

WEBINAR SERIES  
Achieving Excellence and Innovation in  
Family, School, and Community Engagement

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**Harvard Family  
Research Project**

This webinar series is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education's Parental Information and Resource Center program. The content of this webinar series does not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education.

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## Today's Moderator



**Michaela Durán**  
*Interim Executive Director*  
*National Parent Teacher Association*

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## Webinar 4: The Teacher-Parent Relationship: Using Professional Development to Improve Family and Community Engagement

### Presenters:

- **Beatriz Ceja**, *Program Manager, School Leadership and Transition to Teaching Programs, U.S. Department of Education*
- **Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor**, *President, National PTA*
- **Mishaela Durán**, *Interim Executive Director, National PTA*
- **Jane Groff**, *Director, Kansas State PIRC*
- **Katharine Mora**, *Education Coordinator, Columbia University Head Start, and Adjunct Professor, Bank Street College of Education*
- **Susan K. Walker**, *Associate Professor, University of Minnesota*

**November 18, 2010**

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# Opening Remarks



**Beatriz Ceja**

*Program Manager*

*School Leadership and Transition to Teaching Programs*

*U.S. Department of Education*

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## Building Strong Parent-Teacher Partnerships



**Charles J. “Chuck” Saylor**  
*President*  
*National Parent Teacher Association*

## The Benefits of Parent-Teacher Partnerships

- Teachers identified family engagement as one of the top strategies for **education reform**.<sup>1</sup>
- Strong, positive relationships with parents play a key role in **retaining teachers**.<sup>2</sup>
- New teachers identified engaging families as the number one area where they needed more **preparation**.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hart Research and Associates. (2009). *Common Core State Standards Initiative: Strategic messaging research*.

2. Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). *The schools teachers leave: Teacher mobility in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

3. MetLife. (2005). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher, 2004-2005: Transitions and the role of supportive relationships*. New York: Author.



## Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida

### *Parents Play a Key Role in Training Highly-Effective Teachers*

- Hillsborough County PTA is a key player in the Empowering Effective Teachers Initiative, an ambitious program to reform and improve teacher quality and link professional development to student outcomes.
- The district works with a parent consortium to create professional development for teachers on how to meaningfully partner with families.
- Hillsborough PTA also trains teachers on how to share and explain academic standards to families.

## Federal Way Public Schools, Washington

### *Family Engagement Professional Development for All*

- In Federal Way, all school staff, from bus drivers to principals, are trained in how to create a welcoming environment for families.
- District-level family engagement staff serve on a succession committee to ensure that new school leaders have a core knowledge of family engagement.



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## Oakland Unified School District, California

### *Connecting Family Engagement to Schoolwide Goals*

- Oakland Unified trains principals and parent liaisons on how to partner with families to reduce truancy and improve student attendance.
- Educators are trained on how to work with families to monitor attendance and implement effective interventions to prevent youth from disengaging from school.

## **Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts**

### ***Putting PTA Standards into Practice***

- Boston Public Schools includes National PTA's research-based National Standards for Family-School Partnerships in its professional development blueprint.
- The district provides training for teachers and principals on how to integrate family engagement into instructional strategies.
- Last year, family engagement was one of the district's core goals for principals.

## Support at the State Level

### *Providing a Clear Picture of Systemic Family Engagement*

- Fifteen states have codified PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships into state law or policy.
- These standards give educators and parents a clear picture of how proven family engagement strategies can drive professional development and school improvement efforts.

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# KPIRC: Educating Teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



**Jane Groff**  
*Director*

*Kansas Parent Information Resource Center  
(KPIRC)*

[www.kpirc.org](http://www.kpirc.org)

## **KPIRC's Vision for Educating Teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

- Embed family engagement in pre-service curricula.
- Link family engagement to improving student performance.
- Support Professional Education Standards on Family Engagement in pre-service training.
- Introduce PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships as a framework for family engagement (endorsed by KSBE, 2008).

## KPIRC Professional Development for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) 2007–2010

- 1,391 pre-service students received professional development on family engagement in education.
- Approximately 7,000 resources on family engagement distributed to pre-service students.
- Kansas State University
- Wichita State University
- Baker University
- University of Kansas
- Ottawa University
- Pittsburg State University
- Tabor University
- Friends University

## 2010–2011 IHE Curriculum Enhancement Initiative for Family Engagement

### Requirements

- Instructional goals
- Learner outcomes
- Course syllabus
- Evaluation plan
- Plan for sharing the project with other IHE faculty
- Plan for the continuation of the Curriculum Enhancement Initiative
- Budget

### Participating Universities

- Wichita State University
- Ottawa University
- Kansas State University



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**WSU**

**Wichita State  
University**

UTPP–Urban Teacher  
Preparation Program  
A collaboration with  
Wichita Public Schools

Area of Emphasis:  
Urban Secondary  
Education

- Focus on Standards 1, 2, and 3 of the PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- Secondary Education Practicum: Students write letters of introduction to families.
- Secondary Education Practicum: Book study–*Beyond the Bake Sale* by Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies and *Every Teacher’s Guide to Working with Parents* by Rudney.
- Secondary Education Methods: Students write plans of methods to engage families.

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1. Henderson, A., Mapp, K., Johnson, V., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the Bake Sale: The essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York: The New Press.
  2. Rudney, G. (2005). *Every teacher’s guide to working with parents*. California: Corwin Press

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Faculty Learning  
Community

Area of Emphasis:  
Elementary and  
Secondary Education

- Create a faculty learning community focused on family engagement.
- Each faculty creates two learner objectives for further knowledge on family engagement.
- Faculty incorporates Parent Teacher Education Connection modules ([www.pte.unt.edu](http://www.pte.unt.edu)) into courses.
- Faculty requires professional education standards on family collaboration as part of e-portfolio.

# KSU

## Kansas State University

Area of Emphasis:  
Special Education and  
Exceptional Child  
General Education  
Classes

- Students are required to interview parents with children with special needs.
- Interviews are viewed prior to the writing of a teaching philosophy statement as a course requirement.
- Pre-service students meet with parents of a child with special education needs and jointly develop a plan of support.
- Pre-service teachers build an annotated bibliography of works in the area of behavioral disorders to share with parents.

## Research Population: Teacher Candidates

- Treatment Group: Those who received enhanced family engagement curriculum training
- Non-Treatment Group: Those who did not receive the enhanced family engagement curriculum training

## Evaluation Component

Pre-post tests were conducted on pre-service students before the enhancements and 1 year later in their new teaching professions:

- Perception of professional preparation to work effectively with parents and families
- Perception of PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships
- Perception of parent-teacher interactions

## Professional Preparation Results

Treatment group reported they were significantly better prepared in their

- Ability to help parents support their children's learning at home
- Understanding of how to build a classroom or school that is family friendly

Findings also revealed the treatment group needed additional training in

- Working with diverse populations
- Working with the community

## Perception of PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Treatment group responses demonstrated the following:

- A stronger commitment to the sharing of power
- A stronger commitment to the inclusion of parents as partners in their child's education
- A willingness to respect parents' ability to make educational decisions for their child



## Perception of Teacher-Parent Interactions

Treatment group responses indicated the following:

- Teachers must regularly share positive news about the child with parents.
- Teachers and parents should work collaboratively.
- Teachers should provide parents with the information and tools necessary to help their children be successful.

## Summary

- With the increased professional development and course content in pre-service curriculum on family engagement topics, pre-service students demonstrated an increased understanding of the importance of family engagement and developed a confidence in their preparedness.
- With the increased professional development and course content in pre-service curriculum on family engagement topics, new teachers reported a better understanding and preparedness to engage families.

# Teacher Preparation for Family Involvement



**Katharine Mora**

*Education Coordinator, Columbia University Head Start  
Adjunct Professor, Bank Street College of Education*



## Early Childhood Professional Standards for Family Involvement

- Head Start Program Performance Standards outline significant ways in which programs must partner with families.
- NAEYC accreditation standards delineate multiple ways in which programs must include families.
- The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Five Core Propositions emphasize teachers' skill in working with parents.

## How Can Teacher Preparation Programs Prepare Teachers to Partner with Parents?

- Integrate family involvement into all course content
- Impart knowledge of adult development
- Develop communication techniques and skills
- Shape outlook and attitude toward parents
- Engage in reflective practice
- Prepare teachers to work in communities other than their own

## Integration into All Course Content

Preparing teachers to work in partnership with parents should be integrated into required courses so that teachers have the opportunity to incorporate work with families into all aspects of their work with students.

- At the Bank Street College of Education, more than 20 course descriptions mention working with parents.
- A study of Vanderbilt University's approach to teaching family involvement showed that students felt better prepared to work with parents after taking a class focused on family engagement.

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For more information:

1. Bank Street College of Education: Graduate School Catalogue: <http://www.bankstreet.edu/gs/graduateschoolcatalogue.html>
2. The Peabody Family Involvement Initiative: Preparing Preservice Teachers for Family/School Collaboration: <http://www.adi.org/journal/ss01/chapters/Chapter14-Katz&Bauch.pdf>

## Knowledge of Adult Development

Knowledge of adult development will assist teachers in their role as educators of parents:

- In parent-teacher conferences
- In curriculum workshops
- In individual education plans (IEP) and individualized planning meetings



## Communication Techniques and Skills

- Cross-cultural communication
- Basic conflict resolution
- Speaking with parents about challenging subjects
- Communicating with parents who do not speak English
- Communicating with parents who have a low level of literacy

## Outlook and Attitude Toward Parents

- Parent-centered tasks in fieldwork and student teaching help teachers understand and be open to parents' perspectives.
- An understanding of different parenting styles across cultures will help teachers work with children and families in a culturally appropriate fashion.

## Reflective Practice Applied to Parental Involvement

- Reflective practice is key to ongoing positive relationships between parents and teachers.
- Teachers can be encouraged to reflect on positive and negative experiences with families through a reflective supervisory process and in-service training.

## Prepare Teachers to Teach in Communities That Are Not Their Own

Essential skills:

- Basic knowledge of the languages spoken, if only to be able to greet all families
- Understanding of key cultural elements such as religion, gender roles, and approaches to schooling
- Openness

## Conclusions

- As teacher educators and administrators, we must place family engagement at the center of our work.
- Techniques for working with parents should be incorporated into teacher preparation courses and in-service trainings to help teachers feel confident in their work with families.
- Institutions that place family engagement at the center of their practice will see teachers engaging families in innovative ways to improve student outcomes.

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# Family Engagement and the University of Minnesota (UMN) Teacher Education Redesign Initiative



**Susan K. Walker**

*Associate Professor, Curriculum & Instruction*

*Family, Youth, and Community Program*

*University of Minnesota*

## About Family Education in Minnesota and at the UMN

- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)—long-standing family education sponsored by school districts.
- Hires licensed early childhood educators (ECE), parent educators (PE), and early childhood special educators (ECSE).
- UMN provides coursework toward licensure for ECE, PE, and ECSE as well as an MEd in family education and a graduate certificate in parent education.
- Presence of ECFE programs around the state and teacher preparation at UMN establishes a culture of family involvement in schools and at UMN that is committed to families.



## The Teacher Education Redesign Initiative

- UMN is one of fourteen Midwest institutions funded for 10 years by the Bush Foundation “to improve high school graduation rates and reduce disparities in student achievement.”
- The College of Education & Human Development (CEHD) is revisioning its teacher education program to better prepare teachers for the challenges they face in a 21st century classroom.

## Key Areas of Redesign

Core of Redesign	P-12 Student Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Partnerships</b></li> </ul>	<p>➔ <b>Professional development schools</b> in partnership districts that improve student performance through research-based teaching</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Adaptive expertise</b></li> </ul>	<p>➔ Teachers with an <b>expert knowledge</b> base and the ability to <b>differentiate</b> instruction for students' needs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Performance-driven curriculum</b></li> </ul>	<p>➔ Focus on both <b>what</b> we teach (content) and <b>who</b> we teach (ELLs, special education, culturally diverse communities)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Research agenda</b></li> </ul>	<p>➔ Questions centered on <b>effectiveness</b> of our program in preparing teachers who <b>make a difference</b> for students</p>

## Teacher Education Redesign Initiative (TERI) Essentials

- Focusing on student learning
- Adaptive teaching
- Diversifying the teacher work force
- Enhanced clinical experiences
- Strengthening our curriculum
- Improving teacher support
- Measuring effectiveness

## Family Engagement as Part of TERI

- As part of CEHD self-analysis to determine areas of need in teacher preparation, first-year teachers, CEHD graduates, and partner schools were interviewed. Areas of preparation strength and weakness were identified.
- “Working with families & communities” was identified as a key area of need, along with the following:
  - Special education
  - Integrating technology with instruction
  - Cultural competence
  - English language learners

## Family Engagement and TERI

- Summer 2009 Families & Communities task force (one of six) identified key outcomes (of teacher preparation), methods of assessment, and methods of teacher preparation.
  - Considered values and assumptions
  - Considered knowledge and skills involved
- Fall 2009–Spring 2010: Task force reports considered in creation of Teacher Performance Assessments (TPA) and Common Content (core curricular considerations in student coursework taken on campus and in partner school experiences).

## Redesigned Curriculum

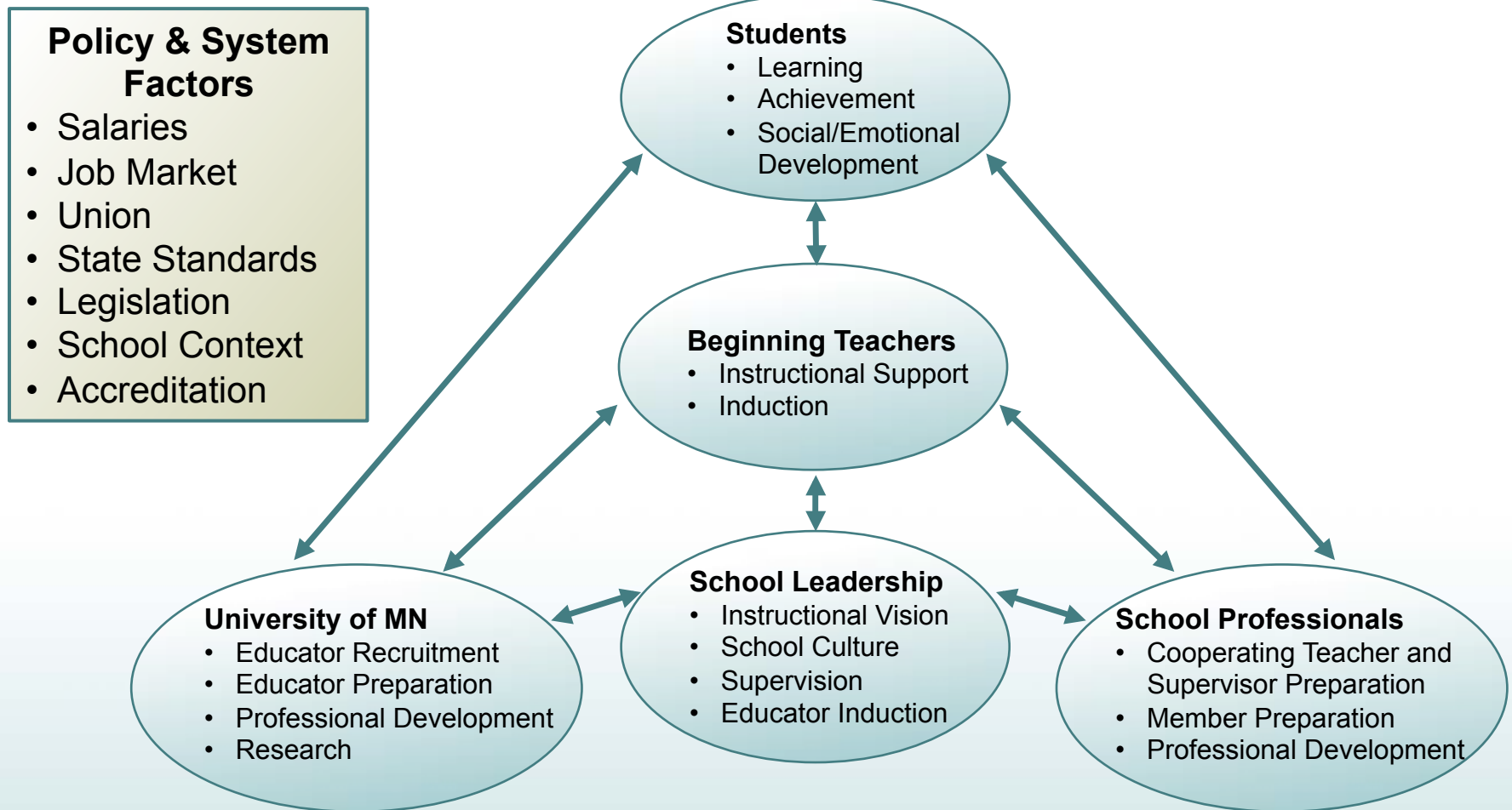
- Maintain strong subject-matter focus in licensure areas
- Ecological perspective, topics that address student learning, classrooms, schools, educational systems, communities, society
- Common Content for all candidates includes the following:
  - Supporting English language learners
  - **Understanding families and communities**
  - Assessment and learning for all students
  - Integrating technology into instruction
  - Human relations in schools and society
  - Reading in content areas

## Family Engagement as part of Teacher Performance Assessment

- As part of a context assessment for teaching assessment tasks (elementary, secondary; English, math, science).
- **“Describe the variation across your class with respect to the features listed below. Focus on key factors that influence your planning and teaching of this learning segment. Be sure to describe what your students can do as well as what they are still learning to do.”**
- One area: **Family and community contexts:** *“Consider key factors such as cultural context, knowledge acquired outside of school, socio-economic background, access to technology, and home/community resources.”*
  - Other areas: Academic development, language development, patterns of social interaction



## TERI Partnership Model



## Progress and Challenges (2008–Current)

- Significant progress in 2 years
- Some Challenges:
  - Logistics of restructuring program at scale of 400 candidates
  - Integrating common content in a year-long model
  - Individual license requirements maintained within a partner school model
  - Family engagement not present in many standards of teacher preparation; requires respect, presence, collaboration, and advocacy

## For More Information

- Teacher Education Redesign Initiative:  
<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/TERI/Default.html>
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE):  
<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/index.html>
- Parent and Family Education at the UMN:  
<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ci/Programs/FYC/parentedFAQ.html>
- Susan K. Walker: [skwalker@umn.edu](mailto:skwalker@umn.edu)