



Electronic Mail Only

August 6, 2020

CCEE Board Members
California Collaborative for Educational Excellence
915 L Street, Suite 1430
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Item 8. General Public Comment

Dear Board Members:

On behalf of the Parent Organization Network (PON), I would like to thank the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) for selecting our organization to facilitate a Professional Learning Network (PLN) on family and community engagement from July 2017 to June 2019. Much was learned by all who participated, and we have expanded the dialogue on this important issue.

The experience inspired a three-report series where PON tackles the complex issue of how to best prepare today's educators to effectively build relationships and partner with families in their day-to-day work. Two of three reports are focused on the four school districts that participated in the PON PLN.

1. [PON PLN Report I: Strengthening District Staff Capacity on Family & Community Engagement](#) describes the process used to build knowledge and peer learning, foster continuous improvement, and lay the foundation to achieve systems change in family engagement.
2. [PON PLN Report II: The Impact on Local Control and Accountability Plans \(LCAPs\)](#), looks at how the PLN influenced the school districts' thinking or practices on family and community engagement and how these changes were or were not reflected in their LCAPs.
3. (Report III) [Family Engagement Training for Educators in Pre-Service: Common Sense but No Common Practice](#) analyzes laws and credentialing requirements for family engagement for educators during pre-service and in-service and provides a landscape analysis of family engagement training available in educator preparation programs and professional development.

The reports may be accessed at the PON website (<https://parentnetwork-la.org/>) under *Resources*.

Key Findings:

- **Districts participating in the PLN experienced growth in community or stakeholder engagement.** They refined existing processes and/or developed new ways to reach specific audiences, and developed structures to strengthen the practice of continuous improvement for LCAP development. However, the growth also might be attributed to multiple key external factors: 1) federal and state laws require and more closely monitor community engagement efforts by school districts; 2) school administrators are responsible for and have authority over community engagement; and 3) credentialing requirements for administrators were updated in

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Parent Organization Network Members: African American Parent/Community Coalition for Educational Equity, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Los Angeles, CADRE, CARECEN, Concilio de Padres de Highland Park, Gente Organizada, Latinos In Action, Los Angeles Education Partnership, Lynwood Save Our Students, MALDEF, Padres Pioneros, Pro-Edu, and Watts/Century Latino Organization

in 2017 to prioritize family and community engagement. We found, however, that *community* engagement is more robust than *family* engagement. In addition, the state reinforces community engagement expectations annually through the LCAP process and identifies districts for differentiated assistance to address performance issues including significant disparities in performance among student groups.

- **A key barrier preventing the same type of growth in family engagement is the lack of training in pre-service for educators which creates a disconnect between research and practice in the field.** We learned that staff tasked with implementing family engagement immerse themselves in the research and do their best to carry it out, but they often are siloed, not fully supported, and not in positions of authority to effect change in planning and budget development. This lack of support from peers and supervisors is because most educators receive little to no family engagement training during pre-service even though research shows a strong correlation between meaningful parent engagement and improved student academic outcomes. Consequently, this disconnect perpetuates outdated notions of family engagement, **which means talking *at* parents rather than working collaboratively *with* them**, even while these practices are shown to be ineffective in reaching diverse communities and working parents.

Request to Present Findings and Recommendations to Bridge Family Engagement Research and Practice

We are beginning discussions with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to address the pre-service issue, but this is a long-term solution and state agencies like CCEE can help shift this practice now.

We respectfully request time to present our research, findings, and recommendations to the CCEE board members and/or staff members. Ultimately, we ask for CCEE to host a group (i.e., a study group or committee) focused on family engagement that is separate from but in coordination with the Community Engagement Initiative so that family engagement can be fully integrated into CCEE's priority goals (i.e., Direct Technical Assistance, Professional Learning, System of Support, and Research & Development).

This is of utmost importance given that the pandemic and school closures now require strong family-school partnerships for distance learning to succeed. However, student academic achievement can only be attained — now and after the pandemic subsides — when teachers work in collaboration with families to assess each student and their situation, adapt academic plans accordingly, and monitor learning together. There is no greater opportunity for all of us to join to do this than right now and I am hopeful that we will rise to meet the challenge.

Sincerely,



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PON Project Director & PLN Facilitator

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