

**A Multi-Tiered Approach to Family Engagement**

**Facilitator’s Guide**

**[Note: Text in black font is instructions for the facilitator. Text in *blue font* should be read aloud.]**

**Step 1**: **Open the Multi-Tiered Approach to Family Engagement Planning Guide Template**. Be prepared to share your screen or project. Make a copy of the template so that it is editable.

Say: *Today we are introducing a tiered approach to family engagement. Why does learning about a multi-tiered strategic approach to family engagement matter?*

* *We want new ideas for how to engage families better. (why?)*
* *…Because the old ways aren’t working. (why?)*
* *…Because not all families are reached. (why?)*
* *…Because families’ personal motivators, knowledge & skills, and desires for information & resources are not met. (why?)*
* *…Because we aren’t centering families in our planning (yet).*

**Step 2:** **Fill in a school/district-specific scenario (see above) in the space provided for “Family Engagement Plan for.”** This may be related to a student-outcome goal or a goal you are working on with the school/district.

Say: *Our goal is that all families not only have the opportunity but can and do engage with the school through differentiated practices that meet the needs of each family. In this model, we categorize our practices, services, and supports into three different tiers which we then make available to families flexibly based on their needs in a given situation. We want to be clear; we are not assigning families to tiers. Instead, we are planning proactively to adapt our approach to family engagement so that each family is supported. Families will need different levels of support at different times and in different situations. Our model is expansive: the purpose is to widen our practices so that all families have opportunity.*

*What is the situation/initiative that is the basis for our plan? What is it? How long is the timeframe?*

*What is the measurable goal for students?*

*How will students benefit if we achieve this goal?*

*How will families benefit if we achieve this goal?*

*How will school personnel benefit if we achieve this goal?*

**Step 3**: **Start to work on Tier 1: Universal for All Families.** This plan is built more generalized to more individualized family engagement. Each section starts with centering families needs and wants BEFORE determining possible school strategies. **Start in Universal for All Families.**

Say: *Tier One is Universal Family Engagement, where we focus on what ALL FAMILIES need and what opportunities we want all families to have. Tier One strategies are proactive, preventing problems and challenges for families. At least 80% of all families should be effectively engaged through tier 1 strategies. Examples include whole-school family feedback surveys, events such as Open House, and school wide communications such as a monthly newsletter. In the situation/initiative you described, think about all families.*

Switch to Planning Guide to respond to the following questions:

1. *What do all families need to support this goal?*
2. *What do all families want to support this goal?*
3. *What strengths do all families have in support of this goal?*
4. *Other notes.*

Say: Now, let’s strategically plan response and supports for ALL FAMILIES to match what we identified above:

1. *What can the school/organization do to meet the universal family needs in support of this goal?* (Look at the answer to #1 to guide this response.)
2. *What can the school/organization do to meet the universal family preferences in support of this goal?* (Look at the answer to #2 to guide this response.)
3. *How can opportunities be created to build on universal family strengths?* (Look at the answer to #3 to guide this response.)
4. *Check: are all roles available universally to families at this level of your plan?*
   * Providers
   * Receivers
   * Initiators
   * Co-designers
   * Evaluators

Say: *Now, let’s think about what may indicate the need to scale up to Tier 2 family engagement strategies. A change in frequency (how often), a change of intensity (how much), or a change of practice (what) will indicate a need to change tiers.*

1. *What might indicate a need for a change of tier for some families? Think about data from students, the school, families, and the community here.*
2. *Check: Are your strategies at Tier 1 universal enough? Will they meet the needs and preferences of at least 80% of families?*

Not on Planning Guide; Say: *How will we measure this? What can we do to revise these practices if we discover that they do not?*

**Step 4: Start to work on Tier II: Tailored for Groups of Families.**

Say: *Tier Two is where we plan for families within our school population that may need more intense, more frequent, or just different strategies. Examples include translated communications (if not a universal practice), focus groups for in-depth feedback, and volunteer opportunities (e.g., reading buddies). These families also have access to Tier One supports. In the scenario described, think about SOME families.*

Switch to Planning Guide to respond to the following questions:

1. *What do some groups of families need to support this goal?*
2. *What do some groups of families want to support this goal?*
3. *What strengths do some groups of families have in support of this goal?*
4. *Other notes?*

Say: *What response/supports can the school plan for these families?*

1. *What can the school/organization do to meet the needs of groups of families in support of this goal?* (Look at the answer to #11 to guide this response.)
2. *What can the school/organization do to meet the preferences/wants of groups of families in support of this goal?* (Look at the answer to #12 to guide this response.)
3. *How can opportunities be created to build on the strengths of groups of families?* (Look at the answer to #13 to guide this response.)
4. *Check: are all roles available to groups of families at this level of your plan?*
   1. Providers
   2. Receivers
   3. Initiators
   4. Co-designers
   5. Evaluators

Say: *Now, let’s think about what may indicate the need to scale up to Tier III family engagement strategies or return to receiving Tier I level of supports.*

1. *What might indicate a need for a change of tier to Tier III for individual families?*
2. *What might indicate that groups of families no longer need Tier II strategies?*

**Step 5: Start to work on Tier III: Intensive for Individual Families.**

Say: *Tier Three is where we plan for individual families within our school population who may need highly individualized strategies for engagement. Examples include home visits for individualized support (if not a universal practice), family leadership opportunity at program level, and family calling site supervisor to speak about an issue of concern. These families also have access to Tier One and Two supports. In the scenario described, consider what UNIQUE NEEDS/OPPORTUNITIES INDIVIDUAL families might need to know or be able to do.*

Switch to Planning Guide to respond to the following questions:

1. *What do individual families need to support this goal?*
2. *What do individual families want to support this goal?*
3. *What unique strengths do individual families have in support of this goal?*
4. *Other notes*

Say: *What response/supports can the school plan for these INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES?*

1. *What can the school/organization do to meet the individualized needs of families in support of this goal?* (Look at the answer to #21 to guide this response.)
2. *What can the school/organization do to meet the individualized preferences of families in support of this goal?* (Look at the answer to #22 to guide this response.)
3. *How can opportunities be created to build on the unique strengths of individual families?* (Look at the answer to #23 to guide this response.)
4. *Check: are all roles available to individual families at this level of your plan?*
   1. Providers
   2. Receivers
   3. Initiators
   4. Co-Designers
   5. Evaluators

Say: *Now, let’s think about what may indicate the need to scale down to Tier II or Tier I.*

1. *What might indicate that individual families no longer need Tier III strategies?*

**Step 6: Review Plan:** Consider each quality indicator below. Read it aloud. Then read the discussion question, pause, and discuss with the team.

Say: The PARADE strategy is a way to check our plans according to six quality indicators. These quality indicators are the non-negotiables that ensure our plan achieves the goal of strategically differentiating family engagement to create opportunities for all families.

**The first quality indicator is that the plan should be proactive and preventative**. We don’t wait for problems. We want our Tier 1 strategies to inform families and support families in such a way that problems don’t occur. We are acting so that families and students have what they need to be successful.

*What are the plan’s strengths? What can still be improved?* [Pause and discuss.]

**The second quality indicator is that all have opportunity**. Our plan isn’t for some families; it is for ALL families. When some families are not engaging, our school community suffers. Instead of blaming families for not engaging, we strategize for how to differentiate our practices so that all families have the opportunity to support their child’s learning in meaningful ways.

*What are the plan’s strengths? What can still be improved?* [Pause and discuss.]

**The third quality indicator is that the plan has all five roles for families**. Being receivers of supports from the school and providers of supports to their children are the main way that schools tend to expect families to engage. However, our plans should include meaningful roles as initiators, co-designers, and evaluators for us to achieve true partnership and collaboration.

*What are the plan’s strengths? What can still be improved?* [Pause and discuss.]

**The fourth quality indicator is that the plan is assets-based.** We create family engagement plans that build on our families’ strengths, rather than focus on fixing their deficits. As a school, we improve because we learn from our families.

*What are the plan’s strengths? What can still be improved?* [Pause and discuss.]

**The fifth quality indicator is that the plan is data-driven.** Tier 1 supports and strategies are based on school data. Indicators for supports and strategies at a Tier 2 or Tier 3 level are based on data-driven indicators. As a school, we collect data from students, families, and our classrooms to determine the best family engagement practices to use to provide opportunity for all families to engage.

*What are the plan’s strengths? What can still be improved?* [Pause and discuss.]

**The sixth quality indicator is that the plan uses evidence-informed approaches to family engagement**. No matter the tier, the strategies included are evidenced-based practices for family engagement. These strategies are central, sustained, family-centered, goal-oriented, systemic, focused on student impact, and for all.

*What are the plan’s strengths? What can still be improved?* [Pause and discuss.]

**Step 7: Lead the team to make any needed revisions to the plan based on Step 6, if not already revised during Step 6.**

**Step 8: Determine the next steps with the team to put the plan into action!**