COVID -19 Parent and Community Engagement Resources

The purpose of this document is to compile resources for state education agencies, school districts and schools to use, and they can repurpose this document to meet their needs. If you repurpose, please use the following language: "This resource draws on a resource created by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)."

Schools have worked to stay connected to students and families since their building doors closed nationwide in mid-March but have struggled to reach some students and their families.

This document contains resources focused on helping schools to reconnect with, and stay connected to, these students and their families, and to ensure that they get the tools, information, and support that they need. These resources are organized into two categories:

1. Resources that pertain to **finding and staying connected to families,** especially those whose students who were difficult to reach during the spring building closures
2. Resources that pertain to **community engagement generally** as schools navigate closures related to COVID-19

Resources that pertain to finding and staying connected to families, especially those whose students were difficult to reach during the spring building closures:

- **Attendance Works** published a list of ideas to support schools in locating students and families who have not been in touch during the coronavirus pandemic and a framework to assist educators in thinking strategically about supporting students and families.
- **Detroit** educators have been searching for students by knocking on doors, leaving notes at families' homes, scouring social media including finding students through TikTok comments and multiplayer online games, and asking student's friends and relatives for information. Some schools have been using spreadsheets to organize and track communication with families.
- **EdNavigator** offered the following tactics:
  + To reach students, call, text, or WhatsApp every emergency contact on file for a disconnected student. If that doesn't work, reach out to the student's friends and ask how to reach the student. Ask the teacher with the best relationship to the student to make those calls.
  + Establish a virtual advisory system where teachers have a group of students for whom they serve as the point person. When a student disconnects, that teacher leads the efforts to reconnect.
  + Dispatch an educator to leave hand-written notes on doors.
  + Attempt to reach parents on social media.

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+ Establish protocols for workers at sites distributing food and/or materials to 1) gather names and updated contact information from parents, and 2) ask about the last time the parents were in touch with school.

- **SchoolHouse Connection**, a group that supports homeless students, published a checklist. It contains strategies that liaisons, schools, and early childhood programs can use to keep in touch. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Service **Office of Head Start** published related guidance on how to best support families experiencing homelessness during COVID-19.

- **Teaching Tolerance** wrote a blog post on rethinking family engagement during school closures. It urges educators to challenge their assumptions and reevaluate family engagement through an equity lens.

Resources that pertain to community engagement generally as schools navigate closures related to COVID-19:

- **FutureEd** and **Attendance Works** updated their Attendance Playbook to add information pertinent to COVID-19 schooling.

- **The Carnegie Foundation** produces a resource center to inform and inspire the field to place families at the center of any approach to student success. It offers a blend of video testimonials and resources reflecting insights of practitioners on family engagement. Resources include those from EdNavigator, NAFSCE, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and TNTP.

- **Center for Supportive Schools** provided a resource guide to support school communities, families, and students. **California Collaborative for Educational Excellence** outlined a communication plan to support authentic and collaborative family and educator partnerships, strengthen family engagement in children's learning, reduce stress and confusion, and improve student outcomes during closure.

- **Everyday Labs** created the Family Insight Toolkit with template letters and surveys, as well as suggestions for contacting all families.

- **Head Start** provided guidance on using social media to engage and communicate with families.

- **Learning Heroes** published extensive research on parent engagement, including research on how parents are responding to school closures related to COVID-19.

- **NYU's Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools** released a set of tools for educators to listen to and learn from families during school closures, including overall guidance, sample email messages, and suggested survey questions.

- **Parent Teacher Home Visits** published guidance on how to maintain relationships in a time of social distancing, including tips for teacher and app recommendations.

- **Parents as Teachers** has conducted virtual home visits with great success.

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- **Stand for Children Leadership Center** published guidance on how to [motivate students and engage families](#) in the 2020-2021 school year.

Updated: July 14, 2020