



What You Need to Know:

- Parent- and community-centered engagement benefits all stakeholders: students, families, schools, and policymakers. This is especially true for our most vulnerable students and families.
- Authentic change happens when those closest to the problem are included in creating the solution. We must look to all of our parents and community members for their expertise and ensure that a diversity of voices are included in the decision-making process.

What is Parent- and Community-Centered Engagement?

Parents know their child best and will always be the best advocates for their children. When we look to make changes to our education system, we must look to parents and community members for their expertise and create meaningful opportunities to engage with them. This must be done with an equity lens. The goal should be to go beyond representative parent leadership where often the same voices are heard, but rather for **all parents** to be engaged leaders in our education system, and to remove the traditional barriers to access.

Why is Parent- and Community-Centered Engagement Important?

When parents and community members are involved in the education system, everyone- students, families, teachers, and communities, experience improved outcomes.

Who Benefits?	What are the Benefits?
Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher scores on standardized tests • Better rates of attendance and fewer behavioral problems • Higher rates of homework completion • Fewer students are identified as special needs • Higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates • Higher rates of post-secondary enrollment • Especially improved outcomes for low-income children
Parents and Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More confidence in their child's school • Teachers have higher opinions of parents & family members • More self-confidence • More likely to continue or complete their own education
Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves teacher morale • Higher ratings of parent, family, and community satisfaction with the school • More support from families • Higher student achievement
Policymakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies more closely address the needs of children and families • When families, parents, and communities are engaged, the benefits are even greater for low-income communities, which has amplified positive impacts for the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 35% more likely to be employed ○ 55% less likely to be on welfare ○ 40% less likely to be arrested



How Can Parent- and Community-Centered Engagement be Improved?

We know that parent and community engagement benefits all children. However, there are currently many barriers to access:

- Many engagement opportunities do not provide childcare and are scheduled during the workday, making it difficult for working parents to attend
- Many parents feel unsafe, and do not have access to reliable transportation, to travel to and from engagement opportunities
- Socioeconomic, language, or cultural differences between school staff, policy makers, and families can discourage families from engaging

As a city, we need to push our schools and government agencies to improve access to these opportunities so they are truly inclusive of all families. We also need to invest in our communities by providing workshops and trainings for parents, ensuring they have the information they need to support their children. Below are just a few ways we can open up these spaces for families:

<p>Host workshops for parents to inform them on the educational system</p> 	<p>Consistently offer translation and interpretation services</p> 	<p>Hold engagement opportunities outside of working hours and in the community</p> 
<p>Opportunities for parents to learn how to support their child (ex., advocacy, helping with schoolwork)</p> 	<p>Offer child-friendly engagement sessions (ex. childcare, child friendly activities)</p> 	<p>Provide time-slots for those testifying at DC Council Hearings</p>

How Can Parents Get Involved?

To advocate for more parent- and community-centered engagement opportunities, parents can:

- **Testify** at state agencies' public hearings
- Reach out to your child's school's **PTO**, **LSAT** (DCPS), or **school board** (PCSB) to advocate for more opportunities for parents and community members to get involved
- Contact PAVE's **community organizing team** at organizers@dcpave.org for more information



Learn More:

- ❖ See the Prichard Committee of Academic Excellence's summary on the benefits of parent engagement: <https://bit.ly/2w6AXSi>
- ❖ Check out the Carnegie Corporation's report on best practices for family engagement: <https://bit.ly/2VUJmI2>