



Moving Forward: Building the Capacity for Effective Family Engagement

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What is the definition of Family Engagement?

Family Engagement is any way that a child's adult caretaker (biological parents, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) effectively supports learning and healthy development.



What's happening in the field of Family Engagement?

- Proposed increase in Title One set-aside for family engagement from 1% to 2%
- Senior level positions are being created in districts around the country to coordinate family and community engagement initiatives
- More family engagement language priority language is being included in federal notices (I3, 21st Century, Promise Neighborhoods)

...and

- “Tiger Mom” phenomenon
- “Parent Trigger” – “Won’t Back Down” movie
- Parent Organizing

When families are effectively engaged in their children's education and in the improvement of schools, what are the various roles they can play?

Families are engaged as:

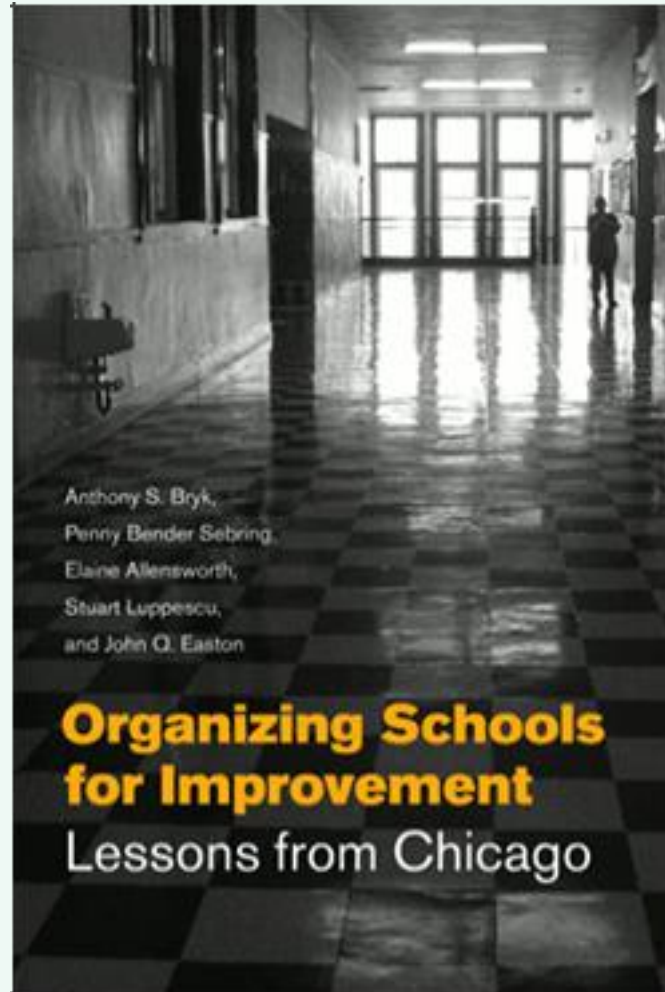
- *Supporters* of their children's learning
- *Encouragers* of an achievement identity, a positive self image, and a "can do" spirit
- *Monitors* of their children's time, behavior, boundaries and resources
- *Models* of lifelong learning and enthusiasm for education
- *Advocates* for improved learning opportunities for their children and at their schools
- *Decision-makers/choosers* of educational options for their child, the school, and community
- *Collaborators* with school staff and members of the community



Impact of Family Engagement:

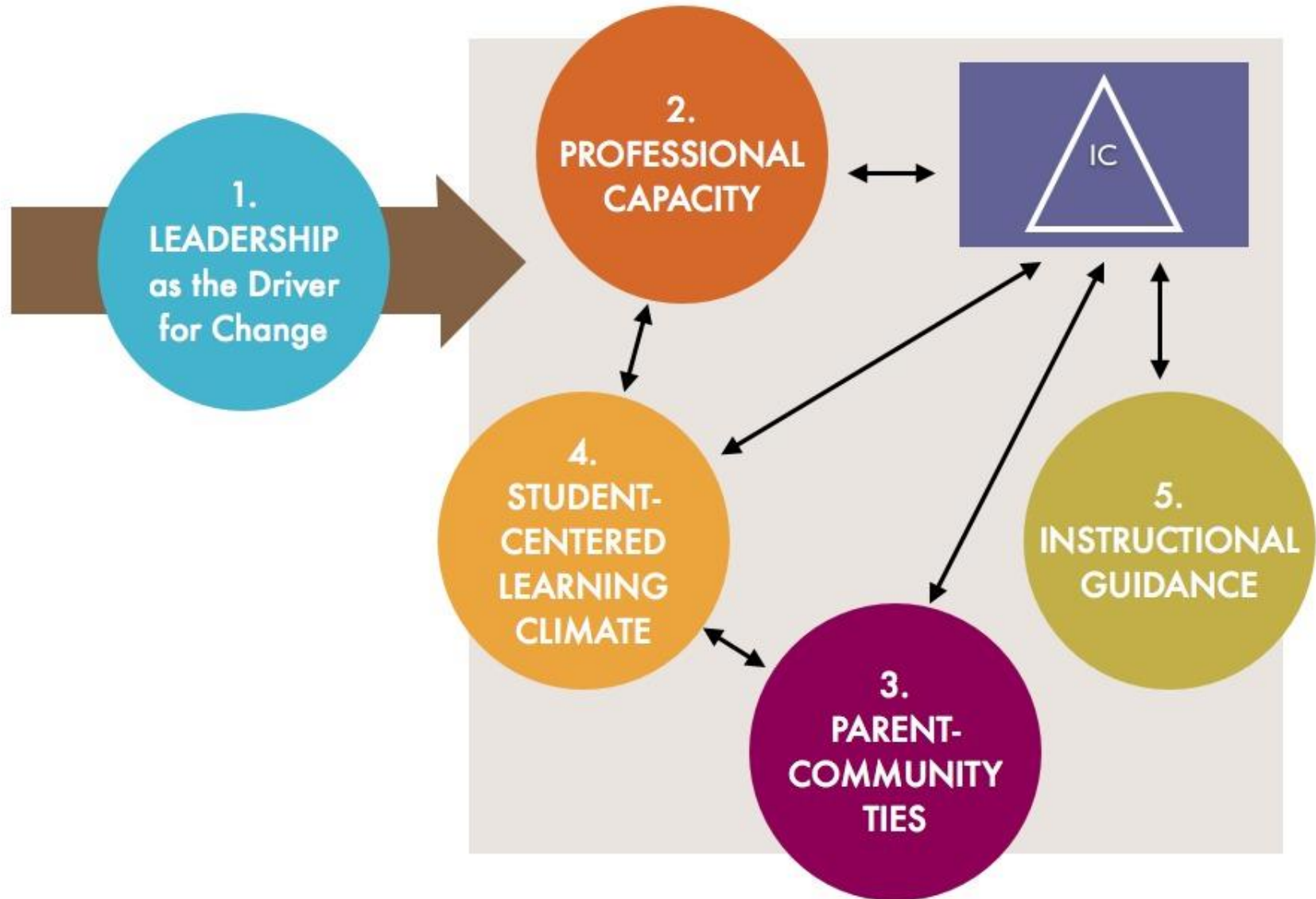
- Faster literacy acquisition
- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in higher level programs
- Are promoted more and earn more credits
- Adapt better to school and attend more regularly
- Have better social skills and behavior
- Graduate and go on to higher education

Organizing Schools for Improvement (2010)



FIVE ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS

The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research



What does an Effective Family-School Partnership Look Like?



Beyond the Bake Sale

The Essential Guide to Family- School Partnerships

Anne T. Henderson,
Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R.
Johnson and Don Davies

The New Press, 2007



Fortress School (Below Basic)

- “Parents don’t care about their children’s education, and they are the main reason the kid’s are failing”



- “Parents don’t come to conferences, no matter what we do”
- Principal picks a small group of “cooperative parents” to help out
- “We’re teachers, not social workers”
- “Curriculum and standards are too advanced for these parents”

Come-if-we-call School (Basic)

- Parents are told what students will be learning at the fall open house



- Workshops are planned by staff
- Families can visit school on report card pickup day
- Parents call the office to get teacher-recorded messages about homework

Open-Door School (Proficient)

- Parent-teacher conferences are held at least twice a year
- There is an “Action Team” for family engagement
- School holds parent events three or four times a year
- Parents can raise issues at PTA meetings or see the principal
- Diversity of families is recognized through multicultural nights are held once a year



Partnership School (Advanced)

- Families are seen as partners in improving educational outcomes
- All family activities are connected to student learning
- There is a clear, open process for resolving problems
- Parent networks are valued and cultivated
- Families are actively involved in decisions on school improvement
- Staff conduct relationship-building home visits to families

