

# 22<sup>nd</sup> International Roundtable on School, Family, and Community Partnerships:

*Research, Policy, and Practice:  
Family and Community Engagement in Education*

# ABSTRACTS INET 2026

**Wednesday, April 8, 2026**

**WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL  
LOS ANGELES, CA**



Co-Sponsored by:

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships (JHU)

Center for Social Organization of Schools (JHU)

Johns Hopkins University (JHU) School of Education

Family, School, Community Partnerships SIG / AERA

Featuring Researchers and Studies from  
Canada, Chile, China, Cyprus, Hungary, and USA

# **INET 2026 Abstracts**

**Los Angeles, CA**

**April 8, 2026**

## **International Perspectives and Themes for the Day** **Plenary Session 9-10 a.m. Room: Santa Barbara B**

**Chair and Discussion Leader: Joyce L. Epstein, JHU**

**Claudia Larroulet, Alejandra Ibieta, Lucas Silva, Fundación AMA, Chile**

*Appreciative Focus and Data Literacy to Overcome Limiting Beliefs in Family-School Partnerships within Vulnerable Contexts and Fragile Organizations*

This narrative presentation analyzes the first year of the “Family-Preschool Partnership” program, which aims to build capacity within educational teams in two early childhood centers in socio-economically vulnerable areas of Chile. The program’s goal is to foster and maintain sustainable partnerships with families to improve children’s educational trajectories. Through a qualitative and reflective lens, we explore how data literacy (using the ama+ Families Socio-emotional Barometer) and appreciative coaching allowed educational teams to overcome limiting beliefs and negative biases toward families. We found a significant transition among staff: moving from decisions based on subjective impressions derived from deficit-based narratives about families, toward a genuine valuation of families’ expertise and lived experience. Additionally, the study reveals that these centers face high levels of professional and organizational fragility, which hinders program implementation; however, technical-emotional support served as an essential anchor to counteract these organizational shortcomings. We conclude that, in precarious contexts, school-family collaboration requires a combination of data-informed decision-making and “appreciative accompaniment” that transforms school culture by building on its inherent strengths. We utilize Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement (2011) to structure the partnership, and Appreciative Coaching to strengthen teacher self-efficacy and agency among educators and technicians.

**Loizos Symeou, Maria Savva, European University, Cyprus**

*Hidden and unhidden agendas and motives of parents/guardians serving on Parent and Guardian Boards*

In this paper we present the findings of a study on the reasons that educators and families assign to parent/guardians’ participation in parent associations. The data were collected through a questionnaire survey circulated among primary school educators and families in Cyprus. After an exploratory factor analysis, researchers identified three distinct parental motivational categories. Statistical analyses revealed notable distinctions between the perceptions of parents/guardians and teacher subgroups. The findings are discussed in terms of improving school governance and developing more effective strategies for family and parental school engagement.

**Zahra Safdarian, University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), Canada**

*Reimagining Family-School-Community Partnerships Through Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Mediation: Afghan and Iranian Newcomer Parents in Ontario*

**Opening Session, continued**

This community-based study examined the engagement of Afghan and Iranian newcomer parents in supporting their children's learning in Ontario middle schools. Grounded in Epstein's family-school-community partnership tradition, the study conceptualizes parental engagement as a relational and collective responsibility shaped by communication, shared accountability, and institutional structures. Extending this perspective, Cultural Historical Activity Theory was used to identify contradictions between families' culturally rooted expectations and their experiences navigating Ontario schools. To address these tensions, the study drew on Developmental Work Research to co-design a Persian Parent Guide Booklet with participants and facilitate community workshops examining the affordances of culturally and linguistically responsive tools. Using a descriptive phenomenological approach, data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with 12 parents. Findings highlighted concerns about limited academic structure and discipline in Ontario schools. Parents reported marginalization linked to communication barriers, unfamiliar educational tools, and limited institutional responsiveness to cultural diversity. These challenges were compounded by the absence of peer networks, counselling, and settlement-related support. In response to the proposed mediating tools, participants reported increased understanding of school expectations, greater confidence, and support for heritage language maintenance. Methodologically, by integrating participatory design, historical responsiveness, and linguistic accessibility, the study extends the partnership model toward more equitable and sustainable forms of collaboration.

**Yi Du, Yanan Zhang, Mi Wang, Renmin University of China, China***Social Support and Perceived Educational Fairness among Adolescents*

Perceptions of educational fairness play a central role in shaping adolescents' educational decisions, institutional trust, and expectations of social mobility. While existing research has focused primarily on objective inequalities and educational outcomes, less attention has been paid to how social environments, i.e., family-peer-community, shape individuals' evaluations of educational institutions. This paper examines how the structure of social support is associated with young people's perceptions of educational fairness. Using survey data from the China Youth Development Study, this study focused on whether family, peer, and community support are associated with perceived educational fairness. Results from OLS regression models showed that greater diversity in sources of support is positively associated with perceptions of educational fairness. Specifically, family support exhibits the most robust positive association, followed by weaker and less consistent effects of community support. Peer support shows more situational sensitivity. Our findings suggested that perceptions of educational fairness are socially embedded beliefs shaped by unequal access to supportive social environments. By highlighting social support as an underexplored mechanism linking inequality and institutional perceptions, this study contributes to broader discussions on how relational contexts influence evaluations of educational systems under conditions of uncertainty.

**Gabriella Pusztai, Edit Szilágyi, University of Debrecen, Hungary***Reducing disparities in education through community building – Evidence from Kolping Secondary Schools in Hungary*

**Opening Session, continued**

Collaboration between schools, families, and local communities is widely recognized as a key factor in students' academic achievement, well-being, and persistence. While community building has been shown to reduce school dropout and students' hopelessness about the future, there is limited empirical evidence on concrete and transferable community-building practices in secondary education, especially in schools serving disadvantaged students. This study examines which community-building practices support students' school attachment and persistence, and how these practices are perceived by different school actors. The research focuses on Kolping secondary and vocational schools in Hungary with community-oriented pedagogy. Quantitative data were collected through student questionnaires in representative samples of Kolping schools and a socioeconomically matched control group from another school sector (N=606). Qualitative data include semi-structured interviews with teachers (N = 9) and school leaders (N = 10). The findings indicate that Kolping schools apply diverse and systematically embedded community-building practices, contributing to dropout rates approximately 50% lower than the national average for comparable schools. While teachers emphasize extracurricular activities, students value whole-school community events that strengthen institutional belonging. The results highlight the importance of SFCP, showing that community building is most effective when it actively engages families and parents alongside school-based practices.

10:15-11:30 a.m.

PAPER SESSIONS

1. *Teacher Attitudes and Influence on Partnerships*

San Gabriel C

**Chair and Discussion Leader: Steve Sheldon, Johns Hopkins U.**

**Emma Chen, Western Washington University**

*Bilingual Latina EducaStors as Cultural Mediators and System Navigators in Family-School Partnerships*

This paper presents findings from a narrative study exploring the critical—yet under-supported—role of bilingual Latina teachers as cultural mediators. Moving beyond linguistic translation, these educators bridge significant cultural and systemic divides between schools and Latinx families. Analyses of reflections from four in-service teachers reveals their nuanced work in: (1) navigating and demystifying institutional barriers for families, (2) actively reframing deficit narratives to recognize families as essential knowledge holders using a Funds of Knowledge lens, (3) building deep trust through relational practices like home visits, and (4) managing the significant emotional labor of advocacy. The study concludes that superficial parent engagement models are insufficient. It advocates systemic changes to formally recognize, resource, and support the cultural mediation role of bilingual educators and calls for the integration of strengths-based, relational engagement frameworks into teacher education and school policy to foster equitable, family-centric partnerships.

**Shana Haines, Parker Goos, Kathleen Kyzar, Grace Francis, and Tracy Gershwin, University of Vermont**

*Categorizing Educator Concepts of Stressful Interactions with Families*

Although teaching is an emotional practice and family-educator partnership is an important aspect of fostering student success, educators' emotional response to interactions with families is unexplored. In this study, we set the stage for understanding elementary educator appraisal of "stressful" interactions with families by analyzing their descriptions of such interactions. Our research question was: What are the characteristics of educator-described stressful interactions with families? A random sample of 279 educators from across the USA submitted open-ended responses describing an interaction with a student's family member that caused them stress. Data indicated that interactions were stressful for educators because: (a) educators and families have differing expectations of roles of family and educators; (b) there is a lack of trust between educators and families; (c) educators perceive family behavior to be aggressive or disrespectful; (d) families disagree with educators or are in denial about child behavior or needs; (e) there is a lack of administrator support; or (f) the family has a reputation. This study will enable us to design programs for support educators to more effectively cope with interactions with families as well as inform leadership practice and education policy to promote positive, effective, and sustainable relationships between families and educators.

**Megumi Hine, Pallavi Chhabra, and Margaret K. Powers, Washington U.-St. Louis**

*A “family-like” school without families? School culture, family engagement, and home visits in a Midwest urban charter school*

Increasingly, schools are implementing home visits as a way to develop relationships with their students’ families (Sheldon & Jung, 2018). However, researchers have also highlighted the problematic history of home visits and how these visits may reinforce deficit-based perspectives of minoritized communities (Park & Paulick, 2021; Paulick et al., 2022). Our study examined how Dream Charter School, a PreK-2 charter school located in a mid-sized Midwest city, cultivated a “family-like” school culture and implemented home visits. We found that despite evoking family-like narratives about the school and recognizing the value of home visits in strengthening home-school relationships, many staff members maintained deficit-based perspectives.

**Judith Paulick, Natalia Palacios, Amanda Kibler, Julie Smith, Carlin Lacques, University of Virginia**

*Revisiting Home Visiting: Following up with Home Visiting Teachers Seven Years Later*

This study explores the long-term impact of relationship-building home visits on teachers’ professional practice. Rooted in the Parent Teacher Home Visit model, the study revisits teachers who received home visit training in 2017 to examine how insights from these visits influenced their teaching over time. Using pláticas—a dialogic methodology involving three rounds of focus groups—we analyzed how seven of the original eight participant-teachers remembered and applied their experiences. Findings revealed that most teachers found the visits profoundly positive, reporting enhanced understanding of families’ strengths and deeper relationships with students. However, some visits surfaced teacher biases, highlighting the need for sustained critical reflection. The study also revealed that continued home visiting efforts were largely contingent on principal support, including time, compensation, and cultural advocacy. This work contributes to sparse longitudinal research on home visiting and has implications for educator training, administrator preparation, and education policy. It reinforces the idea that relationship-centered home visits can meaningfully shift teacher beliefs and classroom practices—if accompanied by systemic support.

**Steven Sheldon, Victoria Timmerman, Roxanne Bristol, and Jordan Harden, Johns Hopkins University**

*Strengthening Family Engagement in Schools: Findings from an Intervention*

A wealth of research shows that students are more likely to succeed in school if their parents or other family members are engaged in and support their education (Epstein et.al., 2019; Henderson and Mapp, 2002). At a broad level, researchers have made the distinction between family involvement (FI) - school-directed activities that include parents and family members - and family engagement (FE) - activities families use to support their children’s learning and development (Lawson, 2003; Garbacz, et al., 2017). This paper will report on findings from an evaluation of an intervention to support educators’ planning and implementation of FI and FE practices to engage more families in ways supporting student outcomes. Two types of data were collected to investigate: (1) Educators’ and caregivers’ perceptions of family engagement at their school and (2) What strategies do educators promote as meaningful ways to improve family engagement to support student learning? Families and school staff at five schools were asked to complete a survey in Spring 2025, asking them about their perceptions of the school climate for partnerships, levels of family engagement, and their own practices to engage families in student learning.

**2. Community Organizations and Partnership Programs**

**Santa Barbara A**

**Chair and Discussion Leader: TBA**

**Destinee Cherry, J. Patrick Otto, and Mary Lou Miller, Oral Roberts University**

*The perceived barriers community organizations experience when initiating and sustaining partnerships with urban P-12 public schools: A school community approach*

School–community partnerships are designed to promote the holistic development of students of color in high-poverty schools by addressing barriers and inequities that impede success. While many partnerships mitigate challenges associated with limited opportunities in urban contexts, others remain ineffective due to obstacles in their initiation and sustainability. Grounded in Epstein’s Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 1987), which emphasizes shared responsibility between schools and communities for student learning, this qualitative descriptive study explores the perceived barriers community organizations encounter when partnering with urban P–12 public schools. Despite extensive scholarship on school–community partnerships, systematic investigations focusing on community organizations remain limited. This study amplifies the perspectives of community partners to inform more equitable and sustainable collaboration practices.

**Lusa Lo, Kimberly Lee, University of Massachusetts, Boston**

*Community Engagement: Bridging the Gap between Schools and Multilingual Families of Students with Disabilities*

While family and school partnership is important, community involvement is equally crucial, especially for multilingual families of children with disabilities. These families are expected to be knowledgeable about the special education process and regulations, so they can advocate for their children with disabilities. However, existing literature consistently suggests that, due to numerous barriers, families from diverse backgrounds are less likely to be equipped to take on the roles as advocates and decision-makers. Involving local community organizations can be helpful to these families. Often, these organizations can serve as cultural brokers and offer suggestions to schools regarding how to best communicate with these parents. They can also provide these families with resources which target their needs. The purpose of this study was to share how one community-based parent group empowered and prepared Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant families, so they were able to support and advocate for their children/youth with disabilities for needed services. It was also able to bridge the gap between schools and families.

**Dante M. deTablan, Claudia Galindo, Univ. of Maryland - College Park**

*From Passive Beneficiaries to Agents of Change: Latinx Parent Leadership in Community Schools*

Community schools are gaining momentum nationwide as a comprehensive educational strategy for addressing longstanding disparities in academic opportunity, access to resources, and student well-being (Galindo & Sanders, 2019). They advance this work by integrating wraparound services for students and families, expanding enriched learning time, fostering meaningful family engagement, and cultivating collaborative leadership to better support students who have been historically underserved in public schools (Oakes et al., 2017). The theories of change underlying community schools generally emphasize removing barriers to learning—such as food insecurity, inadequate out-of-school time supervision, and unmet medical needs—through coordinated social service provision and intentional family engagement (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011). Research has further demonstrated that

strong, collaborative leadership teams are essential for effective implementation of the community school model and for improving student outcomes (Sanders et al., 2019). Collaborative leadership acknowledges the presence of multiple leaders within schools—including principals and community school coordinators—and emphasizes their shared responsibility for decision-making and problem-solving (Blank et al., 2006; Sanders, 2018). One way collaborative leadership is enacted in community schools is through the formation of leadership teams that guide the school's overall functioning. In addition to principals and community school coordinators, these teams also include parents, reflecting a shared governance structure that positions multiple stakeholders as partners in shaping school priorities. Although existing research has largely focused on the leadership roles of principals and community school coordinators (ref), far less attention has been given to the role of family leadership. This qualitative study addresses this gap by examining how Latinx parents and school personnel conceptualize and enact family leadership within community schools. It seeks to illuminate the processes through which community schools cultivate leadership practices that position parents as partners and co-leaders in shaping school vision, culture, and decision-making.

**Richaa Hoysala, Brooking Institution, Center for Universal Education**

*Bringing Families into Conversations and Implementation of AI and Education in Schools and Homes*

Families are rarely informed or included in conversations on how to plan for and create policies for AI in schools. They are also left out of generative artificial intelligence (AI) design, being driven by tech companies, and are left to navigate AI use at home with their children without the knowledge, guidance, or tools to do so safely and effectively. The AI Task Force on Education at the Center for Universal Education has partnered with the Family Engagement in Education Network (FEEN) to create family-facing guidance for families based on a newly released research report: *A New Direction for Students in an AI world: Prosper, Prepare, Protect* (Winthrop & Burns, 2026). Key lessons and recommendations from this research will be shared. This research was conducted between 2024 and 2025 with educators, families, and youth in the U.S. and roughly 50 other countries, drawing on focus group discussions, interviews, and surveys to understand both the risks and benefits of AI in education. Additionally, a review of research from 50 countries was conducted to capture emerging knowledge on AI in education. The guiding research questions of the premortem were: What are the potential negative risks generative AI poses to children's education from early childhood through secondary school? Assuming these potential risks, what can we begin to do now to prevent them and maximize the potential benefits of AI?

**Emily Morris, Brooking Institution, Center for Universal Education**

*Family-Centered Education Systems: Country Lessons on How to Promote Education Innovation and Transformation with Families*

Schools and learning institutions in the U.S. and around the world are struggling to keep up with pressing issues. Chronic absenteeism, mental health, human displacement and migration, and new technologies and AI are just some of the issues changing the face of learning. With all these competing priorities, how do education leaders keep family, school, and community partnerships on the agenda? What actions can communities take to keep promoting family-centered education systems? Researchers at the Center for Universal Education will share how schools, communities, and governments around the world are ensuring families are central to education system transformation. Key findings from the *Six Global Lessons on How Family, School, and Community Engagement can Transform Education*, a

mixed-methods study conducted on six continents, will be shared. The research was conducted with roughly 23,000 students, family, and educator participants, and a participatory research methodology was co-created during this process. The presentation will highlight how country teams are applying family engagement research to enact small but audacious changes in their education systems. From building trust in U.S. community schools to reinventing family engagement school programming in Colombia to supporting youth research on chronic absenteeism in Sierra Leone, community organizations are partnering with schools and governments to create more family-centered education systems.

10:15-11:30 a.m.

**ROUNDTABLES**

**Table A. Technology Advances Partnerships**

**Santa Barbara B**

**Sasha Albrecht, Ramirez, J., Brundage, B., Romero-Herrera, L., Serna, E., Dela Cruz, R., Beltrán-Grimm, S,  
Portland State University**

*Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on Professional Development Needs for Technology Use*

This qualitative study explored early childhood educators' beliefs and experiences with media and technology integration in relation to professional development. A 90-minute focus group with nine early childhood educators and administrators in Southern California was analyzed using deductive rapid grounded theory to explore the alignment between beliefs, practice, and professional development needs. Findings reveal that educators use diverse tools, but face challenges integrating technology beyond administrative and communication functions in the classroom. Teachers seek balance, expressing both enthusiasm for digital learning and concern over screen time and developmentally appropriate practice. Findings also suggest that teachers' attitudes are also shaped by mentorship, training, and experience, while barriers include funding inequities, inconsistent infrastructure, and limited time for PD. Together, these findings highlight the critical role of in-service PD and administrative leadership in supporting culturally sustaining and developmentally appropriate technology use.

**Thomas J. Capretta, Yesenia Alvarez Padilla, and Barbara Boone, The Ohio State University**

*Engaging Families Through Text Messaging to Improve Attendance*

This study evaluates the impact of bi-weekly text messages from schools to families that encourage attendance and address common obstacles for kindergarten through sixth-grade students in an Ohio district. The goal of this study is to inform educators and district leaders about the potential of a low-cost, scalable texting strategy that can be co-designed with school teams to strengthen family engagement and support improved attendance. Drawing on prior research on attendance messaging and family engagement, schools sent ten text messages, bi-weekly, over the 2025 fall semester, with content informed by recent studies on attendance interventions and messaging (Heppen et al.; 2020; Ad Council, 2024; Capretta et al., 2024). Using a quasi-experimental approach, we will compare grade-level cohorts across adjacent years (e.g., Kindergarten in 2024–25 compared to the same students as first graders in 2025–26), recognizing that this approach assumes relatively low student mobility. We will test within-cohort change using paired t-tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests to accommodate small sample sizes and potential non-normal distributions. Although results are not available at the time of submission, analyses will be completed prior to the conference.

**Köksal Banoğlu, The Education U. of Hong Kong, and Carol Mullen, Virginia Tech**

*AI-Informed Student Activism and Civic Engagement in K–12 School Communities*

Dominant discourse frames artificial intelligence (AI) as an efficiency tool in education, not as an opportunity for supporting student voice, rights, contributions, and action. This paper focuses on AI-informed student activism, with an eye towards its cultivation for civic engagement and social justice advocacy in K–12 school communities. Broadly, we pursue threats to civic education and social justice that dampen student agency on behalf of potent learning partnerships in/beyond the classroom. We asked how AI might boost benefits, particularly opportunities, on behalf of civic engagement. AI’s potential for meaningfully and authentically creating an active, engaged citizenry led us to consider AI uses that facilitate student activism and civic engagement. We propose a transformative approach to and beyond technocratic manifestations of AI. The aim is to explore how AI might empower youth to advocate for their rights, engage in collective decision-making, and challenge power relations in schools and societies. Insights from past K–12 student leaders provoke reflection on AI as an ally in learning. We highlight civic capacities of AI: empowering informed dialogue, streamlining communication, building bridges among students, and cultivating ethical and autonomous leadership. This work has direct relevance for programs that prepare teachers and leaders.

**Maria K. McKenna, University of Notre Dame**

*Student Accompaniment in Higher Education: Promises and Pressures of Familial and Kinfolk Social Mobility*

The challenges for young adults entering into higher education amidst our complex technological, geographic, and economic global landscape are irrefutable. As institutions of higher education aim to remain relevant and impactful they must meet students where they are at, developing systems, structures, and communities that allow for personalized, meaningfully relational support. This work necessarily includes conversations about discernment. This is especially true for students who are the first in their families to attend college and for students from cultural backgrounds that privilege extended kin networks. Students must weigh professional and academic track decisions alongside familial relationships, needs, and dreams. In a world where rapid advances in artificial intelligence risk rendering educational institutions as we know them obsolete, this presentation explores a working model of what remains essential to education—human connection, an ethic of care, and attentiveness to the whole person, including family dynamics, kinfolk, and extended family needs.

### ***Table B. Promote Excellence on Partnerships***

**Rachel Renbarger, FHI 360, and Hadley F. Bachman, The Ohio State Univ.**

*Evaluating the Family Friendly Schools Certification Process as a Lever for Improved School, Family, and Community Partnerships*

This study evaluates the Family Friendly Schools (FFS) certification process as a mechanism for strengthening school, family, and community partnerships. Developed by the Prichard Committee in 2022, the FFS certification guides schools to form Family Engagement Action Teams, conduct self-assessments in key engagement domains, document evidence of effectiveness, and ensure professional learning for team members. Through qualitative interviews and focus groups with 70 educators and surveys with 574 educators, findings reveal that the FFS process fosters a stronger culture of family engagement, encourages critical self-reflection, and drives the implementation of targeted, effective practices. Educators reported statistically significant growth on all factors of the Family Engagement Efficacy Beliefs of Educators (FEEB-E) scale with Collaborating for Learning showing the lowest effect size (0.17) and the Honoring All Families having the largest effect size (0.45). Educators reported a shift from viewing family engagement as an

“add on” to integrating caregiver insights into all activities, resulting in improved relationships, higher event participation, and increased school enrollment. The study underscores the importance of diverse, collaborative teams and intentional reflection in transforming school culture and achieving authentic partnerships. The FFS certification provides a clear framework for schools aspiring to become truly “family friendly.”

**Veronica Marion and Melissa Redding, CT Statewide Engagement Center**

*Preparing District and Regional Leaders to Organize Sustainable School-Family-Community Partnership Program*

This practice-based paper describes Connecticut’s implementation of a regional model for statewide family engagement focused on preparing district and regional leaders to organize strong, sustainable school–family–community partnership programs. Grounded in the AERA 2026 theme, Sankofa: Learning from the Past to Shape a Better Future, the work applies the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) framework to contemporary leadership development and system-building. The guiding questions are: How can state and regional structures support district leaders in developing the capacity to lead effective partnership programs? What leadership practices emerge when professional learning is aligned with a research-based partnership framework over time? This paper reflects implementation from the third school year of Connecticut’s regional family engagement model, launched in January 2024. The project sample consists of current district and regional leaders within the Connecticut Statewide Family Engagement Center network who have signed participation agreements and are participating in the Certificate of Excellence in Family Engagement Leadership. Results are formative and practice-oriented, emphasizing early implementation. Evidence includes increased clarity of leadership roles, stronger alignment between family engagement and district improvement priorities, and establishment of foundational systems supporting sustainability.

**Reyes L. Quezada, U. of San Diego; Angela Louque, Cal State U-SB; Reyna Garcia-Ramos, Pepperdine Univ.**

*Integrating Family, School, and Community Engagement in Pre- and In-Service Teacher and Leadership Programs Through an Equity Partnership*

This session examines strategies for integrating family, school, and community engagement within pre-service and in-service teacher and leadership preparation programs through an equity-focused partnership framework. Grounded in Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement, Constantino’s Five Simple Principles, Mapp and Kuttner’s Dual Capacity-Building Framework, and the Cultural Proficiency Framework, the work emphasizes inclusive, culturally responsive engagement practices. Participants explore evidence-based strategies for partnering with linguistically and culturally diverse families, including those often considered “hard to reach.” The session highlights practical applications, real-world vignettes, and capacity-building tools to strengthen equitable collaboration and improve student learning outcomes.

**Brian R. Beabout, University of New Orleans**

*Sustaining Community Leadership: Preserving Social Justice in a New Orleans Charter School*

The presentation re-visits a 2013 case study of the founding of the Morris Jeff Community School in New Orleans. Original qualitative data as revisited and combined with media reports and field observations of the school as it operates 15 years after its founding, now serving 1400 students instead of only 180. The examination finds that while

some moderation of the founding values has taken place, new and unanticipated challenges have also been met. Changing student demographics, evolving state accountability systems, and budget demands in a pro-voucher state have meant sustainability and survival of a school can sometimes come into conflict with foundational values. The creation of a single site teachers union added a new community to be considered. The study concludes with a discussion that school values and operations change as organizations grow and their context changes.

**Christopher B. Arellano, Reyna Garcia Ramos, Pepperdine Univ., Angela Louque (Cal State U-SB),  
Reyes Quezada, Univ. of San Diego, Cassandra Villa, Pepperdine Univ.**

*Building Equity Partnerships: The Cultural Proficiency Framework for Continued Family, School, and Community Engagement*

This work extends research on families, schools, and community engagement. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the success of students and their presence in schools are dependent on families working in tandem with schools to support students' attendance and participation in schools. Families, we know, have not always felt served by the school system, and families of Color report even less satisfaction. When parents feel heard, they will participate to support not only their children in schools but the community as a whole. This session presents three examples of how family engagement and community engagement practices expand to include community organizing, district-wide initiatives, and a focus on students' voices to improve the educational journeys for all students, particularly in urban settings.

11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

PAPER SESSIONS

3. Parent Attitudes and Actions as Partners in Education

San Gabriel C

Chair and Discussion Leader: TBA

**Michelle Bologna Dasgupta and Karen Beard, The Ohio State University**

*Testimonios y Perspectivas of Latina Immigrant Mothers: Informing School, Family, and Community Engagement for Student Success*

This phenomenological study examined, thus contribute to the understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and unmet critical needs of Guatemalan immigrant mothers as they navigate an American public high school system. We prioritized the Latina mothers' experiences through their voices because their unique perspectives been unheard. Many U.S. school districts neglect to address fundamental, historical, cultural, and social divides between families and schools, particularly those of Latin American immigrant parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Ishimaru, 2014; Noguera, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Author (2008) noted the overwhelming evidence that the American education system continues to fall short in satisfying the promise of advancement for specific populations marginalized in schools and society. Latina immigrant mothers have been marginalized through systemic exclusion, even within their own communities. This disregard for their perspectives, knowledge, and cultural values has limited opportunities to recognize them as critical stakeholders in efforts to advance Latino student achievement (Valdes & Bender, 2021; Durand, 2011; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Yosso, 2005). The findings revealed their beliefs about education including feeling frustration and isolation; ineffective communication and language barriers; a lack of support and understanding; and hope to uplift Hispanics. Most significantly, the study unveiled what needs were not being met by the district for recommendations.

**Jonathan Ramirez, Dela Cruz, R., Albrecht, S., Serna, E., Brundage, B., Romero-Herrera, E.,**

**Beltrán-Grimm, S., Portland State University**

*Immigration Policy and Inter-generational Attitudes and Behaviors*

Immigration policies on Latine families heighten anxiety and stress as a result of fear of deportation, surveillance, and family separation. Literature on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) shows that ACEs have been reconceptualized to incorporate the experience of threat of detention and deportation as an adverse experience for Latine immigrant children and families. These stressors have severe implications for developmental outcomes, including mental health. In response to the extensive impact of the current immigration policy, we explored the psychological and emotional distress families are experiencing, through secondary analysis of a pilot study, reporting family behaviors, anxiety, and fear of families who have been affected by the immigration policies. Survey results (N=52) revealed first generation status is associated with greater immigration related anxiety, and caregivers who experience higher levels of immigration related anxiety also report surveillance and safety concerns. Further analysis of the association between parent education levels and fears of family separation indicated no statistically significant difference.

**Patricia Edwards, Michigan State U., Marliese R. Peltier, Ball State U., Jacquelyn Sweeney, Bowie State U.**

*Family Literacy and Reading Comprehension: Evolving Understandings and Emerging Directions*

This paper synthesizes historical, theoretical, and empirical research on the relationship between family literacy and children's reading comprehension, emphasizing evolving definitions of family literacy, expanding evidence on family literacy initiatives, and emerging directions for future research. Building from foundational scholarship that conceptualizes literacy as socially situated (Anderson & Stokes, 1984) and families as children's first and most important teachers (Edwards, Pleasants, & Franklin, 1999), the review traces how the field moved from early controversies toward broader acceptance of family literacy programs. We highlight how shared reading and home literacy environments support comprehension through vocabulary growth, narrative understanding, and inferential thinking (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Across a limited but growing set of studies directly linking family literacy initiatives to comprehension (e.g., Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Kim & White, 2008; Koskinen et al., 2000; Pagan & Sénéchal, 2014), results indicate positive effects, particularly when initiatives include explicit parent training, culturally responsive incorporation of family practices, sustained relationships, and provision of materials. Implications emphasize designing coherent, two-way home-school partnerships that extend comprehension development across print and digital contexts.

**Elif Karsli-Calamak, Cristina Valencia Mazzanti, University of South Carolina**

*Portrayals of Family Engagement in Early Childhood Literature*

In this presentation we will discuss the role and involvement of families in early childhood research based on a systematic literature review of 959 articles published in 4 leading journals in the field between 2021 and 2024. Our findings show that children are included as research participants in nearly half of the studies published, whereas adults such as families, teachers, other school staff and archival materials and policy documents make up the other half (n=488). Out of these 488, %19 involve only families as participants in the published studies. Our overall analysis demonstrates that families are particularly instrumental in reporting their children's experiences and perspectives. In doing so, they play a key role in creating a comprehensive picture of children's lives and needs through research that can in turn support their well-being, development, and access.

#### 4. Student Attitudes, Actions, and Results of Partnerships

Santa Barbara A

**Chair and Discussion Leader: TBA**

**Ashley Cureton, Erick R. Aguinaldo, and Sean J. Drake, University of Michigan**

*"I'm Terrified to Go to School": Refugee Youths' Perceptions of Mass School Shootings and School Violence*

Mass school shootings and overall school violence have heightened fear among students and the general public. However, refugee students are less familiar with this phenomenon upon resettling to the United States. Drawing on 30 in-depth interviews with refugee high school students who resettled to a Midwestern city, this phenomenological case study considers the environmental and experiential factors contributing to refugee youths' perceptions of safety

in the U.S. school environment. We use Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to analyze how refugee students experience and perceive mass school shootings and school safety, particularly through social media. Results indicate that refugee youth feel a mixture of shock, anxiety, hopelessness, and fear of becoming victims of gun violence at school. The findings are noteworthy given refugee youths' prior experiences with or knowledge of political violence and persecution. This study concludes with recommendations for school social workers to help refugee students feel safer at school and adjust to the American reality of senseless gun violence.

**Travis Lewis, Diana Hiatt-Michael, East Carolina University**

*Research on Practice with Families to Promote Positive Mental Health of Students*

The intent of this presentation is to highlight concerns regarding mental health conditions between the staff at American public schools and families they serve. The research findings for this presentation come from a call from AERA FSCP researchers and known professionals in this area. Reports reveal that the primary causes of teacher drop-out are student discipline and challenges dealing with families. These two issues lead to mental health issues for teachers, students, and parents. Research will be presented regarding the state of mental health among student population and common school practices in America to address those issues. The primary focus will be on research-supported practices to connect students, teachers, counsellors, and families to improve mental health. The presentation will begin with a summary of current mental health issues of American student populations. This will be followed by resources currently available in American schools and shortage of trained school counsellors across U. S. but primarily in rural areas. The findings will address promising ways schools and teachers can create positive mental health among students, families, and school staff.

**Eyal Bergman, Learning Heroes; Zenzile Riddick, Northwestern U., and Karen Mapp,**

**Harvard Graduate School of Education**

*How Family Engagement Drives Improved Student Outcomes: Lessons from the Family Engagement Impact Study*

The Family Engagement Impact study tested the hypothesis that schools with stronger family engagement pre-pandemic were better equipped to withstand the disruptions caused by the pandemic. This mixed-methods study used 5Essentials and other publicly available data in Illinois because it is the strongest data set with a family engagement construct. The quantitative stage revealed strong associations between pre-pandemic family engagement and post-pandemic outcomes on chronic absenteeism, attendance, ELA, and math proficiency rates. On chronic absenteeism, the effect size of family engagement was stronger than the effect size of poverty. The subsequent qualitative stage included a rigorous sampling process to identify schools that consistently outperform expectations on family engagement and matched them with a Partner school in their same district and local community. Following 100+ interviews with principals, teachers, and families, four "distinguishing factors" emerged: 1) a consistent mindset that families and educators are on the same team, 2) leadership that promotes effective practice, 3) proactive, consistent, and persistent communication patterns, 4) deep, personal connections between families and educators. Future research aims to improve measurement of family engagement so that schools, policymakers, and researchers can have a reliable tool that objectively measures family engagement practices known to accelerate student outcomes.

11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

**ROUNDTABLES**

**Table C. Prospective and Retrospective Measures of The Quality of Family Engagement  
Santa Barbara B**

**Hadley F. Bachman, The Ohio State U., and Rachel Renbarger, FHI 360**

*Extending the FEEB-E: Structural Validity and Response Patterns in Retrospective Assessment*

The Family Engagement Efficacy Beliefs of Educators (FEEB-E) scale was developed as a comprehensive tool to assess efficacy beliefs in family engagement (Bachman, 2023). The results of original exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were presented at a prior International Network on School, Family, and Community Partnerships presentation (Bachman et al., 2024). The current study extends the FEEB-E by examining the structural validity and response patterns in a newly developed retrospective version of the FEEB-E scale (N = 574). Confirmatory factor analysis and paired sample t-tests demonstrate that the retrospective version retains the psychometric stability of the original. With evidence supporting the validity of scores produced by the retrospective FEEB-E, family engagement researchers can now capture changes in efficacy beliefs resulting from an intervention while reducing the attrition problem found in traditional pre-post testing.

**Jiarui Xie, Yesenia Alvarez Padilla, Hadley F. Bachman, and Barbara J. Boone, The Ohio State University**

*Exploring the Impact of Education In-service Development on the Family Engagement Efficacy Beliefs of Educators*

This study investigates the influence of state-mandated educator preparation coursework on teachers' self-efficacy regarding family engagement. Utilizing the Family Engagement Efficacy Beliefs of Educators (FEEB-E) instrument (Bachman, 2023), researchers employed a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design with provisional teachers in Nevada. While the survey was distributed to over 12,000 educators, high attrition and longitudinal matching challenges resulted in a final sample of N = 161 (76 treatment, 85 control). Quantitative results indicate a significant main effect of time on efficacy growth regardless of course completion, potentially reflecting the resilience of the retained sample. Within the treatment group, the "Partnering" domain saw the greatest improvement despite being the weakest initial area, and university-based course settings yielded the highest efficacy gains. Conversely, male and late-career educators demonstrated efficacy declines despite treatment. The findings imply that while experience drives growth, targeted interventions are necessary for vulnerable demographic groups. Qualitative results from open-ended responses underscore the value of integrating practical strategies into courses to strengthen family partnerships, including role-playing, case studies, and customizable, ready-to-use resources. Furthermore, given the substantial data loss inherent in pre/post tracking, future research should consider retrospective pretest designs to better mitigate attrition and capture efficacy changes.