Welcome to the
Family Engagement Tool

Purpose

The web-based Family Engagement Tool (FET) guides a school-based team through an inventory and self-assessment of parent involvement policies and practices, resulting in recommendations for improvement that can become part of the school improvement plan.

The Team

The team may be an existing team (school improvement team, for example) or a team formed especially to conduct the analysis. In either case, at least half of the members of the team should be parents of currently enrolled students, and these parents should not be employed by the school. Other team members would include the principal and faculty representatives. A typical team structure is the principal, parent facilitator (or social worker), a teacher, and four parents.

Time

An estimate of the amount of time necessary for the team to complete the analysis is 5 to 6 hours, after the principal has completed the School Information Form and gathered the key documents. This time can be efficiently divided among three meetings (one meeting for each of steps 3, 4, and 5 in the process). Or the team may choose to meet twice for longer amounts of time. It is also possible to devote a day to the process and complete the process in one meeting.

> The best part of the Family Engagement Tool tool was working together with parents in reviewing our School Improvement Goals and enlisting their support in developing initiatives to help meet them.
>
> *~John Ulferts Principal at Whitehead Elementary, Rockford School District*

Abundant Resources

FET provides convenient, web-based access to hundreds of resources on parent involvement:

- ◊ Wise Ways®: Research and practice briefs linked to each topic in FET, and
- ◊ Resource library: Downloadable materials on every aspect of parent involvement, including many materials in both English and Spanish.

A Five Step Process

The five steps in this process will lead your school to a set of parent involvement recommendations to include in your school improvement plan. Your school team will develop the recommendations after careful assessment of your school's parent involvement policies, programs, and practices. Each step is important.

The principal starts the process by completing steps 1 and 2. A PDF form for step 1 can be printed out and completed and the answers then entered into the web system.

Steps 3-5 are completed by the school team. The school team typically includes the principal, teacher representatives, and parent representatives. PDF forms are provided for steps 3, 4, and 5. The principal can print out a form and make copies for team members. The team then works with the form in its meeting, and the principal records the completed work in the online system.

Step 1: Complete School Information Form

The principal completes an online School Information Form (entered using "Input School Info Data") and prints copies for the school team to review when completing the Needs Assessment and Plan. Complete Step 1 and 2 before moving on to Step 3.

Step 2: Complete About Your School

The principal completes an online "About Your School" that captures current parent involvement procedures and practices (entered using "Input About Your School") and prints copies for the school team to review when completing the Needs Assessment and Plan.

Step 3: Gather Key Documents and Complete Policy Analysis

The principal gathers copies of the following six key documents, if available, for review by the school team when completing the Policy Analysis.

- ◊ District parent involvement policy
- ◊ School parent involvement policy
- ◊ Compact
- ◊ Homework guidelines
- ◊ Student report card
- ◊ Classroom visit procedures

The school team scores the key documents using the rubrics provided in this step. The results are entered using "Input Policy Analysis," and a scored report is printed for the school team to review when completing the Needs Assessment and Plan.

Step 4: Complete School Community Survey

The school team completes the School Community Survey (print out PDF copy of survey for each team member), answering each question by arriving at a group consensus following a full discussion.

The results are entered using "Input School Community Survey" and a scored report is printed to review when completing the Needs Assessment and Plan.

> "The template was easy to follow. I thought the entire involvement analysis was valuable–when you put things down in writing–the facts are indisputable. You can see areas where you need to make improvements clearly."
>
> *~Ronnie Bazan Principal at West View Elementary, Rockford School District*

Step 5: Complete Needs Assessment

The school team meets to complete a Needs Assessment and make recommendations to include in the school improvement plan based on information derived from the School Information Form, About Your School, rubrics scoring of key documents, and School Community Survey results. More than one meeting may be required. Click on the Wise Ways® links to find helpful information on specific topics. Print out the Wise Ways® for the team.

When the activities or objectives are entered into the school improvement plan or the optional planning tool provided in FET, detailed tasks, timelines, and persons responsible for completion of the tasks should be included and updated when activities or objectives have been completed.

Benefits to Your School

1. Purposeful team process
2. Practical parent leadership
3. Improved parent engagement
4. Access to evidence-based practices
5. Structured guidance on policy and practice
6. Focus on student learning
7. Thoughtful assessment of strengths and areas for improvement
8. Strengthened school improvement plan
9. Efficient, time-saving process
10. Documentation of the work
11. Data for decision making

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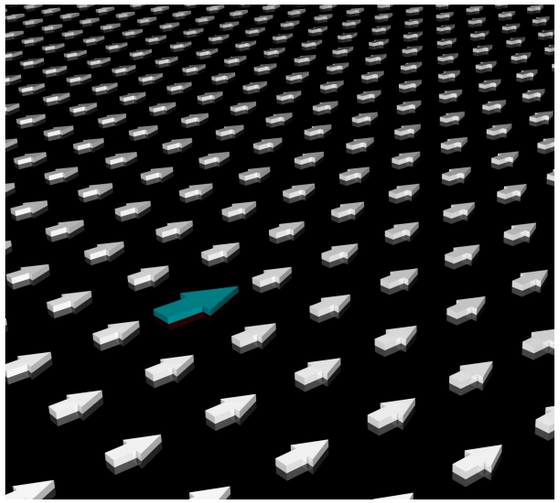
The team process is an enjoyable and productive way to thoughtfully assess the school's parent involvement and plan for its improvement.



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Going through this process really helped to fine tune the plan we had in place and make it more meaningful to all stakeholders. This process showed us voids as well as strengths in our plan. When we finished this process we had a clear direction for where we were headed with the next steps outlined.

~Shawn Galvin, Assistant Principal at Lewis Lemon Elementary, Rockford School District

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Family Engagement Tool

An online tool for schools

School Community Network

Academic Development Institute

Family Engagement Tool

The Family Engagement Tool (FET) is a useful tool for any school. For Title I schools the tool helps meet the letter and the spirit of parent involvement as defined in Title I Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The FET provides:

- **a School Team with a structured process to strengthen parent involvement through the school improvement plan;**
- **purposeful parent engagement that is linked with student learning;**
- **rubrics for improving district and school parent involvement policies, the home-school compact, and other policies connected to family engagement.**

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