

VOICES

from the field

2017-2018



A Snapshot of Ohio's Regional Supports for
Family, School, and Community Engagement



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

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



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A letter from the authors



The [Ohio State University, Center on Education and Training for Employment](#) is a proud partner of the Ohio Department of Education's, State Support Teams, working to enhance and expand family and community engagement in Ohio. Together, OSU and the ODE have established the Family and Community Engagement Network—a Community of Practice dedicated to advancing and supporting collaboration. This report provides 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. The work of Ohio's regional offices extends far beyond what we were able to present in this report. We love our work supporting Ohio's sixteen regions, and wanted to share with you some highlights from this year:



The work featured in this report is a great example of how Ohio's regions are building the dual capacity of families and educators. 12 regions highlighted here provided training and supports for families or parent mentors, and 7 regions provided training and supports for educators and other professionals working with families.



Members of this Network take what they learn at meetings and webinars back to their regions and implement it quickly and efficiently. The work highlighted from Regions 1, 7, and 15 demonstrates this well.



A detailed look at events hosted by Ohio's regional teams reveals a plethora of collaborative partners who work with State Support Team staff, such as local libraries (see SST 5 and 12 for examples), OCALI, ODE Leadership (see SST 15), Developmental Disabilities offices, Parent Mentors, and more!

We hope you enjoy and learn from this report representing some of the great work going on in Ohio this year!

Sincerely, Barbara Boone and Meredith Wellman

The Ohio State University



VOICES from the field

USING IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF PARENT MENTORS AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES WITHIN PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS



Action

Region 1 worked to improve the efforts of the Parent Advisory Council, PAC. The council's mission and values were undefined and member participation was wary. The team collaborated and answered many tough and important questions about their work while identifying a common definition for the council. The team utilized the frameworks of implementation science to begin to develop an elevator pitch and terms of reference. Work of the PAC will continue to flourish as a result of using the implementation science tools in the 2018-2019 school year.

Impact

Region 1 wants to have a cohesive and collaborative Parent Advisory Council that truly has an impact on the families supported by the participating community agencies and parent mentors. By using the tools from the implementation science framework, the group has developed a systems-based approach to their work that ensures all decisions are aligned and appropriate to meet the needs of families.



VOICES from the field

FAMILIES CONNECTING HEALTH, BEHAVIOR, AND ACHIEVEMENT



Action

Region 2 focused on integrating Parent Engagement in both the Healthy Schools Initiative and in the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Parents in Elyria attended evening events throughout the year in which they learned, through activity-based centers, the connections between family/student health and student achievement.

These nights covered concepts such as Yoga in the Classroom, Nutrition on a Budget, Mental Health, Family Exercise Routines, and Utilizing Technology to track and improve overall health.

Impact

In many districts, families were represented on PBIS Planning Teams and provided valuable insight and perspective from the family point of view. PBIS Home Matrices were developed and the importance of using common language around social/emotional concepts added to the value of including families in this school improvement initiative.

The picture depicts parents and educators, from the Monroeville Schools, discussing the implementation of PBIS in their district.



VOICES from the field



Family Leadership Network Meets Local Needs

Action

Region 3 provided their districts opportunities to develop their Family Engagement planning through technical assistance and leadership development of their selected Family Representatives and Parent Mentors. Through the SST 3 Family Leadership Network district representatives, Family Representatives, Parent Mentors and local Community Agencies meet three times a year to share resources, develop collaborative trainings and discuss local issues impacting student learning.

Impact

Region 3 targets topics from data gathered in the region and shares targeted information related to student learning like Early Literacy, School Improvement, Special Education Compliance, PBIS and Family Engagement. Teams are in the early stages of developing their individual action plans that address targeted areas important to their own districts with a focus on student learning. Results will be tracked over the next several years as they monitor family engagement activities and increased involvement. Agendas, attendance and feedback is tracked and follow up is provided in response to feedback received.



VOICES from the field



Action

Region 4 provided targeted professional development, coaching, technical assistance and resources to strengthen home-school-community partnerships within Painesville City Local Schools (PCLS). A systematic three step approach to enhancing family engagement work included:

- 1) supporting PCLS in the creation of the Cradle to Kindergarten early literacy initiative,
- 2) offering bilingual early literacy development series for parents, and
- 3) planning and assisting the PCLS family resource fair.

Impact

The Cradle to Kindergarten program, which will launch in 2018-2019 school year, will link new parents with volunteers trained in the importance of early literacy and language development. Families enrolled in the program will receive free bilingual books and materials in English and Spanish four times per year from birth until age 5 when their child enters Kindergarten. The program seeks to support families by building their home libraries as well as to increase Kindergarten readiness skills of children entering Painesville City Local Schools. Volunteers will coordinate quarterly home visits to mentor new parents in the importance of tuning in, talking more, and taking turns in daily conversations with their children.



Region 4’s Family Engagement Specialist,
Anthony Pizzuti, at the PCLS Resource Fair.



VOICES from the field

Strong Community Partnerships Build Family Efficacy on Literacy and IEP Supports



Action

For a second year, Region 5 partnered with Down Syndrome of the Valley to provide educational opportunities for families. On Thursday May 17th, 2018 at the DSAV Center for Success; a presentation entitled "Families and the IEP process: ABC's of the IEP" was given by Region 5 and DSAV. Participants were introduced to a variety of resources both online and through the lending library. Each family received a Partner IEP Resource Notebook that was created for them to help stay informed and organized.

Impact

"...the lecture was extremely informative and helpful in navigating the IEP process."

"I found the IEP binder an excellent resource in helping me as a parent organize the information needed to assist in writing the best IEP."



In addition, Region 5 provided STAR (Sit Together and Read) Professional Development through a collaboration with Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County to 40 teachers, classroom assistants, library employees, and parents. STAR focuses on building print awareness in children. Families, caregivers, and educators were trained in the basics of print knowledge as a component of emergent literacy. They learned about the impact of print knowledge on later reading skills, and also how to develop print awareness in preschoolers using print rich texts.



VOICES

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY LIBRARIES TO IMPLEMENT “SIT TOGETHER AND READ”



Action

Region 6 used Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data to target supports in communities with the most need. Support included introducing local libraries to the Sit Together and Read (STAR) program. This work was done in partnership with several consultants from the Region 6 office, including the Early Childhood and literacy consultants. The SST staff members met with the director and/or children's librarian at libraries to share STAR, asking that the library incorporate STAR into their work. This work was eventually scaled up to include all libraries in the region.

Impact

The overall intent of Region 6's work was to support early literacy using an evidence based program (STAR) that incorporated family engagement. To that end, Region 6 met with 83% (38/46) of their libraries to share information about STAR. They collected great ideas they heard along the way and began sharing them with other libraries. This work may develop into a community of practice. Librarians were excited to hear about a free program and to work in collaboration with their local school district, SST6, ODE and Ohio State to support print awareness as a component of early literacy.





VOICES from the field

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES: *PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO SUPPORT EARLY LITERACY*

"I learned about each child more deeply. It helped me understand the dynamics of each family as well. When working with each student after that, I could connect with them more on a personal level tapping into their interests and building connections with their reading and writing."

—Teacher from Mansfield, OH

Action

In partnership with Barbara Boone at Ohio State University, Region 7 provided a four part professional development series for pre-K through grade 3 teachers. The series was called SST Region 7 Partnering with Families to Support Early Literacy Professional Development Series. The main goals of the series were:

- ♦ Apply communication skills in order to operationalize ways to use inviting language with parent/families
- ♦ Utilize growth mindset/habits of mind skills to increase family engagement and draw upon family's assets and interests
- ♦ Improve language and literacy opportunities at home and at school
- ♦ Examine language and literacy resources for everyday family activities to support early literacy and promote family engagement

Each participant in the class partnered with two families to apply what they were learning.

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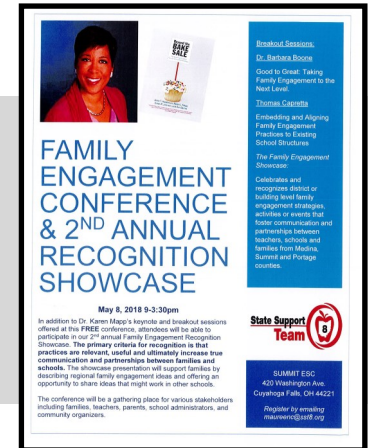
Impact

Each teacher was able to share how they applied communication strategies, used "life-giving talk" rather than deficit thinking, and growth mindset in communicating with their partner families, colleagues, and administrators. This was demonstrated in their in class discussions, journal entries, and final projects. Each and every educator reported that in one way or another they changed how they conducted parent teacher conferences and family nights using Universal Design for Learning Principles so that they could improve access and engagement of more families. Many teachers changed from teacher-led conferences to student-led conferences or parent-led conferences. The teachers used various options for families to attend conferences and events, they tapped into families interests, needs for their offerings, and practiced using flexible methods in their family engagement efforts. Region 7 plans to offer the class again to the region for the 2018-2019 school year.



VOICES from the field

A SHOWCASE OF WORK “BEYOND THE BAKE SALE”



Action

Region 8 organized their second Family Engagement Showcase for school districts, recognizing district or building-level family engagement strategies that foster communication between teachers, schools, communities and families. District personnel presented posters explaining their success stories., and connected their strategies to one of the six components of parent involvement from Epstein’s Framework: Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making and Collaboration with the Community.

The Showcase featured Dr. Karen Mapp, a National lecturer on Family Engagement from Harvard, with breakout sessions from our own Dr. Barbara Boone and Thomas Capretta.

A diverse representation of school staff, administrators, families and Agency personnel attended.

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 feedback on the conference was tremendous. Not only, were attendees able to hear a national speaker and state speakers for free, they were able to visit the poster sessions and ask questions about implementations of strategies from the various poster participants. Attendees took away ideas and conversations for their own districts and families.

We had a superintendent praise the work of his staff and families and supported continued growth in the district of meaningful family engagement that went “Beyond the Bake sale”. Our organizer for the Family Engagement Showcase, Kathryn Vuchak, has accepted a new job in a local district and we plan to see her presenting at next year’s showcase. It will be difficult to top this year’s showcase. We welcome any feedback or suggestions. The more we expose districts to family engagement opportunities and showcase implementation of others, the more family engagement will be systemically sustained.



VOICES

from the field

Action

Region 9 partnered with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities to support Parent Mentors across the state in encouraging and equipping parents in their role of developing their child's language/literacy skills.

Region 9 produced three videos titled *The Power of Language*, *Phonological Awareness* and *Responsive Interactions*, which define key terms, share research around brain development, and discuss the building blocks of language and the role of sound in relationship to early literacy. As a follow-up to the videos, printable resources were provided for Parent Mentors to access and share based on the needs of the families they support.

The videos and resources are also accessible on State Support Team 9's website to continue to build capacity with community partners who are investing in families with young children.

Impact

The **Early Literacy Videos** and follow-up **Early Literacy Resources** were emailed to parent mentors in Spring 2018. The videos have been viewed over 750 times thus far, indicating that parent mentors are going back to the resources more than once, and they are sharing them, as well. The resource materials and videos were accessed by 69 of the 91 parent mentors. That means approximately 75% of the parent mentors engaged with the resources and videos- wonderful numbers! The top 5 resources they viewed and downloaded were: 1) Early Literacy Printable Tips, 2) Books at Home Checklist, 3) Talk, Read & Sing Together Everyday, 4) Read Aloud Every Day, 5) What's in a Book?

These resources were timely, as some parent mentors were preparing early literacy packets for pre-K children and their families to have during the summer months.





RECORD TURNOUT AT REGIONAL TRANSITION FAIR

Action

Region 10 concentrated their efforts on increasing participation in the Regional Transition Fair to connect more families and their students with IEPs and 504s to resources for improving post-secondary transition outcomes. With members of their Parent Advisory Council (PAC), Regional Transition Council (RTC), and local community organizations and schools, the regional staff worked towards increasing awareness of the Transition Fair.

We saw a record-breaking increase of 52% for participants and 41% for exhibitors, exposing more families and their students to post-secondary transition planning opportunities for education, employment and life after high school. Interactive panel sessions, networking, and student & family activities created additional engagement opportunities.

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Impact

Region 10 measured impact by collecting registration/sign-in of all attending participants and collected feedback through on-site and post-event surveys with the intention of using the data to set objectives and provide additional needed resources and opportunities for families to connect with during future fairs. SST 10 received overwhelmingly positive feedback in survey results and valuable information to drive future planning.

Action

SST 11

www.sst11.org



VOICES from the field

Attendance/Truancy House Bill 410

"The Ohio General Assembly passed last December to encourage and support districts in a preventative approach to excessive absences and truancy." (education.ohio.gov)

Action

Every session in Region 11's Parent Series began with a discussion focusing on House Bill 410. Families were provided with information about the Bill, as well as how to access additional information from the Ohio Department of Education homepage. "Fast Facts for Families" was disseminated along with other printed literature from ODE and attendanceworks.org.

Central Ohio Parent Mentors were provided informational materials for dissemination to families in their districts. In addition, information regarding HB410 was emailed to the 1,000 plus families and educators on our distribution list, as well as the link to our Family Engagement site on the SST11 webpage, where additional information could be found.

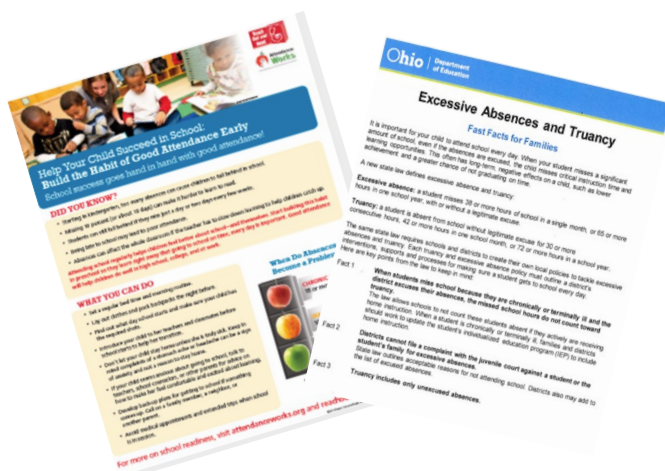
School districts and community schools were provided with resources to share with families with the common goal of improved student attendance.

Impact

99 parents/caregivers were in attendance at the Parent Series meeting where HB410 was discussed.

77 parents/caregivers have accessed the materials made available.

The baseline data for attendance was the 2016-17 School Report Card. The 2017-18 School Report Card data is not yet available, but will be analyzed for impact once released in the Fall of 2018.





VOICES from the field

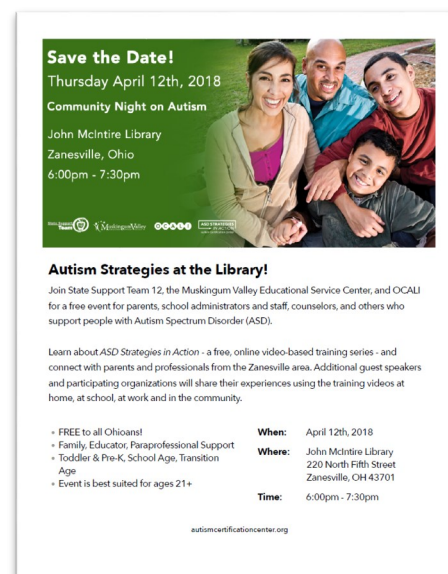
COLLABORATING WITH LIBRARIES TO REACH FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

Action

Region 12 hosted a Community Night on Autism at a local library, John McIntire Library, to share information with families, educators, and other professionals about Autism Spectrum Disorders. They partnered with one of their parent mentors, the ESC, and OCALI to host this event. During the hour and a half long evening event, Region 12's Family and Community Engagement Consultant and Parent Mentor provided opening remarks. Then, a representative from the National Autism Association shared local resources. OCALI shared videos about ASD, and then a liaison from the Mid-East Ohio Regional Council and a representative from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities shared transition resources for those with developmental disabilities. The event ended with a call to action from OCALI and networking time.

Impact

This event impacted approximately 25 participants directly. Evaluations were collected from participants, and great feedback was received. Through a question/answer session, the presenters were able to help families and teachers gain information in the areas of early childhood, school age, and transitioning young adults.



What is autism spectrum disorder?

"Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many types, caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences. The term "spectrum" reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person with autism. Autism's most-obvious signs tend to appear between 2 and 3 years of age" (autismspeaks.org).



VOICES



REFINING AND REFOCUSING THE SST'S ROLE WITH FAMILIES AND AGENCIES

Action

In 2017-2018, Region 13 focused on refining the roles and efforts of Parent Mentors in their collaboration with families and agencies. Using Implementation Science tools including an elevator pitch and terms of reference, they refined their perceptions of roles within their group to better focus on their direction for the school year. By collaborating with their consultant from the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, they learned more about the focus of community agencies.

Impact

Region 13 Parent Mentors increased knowledge about local, regional and state agencies and how to access these services for our families. The Implementation Science tools were very useful in refining and focusing our work. Our aim is to provide focused, targeted supports to families.



VOICES from the field

SUPPORTING FAMILIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES BY PROVIDING PARENT PACKETS TO OVER 3,000

Action

Parent Packets were developed and distributed to over 3,000 families of students with disabilities in Region 14 in September, 2017. The Parent Packets contained information that helped raise awareness of Region 14 and the services and supports provided to families. Region 14 consists of eighteen School Districts. The Regional Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Members assisted in selecting the items for the packets and distributing the Parent Packets to families in all of the School Districts.

Included in the Parent Packets:

- ◇ Letter of introduction from the Family & Community Engagement Consultant
- ◇ List of PAC Members, Roles and Responsibilities
- ◇ Flyer for the annual Family Conference
- ◇ Helpful Homework Tips
- ◇ Quick Guide to Preparing for Your Child's IEP
- ◇ Parent Mentor Contact Information

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Impact

PAC members took ownership of delivering the Parent Packets to their Districts and School Buildings. This helped build and enhance School and Family relationships. Contacts were made between Districts, PAC members, Parent Mentors, and family members across Region 14. Additionally, there was an increase in the number of Family Conference participants which provided more opportunities to provide information and support to family members. And of course, families appreciated receiving the information.





VOICES from the field

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES IN OHIO

Action

Region 15 welcomed a new member to the Family Engagement work in Fall 2017. Her first experience with the FCE Network included partnering with Thomas Capretta, the Family and Children Coordinator, and Foster Care Specialist with the Ohio Department of Education. She heard about new resources for Foster Children at an FCE Network Meeting presentation and followed up with a plan to bring these resources to districts and families in southern Ohio.”

Impact

As a result of learning about McKinney Vento, Foster care and Homelessness, the Coordinator invited Mr. Capretta to come to Region 15 and present to the Early Childhood staff at her Quarterly meeting. The group heard loud and clear that, “Districts and child welfare agencies must designate a point person of contact with the time, capabilities and Knowledge to meet the requirements of ESSA.” One district from Region 15, Rock Hill Local School District, has earned state recognition for doing just that!

Foster children, one of America’s most overlooked and underserved populations, have long been deprived of equal access to sustained, quality education. Barely half of all children in foster care could expect to graduate high school by age 18 due to frequent changes in home placement and gaping communication disconnects between education and child-welfare agencies.

“Students in foster care move schools at least once or twice a year, and by the time they age out of the system, over one third will have experienced five or more school moves.

Children are estimated to lose four to six months of academic progress per move, which puts most foster-care children years behind their peers.”

The ESSA contains provisions designed to close the achievement gap for students in foster care by protecting their educational stability.

The ESSA allows children to remain in the same school regardless of changes in placement, even if they move from one district to another.

Furthermore, **the law requires schools and state agencies to provide transportation, rapid enrollment, and record transfer, as well as a dedicated point person** tasked with ensuring the educational well-being of children in state care.



VOICES

BRAIDING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INTO REGIONAL AND SCHOOL-LEVEL WORK



Action

Region 16 as an organization incorporated family engagement into every professional learning opportunity they offered and into meetings as well. Integrating family engagement into education initiatives at the regional, district, or school level, helps to build partnerships with families that are linked to learning goals for students. This work will continue in 2018-19. Each month, the SST Family Engagement Specialist in Region 16 will send a resource to all consultants to share within their

districts.

Region 16 supported districts in their family engagement efforts and challenged them to try new and different strategies. One district in particular hosted two family gatherings. During the gatherings, school staff and SST staff sat with parents/caregivers and asked them how the district could better engage them. Region 16 also held a regional professional learning opportunity last spring for family engagement.

Regional Contacts

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About this Report

It is our mission to support and shed light on Ohio's efforts to bring together families, schools, and communities. Voices from the Field, a summary report representing the work of Ohio's State Support Teams, was compiled by Dr. Barbara Boone and Dr. Meredith Wellman from OSU's College of Education and Human Ecology. Dr. Boone serves as Ohio's Family and Community Engagement Network Coordinator. The authors thank the State Support Teams for their assistance in compiling the information about part of their work for this report. For more information about this report, please contact us at results@osu.edu.

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