Self-Assessment: School Level

Section 1. Introduction and Purpose

This tool was developed to support educators' collaborative reflection on systemic family and community engagement practices in their school. It is aligned to the Washington Statewide Family Engagement Center (WASFEC) school-based online learning modules and draws on the dual capacity framework, Washington Family Engagement Framework, and SISEP District Capacity Assessment used by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

What is systemic family engagement?

Systemic family and community engagement is a "full and equitable partnership among families, educators, providers, and communities to support learners' development from birth through college and career. It is a collective responsibility that means doing with—not doing for—families. Family engagement promotes equity and success for all families, achieving equitable outcomes by recognizing the diversity of family types, by using a multi-generational lens, and through cultural and linguistic competency and responsiveness."[1]

Who is this tool for?

This tool is intended to be used by a school team in collaboration with families and community partners. An ideal team composition for this work includes four to six participants who represent diverse roles and perspectives. Potential participant roles could include, but are not limited to:

- Families
- Students
- Educators
- School support staff (i.e. Family engagement liaison, counselor, social worker)
- Administrators
- Community partners

How can this tool support family engagement in my school?

This tool helps teams reflect on their school's current family engagement practices with the goal of celebrating strengths and identifying opportunities for meaningful growth and improvement. It is intended to support teams to create momentum for strategic planning that leads to equity-driven cultural change, the empowerment of families, and shared decision-making to benefit students.

How should you use this tool?

This tool is intended to support your team's collaborative reflection on current strengths and areas for improvement as you complete the WASFEC school-based modules. We recommend that each member of the team complete the assessment from their perspective, then come together to spend time in collaborative conversation to make meaning of the ratings. Teams should discuss areas of strength and opportunities for growth as they complete the assessment. This tool can be used in sections—to focus on specific areas of family and community engagement—or in its entirety, serving as a broad overview of family engagement practices in your setting. This self-assessment can also be completed annually or as needed.

The seven main categories of the assessment represent broad foundational elements of effective and systemic family engagement practices and beliefs. Teams will collaborate and identify their level of implementation in the following areas:

*Table 1. Categories and definitions of systemic family engagement*

Category	Definition
Leadership, vision, and values	• Defined vision and values that elevate family and community engagement • Family engagement goals connected to their Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) • Leadership expectations that are aligned to defined values and vision for family and community engagement
Beliefs and mindsets	• Ensuring staff members have asset-based beliefs about families
Relationships and relational trust	• The importance of establishing strong relationships with families, rooted in trust • Inclusive and welcoming environments • Culturally responsive, equitable, and asset-based approaches to engaging students and families
Two-way communication	• Differentiated and community focused two-way communication
Collaboration and shared power	• Shared leadership, decision-making, and power with families and community
Systemic engagement	• Policies (e.g., board policies and other formal rules) • Structures that support family and community engagement • Sustainable resources and capacity
Collecting and sharing data	• Meaningful measures of family and community engagement data collection aligned to vision and goals • System-focused accountability measures and outcomes

Table 2. Reflection scale

Level of implementation	Description
1. We haven't started	–
2. We are just beginning	We have started conversations and planning for this but are just beginning to implement
3. We have some elements in place	We have a clear plan of action and are implementing some aspects
4. We have this fully in place	We are implementing our plan for this schoolwide with fidelity

Section 2. Self-Assessment

Category 1. Leadership, vision, and values
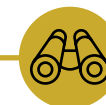
GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Does your school have a clearly stated vision statement for family engagement? What is it?
- How clearly are the guiding principles, expectations, and objectives for family engagement identified and communicated to all staff members and families?
- How does your school make decisions? Do you use a framework for decision-making that aligns with the core values of family engagement?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet have a vision for family engagement.	School has started a process for developing a vision for family engagement.	School has a vision for family engagement, but it does not fully center asset-based, culturally responsive family engagement and shared decision-making.	School has a vision of family engagement that centers asset-based, culturally responsive family engagement and shared decision-making.	
School does not yet have goals related to family engagement.	School has started a process for developing family engagement goals	School has goals, but they were developed by educators without family and community input	School has goals related to family engagement that were collaboratively developed by educators and families. School has well-developed work plan and associated action steps	

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet have family engagement goals in the CSIP.	School has started to add family engagement goals to the CSIP.	School's CSIP has family engagement goals, but they are not embedded throughout other areas (e.g., academics, culture).	School's family engagement goals were co-developed and are embedded throughout the CSIP (e.g., academics, culture).	
School does not yet have defined expectations for staff members and administrators related to family engagement.	School has started a process for developing family engagement expectations for staff members and administrators but they remain unclear.	School has expectations for staff members and administrators related to family engagement, but they are not fully aligned to the vision for family engagement or met consistently across the school community.	School has defined expectations for staff members and administrators aligned to a vision for asset-based, culturally responsive family engagement and shared decision-making, *and* staff members consistently understand and meet expectations.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

What is your team's biggest strength and challenge in defining a clear and actionable vision for family engagement?

Category 2. Beliefs and Mindsets

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do educators' beliefs and mindsets impact student outcomes?

- How can staff members recognize the funds of knowledge and unique contributions of all families?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
Staff members do not yet have the opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and mindsets.	Staff members have a few opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and mindsets.	Staff members have opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and mindsets and how these shape their instruction but are not provided with professional development to support mindset shifts.	Staff members regularly reflect on their beliefs and mindsets and how these shape their instruction, student outcomes, and relationships with families. Staff members are given professional development and team learning to support positive mindset shifts.	
Most staff members believe that family engagement should be led by a few individuals.	A few staff members believe that family engagement is everyone's responsibility.	Most staff members believe that family engagement is everyone's responsibility.	All staff members understand that family engagement is everyone's responsibility.	
Most staff members do not yet recognize and value the funds of knowledge and unique contributions of all families.	A few staff members recognize and value the funds of knowledge and unique contributions of all families.	Most staff members recognize and value the funds of knowledge and unique contributions of all families.	All staff members recognize and value the funds of knowledge and unique contributions of all families.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

How can your school support all staff members to have the asset-based mindsets and beliefs necessary for equitable family engagement for all?

Category 3. Relationships and relational trust

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do educators reflect on how they build strong relationships with families? Does your school provide opportunities for this reflection?

- What are the qualities of a welcoming school environment? Have you implemented these elements?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School environment does not yet reflect the diversity of the community and there are no systems to support educators to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment.	School has started to add elements that reflect the diversity of the community and has started to support educators to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment.	School environment mostly reflects the diversity of the community, and educators are supported to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment.	School environment reflects the diversity of the community, and the school has systems to support educators to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment.	
School does not yet implement asset-based family engagement practices.	School is starting to implement asset-based family engagement practices that value the funds of knowledge of all families.	School often implements asset-based family engagement practices that value the funds of knowledge of all families.	School routinely implements asset-based family engagement practices that value the funds of knowledge of all families. Families feel valued and respected as essential partners.	

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet provide support for educators to build relationships with families.	School supports educators to build relationships with families and provides some training on culturally responsive family engagement.	School often supports educators to build authentic, trusting relationships with families. Staff members receive occasional training on culturally responsive family engagement practices.	School has a system in place that supports educators to build authentic, trusting relationships with families. Staff members regularly receive training on culturally responsive family engagement practices and strategies for shared power and decision-making with families.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

How does your school foster trusting relationships between families and educators?

Category 4. Two-way communication

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do we know our school's communication efforts reach all families?

- How frequently and in what ways do we communicate with families?

- Is communication culturally responsive and two-way?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School has mostly one-way communication from the school to families.	School has started to develop systems for two-way communication but not all staff members are trained on using the system.	School has systems for culturally responsive, two-way communication and training for staff members on best practices.	School has systems for culturally responsive, two-way communication, engages with families to understand their communication preferences, and routinely takes action based on family feedback.	
Communication is accessible to a few families.	Communication is accessible to some families.	Communication is accessible to most families.	Communication is accessible to all families (translated, culturally relevant, and multi-modal).	
School does not yet offer support for families to use communication platforms.	Some families who need support on communication platforms used by the school receive it.	Most families who need support on communication platforms used by the school receive it.	Families receive training and support on communication platforms used by the school.	

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet offer support for staff members to use communication platforms.	Some staff members who need support on communication platforms used by the school receive it.	Most staff members who need support on communication platforms used by the school receive it.	All school staff members receive training and ongoing support to use communication platforms.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

What communication efforts are working well, and what new forms of two-way communication could your school develop?

Category 5. Collaboration and shared power

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What shared power and decision-making opportunities does your school provide to families?

- How could your school establish a process for engaging community partners to strengthen family engagement efforts?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet have structures or resources to support collaboration with families.	School is beginning to develop structures to support collaboration with families.	School has some structures and resources that support collaboration with some families.	School has sufficient structures and resources that support collaboration with all families.	
School does not yet have structures or resources to support collaboration with community partners.	School is beginning to develop structures to support collaboration with community partners.	School has some structures and resources that support collaboration with community partners. Staff members' awareness and use of these is inconsistent.	School has structures and resources that support collaboration with community partners. Staff members are aware of these structures and resources and leverage them consistently.	
Families and community partners are not yet involved in school decision-making structures.	School is beginning to develop structures to include families and community partners in decision-making.	Some families and community partners are active participants in some school decision-making structures.	Families and community partners are active participants in school decision-making structures. This practice has become internalized as a part of the school's decision-making process, and families represent the school demographics.	

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
Educators do not yet collaborate with families regarding student learning.	Some educators are beginning to collaborate with families and the community to personalize student learning.	Educators at times collaborate with families and the community to personalize student learning.	Educators regularly collaborate with families and the community to personalize student learning, including supporting learning at home.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

How are families involved in decision-making at your school? What new opportunities exist for shared power at your school?

Category 6. Systemic engagement

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Have you identified all mandated family engagement activities and their impact level?

- How have you assessed whether current strategies align with high-impact practices?

- How have you embedded family engagement expectations into key school policies (e.g., teacher evaluations, school improvement plans)?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
Family engagement is not yet included in school policies and improvement plans.	School is starting to include family engagement in policies and improvement plans.	Family engagement is at times included in school policies and improvement plans, as required.	Family engagement is embedded in school policies and improvement plans, beyond adherence to requirements.	
School does not yet have any resources or staffing to support family-school partnerships.	School is starting to dedicate resources and staffing to support family-school partnerships.	School has some resources and staffing to support ongoing family-school partnerships.	School has adequate resources and staffing to support ongoing family-school partnerships.	
School does not yet offer capacity-building for educators and families to collaborate.	School is starting to offer capacity-building for educators and families to collaborate, but these opportunities are not designed in partnership with families.	School offers some capacity-building for educators and families to collaborate, and families have some input on the design of these opportunities.	School routinely offers capacity-building for educators and families to foster equitable collaborations, and these opportunities are co-designed with families.	

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet collaborate with community organizations.	School is starting to collaborate with community organizations.	School often collaborates with community organizations.	School regularly collaborates with community organizations to support student and family needs.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

How can equitable family engagement for all be further embedded and systemic at your school?

Category 7. Collecting and sharing data

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What data collection methods and tracking systems are in place to measure family engagement success? Are you collecting data that informs what you want to know?

- Have you developed a rubric or method for assessing family engagement efforts across your school community?

- Do you have clear systems for acknowledging and celebrating successes?

- What opportunities do families have to review and make meaning from data?

Please rate your level of implementation based on the following statements:

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet have metrics for assessing family engagement.	School is starting to develop metrics to assess family engagement.	School has developed some metrics for assessing family engagement.	School community has co-developed metrics for assessing authentic family engagement.	
School does not yet collect data on effectiveness of family engagement practices.	School is starting to collect data on effectiveness of family engagement practices.	School community collaboratively collects data on metrics that measure family engagement and at times use this data to drive decision-making.	School community collaboratively collects data on co-developed metrics that assess authentic family engagement and collaboratively uses data to drive decision-making and ensure systems-level accountability.	

1. We haven't started	2. We are just beginning	3. We have some elements in place	4. We have this fully in place	Evidence
School does not yet share data related to family engagement with families or communities.	School and community are starting to collaborate to make meaning of data.	School and community sometimes collaborate to share and make meaning of data.	School and community collaborate to transparently share and make meaning of data to inform decision-making.	
School does not yet have family engagement metrics.	Family engagement metrics are somewhat aligned with the school and district's vision and goals for family engagement.	Family engagement metrics are mostly aligned with the school and district's vision and goals for family engagement.	Family engagement metrics are well aligned with the school and district's vision and goals for family engagement.	

AFTER FILLING OUT YOUR LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECT:

What challenges does your school face in sharing data with families? What are your school's strengths and challenges in monitoring the effectiveness of family engagement practices?

Prioritization and Action Steps

After your team completes the self-assessment, you will reflect on these questions when developing your action plan in Module 8.

- Based on your team's self-assessment, what are your top three areas of strength in family engagement? Where are you excelling and what are you proud of?

- What are your top three areas of growth or biggest gaps? Where can you make your family engagement efforts more systemic or equitable?

- Which priority area will you focus on first to improve equitable family engagement at your school?

Endnote

[1] Rees, H. (2021). *Family engagement framework: 2021 report to the legislature.* Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.