



Update From the Director

Welcome to the 2022–23 school year! Families, educators, and students have persevered for almost 2 1/2 years, between remote, hybrid, and in-person learning. Though the setting of schooling may have changed during this time, the need for connection among students, families, schools, and teachers has not.

That's why we chose family engagement as the theme for this newsletter. The research is clear: the more that families are involved in their children's education, the better the learning outcomes are for students. Family engagement is a top priority for our REL Northwest partners and Governing Board, so we'll be sharing more evidence-based resources throughout the school year.



In this newsletter, you'll find our recent blog post highlighting six strategies that schools can use to hold effective family events. Also, we've compiled a list of family engagement resources from our federal and regional education partners. An effective family engagement strategy should be strategic and sustained, extending well beyond any singular event. These resources in the blog can help when developing those plans. We encourage you to share this actionable information with your educator and school networks.

Finally, we highlight a few of our REL Northwest partnerships. We'll keep you updated in future newsletters on our other partnerships, our projects, and our progress. This is the just the beginning as we work to positively impact educational outcomes in the Northwest.

Katie Drummond
Director, REL Northwest

Blog: 6 Strategies for Effective School Family Engagement Events

Building positive relationships with families and teachers strengthens students' learning, social competencies, and emotional well-being. When families feel connected and included in their children's education, everyone benefits.



Feeling a sense of belonging is particularly important for students from historically underserved families, such as low-income families, families from communities of color, and families whose primary language is not English. Making genuine connections with underserved families opens doors to communication, problem-solving, and mutual support on behalf of students' learning and achievement.

School-based family engagement centers on the activities, events, and communication schools share with families. Try these six strategies to improve family attendance at school events and to make event planning and family outreach more intentional and effective.

Read about the [6 family engagement strategies](#) at our website ...

Learn More About REL Northwest Partnerships

In the 2022–27 contract cycle, Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) are emphasizing focused partnerships that target measurable improvements in educational outcomes. For the last few months, REL Northwest has been busy working with partners in our five Northwest states to build multifaceted projects that address their current needs and priorities.

Read about three of our partnerships below and [visit our website](#) to learn more. We'll soon be posting logic models for our partnerships.

- **Portland High School Graduation Partnership**

High-leverage need: To improve high school graduation and completion rates, Portland Public Schools will evaluate implementation of its 2022–2026 High School Strategic Plan. The district will continue to focus on improving graduation and completion rates for students from historically underserved communities, especially Black and American Indian/Alaska Native students.

Support: REL Northwest is assisting Portland Public Schools in developing instruments

and processes to collect data that can help the district better understand how the High School Strategic Plan activities are implemented. The findings will help them continuously improve related resources and supports.

- **Alaska Trauma-Engaged Schools Partnership**

High-leverage need: Nearly two-thirds of Alaskan students have experienced traumatic events, leading to increased risk of poor educational, social, health, and economic outcomes.

Support: REL Northwest is supporting the Alaska Departments of Education and Early Development and Health and Social Services, along with other partners, by conducting applied research to understand implementation of their Transforming Schools Toolkit, monitor progress, address challenges, and enhance culturally responsive adaptation to local contexts.

- **Idaho Early Childhood Education Partnership**

High-leverage need: The West Central Mountains Early Learning Advisory Committee has identified a need to enhance the access and quality of early care and education in the region, to improve early literacy learning and kindergarten readiness.

Support: REL Northwest will provide technical support around articulating and measuring the committee's early learning objectives and around selecting and evaluating evidence-based programming for early literacy.

Family Engagement News and Resources

Read the latest education news about family engagement from federal agencies and organizations:

- The U.S. Department of Education [announced the formation](#) of the National Parents and Families Engagement Council, which has a mission of facilitating strong, effective relationships between schools and parents, families, and caregivers. Families' voices play a critical role in how the nation's children are recovering from the pandemic.
- The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement [produced a summary](#) of selected research, promising practices, and program strategies focused on students' transition to kindergarten.

Learn about family engagement from other RELs:

- Want to help families practice foundational reading skills at home? REL Southeast [offers ways](#) that kindergarten teachers can promote parent-child interactions that build literacy.
- REL Mid-Atlantic [describes the pillars](#) for meaningful and equitable school and family partnerships, with its research-based family engagement framework.
- When families are involved in their children's education, students have better attendance, earn higher grades, have higher test scores, and enroll in higher-level classes. REL West [shares research-based practices](#) that teachers and school leaders can use to increase family engagement.

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