

VOICES from the field



A SNAPSHOT OF STATEWIDE FAMILY, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Sixteen regional [State Support Teams of the Ohio Department of Education](#) provide supports to local schools and families. These teams help schools develop the capacity to implement evidence-based processes and practices supporting learning across all levels. One evidence-based practice area is Family and Community Engagement. School partnerships with families and communities to support student learning is advanced by the State Support Teams through professional development, coaching, technical assistance and resources for school personnel and family members—including educators and families of students with disabilities, English Learners, and foster families.

In the fall of 2016, each State Support Team selected one of their many family and community engagement activities to study as a year-long action research project. This report describes the diverse and innovative set of practices studied by the State Support Teams and offers a glimpse of the wide array of supports provided to families and schools to enhance home-school-community partnerships.

The [Ohio State University, Center for Education and Training for Employment](#) (OSU) is a proud partner of the State Support Teams, working to enhance and expand family and community engagement in Ohio. Together, OSU and the Ohio Department of Education have established the Family and Community Engagement Network—a Community of Practice dedicated to advancing and supporting collaboration. This report was prepared by OSU to provide a snapshot of the efforts in Ohio to bring schools, families, and communities together to create the supports all students need to succeed in life.

***Ohio's State
Support Teams
equip families and
schools to work
together to
support student
learning.***

Electronic version available at: u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships



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“ Providing families with the information they need to use Career Connections and Ohio Means Jobs will help them be active participants in the transition planning process. ”

Action

The [State Support Team of Region 1](#) provided professional development for educators to enhance their knowledge and skills for engaging families in the post-secondary transition planning process. As a part of the professional development, educators were provided with career planning tools they could utilize when planning with families, including Career Connections and [OhioMeansJobs](#) (CC and OMJ). One tool, a Parent Resource, was promoted for educators to use as they support families through the secondary transition planning process.

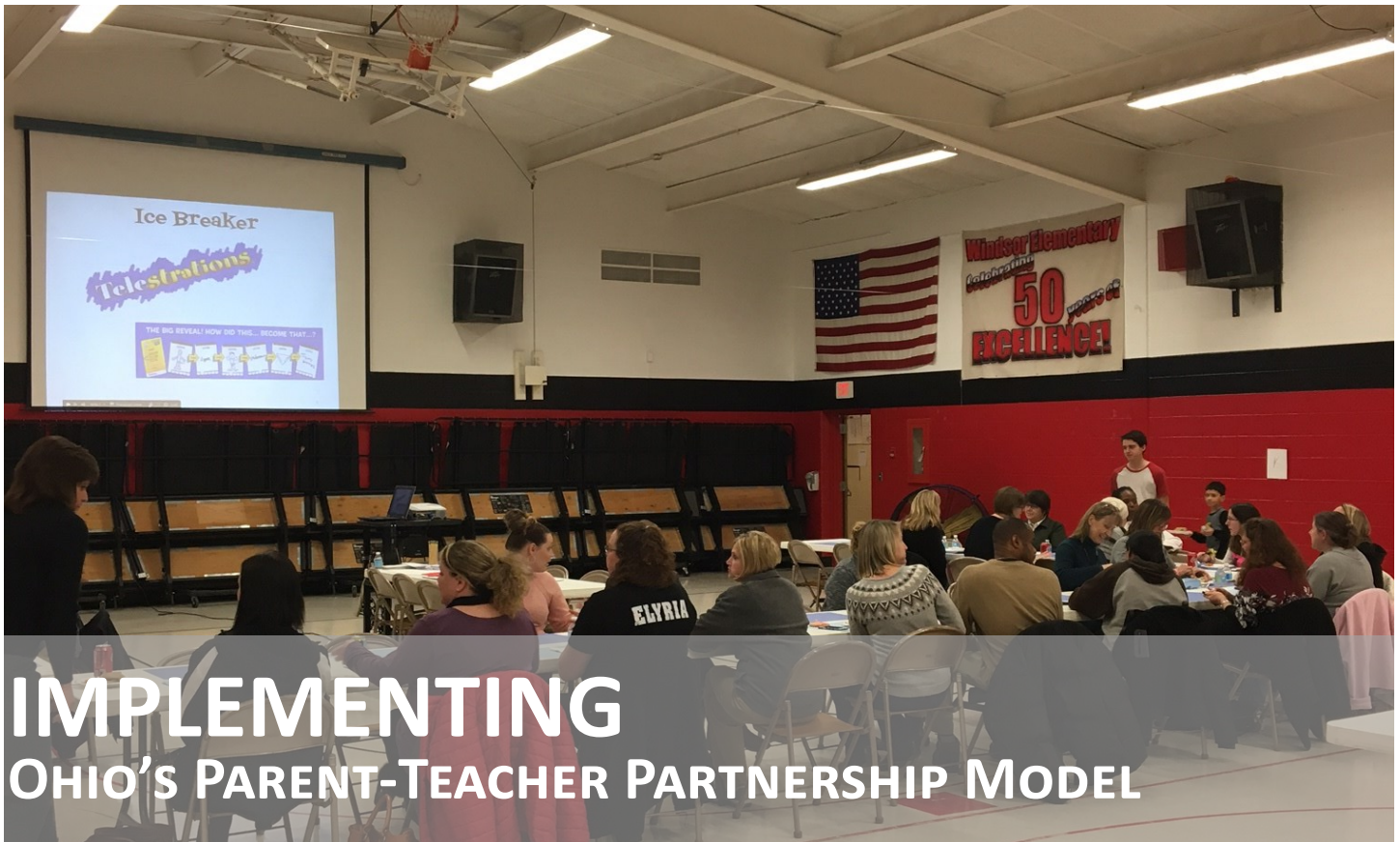
Impact

The Region 1 State Support Team surveyed the CC/OMJ training participants from the past two years to determine how many provide the OMJ Parent Resource to parents of students. If the baseline is low, the State Support Team will change their approach to the training and provide more explicit instruction on using the Parent tool. If the baseline is high, the State Support Team will have the educators survey the parents and determine if the tool increased the participation of parents in the transition planning process.



VOICES

from the field



Action

The Region 2 State Support Team focused their action research on the implementation of the [Ohio Parent-Teacher Partnership](https://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships) (PTP) model in one school district. Teacher and parent teams met four times a year to discuss topics such as communication, respect, equality, and decision-making. Parents and teachers shared their experiences and developed ideas for how their district could improve their partnerships with families.

Impact

Using a rubric developed by the Family and Community Engagement Network, the district began with a self assessment. After implementation of the PTP model, the SST looked for evidence that the District Leadership Team was reviewing data from the parent and teacher meetings and including it in district improvement planning.



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Integrating Family Engagement in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)



Action

[State Support Team 3](#) provided all of their regional staff with professional development and tools for supporting family engagement and PBIS equipping them to work with families and schools in their region. SST staff members then visited local PBIS schools and utilized the [PBIS Family Engagement Tier I Rubric](#) to assess each school's level of family engagement.

Impact

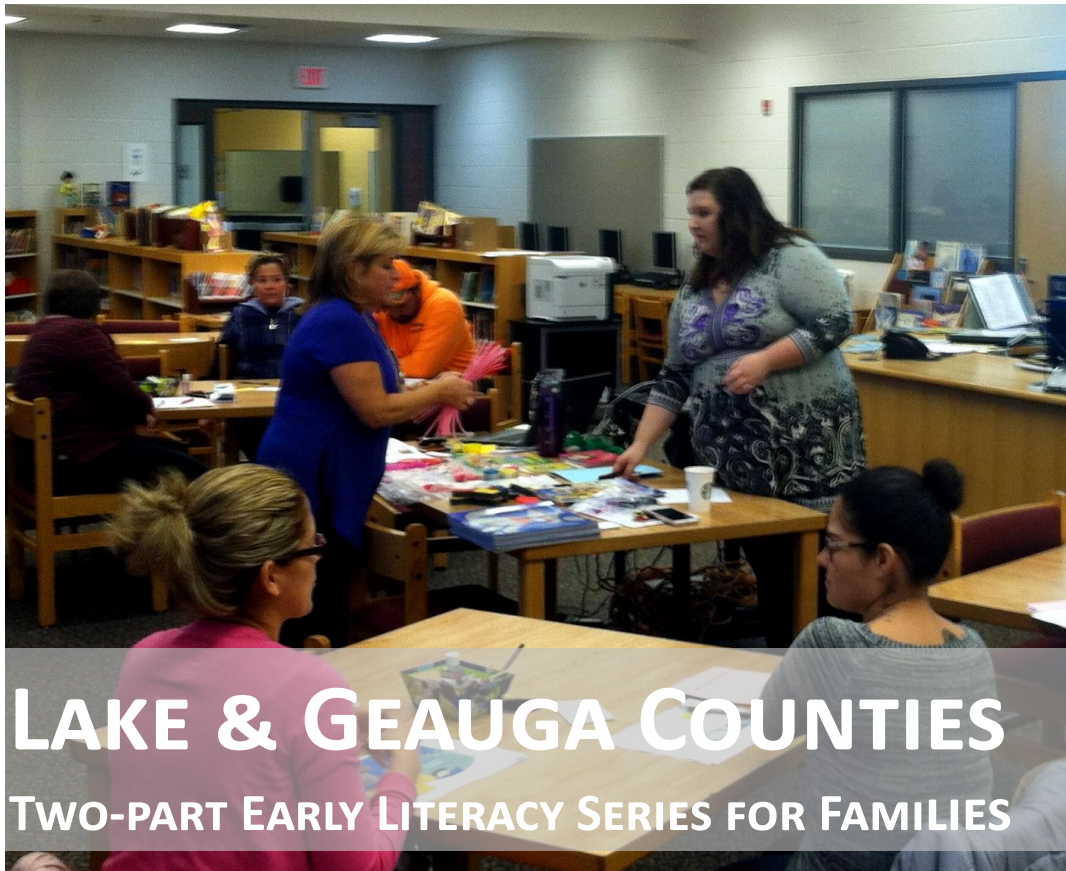
The regional team rated multiple districts using the [PBIS Family Engagement Tier I Rubric](#) to determine a baseline of implementation in the region. After 6 months of trainings for the districts, another rating was completed with a sample of districts in the region to measure growth from baseline. The PBIS Family Engagement Rubric pictured above can be found online at:

<http://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/pbis>

SST 4



VOICES from the field



LAKE & GEAUGA COUNTIES TWO-PART EARLY LITERACY SERIES FOR FAMILIES

Action

The [State Support Team in Region 4](#) designed and delivered a two-part, early language and literacy development series for families, titled “Engaging Your Child for Reading Success.” After piloting the series, a Train the Trainer event was provided to district literacy specialists, curriculum directors, and early childhood leaders so that they could offer the same training for families in their districts.

Impact

To measure the impact of each series for families, the SST used pre- and post- training surveys of families’ perceptions. Survey items measured families’ perceptions of their role in their children’s early language and literacy development, their comfort working with their child, and the impact on their child.



VOICES from the field



Building Strong Foundations for Educational Success

One of the best gifts you can give your child is a great foundation before going off to kindergarten. DSAV invites you to attend the Smart Start sessions which will help you better understand what successful students with Down syndrome have in common. Your attendance will help you send your child with Down syndrome off to the first day of kindergarten with excitement instead of trepidation. You will have the opportunity to ask questions, learn about local resources, and to meet other parents whose children are also preparing to enter kindergarten.

OPEN TO PARENTS WITH A CHILD AGES 4, 5 OR 6 YEARS OLD. • 1 or 2 years before entering Kindergarten or currently in Kindergarten

Each of the 4 sessions in this series will be held at DSAV Center for Success at 6pm

SESSION 1: NOVEMBER 16th Getting Ready for Kindergarten

- Setting High Expectations
- Practicing our Listening Skills
- Transitions
- Being Friends

SESSION 2: JANUARY 18th Communication & School Relationships

- Communicating effectively
- What is family school communication?
- Building family school relations

SESSION 3: MARCH 14th Families and the IEP process

- What is an IEP?
- What should be on an IEP?
- What is the role of the family in the IEP?
- The ABC's of the IEP?

SESSION 4: MAY 17th Fostering Friendships

- Social skills for success
- Creating social opportunities
- Extra-curricular activities
- Diversity Awareness



• While attendance to all 4 sessions is not required to participate, it is highly recommended as sessions build upon each other

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Systemic Integration of Family Engagement

Action

State Support Team 5 took a systemic approach to Family Engagement, working to integrate these critical partnerships in all major work areas of the SST. This included integrating family engagement in the SSTs work with schools for the Ohio Improvement Process, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Integrated-Comprehensive Services, Universal Design for Learning, Special Education, and Early Learning. They included professional development on family engagement for districts/community agencies and developed a parent resource notebook for all participants.

Impact

The focus on family and community engagement was designed to increase collaboration between schools and families and to increase the number of parents and community members receiving information. The goal for districts was their incorporation of family and community engagement into their Focus Plans. Leveraging technology, SST 5 used a Google doc so all staff could document the number of community partnerships established, the number of parents who attended and received information, and the number of Focus Plans that included family and community engagement strategies or action steps. In addition, they routinely collected all family communications to track and analyze impact and areas of need for the region.

SST 6



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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TEAMS FOCUS ON SCHOOL CLIMATE

Action

The [State Support Team from Region 6](#) invited seven districts to send teams of administrators, family members, and teachers to participate in a year-long professional development series. Participating school building teams completed a 3-part series: 1) establishing a team of family and community engagement partners, 2) conducting a needs assessment, and 3) completing an action plan for addressing needs and identifying funding sources. Schools received mini grants to support each step of the process.

Impact



The SST collected feedback from teams after each session to monitor the quality of the professional development. In addition, SST staff worked with the school teams to recruit local stakeholders to complete a thorough Welcoming Walk-Through assessment of the school. In the end, the SST is tracking each team's completion of their action plan and providing tailored support for implementation.

The guides for developing a family engagement team and planning family engagement activities used in this project can be found @ <https://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/documents/>

Family-School-Community Partnerships Planning Guide Version 1

Establish a Team of Family Engagement Partners

Your family engagement team may be a group of parents and caregivers, a group of educators, parents and community representatives, or another combination. Most importantly, the family engagement team gives families a voice and ownership in decision making and planning. Families bring perspectives and knowledge that will benefit planning and programs for their children, and for other families in their community. This guide provides the why, what, when, and how steps for establishing and growing family engagement teams. While written in a broad way, it is appropriate for each team to be more narrowly focused on their region and their specific purpose. For example, a school district Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) team or District Leadership Team (DLT) may establish a subgroup charged with focused planning and action for engaging families. At a broader level, regional/county initiatives (such as Safe Schools Healthy Students) might use this guidance to establish teams of partners for planning and implementing family engagement strategies. Once a family engagement team has been started, members can re-examine and revise the team purpose, meeting times, members and other aspects that this guide helps establish. Throughout the guide, you will find questions for discussion to assist with your team development.

Getting Started

First impressions are important. For the initial meeting of your family engagement team, the primary goal should be to establish positive relationships between team members, to make members feel their contribution to the team is valued for the perspectives they bring.

This is especially important for parent/caregiver and student representatives. Consider holding an orientation for the parent/caregiver and student members to set them at ease, clarify the importance of their perspectives and role on the team. If there is information that will be helpful for group members to understand in order to fully participate in the meetings and planning, take time to provide that information for members to read (view on video, listen to recording, etc.) before the first working meeting.

Be sure to allow time for team members to be introduced, to clarify the purpose and expectations of the team and the expectations of the group members. Take time to let members share their hopes for the team.

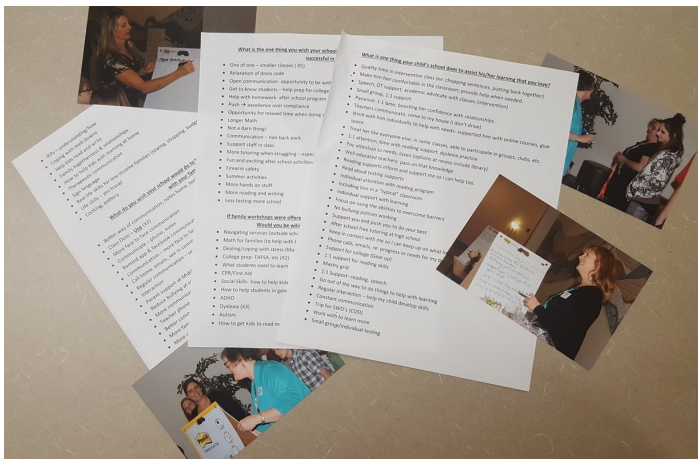
You can take time to let the group decide on their group norms for how they will function as a team and ensure that dates and times for meetings are set.



SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGE with **The Ohio Improvement Process**

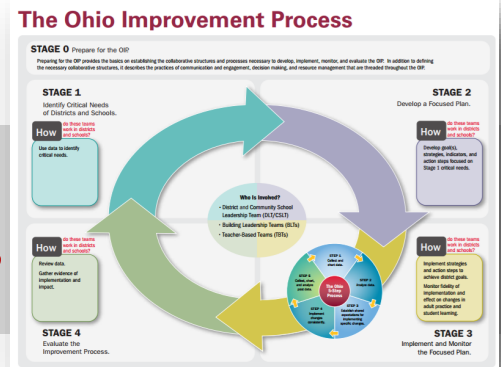
Action

Using the [Ohio Improvement Process five-step strategy](#), [State Support Team 7](#) completed a self-assessment using the [Family and Community Engagement Self-Assessment Tool](#) developed by OSU. This is a tool used annually by the SST Family Engagement Workgroup to review each SST's



efforts in the area of family engagement. Based on their results, SST 7 integrated professional learning opportunities into each of their regional leadership networks in order to build district capacity for family engagement. By embedding family and community engagement into leadership meetings, they increased collaboration among all

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stakeholders, and facilitated recognition of the importance of family engagement by both districts and families. This work improved districts' capacity to engage and integrate families, including action steps and tasks embedded into their district and building focused plans.

Impact

SST 7 measured their impact using several different tracking methods. First, they monitored leadership agendas ensuring the topic of family engagement was included each month. Then, they collected 5-Step Process notes to track adult implementation. They also revisited the FCE Self-Assessment tool to identify growth and make course corrections as an SST. To build on past successes, they collected strategies and best practices that have been successful in the region. They created a list of family engagement contacts from districts in the region, executed a data calendar of adult behavior inclusive of dates and action steps taken, examined drawings of family engagement models for changes, and collected family perception data about their school in the area of family engagement.



SHOWCASING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Action

[State Support Team 8](#) organized a Family Engagement Showcase for school districts across the region. The showcase recognized district or building-level family engagement strategies that fostered communication between teachers, schools, and families. District personnel presented posters explaining their success stories. The districts connected their strategy to one of the six types of parent involvement from Epstein's Framework: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaboration with the Community. Districts submitted a one-page

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description of the implementation of the strategy and the systemic implications of the success it generated.

Impact

Pre- and post- surveys of districts measured if they added any activities or opportunities for collaboration to their buildings or district as a result of the showcase. The baseline survey was given at the event before the showcase and the follow-up surveys are planned for next school year.



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WELCOMING FAMILIES INTO THE CLASSROOM FOR EARLY LITERACY EXPERIENCES



Impact

SST staff members requested parents' feedback after each session through exit tickets. The team also utilized pre- and post-surveys and captured personal testimonies to measure the impact for families— including increased literacy practices at home.



Action

[State Support Team 9](#) brought families into the classroom to work with their children and teachers on early literacy practices. Families participated in activities that facilitated the modeling and integration of foundational literacy skills that are critical to the development of emerging reading. This time in the classroom allowed the parents and teachers to develop relationships and a common understanding of the value of emerging literacy supports. SST staff developed and led these interactive and fun events.

SST 10



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Building Up Our Parent Advisory Council



Work Together

Action

[State Support Team 10](#) focused their efforts on expanding the membership and resources available to their Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and other families in their region. The PAC is a group of parents, caregivers, and community representatives that assists the SST in planning learning opportunities and educational programs for parents who have children with disabilities. They discuss current issues, share updated information, share resources, and learn about parent and family opportunities. This year, the SST expanded the community agencies represented on the PAC from the region's six counties. Community agency representatives shared information and resources for families in order to increase access for families across the region.

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Impact

To measure the impact of their efforts to expand their PAC and also expand resources accessed by families of children with disabilities in their region, SST 10 staff members collected and monitored sign-in sheets and agendas at monthly meetings. They also created and monitored flyers regarding guest speakers providing information to parents and survey results after each event. They conducted a needs assessment from the PAC members and also tracked the number of hits on the SST "Parents" page. They noted an increase in the number of parents/families subscribers from all counties in the region.



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Supporting the Individualized Education Program Process for Parents Learning English

Action

[State Support Team 11](#) expanded their outreach services to more diverse populations of families with a focus on Spanish-speaking and Somali families. SST staff members identified community agencies that support specific diverse family groups. They worked to develop partnerships with agencies to increase collaboration and networking opportunities and recruited interpreters to participate in SST family events. Interpreters met with families, translated vital documents for families of children with disabilities, and worked with the SST to develop and maintain a language accessible website.

Impact

The State Support Team assessed family participation in learning opportunities at the SST including their annual “IEP Clinic.” Their pre- and post- assessments and a follow-up survey measured families’ understanding of the IEP process and if families took a more active role in the IEP process after the training.





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EARLY LITERACY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



Action

[State Support Team 12](#) Consultants met with preschool and kindergarten families and teachers at Harrison Hills North Elementary School for four, 1-1/2 hour sessions to discuss and share ideas on how parents can engage in literacy activities at home with their children. Children's fiction and nonfiction books were used to lead discussions on rhyme, repetition, sight words, oral language, environment, play, and writing. Books and hands-on activities were included for parents to take home for their children to read and explore together. This was the second year for the project, and it expanded from preschool to include kindergarten and to also include Head Start students living in the North Elementary District.

Impact

Results of the SST's evaluation indicate parents that attended were more involved in learning at home, had fun with academic activities, and saw results in literacy. The expected long term impact includes increased learning partnerships with families as students get older through the development of partnership teams reflective of Epstein's Model.





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Action

State Support Team 13's action research project embedded family engagement in two trainings with preschool teachers and childcare providers. The goal of embedding family engagement research and strategies into these trainings was to increase preschool teachers' and childcare providers' knowledge of how to build strong partnerships with families. The research-based frameworks for family engagement developed at Johns Hopkins University by Joyce Epstein and the University of Kansas by Ann Turnbull were embedded in the two sessions. Engagement strategies included how to involve parents, how to share information with parents, and communicating how parents can support their children.

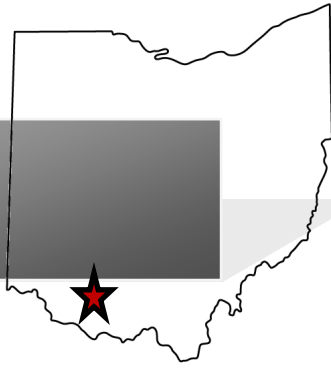
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

Impact

To gauge the learning outcomes for the participating early childhood professionals, the SST conducted post-training surveys and training evaluations to measure participants' awareness and acquired knowledge.



SST 14



VOICES from the field

IMPLEMENTING OHIO'S PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP MODEL



Action

[State Support Team 14](#) implemented [Ohio's Parent Teacher Partnership Model](#) (PTP) as the focus of their year-long action research project. The PTP involves a two-year commitment with eight training sessions for parent and teachers that are facilitated by a parent-teacher co-facilitator team. The series of modules were developed as a part of Ohio's State Personnel Development Grant. The purpose of implementing the PTP was to build relationships between educators and families, promoting better communication while removing barriers between school and the home.

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Impact

The SST measured the impact of the PTP by monitoring the number of activities aimed at partnering with families that were implemented by schools and also the level of family involvement in the activities. The long term goal was to improve student outcomes.



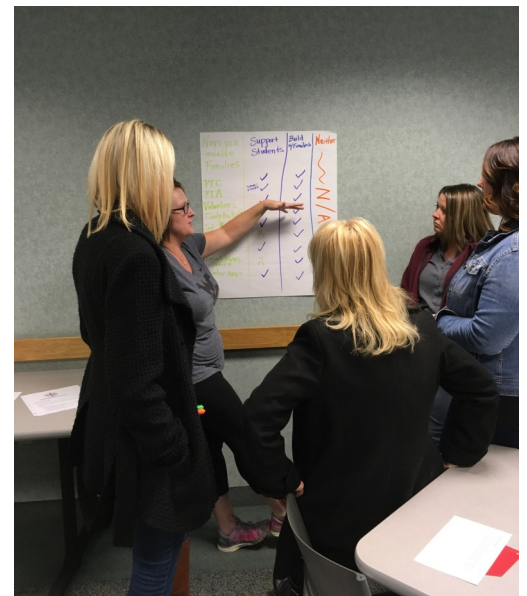
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PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO SUPPORT EARLY LITERACY

**A professional development course
for teachers Pre-K through Grade 3**

Action

[State Support Team 15](#) hosted a brand new family engagement professional development series in Waverly, Ohio for PreK-3rd grade teachers in Regions 14, 15, and 16. This four day professional development series was developed through a partnership with OSU. It focused on teachers' skills at working with families, and covered content on communication, mindset, and early literacy. Teachers received graduate credits through a local university for taking the course. SST staff from all three regions participated in leading the class and engaged in coaching conversations with the teachers from their region.



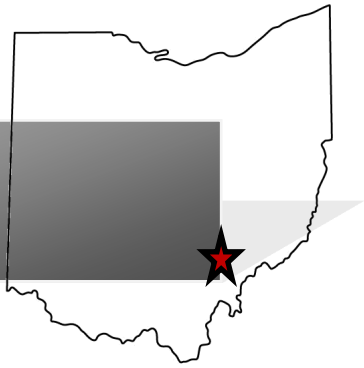
Impact

In partnership with OSU, SST 15 and their partners conducted a research study to measure the impact of participation in the class on teachers' attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about family engagement, and early literacy practices. Early results indicate teachers' efficacy for working with families increased after completion of the course. In addition, the SST collected feedback from teachers after each session and used the data to improve the professional development course.

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SST 16



Parent Mentors and SSTs Work Together



Action

As the focus of their action research project, [State Support Team 16](#) increased communication with [Parent Mentors](#) in the Region and invited them to trainings and meetings. Parent Mentors are positioned as liaisons between the SST, parents, and school district administrators. Each Parent Mentor was asked to hold one event for parents in partnership with the SST or set up an information table at a school function in the region. The purpose of this action research project was to position Parent Mentors as leaders for other parents, increase awareness of the services of Parent Mentors to families in the region, to

increase the participation of Parent Mentors on District Leadership Teams, and encourage them to become more involved in their school district and with the SST.

Impact

SST 16 implemented the Parent Mentor Survey to measure Parent Mentors' attendance at meetings, how many parents in the region they assisted over the year, their role description, and how the SST could improve the supports they provide to the Parent Mentors.

Regional Contacts

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"It is our mission to support and shed light on Ohio's efforts to bring together families, schools, and communities."

For more information about our work, please contact us at results@osu.edu.

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