

Powerful Partnerships
A Teacher's Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success

Book Study Introduction

Welcome!

Over the next seven sessions, you will be exploring the dynamics of family engagement in the classroom as you read *Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher's Guide for Engaging Families in Student Success* by Karen L. Mapp, Ed.D., Ilene Carver and Jessica Lander. Dr. Mapp, a senior lecturer on education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the faculty director of the Education Policy and Management Master's Program, has spent the past twenty years focused on the cultivation of partnerships among families, community members and educators.

Book Study Overview

The goal of this accompanying book guide is to help you reflect upon and discuss family engagement in a supportive setting where you can ask questions and share experiences. The questions on the following pages are designed to help you think about your past experiences as well as how you can apply what you are learning to the school years ahead.

As you read, please use this guide to reflect independently on the content. You will notice that many questions also provide a structure for group discussions, and these will be used when such sessions are held.

A Note as You Begin

Teaching is an undoubtedly personal profession, and there may be moments as you read and discuss the text when you feel out of your comfort zone. To get the most out of this book guide and discussion group, we encourage you to reflect and share as much as possible and listen openly to your peers. Just as you learn daily from your students, you may also be surprised at what you can learn from yourself and each other!

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Week One: Introduction: Build Your Case for Family Engagement

RELLECT, JOT & DISCUSS:

Use the space provided to **reflect** on each question and **jot** your own ideas. If you have the opportunity, you may then **discuss** and share your thoughts with each other.

1). The introduction begins by touching on four situations that bring teachers a sense of well-being and accomplishment. How do you personally measure success? Can it be found within the four ideas bulleted in this chapter? Or, do you measure success differently and, if so, how?

2). Page 5 acknowledges that a variety of factors contribute to an educator's success. Place the success factors on the continuum below to indicate how much of an impact you believe they have on your own success. You may also add your own key contributors if you feel any are missing. Be ready to share the factor that affects your success the most and why it has this impact.

Success Factors

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| - Competent, positive leader(s) | - Skilled coworkers | - Strong family ties |
| - Instructional guidance and support | - Strong community ties | - _____ |

No Impact



Large Impact

3). According to pages 5 and 6, research shows that family partnerships yield the following results:

- Children's grades go up.
- Children attend school more regularly.
- Children are more likely to enroll in higher-level programs.
- Children are more likely to graduate and go on to college.
- Children are more excited and positive about school and learning.
- Children have fewer discipline problems inside and outside the classroom.

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Do any of your personal experiences align with this research? How?

If not, do you believe family engagement has the potential to have this impact? Why or why not?

4a). Throughout this book, you will read teachers' personal reflections on family engagement in their classrooms. You will also often be asked to personally reflect on your own relationships with students' families. For your first reflection, think broadly and fill in the chart below.

Examples of Positive Family Relationships (What made them positive?)	Examples of Difficult Family Relationships (What made them difficult?)

4b). As you share these relationships, consider: What similarities can you find in the positive experiences? What may have helped the difficult relationships become more positive?

5). Pages 7 through 10 highlight a few questions that may be going through your mind as you read this introduction. Did any of these questions resonate with you? Why? Do you have any additional questions that may be helpful to share at this time?

LOOKING AHEAD:

1). Pages 12 and 13 provide a brief overview of the rest of the book. Take a few moments to record your initial reactions to the upcoming chapters. Then share: Which chapter(s) has the potential to make the most impact on your teaching practice? Why? Are there any chapters that you feel apprehensive or unsure about exploring? Why?

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Chapter 1: Examine Your Core Beliefs

Chapter 2: Harness the Power of Partnerships

Chapter 3: Welcome, Honor and Connect with Your Families

Chapter 4: Transform Your Family Conferences and IEP Meetings

Chapter 5: Maintain Strong Family Ties Throughout the Year

Chapter 6: Support Your Work with Family-Friendly Resources

2). Reread the *Final Thoughts* section at the very end of the introduction and watch the “Introduction: Your Colleagues Reflect” video available [here](#) if you haven't already. Then answer the question below.

Think about a time when you partnered with a family to support a student in your own classroom and the impact it had on the child, on the family, and on your teaching. Then consider: What aspects of family engagement in your classroom do you hope to grow and improve?

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Try to take the time to share your individual goals with one another. Being aware of how your colleagues hope to grow and what they hope to get out of the next several weeks is an important step in building a relationship with each other!

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Week Two: Chapter 1: Examine Your Core Beliefs

RELLECT, JOT & DISCUSS:

Use the space provided to **reflect** on each question and **jot** your own ideas. If you have the opportunity, you may then **discuss** and share your thoughts with each other.

1). Chapter One begins with a discussion of core beliefs: the idea that every decision we make ties back to our personal values. Core beliefs affect not only who we are as individuals, but who we are as educators as well. Each and every action we take in our classroom and our school community is rooted in our core beliefs. For this reason, we'll begin by examining them.

Reflecting on core beliefs is not easy. Our core beliefs may stem from experiences that we don't often think about, and they're incredibly personal in nature. To help you begin to think about your own core beliefs, use the chart below to work through the questions that are presented at the beginning of Chapter 1. Don't worry about sharing your responses with the group. This is for you. If you need more room, please continue on a separate piece of paper.

A Reflection on My Core Beliefs			
School Experience: How was your family connected or not connected to your school and educational experience?	Shaping Beliefs: How might these past experiences, positive or negative, shape your beliefs as a teacher about family engagement?	Barriers: What fears, hesitations, or apprehensions do you have about this work? What barriers will you have to overcome?	Commitments: What passions, beliefs, and commitments do you bring that will help you do this work?

2). Now that you've begun to consider your own core beliefs, let's think about the four essential core beliefs that are presented beginning on page 19. These core beliefs are called "essential" because Dr. Mapp believes all teachers must truly believe in them in order to achieve successful family engagement. The reflection prompts below restate each of the core beliefs and then provide you with guiding questions meant to help you contemplate each belief more thoroughly. Be ready to share your responses!

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Core Belief #1: All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

a. Is there a time that sticks out in your mind related to this core belief?

b. I do / don't struggle with this belief because:

c. Based on your reading, what could you consider if / when you struggle?

Core Belief #2: All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.

a. The time I may have been most surprised to see this to be true was:

b. Turn to page 23 and reread strengths #1-8. Are you making the most of the strengths and assets your families have to offer? Why or why not?

c. Page 25 explains that strength-based thinkers look at the world with the belief that everyone has their own unique toolkit. How could you enhance the way you utilize the strengths, the tools and the assets of your families?

Core Belief 3: Families and school staff are equal partners.

a. What does it mean to be equal partners? Does equal mean "the same"? Why or why not?

b. What do you already value about the families you work with?

c. What can you do to further show families that they are valued and respected?

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Core Belief #4: The responsibility for cultivating and sustaining partnerships among school, home and community rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.

a. The research brief on pages 29-31 discusses the need for parents to trust their school before they become active participants. But this can be a complex barrier to overcome, as their mistrust often stems from racial tension and disrespect that leaves parents weary of educators. With this in mind, what could you or your school do to promote trust and start more authentic lines of communication between parents and staff members?

To promote trust, my school could:	To promote trust, I could:

b. Watch the accompanying Chapter 1 [video](#) in which educators share their own engagement strategies. Feel free to add new ideas to your chart as you discuss, watch and listen!

LOOKING BACK (in order to) LOOK AHEAD

1). Page 33 quotes author Beverly Tatum: “I assume that we all have prejudices, not because we want them, but simply because we are so continually exposed to misinformation about others.” The chapter then goes on to discuss the existence of prejudices in everyone’s lives. In particular, it urges us as educators to take the time to examine the role race plays in our own core beliefs in order for us to strengthen our relationships with families.

Take some time to consider the words above and then reflect on an experience where race, class, or another difference made your relationship with a student’s family more difficult. Which essential core belief could you have embraced more heavily in order to build a more successful relationship? How?

2). How can continuing to be more aware of this core belief help guide your family relationships next school year?

Be prepared to share these closing reflections and goals. Despite the vast differences that make each of your family relationships unique, you may be surprised at how alike they can be too!

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Week Three: Chapter 2: Harness the Power of Partnerships

RELLECT, JOT & DISCUSS:

Use the space provided to **reflect** on each question and **jot** your own ideas. If you have the opportunity, you may then **discuss** and share your thoughts with each other.

1). As Chapter 2 acknowledges, everyone has hopefully been fortunate enough to be in a successful partnership at some point in their lives: whether it involved a friend, significant other, colleague or sibling. Let's follow the book's suggestion and begin by thinking about this particular partnership. Why was it successful? What did you enjoy about it? How exactly did you collaborate, and why did you complement each other? Jot down a description of the partnership below and be ready to share why and how it worked.

2a). Now that you have a model of a positive partnership in mind, let's reflect on family partnerships within your school. Page 38 mentions a partnership rubric in another book by Dr. Mapp called *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. A copy of this rubric accompanies this guide. Please follow the directions on the rubric and complete it thoughtfully, without worry about judgements or implications, and then return to 2b below.

2b). Now that you've finished the rubric, follow the directions listed under the rubric's "Where Does Your School Fall?" header to determine your school's partnership achievement level. Then examine your results and consider: Does any part of it surprise you? Why?

Don't let yourself be overwhelmed by your school's score. The important part is that you now have a starting point for partnerships in your school and classroom as you move forward!

3a). On page 42, you read that Dr. Mapp collaborated with the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) to create the USDOE Dual Capacity Framework for Family-School Partnership. This was created to provide a tangible resource that schools and educators could use to help engage in meaningful family partnerships. Before you move on, take a moment to [review](#) the framework and then [listen](#) to an explanation of the theory behind it. If you have any overarching questions, jot them here in case you have time to discuss them with your group:

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3b). As a teacher, you have the most control over the Opportunity Condition block of this framework. Page 43 states that there are five process conditions that need to be built into the planning of a family engagement event, program, or initiative to ensure its success. Follow the instructions included in the chart below to help you think through each of these conditions. Once complete, try to share your responses and take this opportunity to learn from your peers.

Process Condition For further information refer to pages 43-25.	Example(s) of personal success with each process condition If you're unsure, you may jot an example that someone shares.	How could I (better) achieve this? Reread page 46 to refresh your memory on how adults learn best. Then use these to think of actionable ways you could be more successful.	Which school stakeholders (if any) could I ask for support from in order to be more successful? You can't do everything alone!
Linked to Learning: Do my families leave the events in my classroom knowing more about what their children should know and be able to do?			
Relational: Do families and school staff have an opportunity to learn about each other, to share stories, and to build partnerships that are based on respect?			
Developmental: Do you assume that families already have strengths and knowledge on which you can build?			
Collaborative: Do you strive to bring families and staff (yourself included) together so that they can learn from and with each other?			
Interactive: Do you provide families with an opportunity to practice and discuss the activities that you'd like them to complete with their children at home?			

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LOOKING BACK (in order to) LOOK AHEAD

1). Watch the Chapter 2 Colleague Reflection video [here](#). Then consider what these educators expressed and fill in the sentence starters below. Be ready to share the sentence that is most meaningful to you.

- One connection I have is:

- One statement that surprised me was:

because _____

- Something I heard that I would like to keep in mind moving forward is:

- One idea someone shared that I would like to commit to trying is:

because _____

2). Over the course of studying this chapter, you assessed where your school currently falls on the Fortress through Partnerships School rubric. You evaluated your process condition successes, and you pinpointed areas where you could improve. You also listened to colleagues (those in the video and/or those in your discussion group) articulate their successes and struggles.

Out of all the information you're now processing, what is the single biggest takeaway you would like to remember as you move forward?

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Week Four: Chapter 3: Welcome, Honor and Connect with your Families

RELLECT, JOT & DISCUSS:

Use the space provided to **reflect** on each question and **jot** your own ideas. If you have the opportunity, you may then **discuss** and share your thoughts with each other.

1a). This chapter focuses primarily on first impressions. Think about a time in your life when you had a positive first impression as well as a negative first impression, and record what happened side by side below. What factors contributed to these impressions?

Positive First Impression	Negative First Impression

1b). Upon thinking about your impressions above, and perhaps even listening to the first impressions of your peers, what seem to be some of the key characteristics that distinguish a positive first impression from a negative first impression?

2.) Now think about your own classroom. How do you normally welcome families to the start of a new school year? What kind of impression do you think this gives? Why?

3). This chapter discusses the three key components to what Dr. Mapp calls the Joining Process: Welcoming, Honoring and Connecting. In particular, it focuses on three foundational strategies for building an effective family-school partnership early on. Below, we'll dive into each of these strategies.

Foundational Strategy 1: Welcome Phone Calls

No different than a first impression, your first contact with a family sets a lasting tone for the duration of the year—and it has the power to welcome families and encourage them to engage with you! Pages 53-54 provide helpful tips for what you could include in your own welcome phone call to each family, but what you say is really up to you.

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To help you begin to think about how to approach these calls, below is space to create a model script that could be used during your welcome phone calls this coming school year. There is room to jot anticipated responses if it would be helpful, but you also may choose to leave the family lines blank and instead map out what you want to make sure to say. If given the opportunity, find a colleague with whom you can roleplay this script once it is complete!

Family Guardian: Hello?

Teacher: _____

Family Guardian: _____

Teacher: _____

ELL Consideration: Thinking about the demographics of your school community, what strategies might you try to incorporate as you call families who are learning English? (Page 55 has tips!)

Foundational Strategy #2: Home Visits

Pages 56-62 discuss home visits extensively. While visits to your students' homes are undoubtedly more complicated than phone calls, as they need administrator support, prior planning and dedicated time, they are also undeniably successful.

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If you have participated in a home visit before, choose one visit to reflect upon. How and why did it impact your relationship with the student and their family moving forward?

If you have not yet participated in a home visit, choose two different students from past years of teaching and imagine how a home visit may have been able to change your relationship with them and their families. Record your thoughts below and be ready to share.

If your school does not hold home visits, would you be comfortable advocating for them? Why or why not? If so, with whom in your school may you be able to address this? If possible, use this opportunity to discuss how home visits were initiated in your colleagues' school communities.

Foundational Strategy #3: An Invitation into the Classroom: Back-to-School Night and Open House

While it's easy to stick with what you've always done, this section discusses the potential impact these events can have if they're restructured to become more family focused.

Skim back through the suggestions on pages 66-70 about ways to make your family nights more hands-on and family-friendly. How could you restructure your next Back-to-School Night to incorporate some of these ideas?

Page 68 encourages every teacher to choose three key messages to present on Back-to-School Night—and even offers a few suggestions. No matter which messages you choose, the conversation should be kept as interactive as possible. If you were to think about all of the information that you normally relay on Back-to-School Night, how could you narrow it down to three key messages?

1.

2.

3.

ELL Consideration: If you haven't already, watch the Chapter 3 Colleague Reflection video [here](#). Then, thinking about the demographics of your school community, what strategies could you and your school try to incorporate into events like Back-to-School night for families who are learning English? (Page 70 has a few tips!)

LOOKING BACK in order to LOOK AHEAD

1). Out of everything you already do to initiate strong relationships with the families of the children you teach, which do you think are the most effective? Why?

2). Based on the strategies and ideas presented in this chapter, what can you commit to trying differently next school year?

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Week Five: Chapter 4: Transform Your Family Conferences and IEP Meetings

1a). This chapter begins by discussing conferences. It focuses especially on a model of *family* conferences, which Dr. Mapp writes: “provide meaningful opportunities for teachers and families to speak as equal adults and partners in the work of supporting the student.” Think about the way Dr. Mapp presents family conferences and also consider how conferences are held in your classroom. Then complete the rectangular Venn Diagram below to help you analyze the similarities and differences between the two.

Key features of Dr. Mapp's family conferences	Similarities	Key features of the conferences I hold

1b). Looking at the Venn Diagram, what are the two biggest differences between a family conference (as described in this chapter) and the conferences you typically hold? For each difference, what shift would you have to make to transition towards a family conference?

1. _____

2. _____

2). Pages 76-78 relay accounts of a wide variety of parent-teacher conferences. Which account(s) resonated with you? What qualities or characteristics would you like to include in your next round of conferences? Why?

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3). Pages 82-83 acknowledge that sufficient time for family conferences is not always provided. Think about your school schedule and your conferences. When would you realistically be able to hold family conferences, and what steps would you have to take to ensure that family conferences are held at this time?

4). The second half of Chapter 4 focuses on Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Depending on your district, your school and your students, the degree to which you are exposed to IEP meetings may vary. However, despite these differences, Dr. Mapp acknowledges that all teachers likely share one common characteristic: They have received little or no training on how to engage with families in the IEP process. She therefore presents strategies for the IEP process that revolve around two central ideas: Mindset and Communication.

Keeping these strategies in mind, what are three actionable takeaways you gained from pages 83-100 regarding partnering with families during IEP meetings? Consider the backgrounds of your students' families and how you may apply the strategies on these pages to their unique needs. Fill out the chart below once you have these takeaways in mind:

Key Takeaway	A personal goal statement to ensure I address this point next year	How will I know if I've achieved this goal?

5a). The IEP process can be daunting for any parent, even in the very best of circumstances. What do you already do help families of students with an IEP? Based on what you have read, what else could you do to become an ally of your students' families throughout the IEP process?

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5b). What can you and your school do to make sure ELL families feel welcome as well? (Page 99 provides recommendations, but tailor your answer to your own school community.)

LOOKING BACK (in order to) LOOK AHEAD

1). Watch the Chapter 4 Colleague Reflection video [here](#) and listen to these educators reflect on what works well in their own family engagement. Then reflect: When you interact with families during meetings and conferences, what do you already do that you feel works well? What aspects of your meetings and conferences would you like to maintain next year?

2). Moving forward, how and when will you plan to share achievement data with your families, and how will you ensure that families also share their perspective on their child's progress?

3). Continuing to think about future parent meetings and conferences, how will you use the information in this chapter to help convey to families that they are the "experts" when it comes to knowing their children? In addition, how can you make sure you learn everything you can from families to help you best teach each child? Remember that no two families are alike and you may need to use a variety of strategies to connect with all of the families in your classroom.

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Week Six: Chapter 5: Maintain Strong Family Ties Throughout the Year

1). This chapter is uniquely presented in that it consists primarily of four case studies, with the hope that you will be able to use the examples and models presented to create a plan for maintaining your own strong family ties throughout the school year.

Dr. Mapp explains that she selected each of these case studies because they align with the five process conditions for planning successful family engagement events that were discussed in Chapter 2. The chart below is designed to help you understand *how* the cases studies exemplify the process conditions. By jotting a few notes in every square, you will be able to visualize how each case study incorporates all five process conditions.

How are these process conditions present in the case studies below?	<i>Condition 1:</i> Directly linked to learning	<i>Condition 2:</i> Builds relationships between teachers and parents, and between parents.	<i>Condition 3:</i> Collaborative, with equal participation and input from teachers, families, and students.	<i>Condition 4:</i> Honors families' home languages, cultures, and experiences.	<i>Condition 5:</i> Interactive, providing many and varied opportunities to learn together.
We Are All History Makers: The Family Story Project					
Breaking Bread: A Case for Family Potlucks					
Global Connection: Building Partnerships w/ Immigrant Parents through Texts					
Middle School Passage Presentations					

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2a). What are the overarching themes in your completed chart? In other words, what phrases or concepts are brought up again and again? Why do you think this is the case?

2b.) Are the themes that you identified above also common in your own classroom? Why or why not? If not, what changes could you make to begin incorporating these themes?

3a). Of the four case studies presented, which one reminds you most of your own classroom? Why?

3b). Thinking about these similarities you identified above, are there any additional ideas from this case study that you could incorporate into what you already do? Try to especially consider changes that may help you connect with all of your students' families.

4a). Of the four case studies presented, which one seems the farthest outside your comfort zone or the most different from anything you already do? Why do you think this case study struck you as the most unconventional?

4b). Dr. Mapp provides several reflection questions following each case study. Flip to the case study that you selected for #4a and thoughtfully consider the *Reflect and Act* questions provided in the chapter. Use the space below to jot down your answers and reactions to these questions.

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LOOKING BACK (in order to) LOOK AHEAD

1). What opportunities do you provide for families to participate in their children's learning? To analyze how these opportunities progress throughout the year, record them in monthly increments below:

August, September, October:

November, December, January:

February, March, April:

May, June, July:

2). Examine the opportunities that you listed above and reflect on two factors:

Are there any points in the school year when there are *not* opportunities for families to engage in their children's learning? How can you fill these gaps and/or strengthen the opportunities with strategies presented in this chapter? Pages 115-117 as well as the Chapter 5 Colleague Reflection video (available [here](#)) may provide you with additional ideas.

Are there ample and varied opportunities for engagement with *all* families? Think especially about families who you may typically find more difficult to reach. What are two or three strategies from this chapter that you can employ next school year to reach these families?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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Week Seven: Chapter 6: Support Your Work with Family-Friendly Resources

1). Up to this point, you have focused on what you can do to build meaningful relationships with your students' families. This chapter, however, acknowledges that *you* can't do it all. You need help and support in order to be successful!

As you look towards next school year and the important work you hope to accomplish, what alliances do you already have that you know you can depend on? What additional alliances might be beneficial for you to form? Consider individuals and organizations that can support you both professionally and personally.

2). This chapter also discusses selfcare and the importance of taking the time to focus on your own wellbeing. In a profession where you're constantly caring for and about others, it can seem counterintuitive to care for yourself. But making sure you consider your own needs and take time to rejuvenate yourself is of the utmost importance. You need to be at your own personal best before you are capable of truly helping others.

What have you done in the past that helps you feel healthy and happy? What is something you can commit to doing regularly to continue this positivity and selfcare throughout the year?

3). Pages 122 – 129 provide a variety of templates and tools that you can use as you move forward in building strong partnerships. Take a look through the tools that are available and make note of a few below that you think would be the most helpful to you. Recording them here now may help you remember them later when you need them most!

4). Page 125 introduces the concept of a welcome letter, which can be distributed to families at the beginning of the school year in order to introduce yourself, share your contact information and underscore the importance of family/teacher partnerships.

Use the template on the following page to draft your own welcome letter. Please note that this format is a suggestion, and you are welcome to shift and change the paragraphs as you see fit. The goal is that your completed draft will serve as a resource that you can refer to and tweak for years to come!

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Date

_____,
Friendly Greeting

Quick welcome:

Background about yourself and your educational philosophy:

Information about how you will stay in touch and work to build strong family partnerships throughout the year:

Brief curricular overview/what to expect this school year:

Wrap-up and any important closing information, including contact information if not shared already:

Friendly closing and signature:

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LOOKING BACK (in order to) LOOK AHEAD

1). Pages 129-139 provide a lengthy list of additional resources including organizations, professional development opportunities, books and articles, classroom resources, and evaluation tools. While it can be easy to skim through this list, take the time to truly read these pages.

Then choose at least one resource that you think would have been helpful *last* school year. If it would have come in handy in the past, it will likely be helpful in the future as well! Once you have selected a resource, use the website provided to investigate it. Then record at least a couple important takeaways in the space below:

2). It's hard to anticipate what next year may bring, and only you can predict what may be helpful as you tackle a new year of creating strong family partnerships. As you try to form meaningful partnerships with every family in your class, no matter their background, what are three resources from the list provided that may prove beneficial to you? Record them below, along with a note of why you chose them so you can quickly refer to this when you need assistance in the future!

1.

2.

3.

Week Eight: Brainstorming for the Future

From examining your own core beliefs to learning about the power of partnerships and exploring how to build strong relationships with your students' families, you have covered a lot of ground over the course of this book study! Unlike the preceding chapters, this final reflection will not align to a specific chapter; rather, it is designed to help you consider the *Powerful Partnerships* book as a whole in order to build an action plan for moving forward.

Before you complete the action plan below, make sure you have your book and your completed book study pages easily accessible. You are about to put everything together and create a tangible plan to help guide you through the year(s) ahead!

Step 1: Revisit your Goals

Flip back to the *Looking Ahead* section of the Book Study's Introduction. In the very last question, you considered the aspects of family engagement in your classroom that you hoped to grow and improve. Reread your goal statement, and then consider what you've learned over the course of this book study.

Do you feel better equipped to achieve this goal now that your reading is complete? Why or why not? If not, what else could you do to make sure your goal is achievable?

Considering the engagement strategies that you have learned, are there any additional goals you hope to achieve regarding family partnerships in your classroom? Think about what you can do to not only reach every student's family but to also create a lasting partnership with them. Then record your new goal(s) here.

Step 2: Develop a Plan

Without a plan, a goal is just a goal. A goal only has the potential to become a success story when a plan is in place. While the concepts and strategies presented in *Powerful Partnerships* are still fresh in your mind, use the action plan template on the following pages to map out the year ahead. The template has been designed to break down the school year into key increments so you can consider how to build, create and maintain powerful partnerships with each of your student's families over the course of the entire school year.

My Action Plan for Family Engagement

Timing	Partnership and engagement strategies I will employ:	Steps I will take to make sure I successfully complete these strategies:	How I will engage <i>all</i> families, including those who speak another language, seem more difficult to reach, etc.:
<p>What will I do before the school year begins?</p>	<p><i>Consider:</i> Welcome phone calls, home visits, and welcome letters</p>		
<p>What will I do at the beginning of the school year?</p>	<p><i>Consider:</i> Messaging at Back-to-School night/Open House, including ice breakers, scavenger hunts, hopes and dream letters, and opportunities for parent interaction</p>		
<p>What will I do throughout the school year?</p>	<p><i>Consider:</i> How you will consistently involve parents as equal partners, maintain ongoing positive communication, and engage families in the learning?</p>		

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<p>What will I do throughout the school year?</p> <p>(continued)</p>			
<p>What will I do at the end of the school year?</p>	<p><i>Consider:</i> End-of-year celebrations, parent surveys, moving up events, etc.</p>		

If I need help with any part of my action plan, I can reach out to:
(Consider colleagues, school stakeholders, professional organizations, etc.)

Step 3: Persevere

Always remember that the process of building and maintaining relationships with your students' families is an ongoing commitment. You may have the best-laid plans, only to turn them all upside down when they don't seem to be working. As you refer to your action plan throughout the school year, don't be afraid to add, cross out, erase and start over. With resilience and dedication, as well as an open mind and a fervent belief that all families want to be engaged in their child's learning, you are bound to achieve powerful family partnerships!