

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Engagement  
**LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

welcome!  
we will begin  
shortly...

Ohio Statewide  
Family Engagement Center

FLEX HIGH SCHOOL

# Literacy & Family Engagement Event

Rethinking What Family Engagement Looks Like  
in a Dropout Recovery High School

OSU Family Engagement Summit  
Flex High School Main Campus • March 19, 2026



# Meet the Presenters



Dr. Linda Gibson Fletcher

2025–26 State Support Team 11 Consultant

Family engagement strategy • partnership • reflection



Mr. Eric Smith

[esmith@flexhigh.org](mailto:esmith@flexhigh.org)

Community Liaison and Enrollment Specialist

Flex High School • school perspective • student experience

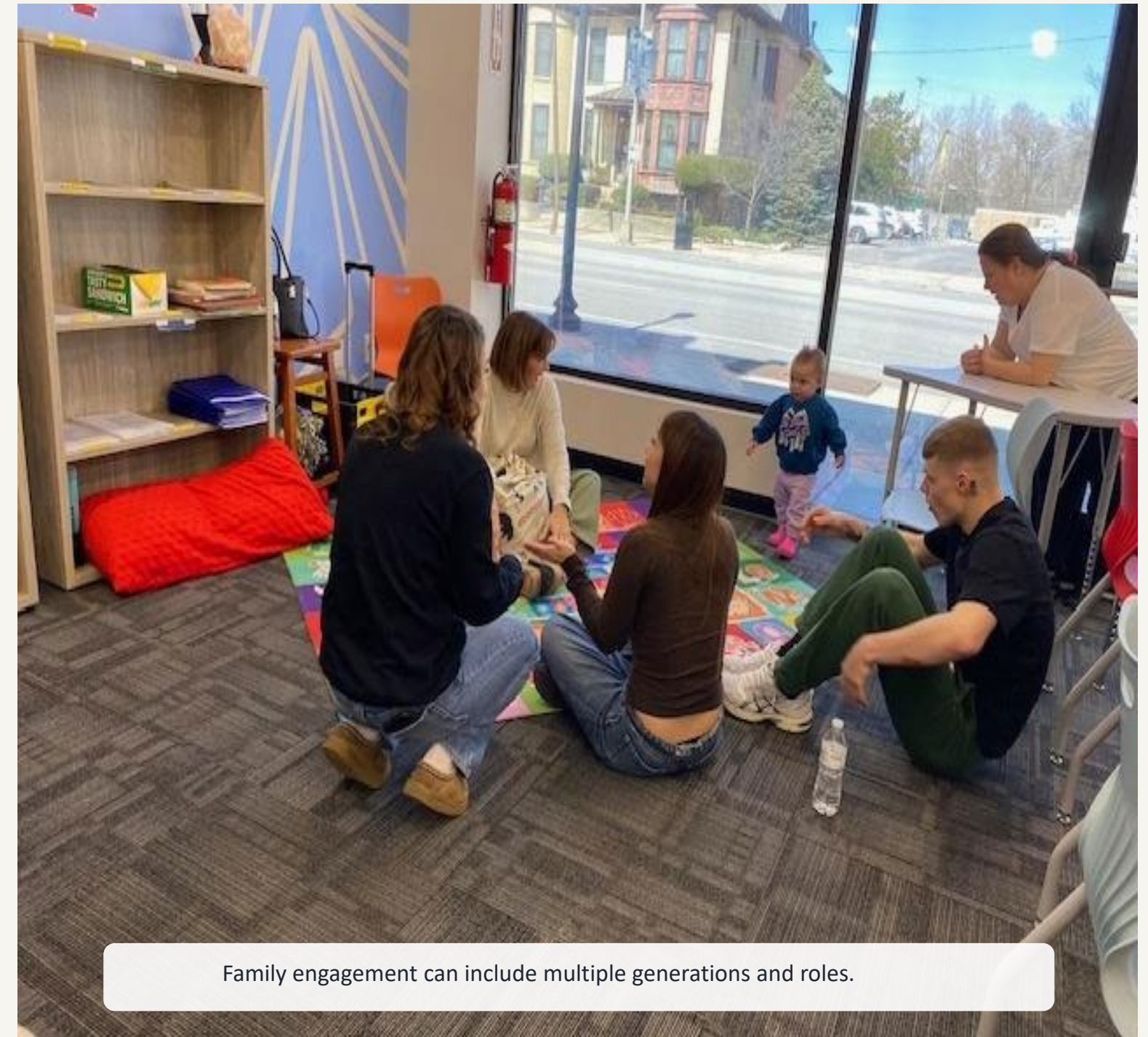
# The Question That Changed Our Planning

How do we create a literacy and family engagement experience that meets students and families where they are?

Not: What event should we host?  
Instead: Who are we serving, and what do they need?

# Start With Who Your Families Are

- Students as learners
- Parents and caregivers as partners
- Students who are also parents
- Peers as an important source of connection
- Staff as trusted relationship builders



Family engagement can include multiple generations and roles.

## Who Do You Picture?

When you hear the words  
“family engagement,”  
who do you automatically picture?  
Put ONE WORD in the chat.

At Flex, we learned that before we could plan the event, we had to broaden our definition of family.

# Begin With Relationships

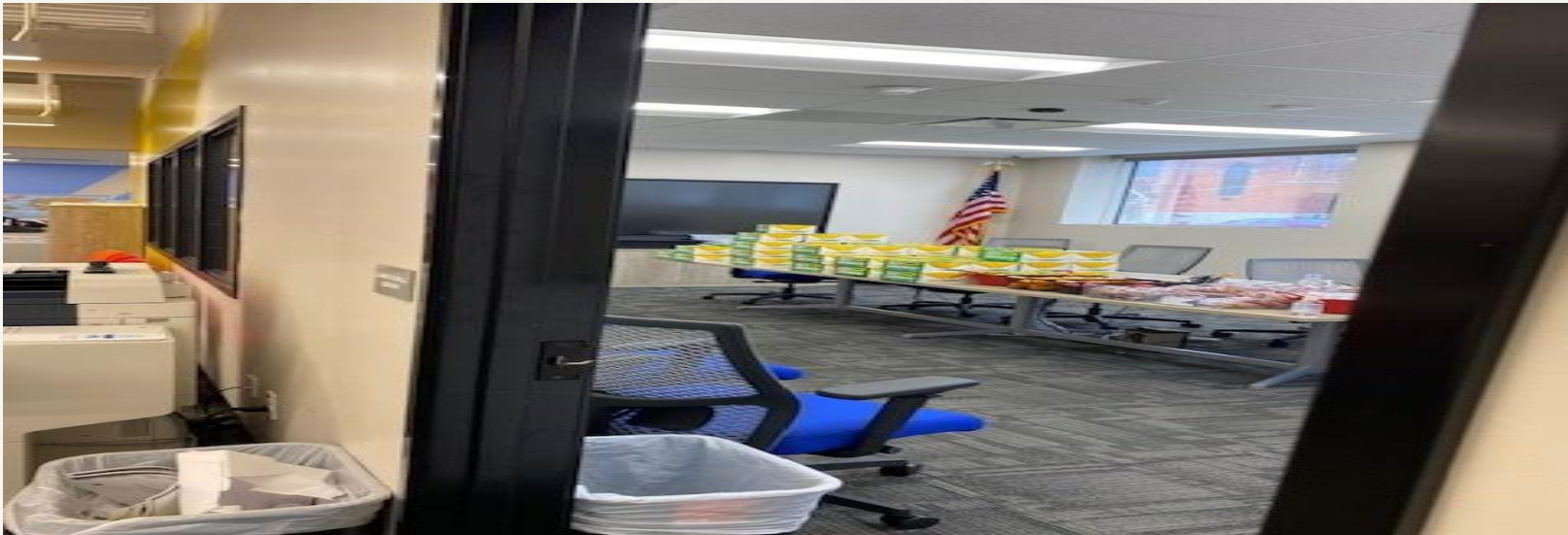
The goal was not simply attendance.  
The goal was to create an environment where people felt:

Welcomed

Comfortable

Connected

Engaged



## From Attendees to Ambassadors



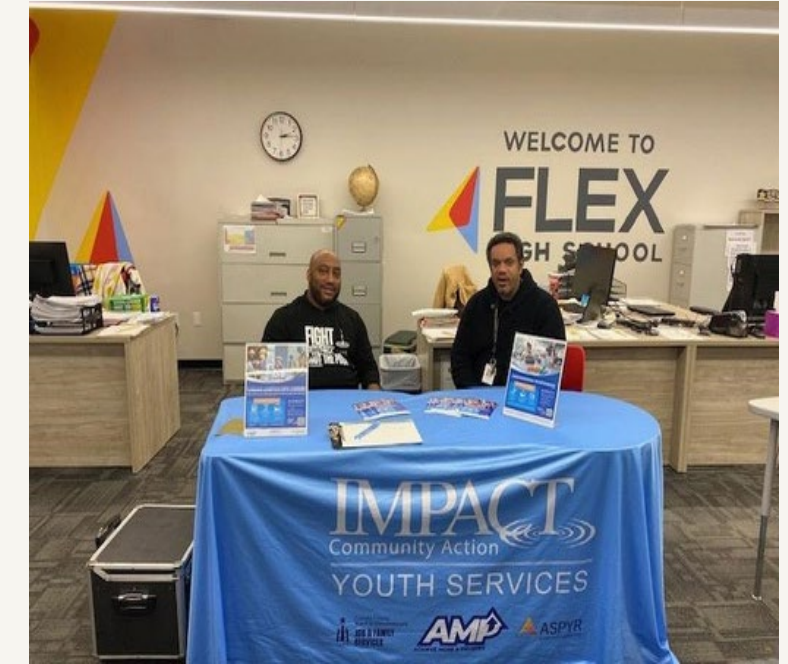
Students were not simply attendees.

- Build ownership
- Strengthen peer connections
- Create a welcoming environment
- Encourage participation • Develop student leadership

When students have meaningful roles, engagement changes from participation to ownership.

# Community Partners Expanded the Experience

- The Ohio State University Family Engagement resources
- Franklinton Metropolitan Library Branch
- Fifth Third Bank
- Huckleberry House
- No Kidding, Franklin County
- Impact Community Action
- State Support Team 11



# Learning That Connected to Real Life



## Money Talks

Financial literacy connected to decisions, independence and future goals.

## Early Literacy for Teen Parents

Everyday interactions with babies and toddlers can build early literacy.

Literacy lives in our financial decisions, our homes, our conversations and the way we interact with our children.

# FINANCIAL LITERACY STUDENTS COULD USE Money Talks



- Talk about money
- Ask questions
- Consider financial choices
- Connect financial literacy with independence and future goals

## School perspective

Why was Money Talks a good fit for Flex students? What did participation and feedback reveal?

# Early Literacy Begins With a Conversation



- Read together
- Talk about pictures
- Ask simple questions
- Respond to sounds and gestures
- Make books interactive
- Use everyday conversations as literacy moments

You do not have to be a literacy expert to be your child's first teacher.

# Create Spaces for Connection



Books to take home



Games and peer connection



Family literacy in action

Books • Games • Puzzles • Art • Take-home resources

Resources remained with the school so engagement could continue after the event.

# Intentional Planning Matters



- Food and hospitality
- Workshop spaces
- Vendor and resource areas
- Activity spaces
- Student movement • Informal social interaction

The environment supported both structured learning and relationship building.

# What Did Students and Families Tell Us?

What they liked best

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Food                 | Learning new things     |
| Money Talks          | Earning stickers        |
| Having conversations | Talking with the banker |
| Meeting people       | Financial literacy      |

What would make it even better?

More opportunities to learn and grow over time  
Better music  
A larger space  
And for some: “I loved everything.”

Yes, they would attend again.

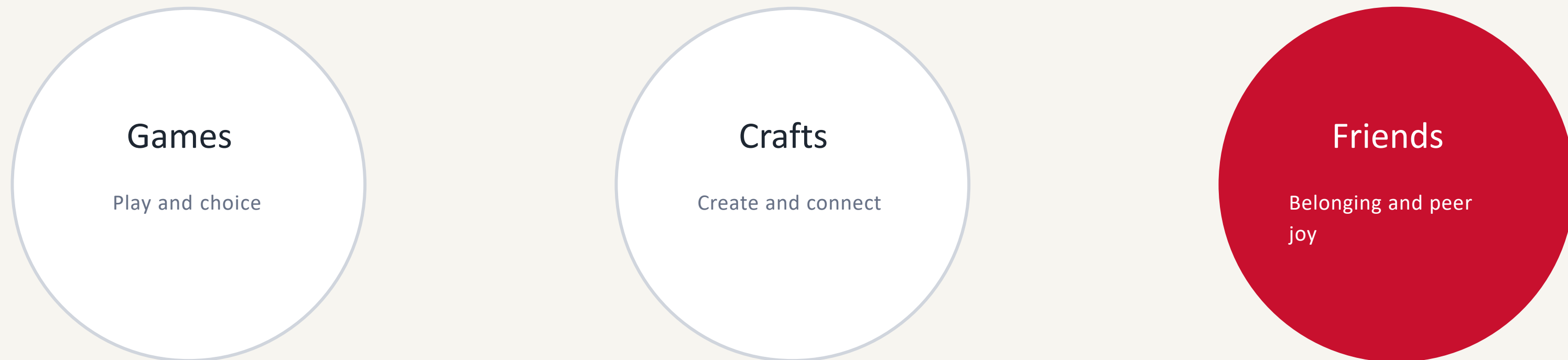
How did they hear about it?

The flyer and trusted school staff were key sources of communication.

We are sharing themes rather than percentages until final counts are confirmed.

## The Engagement Pattern We Saw

Games, crafts, and spending time with friends were nearly equal, separated by only about one response.



Students did not have to choose between learning, relationships and fun. The combination created the engagement.

# Our Biggest Lesson

Relationships

Relevant learning

Food & hospitality

Choice

Conversation

Activities

Time with friends

Adults who engage

Sometimes young people do not need more entertainment. They need more opportunities to belong.

## What Would This Look Like in Your School?

What is ONE thing you could change about your next family engagement event if you planned it around who your families actually are, rather than around what a traditional family event is supposed to look like?

Put ONE IDEA in the chat.

Look at the chat. We already have a room full of ideas that could change how families experience our schools.

# From Event to Practice

## Know your families

Do not assume every family looks the same.

## Ask students what matters

Student voice should influence the experience.

## Give students meaningful roles

Move students from attendees to ambassadors.

## Make learning relevant

Connect workshops to real life.

## Use partners intentionally

Partners should address an identified need.

## Create space for relationships

Especially for adolescents, social connection matters.

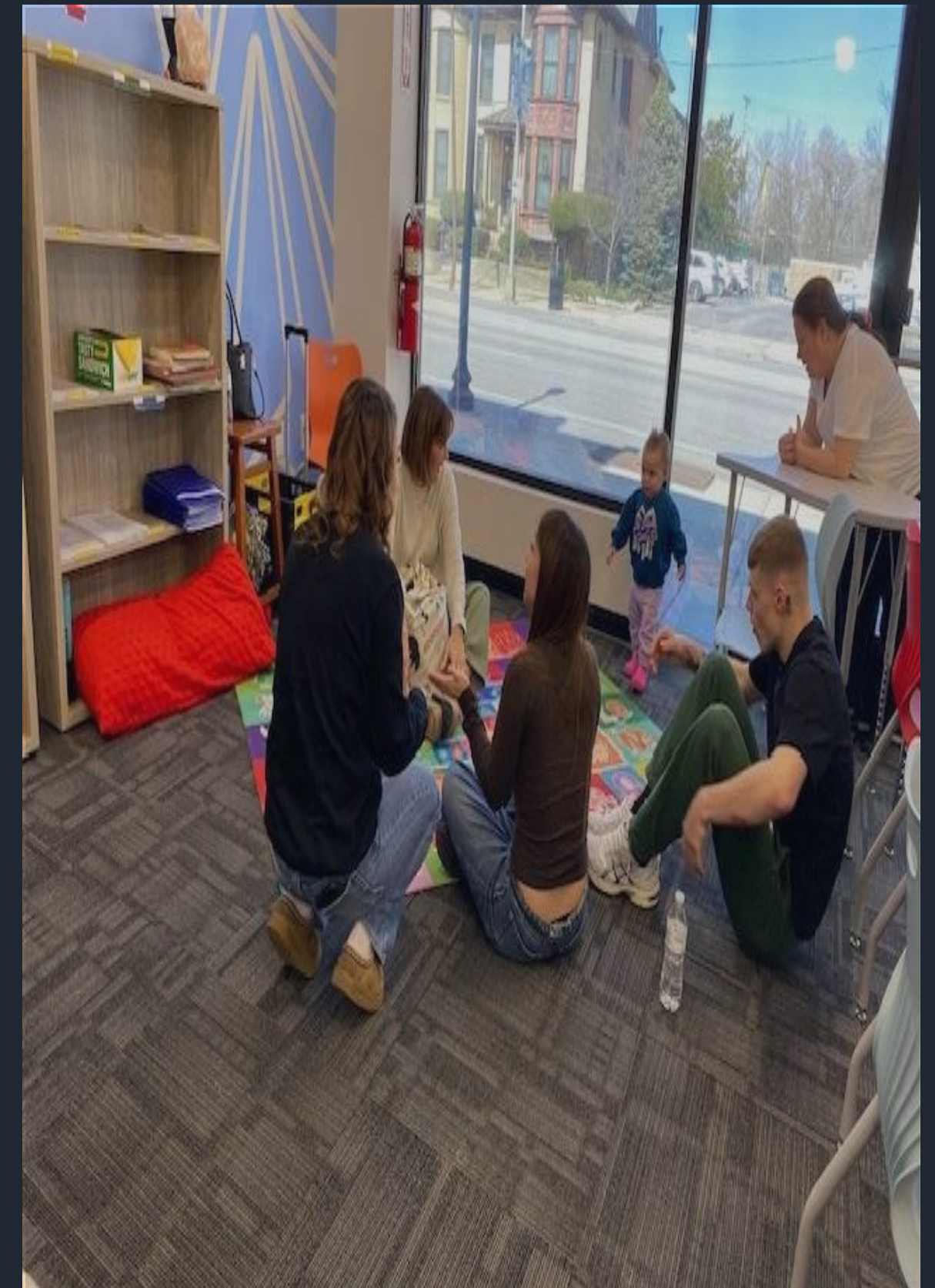
## Engage staff

Family engagement grows when the school community participates.

ONE EVENT. A DIFFERENT WAY OF THINKING.

When we broaden our  
definition of family,  
we broaden our opportunities  
for engagement.

Seen. Welcomed. Connected. Valued. Part of the learning community.





# THE OCS TRANSITION SERIES

AN APPROACH TO BRIDGING THE  
TRANSITIONAL GAP

OAKSTONE COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
COLUMBUS, OHIO

# OCS Presenters



Shelby Greene  
Intervention Specialist/  
Transition Coordinator



Heather Kronewetter  
OCS Superintendent

# OUR GOAL

## \* FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

To increase family engagement related to the transition age years for students on an IEP (13 - 22) and the post-secondary opportunities available to them.

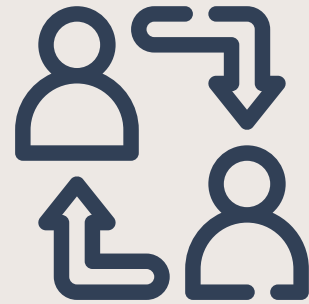


# LET'S DISCUSS!

Using the **CHAT**, tell us a challenge you face when communicating with families about the Transition Process?



Information  
Overload



Reaching the Right  
People



Finding/Sharing  
Resources



Other



# OUR PROCESS

## 01

### Establish

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- Identify our target audience
- Survey for information
- Research and collect resources

## 02

### Inform

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- Transition meeting timeline (Quarterly)
- Multiple modes of communication

## 03

### Improve

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- Post surveys
- Team collaboration and education

01

Establish

## Identifying our Target Audience



- Families with students 13 years or older  
“Transition Age”
- Identified prominent counties within our  
student enrollment

01

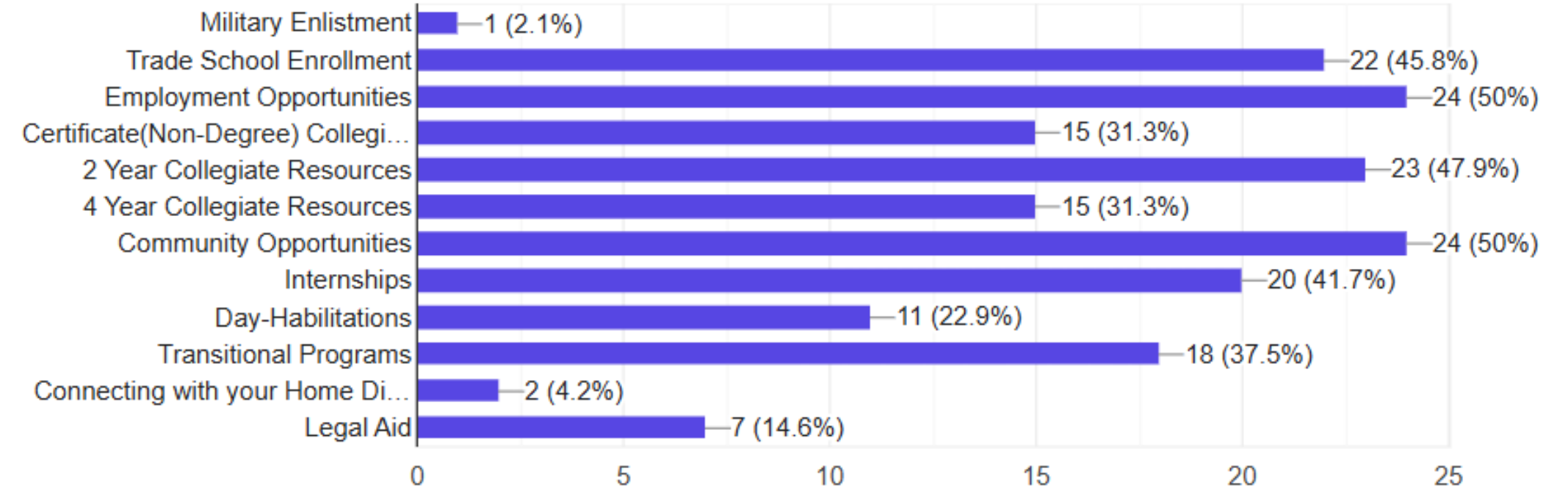
## Establish

Use a Pre-survey  
to Identify Areas  
of Need

What resources would you like to receive more information on?

[Copy chart](#)

48 responses



# 01

Establish

Research &  
Collect  
Resources

## LOCAL & RELIABLE

- County Based
  - Boards of DD
- School Based
  - Postsecondary
- State Based
  - ODD
  - Legal



# 02

## Inform

### Transition Meetings

### Work Preference Assessment

Work Environment Preferences  
Transition Passport / Vocational / Evaluation Tools

staying in one place ☐ moving around

same work ☐ different work

fast work ☐

## TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS

Students are assessed yearly for their IEP. The IEP team will utilize various resources based on your student's abilities to help develop their transition goals.

Examples:

- Student Led- Preference Assessments
- Student Interviews
- Parent/Guardian Interviews
- Ongoing skills rubrics(ELSA)

### Parent Interviews

Parent Interview

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are your student's strengths?
2. What are your student's weaknesses?
3. What are their hobbies outside of school? What do they enjoy doing?
4. What independent living skills does your student currently have? (i.e. cooking, money management, chores they complete)
5. Does your student have a driver's license? If they do not, is that something you think they are able to obtain?
6. What goals would you like your student to meet in the next year?

### Modified ELSA

| Age                                                                     | 13            | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| cleanliness                                                             | 2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| good grooming, hair combed, shirt tucked in, etc                        | 2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| consistent, independent personal hygiene and grooming                   | 2             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| choosing clothes to wear appropriate for weather/activity/social custom | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| identifying when clothes should not be worn                             | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| wearing clothes that are in good condition, clean                       | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| walking/riding to school/work/community following safety rules          | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| getting around school/work sites/community safely                       | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| safe use of ride share or public transportation                         | n/a           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| using effective listening skills including eye contact                  | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| expressing self, answering/asking questions                             | 1             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| conversational skills (turn taking, choice of appropriate topic)        | 0             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| TOTAL                                                                   | 0             | 13 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
|                                                                         | 13/33 (1 N/A) |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

- Creating a Presentation
- Virtual & Evenings
- ADA Considerations

# 02

## Inform

### Multiple Modes of Communication

- District wide emails



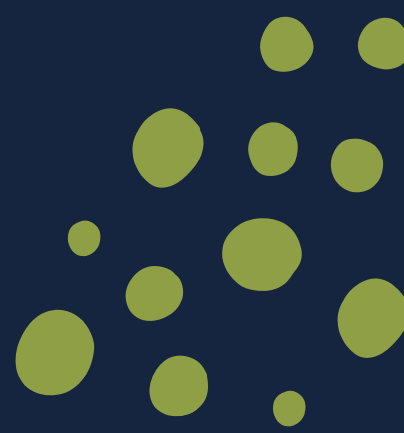
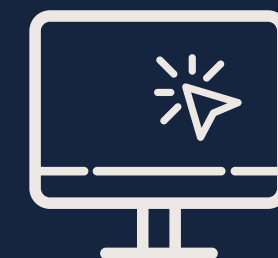
- 2 way communication between teachers and intervention specialists



- Flyers to send home



- School website presence



# LET'S DISCUSS!

Using the **CHAT**, how do you decide what information to share with families?

Survey Data  
(How are parents responding?)

Commonly  
asked Questions in  
Meetings  
(IEP, ETR, etc.)

Known Areas of  
Concern  
(Where do we see  
struggle?)

# 03

Improve

## Feedback is Key



- Post Surveys
  - Specific feedback from the families.
- Internal Reflection and Collaboration
  - Family Engagement Team

# Reach Out for More Information!



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Transition Coordinator  
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