



Tip 1: Establish Trust and Build Authentic Relationships



Our Goal – To build trusting, inclusive partnerships with families that support student success through clear communication, empathy, and consistency

Strategy:	Action Item:
Build a strong foundation and emphasize the importance of family-school partnerships	☐ Make positive, proactive phone calls to help establish trust ☐ Participate in district training on building relationships with families ☐ Use Welcoming Families resources from the Flamboyan Foundation ☐ Actively invite families into the school community ☐ Personally greet parent visitors by name; front office and all staff assist them
Lead with empathy and acknowledge some families may feel hesitant due to past experiences with schools	☐ Ask families what supports they need to be successful ☐ Stay aware of community needs, barriers, and risk factors ☐ Share positive news using “Keep It Positive” postcards highlighting student achievements
Communicate with consistency and transparency and build trust through reliable and open communication	☐ Create regular opportunities for family input and feedback ☐ Share updates about staffing and school or district initiatives ☐ Keep the school website current ☐ Create parent-to-parent phone trees and parent phone directory ☐ Send a monthly school newsletter with key updates
Ensure communication is accessible and easy to understand for every family	☐ Create/use family-friendly materials; translate when needed ☐ Ask families which communication method works best for them ☐ Use a “new parent” orientation or buddy system
Strengthen family and community connections and support staff in building positive relationships with families	☐ Provide staff with tips for making positive phone calls home ☐ Regularly collect home-school contact logs ☐ Coordinate with families and connect them to community resources when appropriate

Together, we create a welcoming school environment where families feel valued, informed, and supported.

Tip 2: Engage Families & the Community in Student Learning

 **Our Belief** – Effective schools view parents and families as partners in their children’s learning and provide meaningful support to help learning continue beyond the classroom.

Strategy:	Action Item:
Create opportunities for families to share feedback about their child’s learning at home	☐ Use Parent-Teacher Conference surveys ☐ Collect feedback through Back-to-School Night forms ☐ Offer an easy, clear process for scheduling one-on-one meetings with teachers or administrators
Provide tools to support learning at home and equip families with practical resources and guidance	☐ Offer Parent University classes on: - Monitoring student grades using the Parent Portal - Technology use and tools - Organization and study skills - Understanding the impact of social media ☐ Share clear homework policies with families ☐ Offer mini-lessons of how subjects are being taught in class in person or via Teams
Clearly communicate learning expectations to help families understand what students are learning and how they can provide support	☐ Share family-friendly, grade-level learning objectives ☐ Host family information nights focused on curriculum and/or assessments ☐ Share family resources from WCSD Family-School Partnerships ☐ Provide information about free tutoring through Brainfuse at the Washoe County Library System
Engage families as active partners in academic goal setting and monitoring goals	☐ Share individual student goals and objectives during Parent-Teacher Conferences ☐ Offer conference opportunities at the secondary level ☐ Provide virtual conference options for families ☐ Host Pre-K to Kindergarten transition training using the “I’m Ready for K!”/“¡Estoy Listo para el Kindergarten!” booklet

Together, we strengthen student success by engaging families as partners in learning – at school and at home.

Tip 3: Identify and Understand Family Needs

 **Our Belief** – Strong family partnerships begin with listening. When schools seek feedback, respect family perspectives, and respond to community needs, families feel valued, connected, and supported.

Strategy:	Action Item:
Listen with care and empathy and create welcoming opportunities for families to share their experiences, needs, and ideas	☐ Provide staff training on family engagement best practices ☐ Use trauma-informed and reflective approaches when working with families ☐ Use person-first and inclusive language ☐ Consider cultural differences when communicating ☐ Hold regular family meetings where families can help shape the agenda ☐ Share survey results and action steps with families
Learn about family needs and gather feedback to better understand family priorities, challenges, and goals	☐ Conduct surveys to identify barriers and areas of need ☐ Include questions about academic goals and logistical challenges ☐ Gather input through family meetings and informal conversations
Use everyday opportunities to connect and build relationships through ongoing communication and daily interactions	☐ Connect with families during student pick-up, phone calls, texts, emails, and other everyday interactions ☐ Ask families which communication methods work best for them ☐ Listen for feedback and concerns during routine conversations
Follow through and communicate solutions to inform families about how the school is responding to concerns and supporting students	☐ Share updates using families' preferred communication methods ☐ Communicate actions taken in response to family feedback
Honor and include all families and recognize and respect the diverse family structures within our community	☐ Use inclusive terms such as parent/guardian or primary caregiver ☐ Ensure all families feel welcomed, respected, and represented

Together, we create a school community where every family feels heard, valued, and included.

Tip 4: Provide Opportunities for Empowerment and Leadership

 **Our Belief** – Families are valuable partners and leaders in our school community. When families have meaningful opportunities to contribute, collaborate, and share their talents, schools become stronger and student success increases.

Strategy:	Action Item:
Include families in school planning and partner with them by sharing leadership, decision-making, and ownership of school improvement efforts	☐ Include a diverse group of families in developing the School Improvement Plan ☐ Provide training to prepare families to serve on leadership teams ☐ Invite families to share insights about student and family needs ☐ Seek family input on the Parent and Family Engagement Policy ☐ Facilitate discussions that encourage every voice to be heard
Create meaningful opportunities for conversation and build trusting relationships through personal connections rather than relying primarily on written communication	☐ Ask families what their hopes and dreams are for their children ☐ Talk to families during family engagement events ☐ Build time into meetings for authentic conversations ☐ Create a family engagement committee that includes diverse staff and families
Invite families to share their talents and recognize the unique strengths and experiences that families bring to our school community	☐ Open conversations and meetings by having families share something important to their family (Beginning with Family Ecologies) ☐ Celebrate families by sharing their cultures, traditions, and experiences ☐ Offer meaningful volunteer and leadership opportunities through the school ☐ Invite families to present about careers, hobbies or special skills
Connect families with one another and strengthen relationships among them to build a welcoming and supportive school community	☐ Use icebreakers during Open House, family events, and other school activities ☐ Build interactions between families during school events and meetings ☐ Encourage family interaction through school events and social media ☐ Provide designated place(s) in the school for families to use
Celebrate family leadership and show appreciation for the time, ideas, and support families provide	☐ Highlight families in newsletters, social media, or school spotlights ☐ Send thank you notes and display appreciation messages through the school ☐ Recognize families through certificates of appreciation

Together, we create a school community where families are empowered to lead, collaborate, and make a lasting difference in student success.

Tip 5: Develop Meaningful and Equitable Opportunities for Engagement



Our Belief – Families engage in different ways, and engagement requires multiple opportunities that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and accessible. Thoughtful engagement experiences help build trust, strengthen relationships, and reinforce an inclusive school culture.

Strategy:	Action Item:
Create welcoming spaces for relationship building and provide opportunities for staff and families to connect, share experiences, and engage in meaningful school activities	☐ Plan interactive Back-to-School Nights and/or Annual Title I Meetings that include peer networking and learning opportunities ☐ Facilitate interactive Parent-Teacher Conferences ☐ Share student and school data with families and invite questions and discussion
Elevate community voices and experiences and build a school culture that reflects and values the experiences of all families	☐ Have a parent representative share with families their experiences with the school and district ☐ Partner with outside organizations and resources that appeal to a wide range of community members ☐ Be proactive in reaching out to families who may be reluctant to interact with the school
Meet families where they are by engaging them in environments where they feel comfortable, safe, and connected	☐ Participate in the district's Parent Teacher Home Visit Program ☐ Plan gatherings in community spaces such as libraries or parks ☐ Offer flexible times for meetings
Connect families to community resources that promote overall wellbeing	☐ Identify and share resources related to: ○ Mental health supports ○ Free adult education opportunities ○ Other family-identified areas of interest ☐ Collaborate with community organizations and institutions to expand access
Ensure language access and inclusive communication so families can engage meaningfully in communications using their language of comfort where practicable	☐ Ensure school communication is in family-friendly language ☐ Translate school communication materials as appropriate ☐ Schedule interpreters if needed

Together, we will create environments where every family feels welcome, respected, and empowered to participate by offering inclusive, flexible, and responsive opportunities for family engagement.

Tip 6: Provide Relevant Adult Learning Opportunities

 **Our Belief** – When adult learning opportunities are relevant, accessible, and grounded in strong relationships, families are better equipped to support their children and themselves. Effective adult learning honors family strengths, experiences, and cultural backgrounds.

Strategy:	Action Item:
Identify adult learning interests and needs and ensure adult learning opportunities reflect those interests	☐ Ask families which adult learning topics would be most helpful for themselves or their children ☐ Provide sample topic and content options to support feedback ☐ Invite families to suggest additional programs or curriculum ideas ☐ Partner with Parent University, RISE, and community-based organizations
Design effective adult learning practices that are relational, respectful, and asset-based	☐ Create engaging lesson plans that include experiential and interactive learning ☐ Ask open-ended questions and recognize families' existing knowledge and experiences ☐ Ensure learning opportunities are culturally responsive and collaborative
Promote opportunities through accessible platforms and make sure families are aware of learning opportunities through channels they already use	☐ Advertise through social media and short video commercials ☐ Promote events using school communication platforms ☐ Partner with local establishments and organizations to share information widely
Remove barriers that may prevent families from participating in adult learning opportunities	☐ Partner with Parent University to offer childcare, interpretation, and/or transportation ☐ Consider scheduling options that accommodate family availability
Offer timely and relevant learning opportunities that address current family needs and life transitions	☐ Offer guidance on supporting students and navigating challenging topics such as: ○ Social-emotional learning ○ Digital literacy and online safety ☐ Provide transition events for families of students moving to kindergarten, 1 st grade, middle school, and high school

Together, we will provide relevant, timely adult learning to strengthen families' confidence, build capacity, and deepen partnerships that support student success.