

NEXT STEPS

- Forming a planning team of teachers, PTO members and administrators.
- Selecting an event date, discussion for additional dates.
- Gathering games and materials, and consider take-home options and instructions.
- Creating family communication materials, including the invitations.
- Staff and volunteers will be assigned roles to support event facilitation and family engagement.
- Baseline teacher observations and family feedback tools will also be developed to measure growth in student social skills, participation, and school-family connection throughout the school year.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank my husband, sons and parents for their support through my time working on this family leaders project. They have been very supportive in my growing desire to improve school and family engagement.

I'd also like to thank Sidney City School District Administration for taking the time to share their insights and concerns. I appreciate their support in being open to facilitate this project to help strengthen family engagement and learning within our district.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Family Game Night



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY/Ohio Statewide
Family Engagement Center**

**Maggie
Sidney, OH**

INTRODUCTION/NEED ADDRESSED

I'm a parent leader for Sidney City Schools, because I saw the need within my district to increase meaningful family and community engagement. Research shows that when families are actively involved in their children's education, students are more likely to succeed academically and socially. I was interested in learning strategies to encourage stronger community, creating opportunities for families to engage and strengthening the partnership between school and families.

My proposed project is addressing a need for more family engagement opportunities with school support, specifically teaching and modeling social and emotional skills in a fun and inviting way during game play. Our school administration expressed their concern in seeing a lack of soft skills during recess play, such as children not understanding rules for specific games, turn taking, sportsmanship, etc. Teachers were taking recess time to teach these underdeveloped skills, but feel this would be a great learning opportunity to involve families in modeling and guiding their own children in these skills.

GOAL and OBJECTIVES

My goal is to host a Family Game Night in the Fall of 2026. At the game night, we'll have staff & volunteers guide families in structured play activities that improve students' social skills, such as turn-taking, cooperation, and sportsmanship. Our focus will be on games that help students and their parents practice these specific skills while modeling and talking explicitly about what they are learning while they play.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DESCRIPTION

The Family Game Night initiative will provide the opportunity for students and families to build social-emotional and communication skills through structured play.

This event will be held at the school in the cafeteria and classrooms using simple, age-appropriate games that encourage turn-taking, cooperation, problem-solving, patience and sportsmanship.

Teachers, staff, PTO members and volunteers will facilitate game stations and model positive interactions and conflict-resolution strategies for families.

Prior to the event, families will receive invitations and information explaining the education purpose of the program and the benefits of game-based learning. During the event, staff will provide quick parent tips and conversation prompts to help families reinforce these skills at home.

The project aims to strengthen family engagement, improve student social skills, and create positive school-home connections in a welcoming environment.

Success will be measured through attendance data, family feedback surveys and teacher observation of student behavior and peer interactions throughout the school year.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Family Game Night provides valuable opportunities to strengthen:

- Social-emotional skills
- Family engagement
- School Culture
- School-home partnerships

We hope families gain confidence in teaching and modeling these social skills to their children and in turn the children will exhibit these skills in game play.

EXPECTED CHALLENGES

Low Family Attendance

- Some families may struggle to attend because of work schedules, transportation or extracurricular conflicts, so offering the event more than a one time event might be a future consideration.

Student Behavior Challenges

- Some students may struggle with waiting their turn, managing frustration and sharing materials but we can turn these into learning opportunities in real time at the event.

Noise & Overstimulation

- A crowded event may become loud, chaotic so we have considered offering games in different rooms and clear traffic flow to decrease noise and congestion.

Lack of Materials or Funding

- We may face challenge with having funds for specific games and providing snacks, but we plan to utilize low cost games and partner with the PTO for monetary assistance.

Staff & Volunteer Availability

- Teachers and staff may be unavailable after school hours, so we are planning to share responsibilities across teams and utilize additional community volunteers.