

What Does High Impact Family Engagement Look Like in Elementary Schools?¹

Higher Impact on student learning and development	Moderate Impact	Lower Impact
1. Back to School Night class meetings where parents and teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share learning strategies • Review key skills for students with home learning tips • Develop a communications plan 	Open House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents tour school, chat with teachers • Classroom visits to meet teacher • Exhibits of student work 	Back to School night in the auditorium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel of speakers • Pass out student handbooks • Hand out school calendar
2. Regular two-way calls/texts/emails to share progress and tips.	Positive personal phone calls home	Robocalls about school events
3. Family center, staffed, with workshops on learning strategies, referrals to social services, and informal gatherings.	Parent resource room with toys, games and books to borrow	School newsletters with generic messages
4. Relationship-building home visits by teachers, voluntary for both teachers and families and available for all families.	Coffee with the principal; Muffins for Moms; Donuts with Dads	Potlucks, other traditional whole-school-based events
5. Story quilting workshops and poetry slams where parents, teachers and students all tell their stories, share their work.	School book club and authors' tea featuring student writers	Student performances
6. Classroom observations with mini-lessons; weekly data-sharing folders go home, with space for parent comments.	Interactive homework with tips for home learning	Curriculum nights
7. Student-led conferences with portfolios of student work, followed by 1:1 conversations about learning, to set goals.	Parent-teacher conferences twice a year, available evenings and weekend	Parent-teacher conferences, during work day
8. Tours of school led by students and community walks led by parents and custodians.	Monthly breakfasts for new families	Visit school by appointment
9. School council has voice in all major decisions; develops and supports parent-initiated projects.	Parent organization meets with principal to discuss suggestions	Suggestion box in office
10. Candidate forum at Fun Fair; parents and students meet in advance, prepare to ask questions regarding issues affecting families.	Candidates for election invited to Fun Fair	Fall Fun Fair
11. Parent leadership classes strengthen family capacity to navigate the system, be effective advocates, and take part in school councils and committees.	Adult learning evenings	Parenting classes

¹ This chart was developed by the Connecticut State Education Department, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, and the Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, which joined with parents, educators and communities to co-create a common definition, framework, and guiding principles for advancing state and local family engagement efforts across the state. More information can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/sde/publications/full-equal-and-equitable-partnerships-with-families/introduction>.