

SPEAKER: Okay, so without further ado, I'd like to introduce Dr. Karen Mapp. She is a lecturer on education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Director of the Education Policy and Management master's program. Over the past 20 years, Karen's research and practice focus has been on the cultivation of partnerships among families, community members, and educators that supports student achievement and school improvement. She was the co-coordinator with professor Mark Warren of the Community Organizing and School Reform research project and a core faculty member for the doctorate in Educational Leadership program at Harvard. Karen currently serves as a consultant on family engagement to the United States Department of Education in the Office of Innovation and Improvement. We have to be extra nice to her today because she had some difficulty getting here with the weather, and she's not sure if she's going to be able to get home to Boston today, either. So without further ado, I'd like to welcome Dr. Karen Mapp. Thank you.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Good morning, everybody. It's great to see you. Yes, I had a real adventure getting here yesterday. I've discovered that I think the airlines play a little trick on us because I find it interesting that I can check the website and my flight says it's on time, and I can get in my car and drive -- it only takes me 15 minutes to get to the airport from my house. And that by the time I get to the airport, it now says cancelled. Fifteen minutes. And then I get here, and on the board it says, on time. And I get in the -- I'm sorry. I get to Philly. And then I get on that little shuttle to terminal F. And I get there, and it says cancelled. So I think, you know, they play a little trick on us. They want us to get there, right? But they've got us captured. So we'll see what happens today. I think I'm going to try to outsmart them. I don't know if I'm going to be able to do that, but we'll see. We'll see. The outsmart might be take the train instead of the plane.

All right-y, so enough about that. So I'm so glad to see all of you on this Friday morning. It certainly is nice to be here, especially since it is not snowing here, so it's great. And what I'm going to do in this two hours is to share with you what we now know about how to engage families in their children's education. So before we get started, I'm going to put you to work because I always like to know a little bit about what you'd like to know about this topic. Now I study broadly family engagement, so I look at schools and districts around the country that are doing a good job of engaging parents from all different walks of life with children who have all types of needs in terms of whether they are special needs children or regular ed children or any type of children, quite frankly, from diverse backgrounds, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic backgrounds. So I'm really looking at why some places and spaces are really able to do a good job of engaging families. And I feel that my job is to share that with as many

people as I can so that hopefully they can change their practices, maybe even their policies. Lisa mentioned that -- Paula, I'm sorry, mentioned that I do work with the Department of Education in Washington, D.C., trying to get them to think differently about their family engagement policies and programs.

So I'd like to know -- I'd like you to talk to a neighbor. So if you're not sitting close to someone, you might want to scoot over, introduce yourself. I am a professor at Harvard, and you can't get the professor out of me. So that's why I'm down here and not up there. I don't do podiums because I like to walk around and I like to see you and greet you and say hi and get you to do some work together. It helps to keep you awake. Helps to keep you vibrant. So I'd like you to talk to your neighbor. What is it that you would like to know? When you walk out of here at 10:30, what new knowledge do you hope to have when we part today? Okay? So talk to a neighbor. What is it that you'd like to know? What are your -- as we say at Harvard, what are your takeaways that you'd like, okay? [inaudible]. All right. Okay. So Lisa has the mic and -- so let me hear what are some of the takeaways that you would like to walk out of here with at 10:32 or whenever it is we actually stop.

WOMAN: This is on?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was just wondering how to engage English language learner parents.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, good. So how do we engage parents that may not speak English or have English as their first language? Okay, great. We'll talk about that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: How about those secondary parents?

DR. KAREN MAPP: High school level, okay. Mm-hmm.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm not sure if this is more relationship building or engagement, but as a special ed teacher, it seems like there's always an adversary, like when you go to IEPs. And I would love to see that stop and see us work together because the common interest is the child, but it's not viewed that way. In our district, it's getting pretty bad.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, so when you have -- you know, you start off with that adversarial relationship instead of really a partnership relationship. How do we get there, okay? Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good morning. Engaging parents in the educational component.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Ah, okay. So connecting them to the educational component. I'm going to talk about that a lot this morning. What else? Anybody up here? Lisa, you're getting a workout this morning, right? I have you running around.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We always get lots of parents who say they want to be involved. How do we actually get them to follow through when you make that call and they don't respond?

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, all right. All right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't need a microphone here. [inaudible].

DR. KAREN MAPP: Yeah, they want to pick it up on the --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, okay. Well, how about parents who you give your best effort and then they're not motivated? So you -- what's out of your control, in other words.

DR. KAREN MAPP: All right-y. Okay. Yup. You've tried, you've tried, you've tried, and you don't seem to be getting anywhere. Okay. Yup.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm challenged by the parent who does not find value in education because either they themselves dropped out or they have a family member that needs assistance at home, and so they'd rather have her high school special ed child take care of the family member. They can get a diploma. And you just -- you could forecast the future, but like how to engage them and have them find value in education when it's really something that's bigger than what I am or my school is?

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay. All right. A couple more.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: How do we get the parents together? Because in our school district, there are parents that have no idea that they should be involved, never mind how to be involved. And it's a big disconnect in our school between the parents and the school. The parents are all on their own, and there's no like bringing together.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, I have a question. I work in a small charter school, and one of the things that I've been kind of experiencing and talking with one of our leadership members about is how to engage parents within their communities. We pull from a diverse background, and I realize that a lot of families may not have the resources, be it transportation, time, needs for their own childcare, or work. And so

I'm very interested in sort of flipping the script on how to go into the community to engage families instead of expecting them to come into the school to be engaged.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, great. All right-y. Okay. These were all really good questions and definitely not ones that I haven't heard before. So I feel relatively confident that we will be able to answer all of them in our time together this morning. So the first thing I want to do is to talk about what we actually even mean by family engagement. Because in my 20 years of doing this work, I have found that people have lots of different definitions about what family engagement actually means. So family engagement is actually a term that encompasses a broad array of actions and activities that families participate in to support their children's learning. And so a broad definition of family engagement is any way a child's caretaker -- and you'll notice we say a child's caretaker because we know that our children are being supported and taken care of by a number of different people, not just biological parents. So grandma, grandpa, auntie, uncle, older sibling, possibly foster parents, and those people that we refer to in the research as fictive kin. Okay, now fictive kin, I often say those are the people in your family who ever since you were young, they were there, they were supportive of you, and when you ask your family how they're related to you, you get 65 different answers. Well, you know -- so those Uncle Bubbas and those Auntie Sis folks that are in our families, right? So we call those fictive kin. Still very important. So family engagement is really any way that those folks support and engage in the development, the positive, effective development, healthy development, of kids. All right? So it's any way -- because what we're going to learn today is that a lot of our families are involved in ways that we might not even recognize, honor, and validate, all right?

So some things happening in the field of family engagement -- now I have to say I'm very excited because, again, I've been doing this work for quite some time. And now, finally, we are starting to gain some traction. Lots of people are talking about engaging families. I used to have to fight to get the -- that to be a part of the local conversation, the state conversation, the national conversation. Now there's a lot going on in the field. Some of you may know that Secretary Duncan has proposed that in the new ESEA reauthorization, if we can ever get it reauthorized, which is a whole other story -- but if we can ever get it reauthorized, one of the changes in the language in section 118, which is the section that has a lot of the family engagement language --

We've actually changed the name to family engagement because, you know, you know how -- how many people in here have a cell phone? Okay, lots of people. You know how every once in a while, you have to download updates? Okay, you get that little message. You know, oh, there's a new version.

Well, we've evolved the terminology, so we now say family engagement. And the reason for that is because first of all, we feel that family captures all of those people I mentioned. Parent still connotes, in many cases, biological parents, but we want to be more inclusive in the language. And so that's why we've changed it to family. Now engagement we feel is more active than involvement. So that's the other reason now why you'll see people like me and Joyce Epstein and Anne Henderson and lots of other people who do this work really trying to change the language to family engagement, okay? Who knows? It might be something else later because like I said, this is like those new versions of things that come out on your cell phone. But the latest version now is we're really trying to push people to use family engagement, okay?

So now -- again, so we've changed the language in the new ESEA reauthorization. So you'll see when it comes out, it's going to be saying more about family engagement. You may notice that Secretary Duncan and even President Obama, we've got them to try to say family engagement instead of parent involvement. So we're really trying to push these changes. So what's going to happen in addition to the language change is we're trying to up the amount of money that gets set aside for family engagement activities in districts from one percent -- which is a floor, by the way. It's not a ceiling. So the minimum amount that is supposed to be set aside from Title I dollars coming through your districts right now is one percent. We want to up that to two percent. Okay?

What else is happening? All over the country, we are starting to see districts appoint someone at the senior level who is in charge of family, and sometimes community, engagement or student engagement. In 2003, I was appointed the deputy superintendent for family and community engagement for the city of Boston. I worked with Tom Payzant. At that time, I was one of maybe only two people who are at the senior level -- when I say that, I mean part of a senior cabinet reporting directly to the superintendent. There were only maybe one or two of us in the country who had those roles. Now there are over 150 people in those roles. We've actually started a district, family, and community engagement network where we bring those folks together so they can share best practice, okay? And if you know anybody like that, let me know because we want to make sure that we're trying to get in touch with all the folks who have that position in their districts so they can join the network. So we'll be talking to you afterwards because I want to get your name and your email. So that's another big thing that's happening. Now we've got lots of people in these positions in districts actually in charge of developing family engagement.

Now one of the things that I've learned is that that's key. Because a lot of districts talk about -- they want more family and community engagement, but they have no infrastructure to support the work. So if there's no one at central office for whom this is their responsibility, guess what? It doesn't really happen, all right? The other thing is -- is that your district sends a message when they have somebody who has this title. They're saying, this is important to us. So we, again, are starting to see especially a lot of the major districts around the country hire someone in this role, all right?

What else have we seen? We're seeing more family engagement language being inserted into some of the discretionary programs in the U.S. Department of Education. So the discretionary programs are those programs that, like it says, at the discretion of the administration that comes in, they can launch these programs. So you know probably about Race to the Top and i3 and Promise Neighborhoods. We're starting to see that family engagement is a priority in those grant programs, so that's also new.

And then finally the popular media -- the last couple of years, we've had this sort of tiger mom phenomenon that you've probably endured while it was out there. I got lots of phone calls of people asking me to write op-eds and things like that. And I -- I just don't -- that's not what I want to respond to. That's not what I have time to respond to. And then, of course, we've had movies like Won't Back Down, which we're talking about the parent trigger wars around the country. And then we've got a lot of parent organizing that's starting to happen throughout the country. This young lady talked about, you know, how do we sort of go into the community and maybe organize our families to not just support school, but to support their communities in their life in terms of, you know, what's happening in the communities around health and housing, etc. etc.? Okay. So there's a lot going on.

So one of the things I want to ask you now is that let's talk about -- we talked about family engagement really encapsulating a broad array of ways that families can be engaged in their children's education. So let's try to name some of those ways. So when you think about families' roles and the various roles that they can play in their children's education, what are some of the roles that you can think of? Okay? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: If I -- this is not necessarily answering your question, but I attended a workshop here yesterday downstairs [inaudible] hallway. One of the takeaways I had was there's a questionnaire that our state sends out to parents asking them -- thank you. There's a questionnaire our state sends out to parents asking them, you know, yes or no? Were you made to fill this? Were you -- where there're people shaking their heads. I can tell them that you were --

DR. KAREN MAPP: So it's like a school climate survey?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Correct.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: One of the takeaways I took from that was start with the end. Educate -- I'm going to print that out, show that to my staff, and educate them on, these are the things that we're trying to achieve. We want parents to say yes to these. And then start a discussion on, how can we get parents to say yes on these? So start with the end in mind. Here's what we're trying to achieve and go from there, I guess.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay. Well, we'll work on -- we'll talk about if you want them to answer the questions, those, in positive ways, what we have to do in terms of what we provide for them to get that to happen.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] one of the questions is to say -- if one of the questions is to say, you know, was I made to feel an active participant in my child's IEP meeting?, I can then say to staff, what can we do to make parents feel more of an active participant in their IEP meetings? So again, I believe -- I like starting with the end in mind, I guess.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay. All right. So one of the things I'll take out of what you said is that one of the things that parents -- a role that they would play, then, is sort of an active communicator with the school so that there's a communications relationship between home and school. So they can be communicators. So in those IEP meetings, really actively involved in them. What other roles do we imagine families can play in their children's education? What other roles? Yes? An advocate, okay. Now that word scares people, right? Because one person back here said, oh my goodness. You know, one of the things that we always see is that -- or we feel is that there's an adversarial relationship between home and school. Well, I want to tell you that having families as advocates can really help you if you're staff because parents can also fight for things that you want and need. So for example, in Baltimore City, they've been able to partner with the community organizing groups around the city to get families to advocate for more funding for new school built -- buildings. In fact, I think they had a big rally at the state capitol a few days ago where they were able to bring three or four thousand parents who weren't all that involved before. But because they connected them to something that was really meaningful, they were able to get parents to advocate for more resources. So don't think advocacy is only advocate for that one child. Think about advocacy for the entire building or all the children and how would you

cultivate that, make it so that families could be engaged in that way? So advocacy, yes. That's another way families can be engaged. What other roles? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible].

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, so nurturing sort of that educational spirit, feeling that -- you know, having your kids know that education is important. And then it could be the basic needs nurturing, too, okay? Food and clothing. Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: They can help families volunteer in school.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay. So they can be volunteers in school, right? Okay. So volunteering, coming to school, helping out. What else? What are some of the other roles? Yes? An educator. So supporting of -- supporting learning, helping to educate their children. Yup?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Modeling appropriate behavior.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Ah, modeling behavior. So being a lifelong learning -- learner yourself. In fact, Michele Brooks, who is the assistant superintendent for family and community engagement in Boston, came to my class last -- this past Wednesday. And they have a parent university program, a very robust one, in Boston. And one of the things she talks about is how the children, when they have the graduation program for families -- now you know, this is a certificate that families get. It doesn't have any, you know, real meaning in terms of credits or anything like that. But the families take this graduation very, very seriously. And when they graduate from parent university, they have to take at least -- I think it's seven courses to graduate from parent university. For each course they take, they get what's called a PUP, a parent university point. And actually it's eight points that they have to get to graduate, eight PUPs.

And so at that graduation ceremony, I've been there, watching the children's faces as their family member goes across that stage is just extraordinary. The families bring 20, sometimes 30 people to watch them graduate from parent university. Now Michele has also interviewed the children, whether they be elementary school, middle, and high. And they all say the same thing. This is an inspiration for me to watch my grandmother, my aunt, my mom or dad graduate. If they can do it, I can do it. Okay? So models of lifelong learning. What else? What other roles can you think of? Anything else? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] leadership role, a member of a school-based leadership team on a particular initiative or systems change.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Right. So decision-makers, okay? All right. So you guys have captured a lot of the ones that we've sort of identified as we've gone around and asked this question. So you've talked about, you know, supporters of learning: so learning at home, you know, maybe even setting up a little place where children can do their homework or making sure there's a time for them to do their homework. Encouragers of a can-do spirit: we now know from the research, ladies and gentlemen, that this is the number one way families can be engaged in their children's education that's linked to achievement outcomes. The number one way. Now why is that important? It's very important because you don't have to speak English. You don't have to have graduated from high school or college to encourage your children and tell them that they can do it. Now this isn't faint praise, ladies and gentlemen. This is encouraging effort, saying, you know, when you're down, get back up. I know you can do it. Put your mind to it and you can succeed. Have your sights set on college. Don't give up.

So a lot of times, families are made to think that if they can't be involved in some of the other things on this list like the decision-maker role or the volunteer role, that we don't validate their engagement. And we're going to talk about that a little bit more. Unfortunately, what I've found a lot of times is that we validate family engagement when we can see the parents in our buildings. So when they come to us and they come to our schools or they come to our meetings, that is family engagement to many of us. But this list shows you that there's lots of different ways that families can be engaged. And some of these activities don't take place at the school because some of our families, quite frankly, can't come to the school because they're working two and sometimes three jobs. And for some of them, there is a psychological barrier represented by that building because they did have bad experiences with school or they're intimidated by school. Especially for new families to this country, school is seen as this huge bureaucracy. And many families, because they don't speak English well or at all, are really embarrassed to come to the school. And unfortunately, sometimes their children are embarrassed to have their parents come to the school because the children are trying so hard to assimilate. Their parents represent that place in space that they feel they're trying to shed when they come to school. So we have to think about all the things, all the dynamics that are in play when sometimes we don't see our families.

Monitors, you mentioned that, of the children's time, behavior, and boundaries. High school students -- I love teenagers. And sometimes I ride -- when I ride the subway in Boston, I try to ride it at a

time I know the kids are going to get out of school because they get on the subway and they just take over the subway. And they're, you know, rowdy and make a lot of noise. But I always engage the kids in conversation, and especially when I was deputy superintendent in Boston. And the kids are fun. But when I first started asking them questions, they'd look at me like I'm crazy, right? Who is this lady? But once they see that I'm genuine and I'm asking questions -- they tell me anything, to be quite honest. So I ask them. I say, you know, I do research on family engagement, and I want to have -- I want your opinion. Do you want your parents out of your hair at this point in your life? These are usually 15, 16 years old. Or do you want them engaged? Every single young person I've talked to, and I've talked to people -- young people in -- all over the world. I actually met with 250 young people at a high school in Dubai.

And I asked the same question. Is family engagement important at the level of high school? And all of them say yes, absolutely yes. They told me, tell our -- miss -- because, you know, the kids call me miss, okay? Miss, tell our parents we don't want them as our friends. They're trying to be our friends. That is not what we want. Even though it's -- one young man said, it's our job when we get to be teenagers to irritate our parents. It's in our DNA. That is what we are supposed to do. But tell them, don't be fooled. Even though we try to act like we don't want them around, we need them. And the number one way they say that they need you at the high school level is that second one on the list: encouragement. Encouragement. When we fall, don't pick us up. But push us to get up. Okay? Tell us we can get up. When we stumble, say, hang in there. Monitor our time. That's okay. We're going to fight you every step of the way, but when you care, you show it because you won't let us go crazy. You'll set those boundaries and monitor our time and monitor that computer time. We want that. Now the kids also tell me, lady, don't tell them because we kind of like this little ruse we've got going on here where we make our families think that we don't want them involved. But all the high school students I've ever interviewed have told me that family engagement is more important, more important at the high school level than at any other time in their lives.

Now think about that. Our institutions are part of the problem because we send subtle messages to families -- okay, no, no, no. You know, back off. You know, it's time that they -- for them to grow up on their own. Don't -- don't get -- no. What we have to do is teach our families, build their capacity to support their teenagers. How many of you in this room have a teenager at home? Bless you. Okay? Many families in Boston when I was a family engagement -- the deputy sup -- mainly at the high

school level, they needed support because their kids were making them crazy. So having parent support groups --

A lot of times people ask me, how do we engage families at the high school level? All you have to do is ask them. Ask them what they need. Many of them need help with -- so how do I deal with adolescents and the developmental changes that are happening with my child? College planning. I used to be associate director of admissions at Trinity College in Hartford. And families need to learn about college planning when? When? Seventh grade, I'm hearing. Fifth grade. Kindergarten. Okay? Quite frankly, you have to intervene by the fifth grade around college planning. The reason for that is that that's when classes -- I don't care what anybody tells me. Tracking is still here, ladies and gentlemen. It's -- it has different ways and shapes and shades, but families need to know. For example, algebra is a deal-breaker class when it comes to college admissions. Students need to have algebra by the seventh grade, seventh grade, in order to be on the right track to take the courses that a lot of four-year colleges want in terms of admissions. A lot of parents do not know that. So we have to start enabling our families early so that they understand if they want their children to go to college, what courses should their children be taking in middle and high school?

I can't tell you how many times as I traveled around the country for that job that I would meet a very bright young person. You know, many times these children were special needs kids, and they had done very well with lots of supports. But when I looked at their transcript, they'd taken all the wrong classes. And they were very capable of taking any classes, but no one had given them the guidance about what kinds of courses they needed to take to prepare for high -- for college. So we have to start early with that kind of planning.

Other things high school families want to know: tell us about this internet. How do we set up monitors for the internet? What should we be watching out for? Bullying. How do I support a special needs child? What are some things I can do? All right? Our families really want information, so we'll talk a little bit more about that information piece and how you are to give parents that information. Because there's a real key to that, as well. We've talked about models of lifelong learning, the advocacy piece, decision-making, and communications. Now here's a question for you. How do families learn how to do all these things? How and where do they learn to do all these things? Yes, sir?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible].

DR. KAREN MAPP: Yup, so they learn from their own families and their upbringing. What else?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] if they don't have that -- if they don't have that in their upbringing and they realize that education is important, then when they have their own children, they encourage them to do better and encourage them to go further in life than just going to school -- going to pursue college.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Right, so it could be -- it could be either way. Either some families are motivated by the fact that maybe their families weren't engaged, and they've seen that that's important and they want to do it. Or families will mimic what their parents did. And sometimes that's not always effective in terms of the habits they've picked up, okay? What else? What are -- how else do families learn? I heard somebody say, from their friends. Okay?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible].

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, so they'll learn through programs if there are any kind of support programs. Okay. How else? Yes? They learn from the media. That's scary, right? Okay. They learn from the media. What -- where else? Yes, way in the back with the glasses. Shout it out and I'll repeat it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]. When a situation pops up, then that starts to trigger the things that they learn as they try to help their children.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay. So if their child has a need -- but again, some families, if they don't get the services, they sometimes don't know what to do, right? And then it becomes a very tension-filled time. Any other ways that our families learn these roles?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: School, teachers.

DR. KAREN MAPP: From schools and from teachers, hopefully. Yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Community churches.

DR. KAREN MAPP: From churches. Yup, from churches. There are religious organizations, synagogues, mosques. Any place else? Yup, shout it out. From the doctor's office. Yes. Sometimes we have the doctors' offices that are involved in reading programs. Now let's think about that for a second. That assumes that our families have these opportunities to learn. You know, a lot of us in the education sector are now trying to talk about the opportunity gap instead of the achievement gap. Because we feel that a lot of the times, the gap is caused by the lack of opportunities that our children and families have access to. So if you're a family who's new to this country, you don't have many friends, you live in an isolated community, a lot of the ways that we discussed might not be available to you.

There's this term in the research literature, and it's been out a lot, called social capital. And social capital is represented by the number of networks you have in your life, right? So if you think for a minute of the networks that you have, you might have your religious organization, maybe you're a member of a bridge club, maybe you bowl, maybe you are a member of a parent organization, maybe you have a hobby that you share with other people. For the gentlemen, you know, maybe there's some kind of a -- golfing that you might -- and ladies, that you do. Okay? So you have all these different networks, and a lot of information about school gets shared via those networks. Your kids are involved in soccer or a sport and you go and you meet other parents. And they're telling you about that great teacher that your child should take for science or for math, or that guidance counselor that's really great and you want to sign on with them. All of that is information that gets shared through your networks, your social capital.

So when you don't have those networks, guess what? A lot of the ways that parents learn these roles is diminished. So you have to say to yourself, why is it that these families aren't engaged? It could be that their social networks are limited. Someone here said about building parent networks. That's one of the reasons why that is so important because we all get a lot of information from these informal networks that we belong to. Okay?

So I want to talk a little bit now about -- so we know that families can be engaged in different roles. Now again, I'm going to underscore for you what I have seen is that many times, schools and other organizations only validate or only recognize that decision-maker and chooser role, the advocate role, and sometimes the collaborators and the volunteers. But when families do things at home, sometimes it's not recognized or validated. I read an essay just yesterday that one of my students wrote who's Taiwanese. And she moved to this country when she was very young, and her family spoke very little English. So they were not involved at all in school, and her teachers labeled her parents as not caring because they never showed up for anything despite all the phone calls home and the letters home. The parents never showed up for anything at school because they were really intimidated. They didn't speak the language. They didn't want to embarrass her. So her family got labeled as the non-caring parents because they never showed up for anything.

The school felt that they had done everything possible. They had sent -- they had gotten a translation and sent home letters that were translated. They got someone to call who could speak the language of the parents. The parents would say that they were going to come to the school, and then they wouldn't show up. They said yes because they thought if they said no, that would be disrespectful.

But they still couldn't show up because they worked two jobs and they had other children to take care of at home. But her parents got labeled non-caring parents, that they didn't value education because since the school never saw them, they figured that they didn't care.

But in her essay, she described the Saturday school program her parents were involved with in the Taiwanese community in her town. Her parents were leaders of the Saturday school. They helped shape the curriculum for the Saturday school. She said it was almost like day and night. Her family would cower if they ever had to come to the school building, but here, they were leaders in the community around an education institution in the community, okay? So we make assumptions about our families that often are not true. So we have to be a little bit careful when we talk about families not caring and families not valuing education because sometimes you'd be surprised. If we go into their community and go into their homes and ask questions, sometimes you begin to see a different story, okay? So we'll talk more about that in a little bit.

I do want to share with you -- although many of you in this room, I'm probably preaching to the choir, so I'll go through this section quickly. I want you to know a little bit about the actual impact of family engagement on student outcomes. And we now have about a 40-year research history that tells us that family engagement is truly one of the most important things we can do in terms of educational outcomes. So what do we see when our families are engaged? These are students who learn how to read and are involved with language and vocabulary much earlier than kids whose families aren't involved. And that doesn't mean just reading to children, but that's reading with children and talking to children about life and having conversations with them. When I was in Dubai, I got asked to come there because they were doing a national campaign called Three A Day. And basically they were asking their parents to read with their children, talk to their children about life, and encourage them at least once a day to do one of those things. A national campaign, all right? Posters and commercials and all kinds of things. Just those three things from pre- up to high school. But reading with is different than reading to.

And again, it could be talking to them about a book they're reading if they're high school students and asking them about it. For the little ones, you know, engaging them in conversation. Tell me about the story. In Boston one time, we did a bookmark for families. And we translated it into nine different languages that gave parents prompts about what kinds of questions to ask your child if they're reading a book. You know, what ending would you come up with? You know, come up with something different. What do you think's going to happen next? Okay? And I'll tell you a little bit about what we did. We had parents actually practice those skills because we often don't learn, ladies and gentlemen,

from somebody just handing us a piece of paper and saying, do this. We have to practice it. The way you gain mastery is through practice. Who is it? I think it's -- I don't know which author it is, but says something like, it takes 10,000 hours to learn a skill. All right? Is that Malcolm Gladwell? Yeah? Ten thousand hours to learn a skill, okay? And we expect our parents -- we're going to just hand them a piece of paper and say, do this when you go home, and they're going to just do it. Right? Not going to happen.

So what else do we see when families are engaged in their kids' education? These are the kids who earn higher grades in test scores. These are the kids who enroll in higher-level programs. I'm going to tell you a personal story about this one. When I was in the 11th grade, my junior year of high school, I decided it was time to take a break from Honors and AP classes. I was tired. I was tired of all the homework. I was tired of all the anxiety. I was a pretty, you know, good student. My parents had not gone to college, not at that time, anyway. They went back to school and got their degrees. And so they didn't quite know which courses I should be taking in my junior year. We were under the module system at that time, so we were trying -- our schools were trying to replicate the kind of classroom schedule that you might have in college. Also, the teachers were coming up with all these fun names of courses. So for families, they're looking at the course book. They can't tell what's AP, what's Honors, but you know, we as kids knew. So I decided, what's the harm? I'm still going to get good grades, and I won't have to work as hard. Sounded like a plan. So I convinced my best friend, we're going to do this together.

So that summer, she and I sat down and we did our course book. And we had actually seen some of the new teachers, and we saw this one teacher named Ms. Freedman. And you know, I'm going to date myself now. She had platform shoes and, you know, really great hair, all different colors. And we figured, she's going to be a lot of fun. So instead of taking AP English with old, boring Mr. Zimmerman who looked like he was 250 years old, we're going to take Ms. Freedman's class. So luckily, my girlfriend's mom went to school early in August because she was very friendly and she did a lot of volunteering at the school. So she went in to say hi to the new teachers. She actually had brought, you know, cupcakes. She had baked for them to say, welcome back to school. And she happened to run into the guidance counselor who had just looked at my friend's course planner. And she said to my friend's mom, something's going on. Your daughter has completely pulled out of all the Honors classes, and that's a real problem because she's the top ten percent of her class. And colleges and universities look at the junior year, and that is true, to see what kinds of courses your child is taking. They should stay in a

rigorous program. And by the way, even at the graduate level, I'm on my graduate level admissions committee, we look at the courses sometimes of senior year of high school. Okay? So we were -- she said to her, you know, what's going on? You'd better go talk to her because this is a real problem.

So my girlfriend's mom came home that night and she confronted my friend and she said, what are you doing? Don't you know we want you to go to college, a good college? Are you crazy? What in the world made you do this? What -- I can tell by the laughter because you know where I'm going. So what did my friend tell her mother? Karen made me do it. Karen made me do it, all right? What happened next, ladies and gentlemen? Oh, my parents got a phone call. And my girlfriend's mother said, Lucille, the girls are trying to bamboozle us again. What happened next? I was in trouble. Right? My parents sat me down. Boy oh boy, I was in trouble. What do you -- what -- you -- we moved out here to send you to a better school. You got to do it [inaudible]. Right? So my mother said, from now on, every quarter, because we were on a quarter system, I want to see what you're signing up for, all right? So that was the end of that.

Now I might not be standing here today, right, if it wasn't for that intervention. So this is why our families being engaged in their children's education -- we have to do a better job of letting them know what's going on because like I told you before, those high school kids, their job, they told me, is to fool you. Okay? The kids even said to me, tell them the stuff because if you expect us to tell them the stuff, you can forget it. I know a little bit of Spanish and I've heard kids translating for their parents. And let me tell you, what you're telling them to tell their parents is not what they're telling their parents. Okay? So you've got to be really crafty to get around -- they're very smart. All right?

So these are the kids -- when we build the capacity of our families to understand how school works, these are the kids who stay in those higher-level programs and get access to those higher-level programs. I know for many of our -- I'll tell you a story in a little bit about -- about one of my parents of a child with autism. So these are the students who are promoted on time and earn more credits. So you see your graduation rates improving when you have more family engagement. These are the kids who adapt better to school and attend more regularly. Your attendance rates will go up with more family engagement. These are the kids who have better social skills and behavior. Boy oh boy, I have seen such a change in the classrooms when the children know the teacher knows the families. I have a teacher in Boston, Ilene Carver. She does a lot of professional development around family engagement. She tells her teachers many times that knowing the families is one of the only classroom management strategies

you may need because kids move from her class to other people's classes, and it's like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Teachers come into her classroom. Ilene, how come the kids are so well behaved in your class? They come to my class and act a fool. She says, because they know I have all their parents on speed dial on my phone. And their parents have my cell phone number. And they can call me anytime, and the kids know that. I've done home visits. I go to community meetings in their community. They see me in the grocery store. Everybody knows me. So the kids respect the fact that I come to their families, and they know that I know their families. So she says, I don't have any problems in my classrooms because I spend the time on the front end getting to know families, and now my whole year is easy breezy because I know their families. So it seems like a lot of work to do that relationship building in the beginning, but it saves her time throughout the school year because she doesn't have problems. When there's parent-teacher conferences, she has 100% attendance because she's gotten to know all her families. And they say, for Miss Carver, we'll do anything because she's come to us and she treats us with respect. Okay?

And these are the students that graduate and go on to higher education. So I call this the sort of Where's The Beef? part of the conversation. Remember -- how many of you remember the Where's The Beef? lady? Where's the beef? Remember her? Okay? She wanted to know, hey, if I'm going to spend money on that hamburger, I want to see that it's worth my while. Well, a lot of staff in your organizations are going to want to know, where's the beef? So sometimes having this little list of ways that family engagement makes a difference is helpful. I'll get to your question in one second. But I also want to get you to see that it's not just that family engagement has an effect on the kids. We now have research that's telling us that it actually has an effect on your school culture and your school's ability to deliver strong programming and to actually see results when it comes to student achievement.

This is a graph done by Peggy Sebring of the Chicago Consortium on School Research. And that book I showed you -- let me see if I can go back to it. Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons From Chicago is a game-changer, ladies and gentlemen. Because what these folks at the Chicago Consortium are trying to tell us is that there is no silver bullet to improving schools. There is no silver bullet. That what it is is a recipe of various elements that when combined work like a cake recipe to improve a school. They have been able to identify the key recipe ingredients for whole school improvement. And that's what these five circles represent: the ingredients in that recipe. They call them the five essential supports.

So what they've found is that those five ingredients include a strong leader at the helm, but not the kind of leader who is, it's all about me. The kind of leader who says, I want to cultivate leadership among my staff and my families. I want to distribute power and leadership throughout my organization. And I teach others how to lead. When I do professional development for principals, how I can tell that that principal has built leadership at his or her school is by the fact that they can put their PDA away and not have to look at it for quite a few hours. Because they know that it's all taken care of at the school. They have other people who can handle it. But those principals who I see where that thing is, you know, like a part of their body and they can't separate themselves from it and they're running it out of the room, that's not somebody who has built a culture of shared leadership at that school or at that program or at that after-school program or whatever the organization is. So we know that this distributive leadership, and that's what we teach at Harvard now, you know, is a different kind of leadership than in the past when it was just that one single person.

How many of you have read the book Good to Great? Okay, so it talks about -- Jim Collins talks about that. It's a type of person who's humble, who shares leadership with others, who doesn't take credit for everything. So that's the kind of leadership we're seeing at these schools and in these districts. What else do we see? What are the other ingredients? Professional capacity: the staff are qualified staff. It doesn't mean they know everything already, but they're willing to learn. Also what do we see? This is a place where it's a student-centered learning climate. The kids are at the center of the enterprise. Not the adults. The curriculum meets their needs. If it's a multi -- diverse school, people are really thinking very wisely about, how do we represent the different cultures and styles in our building in a respectful way? Instructional guidance: our team gets good supports in terms of -- you know, what's the latest information out there and how do we learn -- and people share information. These are cultures where everybody's sharing information, not having, you know, places where people go in and close the door, and then that's it. It's open and honest communication. It's not a gotcha environment where you make a mistake and it's a gotcha. It's like, I made a mistake. I want to learn new skills. Let's share information.

But look at that maroon number three: parent and community ties. What this research is saying, ladies and gentlemen, is that family engagement and community engagement are essential ingredients to improving schools. What these researchers found out is that if you remove one of these circles, the entire enterprise falls apart. When you remove the parent and community ties, the rest of these pieces don't work. It's just like a cake recipe. You take out an ingredient -- they work, they interact with each other. The whole thing falls apart. So why was I excited when this research came out? I was excited

because I've been trying for years to impress upon people that family engagement and community engagement, we're focusing on family engagement today, have to be there in order for your school to improve. It makes it so the culture and environment of your school is one where not all the responsibility for learning is on the staff. The education of the children is everybody's business, and everybody knows that, and your staff have partners in the families and the community. And guess what? The environment of the school is a lot more pleasant. People are happy to come to work. Parents and teachers work as partners. As partners.

That triangle is the instructional core. That's the classroom. And so what we -- when we say the instructional core, we mean the relationship between the teacher and the student and the presence of content. All of these things have an impact on the instructional core. So the bottom line, ladies and gentlemen, is this: when you are developing a school improvement plan or a district plan, you have to have family engagement as a part of the strategy. No family engagement, no school improvement. Full stop. So think about that. Does your school, does your district have family engagement prominent as a strategy for whole school improvement and student achievement? Because if not, that's a problem. I have lots of administrators say to me, oh, you know, Dr. Mapp, we hear you about family engagement. But we've got a focus on teaching and learning. Once we get the teaching and learning down, then we'll add in the family engagement. And I say to them, you're in trouble. You're in trouble because the family engagement is a part of teaching and learning. It's not separate from it. It's an accelerant, actually, to teaching and learning. So if you don't have it, that formula is not going to work. And now we have research to support that. You have to have a family engagement strategy.

A lot of times what I see in districts is they have family engagement as a goal. So you'll see a district improvement plan or a school improvement plan and they'll say, you know, we want to raise our grades and test scores. We want to raise our graduation rates, lower our dropout rate, and we want to improve family and community engagement. It's on the wrong side of the theory of change formula. Take the family and community engagement out of the goals and plunk it onto the strategy side. Because it's one of your strategies to get to all those academic and developmental goals. So now I'm going to go to her first and then to you. Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was just going to say the other benefit of parent engagement and all the -- the one thing you had on that slide is that if your kids do really well, they can get scholarship money for college. So I've seen the benefits of parent engagement, kids doing well, and them getting money.

DR. KAREN MAPP: That's right. Yeah. So that's that postsecondary, you know, attainment, okay? That's another benefit. We had a question up here. We're coming, we're coming, we're coming.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just wanted you to repeat instructional core, the meaning of it.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Yes. The instructional core is the integration and the connection between the student, the teacher, and the presence of content. So it's that dynamic relationship among those three pieces -- is called the instructional core. This is work by Richard Elmore. Okay? So what I want you to take away from this slide, though, is no more family engagement as just an add-on or something you do when, you know, you get around to it. It's got to be a part of your strategy for whole-school improvement and student achievement. Okay?

So let's talk about what this partnership really looks like. So I talk a lot about partnership. And I discovered when I was deputy superintendent in Boston, I had 145 schools in the district, and I had 145 different definitions of what partnership looked like. So when Anne Henderson and I wrote *Beyond The Bake Sale* with Don Davies and Vivian Johnson, we decided that in one of the early chapters, we needed to define what partnership was. And luckily, both Anne and I are visual learners, so -- I think most people are, to be quite honest. That you need a visual to really bring things to life. And so we decided that when we were going to write the book that we would develop a rubric that organizations, not just schools -- we're using the terminology of schools here, but I want to encourage you to think more broadly to other kinds of programs. What would partnership really look like between home and school? And so, again, we developed this rubric that goes from one to four because, you know, in the education sector, we love rubrics. And so we decided that this would be a way, a user-friendly way, that programs and schools could evaluate whether or not they were truly in partnership with their families.

So I'm going to go through the rubric quickly, and then hopefully I'm going to have time to show you a quick video which I think is an illustration of what we mean by a true partnership program. So first of all, this is a fortress school or a fortress program. This would be a one. And I don't know how many of you saw the news last night, but apparently -- I've forgotten where it is in Florida. They closed the beaches because there's sharks everywhere. And you can see here from the picture there's sharks in the water. You know, the door is up. This is not a very friendly-looking building. And these are places where they say things like, you know, no matter what we do, our parents just don't care. We have sent transportation for them. I know one district told me, we've actually hired taxicabs to go and pick up the families. They get to the door, they honk, and nobody comes out. Parents have told me they're coming. They don't come. We've provided childcare. We have raffles. We have food. We have translation. We've

promised them all these things, and we still only get ten or 15 percent of our families to show up to anything that we have. So it's got to be that they don't care. That's the only other, you know, reason we can think of that they don't come. They just don't care about education.

You know, we have a small group of parents who are cooperative, good parents. Okay? They volunteer, they come to the school, sometimes they don't even have children at our school anymore. We don't care because they don't give us any trouble and they're very cooperative. So we've got that small group. So I guess, you know, we'll have to just live with that. And you know, our teachers -- we hear all these people talking about family engagement, but they're not social workers. That's social work to be in this kind of conversation with families. That's not what we do. We're about teaching and learning, not about, you know, all this schmoozing with families.

And then finally, you know, we've heard some people tell us that, you know, sharing data with our families is important. But our families, quite frankly, can't handle that. You know, they -- many of them are recent immigrants. They don't speak English. And the others? Well, you know, they didn't graduate from high school themselves, so if we try to share data with them, they're just going to be intimidated. You know, they're going to really feel lousy about it. We don't want to do that, so we figure it's not worth our while to share data with them. Okay? The other way your organization or your school can count as a fortress school: if it's very difficult for anybody to figure out how to get into the building, and that once they get into the building and go into that front office, they are treated quite poorly.

And I can tell you -- I can vouch for -- like I said, I was associate director of admissions at Trinity, which meant I visited lots of high schools around this country. Four a day in the fall, all over the country. And I can tell you that in most cases when I walked into that front office, I was not treated very nicely. And so you can imagine what parents go through. Now I was dressed like I'm dressed today. Suit, come in, you know, very professional. I'm here to help your students get into college, and I'm still not treated well when I walk in the door. I had one person when I walked up to the counter, she looked up. She said, what do you want? What do you want? I know a superintendent who does mystery shopping visits when she first goes to a district. She puts on jeans, a pair of sneaks, baseball cap turned backwards, jean jacket, and she just drops in to the school to see how she's going to be treated.

She said one school she went to, she walked in the front office. Nobody looked up at her for ten minutes. She stood there and stood there, and it was all this hustle bustle. Nobody looked up at her. And finally, she went up to the counter and the woman looked up and said, yes? She said, you know, I'm new to this district and I would love it if I could just talk to your principal about -- tell me a little bit about

the school. The woman laughed. You don't -- can't just walk in here and expect to see the principal. You can't do that. And she said, well, what kind of policy do you have here around new families? Well, it's not that you can walk in and just say you want to see the principal. You have to make an appointment, and we don't have any appointments because we've got all sorts of stuff going on here. So I suggest you call back. We have a message system. You can leave a message. So now my friend -- if I say her name, you're going to know who she is, so I'm not going to mention. So then she says, I really feel like it would be great if I could talk to somebody. And the woman said, didn't I just tell you that you can't see anybody? So now my friend whipped out her card. She had had enough. And she put it on the desk, and the woman read the card and she said, where did you steal this from?

So your school can count as a fortress if your front office staff do not treat people with respect. When I was in Boston, what we did was we hired a person from Nordstrom's come and do customer service training for our front office staff at our schools. And it was so much fun. It really was. We had a ball. But you know, these are the kinds of things you have to do because your front office staff can make or break you when it comes to family engagement. You want to know why your families don't come back? They've already been there once. And they were treated poorly. They're not coming back again. And that's -- that goes for families of all different socioeconomic groups, all different backgrounds. They want to be treated with respect. Okay? So that's a one.

Let's go back for a second. So that's a one, below basic. Let's go to a two. A little bit better. No sharks in the water. But what do you notice about that picture? The door is closed. So you can come when we say so. So you can come to the open house. We're going to send those -- we're going to have report card days. We'll put that door down. You can come pick up that report card. Maybe we'll give you a cup of coffee. If we have workshops, they're all planned by us because we know best what you need. Right? Not going to ask you. We know. And let's talk about that open house. Let's talk about that open house for a second. First activity at the school of the year, designed to welcome families to our school. But let's talk about how those open houses are usually planned, and what the agenda usually is.

So if I'm a new parent and I'm coming to an open house at a high school -- let's talk about high school. So I walk into the building. Where am I usually going first? To the auditorium or the cafeteria. Who's talking to me there? The principal or the school leader. About what? Procedures, policies. In other words, the rules. Right? So I learn about all the rules and regulations. What kind of rules? School -- what kind of school policy? Behavior. What else? Absentee. What else? Dress code. Yes, what else? And rules for scheduling appointments. Okay, okay. So I'm learning about the rules. Okay? Is there any

dialogue usually? No. Too many people. Okay. Where am I going next? The child's classroom. Who's talking to me there?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Teachers.

DR. KAREN MAPP: About what? More rules. What kind of rules? Jackie, what -- homework assignments and how they get handed in. What else? Curriculum, how grades are calculated. Who in here -- how many teachers do I have in here today? Okay. Let me ask you an honest question. I want you to be honest now. How many of you love open house night, just love open house night, can't wait to have open house night? One person.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because nobody comes to see me.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Right. Because nobody goes -- oh ho. It's a free night. He can do some work in there, maybe check his --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Cookies.

DR. KAREN MAPP: With cookies, okay? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I like open house, but I just don't like the format. [inaudible].

DR. KAREN MAPP: The format stinks, right? Why do we keep it? Because, Rebecca, that's the way we've always done it. There's no rule, ladies and gentlemen, that says you have to do your open houses the same old boring way. Right? We always do it that way. We have one person in this room who said yes and because he gets to do what he wants. Clue, clue: let's change the open houses. Let's make them more fun. Because guess what? Your families know that you don't want to be there. They can figure it out. Your body language, that little smile you plaster on your mouth. Hello, Mrs. Jones. How are you? So good to see you today, right? They know. Imagine I'm moving into your neighborhood. You're having an open house at your home for me, and I get there and you tell me the rules. This is what time you put your garbage out. Not before five. Not before five. We don't want to see those cans on that sidewalk before five o'clock. This is how you park your car. Don't turn it this way. Got to be that way. Would I come back? No. Right? My goal is to change every old boring open house in this country. You can do it. There's no rule that says you have to do them the same way. So we're going to talk about what they should look like, okay? So this is come if we call. Not bad, but not good because this school operates under the mantra -- and I'm going to say the first part, and you're going to shout out the second. Don't call us...

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: We'll call you.

DR. KAREN MAPP: We'll call you. Okay? Let's go to a three. Open door. Now we're getting a little bit better. The door's down, okay? The sun is shining through. We're having our parent-teacher conferences at least -- at least, not minimal -- at least twice a year. And maybe even we're having parent-student-teacher conferences. How many of you have been at or engaged in a parent-student-teacher conference? Okay. All right. They require training, but a lot of times, they're a lot more robust and engaging because now the student is a part of the conversation. And there's usually some sort of partnership that gets discussed. How are we going to work together to try to help you and get you the support you need and help you at home? Okay? There's a team. Joyce Epstein calls it an action team for family engagement. You actually have a committee at the school that designs your family engagement activities for the year. This team can help you redesign that open house.

For example, I've worked with a school in Boston, middle school, special needs school, an inclusion school. They've completely changed their open house program. It was called Family Fun Night. Welcome to our school. They decided they were going to design on the idea of the Academy Awards. So when parents showed up, first of all, they moved all their -- little symbolic things count, ladies and gentlemen. The staff moved all of their cars out of the parking lot. Put them in the back of the parking lot so parents would have the front spaces instead of parents having to park far away and, you know, having to walk, walk, walk, walk to the front door. When the parents got to the school, they had a red carpet out in front of the school building. So parents could walk on the red carpet. Along the sides of the red carpet, they had all the middle school students as the paparazzi taking pictures when parents walked in. They got the school band to play. They had a little combo going when the parents walked into the building. The parents got all these beautiful little, you know, necklaces that the kids had made. And so when they went into the auditorium, it was more -- in fact, they did it in the cafeteria. They had more of a little coffee hour. And they had food. And everybody walked around, and the teachers were instructed to go up and to introduce themselves to the parents. So it was more like a reception, okay? So they made it a lot more lively.

Another school I've gone to, they actually did a Price Is Right night for an open house. Cleverly disguised math night, right? So when families walked into the auditorium, they got those great big old name cards like on Price Is Right. The Price Is Right music was playing when they came in. Right? The principal was dressed up, you know, as the MC. And when the parents sat down in the auditorium, there was a lot of buzz. They had a table which had five items that they had gotten from some of their local

merchants. Small things. A can of tuna fish, whatever. And so the principal said, okay, we're doing the Price Is Right. They pulled out the names. Come on down. Parents came running down to the front, all right? Estimate the items. Whoever gets the right gets all of them. So they did that a couple of rounds. Then when they went to the classrooms. They went to classrooms around the school. And guess what? Every classroom was a different Price Is Right game. So parents got to learn how to do these games, and they even had dice games and they had games with -- you know, board games that had been donated. A cleverly disguised math night. Attendance was unbelievable. I think they had 500 people show up because it was fun. Everybody was having a good time but still learning.

So I want to push you to think about -- the action team was the group that put that together. Who was on the action team? They picked people in the school -- the principal was very smart. She knew people in the school building who were good party planners, and she put them on the action team. She told me, I know some -- that three or four of my staff want to be cruise directors when they retire. I bet you we've got some of you in this room right now, right? That's who was on their action team. Okay? So we have all these great parent events at least three or four times a year. We now have a way that parents can bring up issues that either a PTA or a PTO or a school psych counselor, whatever you might call it -- the diversity of families is recognized through all sorts of events, and not just feasts and festivals, ladies and gentlemen. Where multiculturalism is recognized in the classroom. And that also means the diversities of the children are recognized and celebrated in the classroom. So for our inclusion students, their needs are recognized and celebrated. Seen as an asset and not a deficit in our classrooms. So the children all know and share, okay?

But what's missing? This looked pretty good. How come it's not a four? I said this goes from one to four. So this is a three. How come it's not a four? What's missing? Ah, shared decision-making. This is still pretty school-centric, ladies and gentlemen, okay? So let's look at a four. Partnership school. So here's a place that actually gets at some of the things that you talked about when I asked you, what did you want to learn today? These are schools or organizations that really see parents as equal partners, and they are very purposeful in the language that they use when they talk to families about, we need you. These aren't places that try to say, we've got this and you can go home. Just give us your kids and go home. I actually had someone in Connecticut who runs a charter school who said on national television, look, just -- I just want the parents to give me their kids and go away. No. So you know -- so his staff are working a lot harder than they have to because they don't have parents as partners.

Now here's the piece someone brought up, and this is when I said I was going to be talking about this. All family activities are connected to learning. We don't do any more random acts of family engagement which are just plucked out of the sky and aren't connected to student learning. So let me ask -- let me tell you how I know a true partnership district or school in terms of the connection to student learning. We have a whole chapter in *Bake Sale* called *Linked to Learning* because guess what? Your families, when they come to these activities or when you come to them, which is what we're going to talk about in a minute -- another reason why this is not a partnership school? Everything is happening at the school. Why we're moving to partnership school here is because it's not all just happening at the school. People are going into the community.

But when families meet with you, they know that they're going to learn something new about how to support their child's learning. That's what they want. Parents tell me, please tell them that we don't want to come to an event where we leave and we know no more about how to support our child's learning when we leave than when we walked in. And tell them not to give us that list of, these are the 100 ways you could be involved in your child's education. We don't know how to do that stuff. They have to show us and help us practice it.

So let me ask you a question: what are some of the goals that your schools are trying to achieve when it comes to student learning? What are some -- when you look at the school's data that you're affiliated with, what are some of the areas that the kids are struggling? What are some of the areas and that the schools are really focusing on and your program is focusing on? Reading comprehension, okay? What else? Dropout, okay. What else? Some academic goals? Reading comprehension's one. What else? What about math? What kind of things in math? What -- math strategies, problem solving, okay. What else? Open-ended questions. How to work with open-ended questions and write an open-ended response. Written expression, right. Okay. So guess what? You've just given each other clues as to what your family engagement activities should be about. I should be able to come into your community and ask a parent on the street what grade their child is in, and that they will be able to tell me one or two goals for what that child should know and be able to do by the end of the year. Would I be able to do that in your community? Come up to any parent, not just your more privileged parents, and say, could you tell me two things that your child is supposed to know and be able to do by the end of grade one, two, four, seven, nine, 12?

Because if the answer is no, then you are not in partnership with your families. Because families should be able to answer that question. All activities are connected to student learning, that you're

building your parents' capacity so that when they come to that meeting over a child's IEP, right, that they know something about what the child should know and be able to do, and that you help them practice skills that they can do at home and in the community to get the child there. That you're working in partnership. These are also places where there's a clear process for resolving problems that both staff and families have developed together. And as you can see, the staff are doing visits to the community, maybe home visits. They're also really focused on building those networks to build that social capital in parents. So guess what? They're taking things like parent-teacher conferences, which are all about one-on-one, and turning them into workshops where parents can work together.

So where's Lisa? Because I want you to cue up this video for me. I want you to -- I'm going to show you a video that I think really illustrates a lot of what I've talked about this morning. One, that families and the activities that they are engaged with are linked to learning. Two, that the school is really honoring and paying attention to families and seeing them as partners. In other words, honoring what they already know and do. Because that's something we don't do, ladies and gentlemen. Whoops. If you could just hold Lela off for one second. Families are seen as assets, all right, that they can do a lot to help their children's learning. So what I want you to do is I want you to watch this video, and I want you then -- I'm going to give you a chance to sort of talk to your neighbor about, what did you notice in this video that, first of all, underscores what we've talked about this morning, but maybe something that actually surprises you. Okay? So let's take a look and then we'll do a little conversation after the video is over.

[VIDEO BEGINS]

LELA SPIELBERG: Hi, my name is Lela Spielberg and I work for the Flamboyant Foundation. The video you're about to see is of an academic parent-teacher team or APTT meeting. APTT is a family engagement strategy that aims to provide parents with the information that they need to be effective partners in their children's education. The APTT model was developed in the Creighton School District in Phoenix, Arizona by Maria Paredes. During the 2011 and 2012 school year, Flamboyant Foundation worked with seven schools in D.C. to pilot this model. APTT meetings replaced traditional parent-teacher conferences with three 75-minute group meetings and one 30-minute individual conference. The video you are about to see is of a second APTT meeting in a fourth-grade classroom at Stanton Elementary School.

During this meeting, teachers and families will do four things together. First, there'll be a welcome and an icebreaker. During this time, parents and teachers will celebrate the growth that

students have made since the first meeting, and parents will share strategies that they use to support learning at home with teachers and with each other. Second, foundational skills and data: teachers share with families the most important skills that students need to master in that grade level, and parents review information about how the whole class is doing on those skills, as well as their individual child's progress. Third, home learning activities: the teacher shares activities the families can do with their child to increase their performance on these skills at home, and families and teachers practice these activities together. The last portion of the meeting is goal setting. With support from the teachers, parents set a goal for their individual child's progress between now and the next meeting and commit to steps that they will take to help their children reach those goals. Our hope is that families leave these meetings with the information and tools that they need to make sure their child is successful in school. Now let's take a look at the clip and see what you think.

PARENT: My job as a man, as a parent, as a father, is to educate my baby girl, my youngest daughter and grandchild to prepare them for life. The reason why I came is I do believe that a parent should be involved in their kids' education. And you know, if the teachers take the time to plan and the staff take the -- you know, take the time to actually plan, like [inaudible] we're here today here, then we should at least go ahead and give enough respect to show up.

TEACHER: So we had a lot of success with APTT one, right? A lot of students with sight words and multiplication facts. We went from like around 50% to like over 90%, right? And we couldn't have done that if you guys weren't like playing multiplication war, like making them write their sight words every night. Like we couldn't have made that happen.

If you could as a table just answer these three questions for me: what strategies do you use at home to make sure that your children are mastering the skills that you would like them -- that you would like them to master, right? And just like last time when you came to the first APTT, we read all the charts and we take your considerations into account. So if you could just also let us know, what are some skills that you notice that your child is struggling with? Because we take these and read them, all right? And it helps us with our instruction.

PARENT: [inaudible] money in the ice cream cup. That was such a good strategy.

PARENTS: [inaudible].

TEACHER: Thank you. So really quickly, we're just going to ask, and you can just -- if you feel comfortable sharing some of the things that your group said, we're just going to popcorn out. Yes?

PARENT: [inaudible] chart you gave us, and we also went over the list of words that you gave us.

TEACHER: How many other people did that? So that's a good best practice, right? To study -- study the words over and over. Does anybody else have something else that they want to add that they thought was really good? Because I see a lot of themes written on this paper.

PARENT: [inaudible].

TEACHER: Right. The multiple sums?

PARENT: Yes.

TEACHER: Yeah. How many people are tired of kind of hearing their kids -- right?

PARENTS: [inaudible].

PARENT: All the time.

TEACHER: Now that we've celebrated our successes, we're going to get into the nuts and bolts of why we're here tonight. So the goals of the meeting: by the end of tonight, you should be able to name the most critical reading and math skills that your child should know for the fourth grade, explain your child's current progress in these skills, set a smart goal for literacy and math to work on for the next 60 days, practice activities that will help your child meet those goals.

So like we said before, reading is like riding a bike. You have to take small steps to be able to be smooth sailing on your own. So our first step was sight words because a lot of students were getting stuck on words. And when they were getting stuck on words, they couldn't read the sentence, which is affecting their fluency. So now that we've mastered the sight words, we're moving on to fluency. And fluency is your ability to read with speed and accuracy. So today we're going to be working on fluency. Our class average is 69 and our class goal is 105, and we'll talk about that more when we look at the graph.

So here's our class graph. We administer a fluency assessment called DIBELS, and what happens is we have a passage -- I have a passage, and the student has a passage. The student will read the passage for a minute. Every word they miscue or they skip or omit, I mark as wrong. We all read the passage of fourth-grade reading level. So you'll see your child's number at the bottom. And everything's [inaudible]. Well, here's our class average, was around 69. Here's our class goal, which is 105. The reason why some of them are lower is because everybody took this on a fourth-grade reading level. And

as you know, all the students are not reading on a fourth-grade reading level. Some students are reading on a third-grade or a second-grade, but they still had to take the test on the fourth-grade reading level. So that may have affected their score or how many words they read accurately for that minute. But the class goal is for everybody to be reading on a fourth-grade reading level by the end of the school year and reading 105 words per minute correctly in the next 60 days. Yes, it is a lot of work. I heard Mr. Becks over here make a noise like, whoa. Yes, it's a lot of work, but that's why we're here tonight. I believe, Ms. Bryan believes, our students believe that we can all do it.

If you could open up your folders, on your right-hand side where it says literacy, you should see the class -- could I see yours, Mr. Becks? Thank you. You'll see your class graph. There's a front and a back.

TEACHER 2: If you look on the back of the folder, you'll see your child's number, and if you came to the first APTT, it's the same number.

TEACHER: So then your child's number corresponds to the graph, and if you look at your child's number and go up, you'll see the number of words correctly your child has scored on the graph in comparison to our class. So I'm going to give you about two minutes to take a look at your child [inaudible].

Okay, we're going to move on to the actual activity. And the activity is actually the assessment that I used to assess the students. And it's called DIBELS. So I'm going to show you guys how to do it. Then we're going to do one together, and then you guys are going to practice on each other. So let me explain to you how DIBELS works. The student gets a copy. I have a copy. When the child says their first word, I start the timer. The timer is one minute, and I'm giving -- everybody will be taking home a sand timer which is one minute. They read. As they read, if there's a miscue, they say a word wrong, or they just omit the whole word, then I just check it or I circle it. Something that indicates, that lets me know that they missed that word. When the timer goes off at the end of the minute, I stop and I mark off the last word they stopped at. Then I will count all the words, and then I'll subtract how many they got wrong. So that final number you get is the number they read correctly per minute.

So then you're going to practice the same text -- you're going to practice the same skill the entire week. But you have colored pencils in your folder, and you're going to use a different colored pencil to mark the miscues each day. So if I use a red pencil today, tomorrow, I'll use a yellow.

PARENT: As I read along, I didn't know if it was a mistake or not because I'm not used to them reading to me. Well, they usually read and explain it to me.

TEACHER 2: Oh, okay.

PARENT: So on this questionnaire if I was asking them questions, they're all kind of like fine because you have -- parents similar to me that, you know, there are words that they can't pronounce themselves.

TEACHER: In your folder, there are enough sheets for 12 weeks. So if there's a word you may think that's pronounced one way but your child is saying it another way, give me a call. I know most of you have my number. Mark that spot, and I'll call you. Don't feel embarrassed. It's not a problem. Now you're going to be a student, somebody's going to be a parent, and then we're going to switch. We're going to practice like that.

PARENTS: [inaudible].

TEACHER: Our class fluency smart goal is to read 105 words correctly in a minute on a reading fourth -- on a fourth-grade reading level. So between Q and S is a fourth-grade reading level by April 1st, 2012. So I have a question for you all. If your child is reading nine words correctly per minute, is it realistic to set their goal to 105 words? No. So that's one thing that we need to be mindful of when we take a look at our children's current scores and our goal. So just keep that in mind, and we'll be walking around to help you out. You had your goal sheet. It looks similar to the one we had last time, but this time it has lines so we can write the smart goal.

So he's right around the class average, and our -- you know our goal is 105. But she's reading on a fourth-grade reading level, so she has fourth-grade materials in here. So I sent you both -- okay, because some people have different materials in here. So we just practiced on a fourth-grade level, but some people might have like a third-grade or a fifth-grade. So she has a fourth-grade reading level, so she's already on track because of the fact that she's reading on a fourth-grade reading level. So now we just have to move her fluency up.

Maybe like if you work at nights, maybe you won't see them as much. You know what I'm saying? So like think about like how often you're going to meet with them. And then you can start writing the goal. And it can start off with something like, my child --

PARENT: What we're going to do is come up with our own word problems so that by the time April 1st comes around, [inaudible] is averaging from 98 to 100. I want it to be a larger percent in computation. I'm sure that will be no problem at all. Also at 100 percent, so we're also going to create more math problems at home for her to do. [inaudible] on the reading side, more, you know, book reading. Both of them can read very well. [inaudible] but like we were instructed and it made sense. Since they already

are very proficient, very proficient readers, what we need to do is go ahead and get them reading with more expression, more emotion. So that's the next level. That's the next step.

[VIDEO ENDS]

DR. KAREN MAPP: Okay, so since we're almost out of time, let's have a discussion, a full discussion. So what did you notice? What struck you about that evening or that afternoon between those parents and those teachers? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] proficient. Expression was the next step. And that was just awesome. I mean, that warms my heart to see a parent stating what their child's needs are and then also stating, you know, with the language of what the next steps are.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Now I interviewed Mr. Hudson and his wife. I went to the school because I had heard about the school. In fact, one of -- I have to say I'm very proud because one of my students who took my family and community engagement course at Harvard, Helen Westmoreland, is now the program officer at Flamboyan. And she's the one who worked with Maria Paredes and also Carrie Rose from the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, because those teachers did home visits first in the summer, in August, and in September. And that's why they have such a great turnout at these meetings: because they've built trust. Some of you talked about, you know, how can we break down that adversarial relationship? I will tell you that the year before, this school would not have been able to get two parents to show up at something like this because this was an underperforming school in D.C. It was the lowest performing school in D.C. elementary school. Lots of animosity between the teachers and parents.

And a new principal came in. They talked about -- the first year, they got nowhere because they had four of the five of those ingredients. They had a new leader. They had strong teachers and other staff. They had new curriculum. They had great instructional guidance. They were really centered in on the students. But they didn't have any family and community engagement. So nothing happened that first year. They called it year zero, all right? Nothing happened.

But the second year, Flamboyan came in and said, would you like to be a part of this pilot where we're really going to focus on family engagement? So they trained the teachers in how to do home visits. This is a regular public school, by the way. It's got a charter partner, but it's a regular union public school in D.C. They decided to do home visits. And the home visits were designed to say welcome. Teachers do not go in with any pieces of paper, any pencils. Nothing. Sometimes they'll go with somebody else from the school. It could be the librarian, the school nurse. Even some of the custodians

have done home visits. And home visits are done pre-K right up to 12th grade. Okay? It's the Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project if you want more information on it.

They did the home visits. Now they had trust between home and school. They focused on the relationship. Ladies and gentlemen, no relationship, no program. So if you start with the program and you haven't built relationships with your families first, you haven't spent time letting them know that you appreciate them, that you want them to be engaged in any way that they can, then you won't have the foundation for your family engagement programming. And you will over and over again have that problem of providing supports, providing childcare and all those things, and families not showing up. You need to spend time developing those relationships. So they did that.

As you said -- as they said, this is the second APTT meeting. They don't do many regular parent-teacher conferences anymore. They do one, but they've repurposed what they're already doing. So we're not talking about doing a lot more. We're talking about doing what you're doing now, but in a much smarter way. Okay? So Mr. Hudson -- I asked him, Mr. Hudson, six months ago, did you know these proficiencies? He said no. Now I know. I know how to talk about proficiency. He knows where those kids -- he and his wife know what those kids are doing and what they should be able to do by the end of the year. And so do the rest of the families in that classroom. What else did you see? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good self-efficacy. That teacher really talked positive, positive. We've done this. We can do this.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Right. So good self-efficacy, building parents' self-confidence. Guess what? That's one of the things we see in the research. Your families have to feel confident that they can be engaged in those roles, right? Many of our families don't think that they can do any of this stuff, again, because they -- you know, you heard that dad admit, right? Think about the trust in that room for that dad to say, you know -- I'm a struggling reader myself is basically what he was trying to say. How am I -- I don't really know. What did the teacher say to him? Call me. You all have my phone number. Don't hesitate to call.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But she also said, I will call you back.

DR. KAREN MAPP: And I will call you back. And don't be embarrassed. It's not a problem, right? So again, saying, don't -- don't worry if you're struggling. Most of the parents you see in this room -- this is a high poverty community. Many of these families dropped out of school. Okay? All right. What else did you see? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We test our kids to death, and all the tests that we give the kids over and over -- and I just loved how they were sitting down demonstrating the DIBELS, going over the scores, looking at the data, and involving them in that way so that -- you know, we send -- we test them and send these scores home, and then they don't even get full explanations. I know when I send them, I'm often like, these poor parents. You know, we bombard them with all of our, you know, beginning of the year, middle of the year, end of the year tests. Which is wonderful to see them interacting together and so they really do have that full understanding of, this is what's expected. Here's our goal. Yeah, I just love that.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Absolutely, absolutely. And you know, this is also a school which has a high percentage of kids who are special needs children. But boy oh boy, you know, everybody's pitching in. You know, everybody's in this now. The parents tell me, you know, we never thought that we were considered part of the education community. Now we feel like school is everybody's business. All right? Anything else that you noticed, that struck you? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I loved that -- you know, most of the time, you're [inaudible] their ear. I'm a parent, so I'm here as a parent. And a lot of parents don't know other parents, so that's a biggie for them to actually have a conference where all the parents are in one room. You know, you know some parents or whatnot, but you really don't know all. So if every parent could be communicating and you see what's going on and you're involved, you'll feel more comfortable.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Yup. And you know what's happened now? Those parents have formed a parent group, a support group. They've given each other their phone numbers so that if you want to call another parent who you know is really -- seems like -- Mr. Hudson gets a lot of phone calls now because he kind of knows -- he and his wife know the lexicon of school. So now you have what Joyce Epstein calls more, you know, homes that are like school and more schools that are like home. Right? You have that nice overlap. Anything else you noticed? Yes, way in the back?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That the parents feel valued, that they are a part of this now. And they can feel proud of themselves.

DR. KAREN MAPP: Right. And you saw -- one of the things you saw in terms of the parents being valued is, look at how they started the program. Right? What are you doing at home? Name some best strategies that you're doing at home. And what did that teacher then say? We are going to use it. It helps us with our instruction. Imagine that message going to families, that what you do actually helps us

with our instruction. So you are truly our partners. It's called asset-based thinking versus deficit-based thinking. These families have funds of knowledge. Luis Moll writes about that. Funds of knowledge.

Anything else that you noticed? Anything else? Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]. So we think of how we actively engage kids. They actively engaged them. Their activity was specific to their child. The strategies were specific to their child, and the value of the activity was specific to their child.

DR. KAREN MAPP: And the classroom, too, right? See, one of the things that's really neat about this is that, first of all, you know, you -- there's no names on those charts, right? So it's numbers. But one of the things the parent told me -- one of the parents who was at an APTT told me was that, now I get to see how my child sits in relation to the rest of the kids in the class. Because I never knew like what the whole class goal was before. You see that she says, our whole class goal, our whole class average. So now I see how what my child does actually is related to what everybody's doing. So it becomes a team effort, right? Parents are now comparing -- so how did your child go? He did this. And you know, parents aren't afraid to discuss their child's performance with other parents. Okay? So this school now, what's -- what are the results? Double digit increases in math scores, triple digit increases in English scores. Okay?

Now what I like about this video is that it's -- it shows you that, you know, your parents do not have to have Master's degrees from Harvard. Maria Paredes, who originated this in Creighton? This was done with English language learners. So they had the workshops in Spanish. Now don't get hung up on it has to be DIBELS. It can be anything. They just happened to choose DIBELS. You can do anything with your families in terms of teaching them a skill or something -- an assessment that you may do. Or with, you know, some kind of skill that you would like them to have around numeracy or literacy. You saw there were two sides of those charts, so they're going to do something around math for the next one. So don't get hung up on the actual activity. It's the spirit of the activity. It's the way the activity was done: respecting and validating the families. Building those relationships. And guess what? This was a great example of linking family engagement to what? Learning. Okay?

We have to stop. I hope -- this two hours went by very quickly. I hope this was helpful to you. So the next time you see me, I'm going to want to ask your families around you what their child should know and be able to do by the end of the year. The gentleman who talked about school climate? This is how you get there: when your teachers and staff validate your families and say, we want to be partners with you. And I expect the next time I ask you about your open houses and how much you like them, everybody's going to raise their hand. Thank you very much.