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| QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE  Engaging Families through Educator Evaluation |  |

**Family input can support educators’ continued growth and development toward culturally responsive, equitable teaching and leading.** Families are their children’s first and best advocates, positioning them to help educators understand what it means to be a great teacher for their students - especially when there are cultural differences between educators and the students and families they serve. While not required as part of the current Model System for educator evaluation in Massachusetts, family voice can help to ensure that “evaluations of effective teaching are meaningful in their local context.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This QRG provides guidance to educators and evaluators on 1) general principles of family engagement within the educator evaluation process and 2) integrating family voice into the [Five-Step Educator Evaluation Cycle](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/?section=five-step#view-list).

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| PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATOR EVALUATION PROCESS | | | | | |
| Above all, prioritize relationships. Know your families and caregivers as people first, and show up authentically and consistently to build a mutual partnership. | | Communicate the purpose and value of family input in educator evaluation. Families may not be aware of the existence of educator evaluation, or know much about how the process works. Communicate why you’re asking for their input, keeping families’ accessibility needs in mind. | | | Provide families with accessible and varied options for providing input. Consider soliciting feedback or ideas through written surveys in families’ primary languages, family conferences, informal conversations, voice or video recordings, and/or listening sessions. Ensure interpretation and translation services are available for families that speak languages other than English. |
| Interrogate your own biases and assumptions. Consider a family member’s time constraints, emotional or mental capacity, documentation status, and past traumatic experiences with schooling and the education system. There may be many reasons why family members are not responsive to traditional family engagement structures, or why they may provide criticism. Your own emotional intelligence is key to connecting with families and integrating their input in a meaningful way. | | Compensate and appreciate family members for their leadership. Families can help you solicit feedback from other families in their community. If family members help your school design a family survey, for example, or organize listening sessions, compensate them for their time and contributions. In addition to monetary compensation, consider appreciating families by providing child care during meetings, or publicly crediting them for their contributions. | | | Use data to ensure you are hearing from a representative group of families from your school’s population. Analyze family engagement data (e.g., survey completion, event attendance) across lines of student and family race, ethnicity, ability, and primary language. Consider elevating family voices from historically marginalized populations beyond their representation in the entire student population. |
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| ASHLEY DAVIS  Principal, Pauline A. Shaw Elementary School  Boston Public Schools  DESE Principal Advisory Cabinet Member (2020-2021)  *Hear how Ashley and her team work to center these principles of family engagement in their work:* | | | [Ashley Davis: Equitable Family Engagement Practices](https://www.youtube.com/embed/X5YykGIv0uM?feature=oembed) | | |
| INTEGRATING FAMILY VOICE INTO THE FIVE-STEP EDUCATOR EVALUATION CYCLE | | | | | | |
|  | **Tips for Evaluators** | | | **Tips for Educators** | | |
| ONE  **Self-Assessment** | * **Encourage educators to consider family input** as they think through their strengths and areas of growth. * If this is the first time your school is intentionally integrating family voice into the self-assessment process, **share the purpose of family input with educators, and emphasize that it is intended to support their growth**.Listen to any concerns, and coach educators through equitable family engagement approaches. | | | * Above all, consider how you are building a **respectful, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere** for all families. * When possible, **consider family feedback from previous years**. What did families appreciate about your practice? What did they signal as areas of growth? * **Ask families about their priorities and needs for their child’s education this year.** Reflect on your past successes and challenges relative to the goals they share. | | |
| TWO  **Analysis, Goal Setting, and Plan Development** | * Engage families and cultural brokers[[2]](#footnote-2) to learn about **what an effective teacher does from their perspective**, and center their input in your evaluation processes. For example, consider asking: What focus areas should our team of educators focus on? What is most important to you and your family when it comes to teaching and learning? | | | * **Center family input around priorities for their child’s education this year** when developing goals. * **Share your goals** with families and students**.** | | |
| THREE  **Implementation**  ***Evidence Collection*** | * If possible, provide opportunities for families and cultural brokers to **build out and lead mechanisms for gathering family feedback** on teaching and leading practices(e.g., surveys, listening sessions, questions to ask in conversation). * **Let educators know that you welcome anecdotal evidence from families** (e.g., text messages, quotes from conversations) in the evidence collection process. * When necessary, **coach educators** to engage with families in supportive, reciprocal partnerships. | | | * **Collect anecdotal evidence** from families related to your goals (e.g., text messages, quotes from conversations). * Throughout the year, create intentional space to gather reflective information from families. **In families’ primary language, ask: “From your perspective, how are you experiencing your child’s education with me?”[[3]](#footnote-3)** By creating open space, you can hear families’ feedback and map this evidence onto your goals and performance on standards. Keep in mind, however, that not all families may be comfortable with this type of question – relationships are key to gathering this information in the most responsive way. | | |
| FOUR & FIVE  **Formative & Summative Evaluation** | * Family feedback is valuable within and beyond Standard III (Family Engagement). **Weave evidence of practice from families** into evaluation of progress towards goals and other standards. * At this stage in your evaluation process, **reflect:** Where is family voice reflected in your practice? Is it representative of your students across lines of identity? | | | | | |

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

* [Family, School and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscp-fundamentals.docx) | *DESE*
* Sample Family Feedback Surveys
  + [Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Surveys-Parent.pdf)
  + [Connecticut Department of Education & Panorama Education](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Evaluation-and-Support/Parent-Feedback-Survey-Materials)

* [Facilitating Listening Sessions Toolkit](https://www.pta.org/center-for-family-engagement/listening-sessions) | *The Center for Family Engagement*
* [Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf) | *The Massachusetts Family Engagement Coalition*
* [Challenging Assumptions Reflection Tool](https://flamboyanfoundation.org/resource/challenging-assumptions-reflection-tool/) | *Flamboyan Foundation*

1. del Carmen Salazar, María, and Jessica Lerner, *Teacher Evaluation as Cultural Practice: A Framework for Equity and Excellence* (16). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cultural brokers are individuals who act as bridges between schools and communities (Jezewski, 1990; McMahon, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We’d like to thank educators from the 2020-21 Principal & Teacher Advisory Cabinets for developing this question. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)