

A VOLUME IN FAMILY SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ISSUES

# FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

PROMISING  
PRACTICES  
FOR TEACHERS  
AND TEACHER  
EDUCATORS

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**NAFSCE**  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
FOR FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# **Family and Community Partnerships**

## **Promising Practices for Teachers and Teacher Educators**

A Volume in Family School Community Partnership Issues  
in Collaboration With The National Association for Family, School,  
and Community Engagement

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# **Family and Community Partnerships**

**Promising Practices for Teachers  
and Teacher Educators**

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*Editors*

**Margaret Caspe and Reyna Hernandez**  
*National Association for Family, School,  
and Community Engagement*



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# FOREWORD

**Karen L. Mapp**

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One sunny fall day in 1999, I sat in the car with two education giants, Seymour Sarason and Don Davies. We were on our way to visit Elizabeth Lorentz, sister of Katharine Graham, who was getting on in years and in somewhat fragile health. She was a dedicated supporter of Don and the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE), the education justice organization in Boston that Don founded in 1973. Elizabeth had served as a member of IRE's founding board. I had recently been appointed as the president of IRE.

As we headed to her home in upstate New York, I began to vent. I expressed my frustration to Don and Seymour about the resistance I observed and had encountered on the part of veteran teachers and school leaders to the concept of authentic, meaningful, and trust-based family, school and community partnerships. I wondered out loud about our chances of ever being able to change the mindsets of educators when it came to partnerships, especially with diverse families.

Seymour was driving. I sat in the back because Don Davies, at about 6'4", could not possibly sit in the back of Seymour's small economy car. I remember Seymour periodically glancing at me through the rearview mirror as I unfurled my tales of woe. I could tell that he was listening to me carefully, nodding periodically as I described the resistance I had seen and felt.

Seymour took a deep breath and said, "You know, Karen. Here's my advice. If you want to change the landscape when it comes to partnerships between educators, families, and community members, you're going to have to focus more on the *prevention* side of this work than the *rehabilitation*

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*Family and Community Partnerships:*

*Promising Practices for Teachers and Teacher Educators*, pp. xi–xii

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side. Spending energy trying to rehabilitate those educators who are resistant and recalcitrant is important, but I suggest you spend **more** of your time *preventing* the next generation of educators from going into the field *not* equipped, ready, and eager to partner. Teach **them**, train them on the value of family-school-community partnerships.”

This wonderful publication, *Family and Community Partnerships: Promising Practices for Teachers and Teacher Educators*, leans beautifully into the transformative advice Seymour Sarason gave years back. We have learned from many decades of research that school-family-community partnerships are **key** to the success of students and schools, and these partnerships are more important now than ever before. And we have also learned that the practice of building these partnerships is a skill.

This publication offers educator preparation programs and all family-facing professionals a clear and comprehensive guide to the competencies, skills and dispositions needed to build and sustain effective family and community engagement practice. It also offers practical tools and strategies to develop curriculum and professional development programs to build the capacity of educators to partner with families and community.

In June of 2021, I published a “call to action”—demanding that the education sector embrace a family engagement practice that is liberatory, solidarity-driven and equity focused (Mapp & Bergman, 2021). This publication responds to that call to action by providing the tools and guidance to develop this needed practice.

## REFERENCE

- Mapp, K.L., & Bergman, E. (2021). *Embracing a new normal: Toward a more liberatory approach to family engagement*. Carnegie Corporation of New York. <https://tinyurl.com/48hdzkt9>

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# EDITORS' NOTE

**Reyna Hernandez and Margaret Caspe**

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This book is part of a larger body of work being developed by the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE). NAFSCE is an organization committed to building the professional capacity of the field to create systems and conditions that promote high-impact family engagement practices and policies. In 2022, NAFSCE released its *Family Engagement Core Competencies: A Body of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Family-Facing Professionals*. The *Family Engagement Core Competencies* represent the first effort in the family and community engagement field to codify family-facing professionals' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. (NAFSCE, 2022a). Family-facing professionals include those who work with families such as educators, early childhood providers, administrators, librarians, and afterschool staff, to name a few.

This book is organized around the four main competency areas described in the *Family Engagement Core Competencies*. These are: *reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead*. Each section of the book is designed to provide a theoretical interpretation of the area. The remaining chapters in each section provide examples and a mix of strategies that teacher candidates, teachers, and teacher educators can directly implement. In this way, we hope this book serves as a resource for a broad audience. For educators, this book provides a range of strategies to inform your own professional practice to reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead with families. For faculty, the examples and strategies can be integrated into your coursework and can inform redesigning your courses, field experiences, and overall program.

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*Family and Community Partnerships:*  
*Promising Practices for Teachers and Teacher Educators*, pp. xiii–xvi  
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While the authors in this volume focus mainly on teachers and teacher educators, many of the strategies are directly applicable to or can be adapted by other family-facing professionals such as principals, social workers, and family coordinators in schools. For teacher educators and readers associated with professional preparation programs, you may also want to refer to the *Educator Preparation Framework for Family and Community Partnerships*, which is designed to guide a reimagining of educator preparation programs, from coursework, to field experiences, to state policies and accreditation systems (NAFSCE, 2022b). The recommendations in that report, while focused on educator preparation, are heavily applicable to preparing other family-facing professionals, including school and district administrators, counselors, and other support personnel. Additional promising practices and other resources are available from NAFSCE, as well.

Also, we offer a note on our terminology. Throughout the book, the authors have used the term families, parents, and caregivers interchangeably. Regardless of the terms, it is our intention to be widely and collectively inclusive of all of the ways children are cared for in their homes and communities. Further, authors identify various communities in their work, for example BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color), Latinx, immigrant communities, English as a New Language students, and Black children and families. In the context of this book, it is our intent that you read this in the spirit of examining, respecting, and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities and reflecting on how history and social context influence family engagement systems and practices.

As editors, we also note that although we utilized the four core competency areas to guide and structure this book, the reader will notice that reflecting, connecting, collaborating, and leading are present throughout every chapter. Although each competency area has its own knowledge, skills, and dispositions that should be developed and nurtured intentionally, these four areas are intertwined. As educators grow in their practice and move towards mastery, we expect that these competencies will be ever-present and integrated throughout their practice. For example, practitioners will find that they cannot lead alongside families successfully without first building trusting relationships with them, which are often grounded in learning about and valuing families. We urge the readers not to dwell on the classifications of practices within one section or another. Instead, readers should use the lens of “reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead” as they read each chapter, identifying small and large ways that the core competencies play a role in the work of each author and can be incorporated into the reader’s own professional practice.

Finally, we wish to thank the many people who have supported and contributed to this book, especially Holly Kreider, our series editor, who came to us with the idea for a monograph so long ago, and the executive direc-

tor of NAFSCE, Vito Borrello, who created a brave and safe place for the project to grow. A big thanks also to Alice Clark and all of the authors who contributed their expertise and knowledge to this work. Finally, the ideas in these pages serve to commemorate the work and memory of Patricia Norman. Her contributions to this volume will continue to inspire the field.

Sincerely,  
Reyna and Margaret

## REFERENCES

- National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement [NAFSCE] (2022a). *Family engagement core competencies: A body of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for family-facing professionals*. <https://nafsce.org/page/CoreCompetencies>
- National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement [NAFSCE] (2022b). *Educator preparation framework for family and community partnerships*. <https://nafsce.org/page/edprep>



*Family and Community Partnerships: Promising Practices for Teachers and Teacher Educators*, offers a fresh new look at the competencies, strategies, and practices that effective educators develop to build strong partnerships with families and communities. Written by leaders in the field, the book is an outgrowth of a cutting-edge initiative led by the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement to reimagine how educators are prepared for family and community engagement. Based on four guiding practices—reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead alongside families—each section of the book highlights theory, real-world strategies, discussion questions, and activities that can be used by teachers, teacher educators, and professional learning specialists to inspire new ideas for courses, workshops, and for self-reflection.

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