**

**August 17, 2015**

**Eric Haas, REL West at WestEd (Moderator)**

**Maria Paredes, WestEd**

**Linda Espinosa, University of Missouri (Emeritus)**

**Melanie Packham, WestEd**

# Goals for the webinar:

As a result of your participation today, you'll learn about:

- » The foundations of effective partnerships between school and home that enhance the learning and language development of young EL students.
- » Academic and linguistic skills and dispositions students need to succeed in school and that families can support.
- » Successful outreach efforts to engage families in learning and supporting the skills necessary to succeed in school.

# What we'll cover:

- » Maria Paredes – purpose and structure of family engagement
- » Linda Espinosa – knowledge and skills young English learner students need for school success and what families do to support this
- » Melanie Packham – voice from the field sharing examples of how to create strong home-school partnerships
- » Time for questions – please type in the chat area
- » Focus on English/Dual Language Learner Students

# **More Is Not Always Better: Structuring Home and School Partnerships**

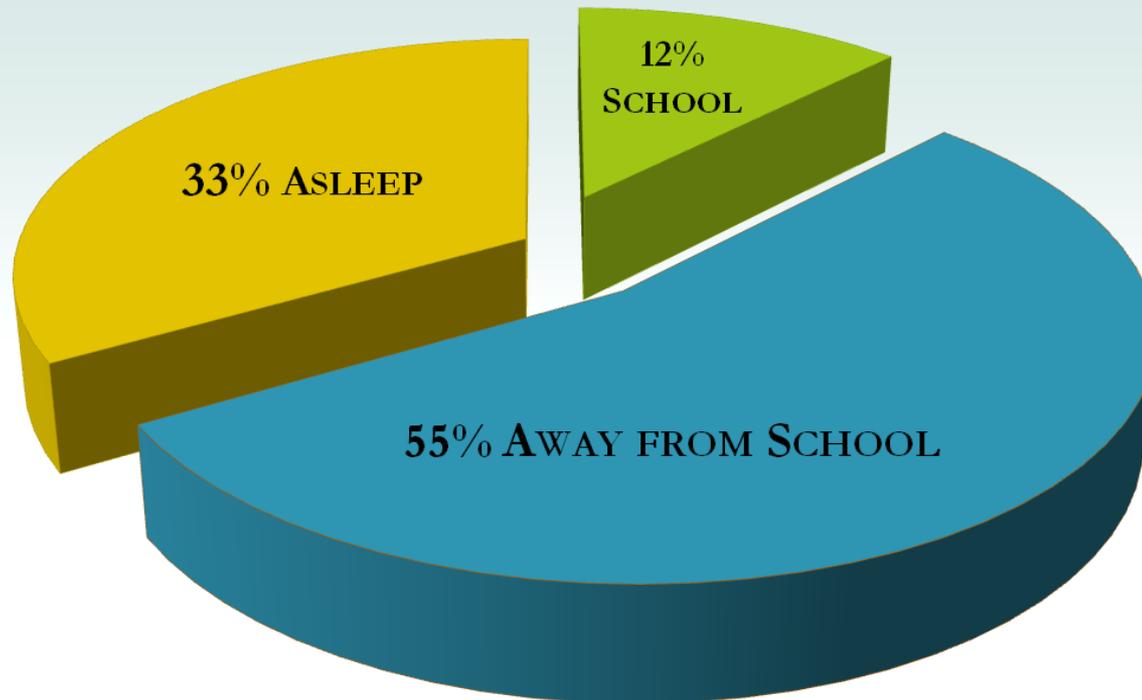
**August 17, 2015**

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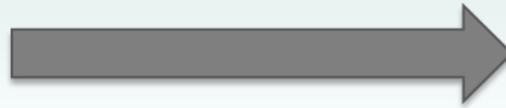
# Student learning time



Based on 6 hours of instruction, 180 days per year, and 8 hours of sleep time.

(School = 1,080 Hours) (Sleep = 2,920 Hours) (Away from school = 4,760 Hours)

# Schools share responsibility in engaging families



The strongest, most consistent predictor of family engagement is the specific school and teacher practices that encourage and guide a family's engagement.

Dauber, S. L., & Epstein, J. L. (1989). Parents' attitudes and practices of involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. In N. Chavkin (Ed.), *Families and schools in a pluralistic society* (pp. 53–71). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

# Family engagement has been blurry

The more is better approach...

Random Acts

# Family engagement in focus

## Family and school partnerships to drive student learning.

1. Build staff and family capacity
2. Embed in the core instructional strategies
3. Set student learning goals
4. Prioritize engagement efforts
5. Measure results

Engaging families for results  
requires a system that incorporates  
ongoing training and support

## Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT)

Paredes (2011)

# Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT)

APTT is a research and evidence-based family engagement framework and best practice that aligns grade level learning skills, student performance data, and family-teacher communication and collaboration in order to inform and enrich the way families support learning at home.

Paredes (2011)

# The APTT model



Paredes (2011)

# The Team Meeting structure

(All families in the class come together)



1. Team building (15 minutes)
2. Review foundational grade level skills and share data (15 minutes)
3. Model practice activities (15 minutes)
4. Family practice of activities (15 minutes)
5. Set 60-day SMART goals (15 minutes)

Paredes (2011)

# Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity Building-Framework for Family-School Partnerships

US DOE (2013)



# Capitalizing on Home Strengths and Supporting School Readiness for Young Dual Language Learners

**August 17, 2015**

**Linda Espinosa, Ph.D.**

**Professor Emeritus**

**University of Missouri, Columbus**

What is the greatest barrier or challenge to meaningful home-school engagement with families of dual language learners?

Please type your thoughts in the chat area

# Working with families has been a cornerstone of effective early childhood practices for decades

Effective family engagement is linked to improved child outcomes:

- Literacy, cognitive, language, math, social-emotional skills
- Long-term academic achievement
- Families critical to cultural and language preservation

To work effectively with young dual language learners, we must establish strong, meaningful, and respectful partnerships with families.

# Features of effective family partnerships

## Collaborative orientation

- Mutually decide on goals and activities; joint decision-making (Halgunseth, et al., 2009)
- Regular two-way communication
- Exchange of information (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008)
- Context of respect and empathy (ZTT, 2015)

# Features of effective family partnerships

Capitalize on family strengths (cultural and social capital)

- High educational aspirations for children (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007)
- Desire to help children succeed
- Parenting strengths:
  - strongly committed to family;
  - extended families with high levels of support;
  - educational positivism (esperanzas);
  - culturally embedded styles of parenting (affectionate and nurturing);
  - language abilities (bilingualism) (Garcia, 2014)

# Common barriers to DLL family engagement

- Language issues
- Cultural mismatches (families may not have any experience with traditional school-related participation)
- Schedules, transportation, child care
- Low parental education
- Culture of schools

(Halgunseth, Jia, & Barbarin, 2013)

# First step

Early in the year or at registration have a conversation with parents:

- Collect information on child's earliest language experiences, current language opportunities, family feelings about maintaining home language, family interests and talents
- Record and use information
- Conduct in family's preferred language (may need to hire an interpreter)

**Important for establishing rapport, respect, and common focus on child's well-being; building relationship based on trust**



# Recognize home language as an asset

- Encourage continued home language by family members
- Provide materials (books, tapes, etc.) in family home language
- Display examples of home languages and family practices throughout school and classrooms
- Help parents with ESL if requested

(Winsler, Burchinal, Espinosa, & Castro, 2014)

# Helping families support their children's school readiness

- Basic home structures and routines
- Encourage learning at home in family's dominant/home language (reading/telling stories, conversations, daily activities)
- Advanced L1 abilities important in developing English proficiency; bilingualism carries many advantages
- Emphasize importance of supporting child's oral language skills
  - Language gaps start to appear by 24 months for Latino DLLs;
  - High levels of L1 and some English important at K entry

# Building literacy skills: Vocabulary, Alphabet Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, early writing, print concepts

- Encourage all adults and older siblings to read with child: letters, cards, notes, menus, religious texts
- Families can make personal books with children that describe family activities, events, personal narratives
- Families can support classroom themes, projects, activities: weekly notices in home language about topics to be studied and key activities, vocabulary, concepts
- Mobile phone texting

# Build social capital and networks

- Community social networks are important for helping families negotiate school systems: registration, schedules, requirements, bus routines
- Facilitate communication among families: meetings, online discussion forums



# Promising approaches

- Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors: Parent education approach for Latino families; good evaluation data  
*“...with the information that was provided we became critically conscious of the state of Latinos in public schools, and this has created a commitment to do something different— to help in any way that I can.”*
- Home Instruction of Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
  - School readiness and literacy home visitation program; some academic gains for Latinos

# Promising approaches

- AVANCE: Parent education program in 3 states
  - Parent meetings and home visitations; mothers and children made gains
- Project Flame: Family literacy program; families and children aged 3–9
  - Children’s school readiness scores improved; home literacy activities increased
- Literacy for Life: Intergenerational literacy program for children and adults
  - English literacy grew for adults and children

# Conclusion

*Some educational experts have called dual language parents a great "untapped resource". Their concern for their children, commitment to family, respect for education, and desire for a better life have rarely been capitalized on by the educational establishment.*

- Espinosa, 1998



# Effective Outreach: Stories From the Field

**August 17, 2015**

**Melanie Packham**

**Family Engagement Facilitator**

**Comprehensive School Assistance Program**

**WestEd**

# As I share, please type into the chat area

- Ways that you help family members understand the importance of their role in their child's school success
- The way you organize orientations or information sessions about students' school success
- Some of the specific skills or knowledge you want students to have as they move into the next level or grade

# Family engagement = Shared responsibility

- Create family-school partnerships
- Effective family engagement closes the achievement gap
- Teachers benefit when families apply new learning to academically support children in the home
- Families benefit from teacher expertise and networking opportunities with other families
- Students benefit from increased learning time

Dearing, E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S., & Weiss, H. B. (2006). Family involvement in school and low-income children's literacy performance: Longitudinal associations between and within families. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *98*, 653– 664.

# Invite families to team meeting

- Organize a Family Engagement Plan for the year
- Effective family outreach– invite all family members
- Provide childcare
- Provide interpretation



Meeting!  
Junta!  
Pulong!

# Building a Team Environment

- Adults learn from one another
- Adult learning is an interactive and social phenomenon
- Families collaborate
- Families support each other
- Families network
- Families build trust with each other and with the teacher



# Team building activity

1. When the music begins mingle, mingle, mingle to the music
2. When the music stops, find a partner
3. Each person takes a turn sharing something about their child
4. Repeat



# Introduce a skill

- Tell families why this skill
  - How does it fit on the grade level continuum
  - Why is mastery important
- Teach the skill
- Share student data
  - Show pre-assessment and benchmark data of the skill
  - Emphasis on family support positively affecting student growth (shared responsibility)

# Provide take-home activities

- Provide fun, engaging activities that can be enjoyed as a family and support the skill introduced
- Enrich home learning environment
- Provide instructional strategies that support family engagement

# Accountability

Provide explicit modeling on how to set a SMART goal

- ✓ Specific
- ✓ Measurable
- ✓ Attainable
- ✓ Results focused
- ✓ Timely



# Reminders!

## **Webinar 2: Building Capacity for School Success in Families of Young English Learner (EL) Students on September 30, 2015**

For more information and to register, visit:  
<https://relwest.wested.org/events/323>