



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# High-Impact Family Engagement: Promoting Equity for Student Success

Webinar Series – Session 2

April 20, 2018

# Welcome!

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Judy Carson  
School-Family-Community Partnerships  
Connecticut State Department of Education



## Agenda for the Webinar

- High-impact practices in family engagement
- Characteristics of a “welcoming school”
- Customer service vs customer experience
- Ideas to Get Started

# Defining Family Engagement (draft)

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Family engagement is  
**a full, equal and equitable partnership**  
among families, educators and community partners  
to promote children's learning and development,  
from birth through college and career.

# High-Impact Practice

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- *Research on why families get involved indicates that a **welcoming environment** is one of the most influential indicators of family engagement. The degree to which **parents feel welcome at the school, trust staff, and have positive interactions with staff** is positively associated with student outcomes (i.e., students' grades, problem behaviors at school, and repeating a grade).*

# How Welcoming Is Your School? Creating A School Culture that Invites Family Engagement

Betsy Leborious  
Program Manager for Youth and Family  
Development  
[bleborious@crec.org](mailto:bleborious@crec.org)



Gerald Barrett  
Specialist for Youth & Family Development  
[gbarrett@crec.org](mailto:gbarrett@crec.org)



# Welcoming Schools

**The goals are to connect families and schools as partners, celebrate diversity and examine equity through a welcoming lens to promote student success.**

# Equity

- **Equity in education means** that personal or social circumstances such as gender, race, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational success.
- ***Equity is a just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can prosper and reach their full potential.*** *The Equity Manifesto, Policy Link*

# School Invitingness

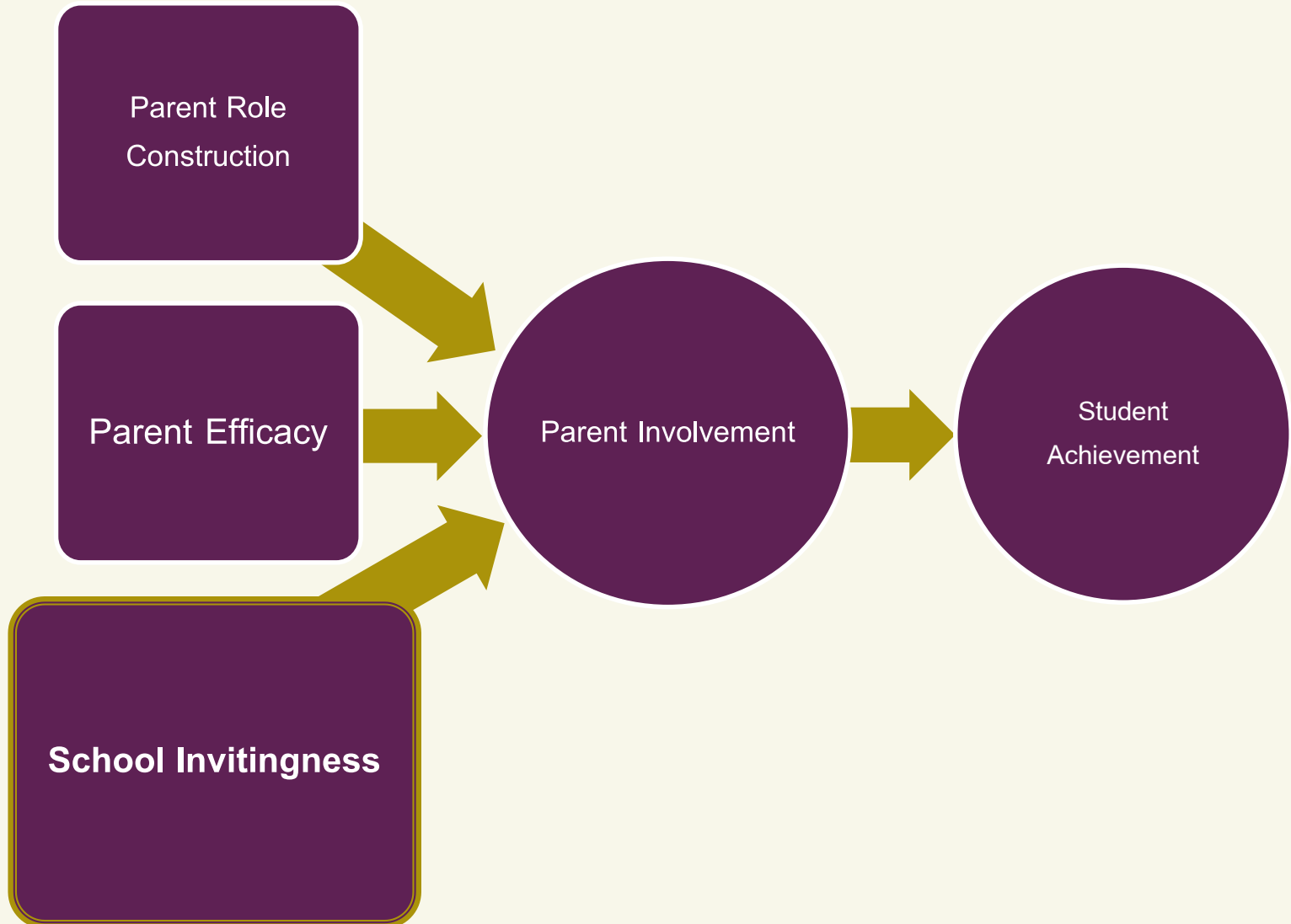
**Research shows that families have a dramatic impact on student learning and the degree to which families feel connected depends on three factors:**

- A sense of efficacy**
- An understanding of their role as a parent**
- An invitation from the school**

Hoover Dempsey (2005). *Why do parents become involved? Research Findings and Implications*. The Elementary School Journal, 106-2, 106-130.



# Why do parents get involved?



Hoover Dempsey (2005). *Why do parents become involved? Research Findings and Implications*. The Elementary School Journal, 106-2, 106-130.

A Project of the Connecticut State Department of Education and Capitol Region Education Council

# What We Know

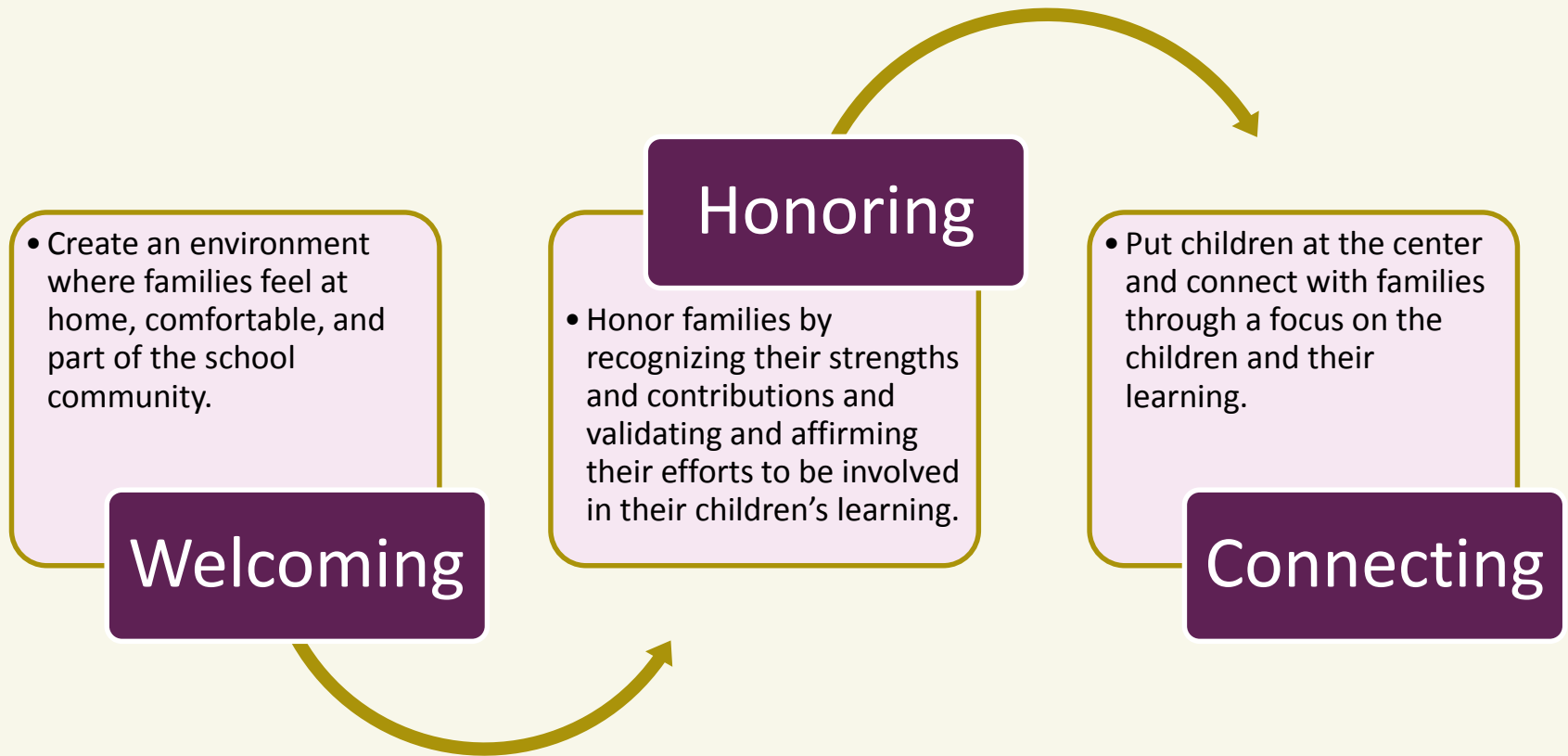
It's relational; we know it's about personal connections.

We often hear:

- They looked me in the eye
- They were prepared for me
- They knew my name
- They made me feel safe
- It was a genuine, positive greeting



# The Joining Process



Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007. *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. P. 48-50.

# The CT Welcoming Schools Tool

- Project /Strategy of attraction, schools and families choose to work together.
- It is an internal assessment used for improvement.
- A team is developed that is representative of the families, school and the community.
- There is equal voice.

# What is the CT Welcoming Schools Initiative?

It IS	It's NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Training, tools</b> and <b>services</b> to support the evaluation of the invitingness of your school/program</li><li>• A <b>constructive process</b> to improve family and community involvement</li><li>• A <b>comprehensive process</b> involving <b>surveys, a walkthrough, a report, and follow up action</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An <b>evaluation</b> of classroom <b>teachers</b></li><li>• An observation of <b>classroom activities</b></li><li>• A tool to be used by <b>outside evaluators</b></li></ul>

# The Components

## The Physical Environment

- Note parking areas, signage, entrances, offices and hallways.

## School-Wide Practices & Policies

- Interview the school principal.

## Welcoming School Staff

- Observe behaviors of school staff, including phone etiquette and interactions between staff, students and families.

## Written Materials

- Review announcements, newsletters, forms and the school website.

# The Process

- **Setting the stage**
- **The day of the walkthrough**
- **The followup**

## Customer Service

- Reactive
- Problem – oriented
- Something done to you or for you
- Single event or point in time
- One person



## Customer Experience

- Proactive and purposeful
- Relational: feelings oriented
- Awareness of families strengths and ability to anticipate their needs
- All interactions with ALL families
- Common operating principles and values shared by all staff



## The Physical Environment

1. Clear directions to the main office are posted near the front entrance and all other entrances.
2. A welcome sign is displayed near the entrance in more than one language.
3. The conference room is inviting and non-threatening (for example, student work on display, artwork on walls, materials to read or plants).

## School-Wide Practices and Policies

1. Information packets and other supports are given to new families throughout the year.
2. Are family engagement activities and events scheduled to fit the availability of parents?
3. There is a procedure in place to contact non-custodial parents regularly.
4. Procedures are in place to ensure that staff is pronouncing parents', students' and visitors' names correctly.

## Welcoming School Staff

1. The office staff greets visitors quickly with a smile and in a friendly, courteous way.
2. Confidential information is not addressed in an area where others could overhear.
3. Prompt attention is given to all telephone calls and messages, inviting two-way communication.

## Written and Website Materials

1. All printed materials are clear, understandable and free of educational jargon.
2. Student work is highlighted in publications and is representative of all students and grades.
3. Translated publications are readily available and distributed to families who have been identified as needing them.
4. Photographs and articles in the publications mirror the diversity of the student body.



# **The Process is Just as Important as the Product!**

# A Principal's Take on Welcoming Schools

“It doesn't matter how many structured activities a school creates, parents must feel welcomed, accepted, respected, and validated at their school and by school leaders. That atmosphere is something that has to be ingrained rather than something contrived by events that are primarily intended to be scored or counted.”

- A Connecticut Principal

# Ideas for Getting Started

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- What's it like to be new here?
- Are they glad to see you?
- “It's on the website”
- For more information about CT Welcoming Schools visit [www.crec.org/welcomingschools](http://www.crec.org/welcomingschools)

# Resources

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- ❑ How Welcoming Is Your School? Training & Assessment:  
<http://www.crec.org/welcomingschools/>
- ❑ Creating a Welcoming Environment: 4 Key Tips for Administrators  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/keytipsadminbrochure.pdf>
- ❑ Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? Review of Educational Research, 67(1), 3–42. Retrieved from  
<http://rer.sagepub.com/content/67/1/3.abstract>
- ❑ Froiland, J. M., & Davison, M. L. (2014). Parental expectations and school relationships as contributors to adolescents' positive outcomes. Social Psychology of Education, 17(1), 1–17.

# Webinar Series

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## High-Impact Family Engagement: Promoting Equity for Student Success

Session 3 – May 25, 2018

Session 4 – June 8, 2018

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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Community and Family Engagement

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Network for Community  
And Family Engagement

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8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Bushnell Theater  
Hartford

Mailing List:

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



# Thank you!

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Judy Carson, Ph.D.

Program Manager for School-Family-Community Partnerships

Connecticut State Department of Education

[judy.carson@ct.gov](mailto:judy.carson@ct.gov)

860-807-2122