



## Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools

The Prichard Committee

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### **Family Engagement Strategy 2: Welcoming (wellness) Phone Calls to Families**

Beginning of the school year and mid-year if feasible

**Goal:** Set a welcoming tone with a strong first impression that shows families the school is an inviting and friendly space. The purpose of the call should also be to allow families to share information about their child and family and begin building an authentic relationship with school staff.

#### **Top Tips:**

- Host a 30 minute staff training via Zoom to explain the purpose of these calls and role play an example call for all staff making the calls. Discuss possible scenarios and questions that may arise. Include paraprofessionals, cafeteria staff and other school staff when possible to expand the team.
- Conduct calls before school starts or within the first month. By making these connections *before* the school year begins and establishing a base level of trust and positive communication early on, families may be more open to communication throughout the year.
- Ask questions such as: “What do you want to share with me about your child? What are your goals for her this year? What are your dreams for your child?” Allow the parent a chance to say everything he or she wants to say.
- Have information about upcoming parent meetings (SBDM, PTA) or other opportunities for parent involvement ready to share if time allows in a way that is very inviting.
- [Sample Script for Call](#)
- [Questions for Trust Building](#)

#### **For Big Schools, Middle and High Schools:**

- Ask for additional school staff, SBDM, PTA and other parent leaders to support making the welcoming phone calls. Be sure to host a training session for anyone making these calls.
- Consider text messages, online videos, handwritten cards or personal emails if phone calls are not practical.

#### **Doing WITH families, not TO families:**



- Tell families when you call WHY you are calling. Explain the goal is to ensure families feel welcome and know the school is a friendly place.
- Create questions that allow families to lead the discussion of what they want to share with you about their hopes and dreams for their child. Families should be doing most of the talking.

#### Equity and Inclusion:

- Families who aren't reached by phone can't be disregarded. The goal should be 100% school-family connection. Must consider and try other options when needed.
- Closed captioning, sign language or translation services may need to be provided. Connect with the district office on how to provide these services.
- Consider options for families who cannot be reached by phone such as home visits and handwritten cards.

#### Measuring Success:

- Track number of phone call attempts to reach a family and % of families reached. Increase the goal each year
- Have each teacher self-score from 1-5 on how well they felt the call went and make notes about what they are learning works between calls.
- During orientation night, by survey or social media create a simple diagram where families can checkmark if they received a welcoming phone call and on a scale of 1-5 how much they enjoyed the conversation.
- Have teachers keep notes and consider correlations between families who answered the call, attendance for family conferences, and overall ease of relationship throughout the year. Use these reflections as a peer learning activity during a staff meeting.

“By requesting teachers/staff to make phone calls and asking directly and personally- what do they want from their district to make their student successful? The parent is the voice of the student and personal advocate. Reaching out to the family gives the teacher/district personal knowledge of not only the family but the community and actual needs of their student in real-time. Emails for quick phone meetings are a quick easy way to connect to the parents.” ~ KY Parent

This strategy sheet is part of a series called “KY’s 11 Goal Post Strategies for Family Engagement” these resources and more will be available online after Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. Questions or comments contact: Brooke Gill, Director of Family Engagement [brooke.gill@prichardcommittee.org](mailto:brooke.gill@prichardcommittee.org)

