

Appendix A.2 • Engaging Learners, Parents, and Communities as Real Partners

Connecting with students, parents, educators, and communities (learning partners) around who learners are and how they can contribute back

Dimension	Substantially off Track	Getting Started	Looking Promising	Well on Track	Geared for Success
Partnering in every aspect of the inquiry process	Learning experiences are teacher-driven, with limited opportunity for learners, parents, or community members to partner in designing, implementing, assessing, measuring, or reflecting on them (inquiry). These learning partners aren't supported to influence learning in the classroom or at any other level of the school system.	Student voice is recognized as an important element of learning, but learners aren't continuously engaged in the inquiry process, resulting in fragmented learning experiences. Most student work is completed individually, and they aren't supported or encouraged to seek partnerships for learning.	The school or school system and its learning partners are moving beyond student <i>voice</i> toward continuous and equitable <i>partnership</i> . At the school leadership or wider system level, learning partners are beginning to engage students not only as active partners in "classroom learning" but in inquiring into systems-level professional learning needs as well.	As a result of equitable learning partnerships, the school or school system is increasingly blurring the lines among learning, teaching, and leading. Learners are taking on active instructional and leadership roles that support them to use their learning to make a difference in the learning of others, both within and beyond classroom walls.	Operations within the school or wider system are implemented as a series of inquiries all centered on deepening learners' outcomes. Instructional practice is a partnership understood in light of learning and contribution. Together, learners pursue experiences that are meaningful to their lives and make a difference in the world.
Working with parents to jointly discover, understand, and realize learners' interests, needs, and goals	Parent involvement in their children's learning is based primarily on the communication of learners' behavior and achievement. Parents aren't asked or supported to partner in sharing about their learners' interests and identities or in identifying, describing, and improving the outcomes that really matter for them.	Parent engagement is a priority across the school or wider school system, and learning partners are connecting with parents around who their children are and what outcomes actually matter. Parents learn about deeper learning and their role in developing learners' deeper learning outcomes both within and outside school-related experiences.	Learning partners embrace parents as experts on their children and are beginning to actively seek ways of engaging parents in students' learning experiences. Parents' insights into their children's learning needs and interests help frame the design of experiences, but they aren't always engaged throughout those experiences in integral or equitable ways.	There's a shared understanding of learners' identities, interests, and needs. Parents are actively engaged in school or school-system decisions and are clear on what deeper learning means and why it's so important. Communication with parents reflects real partnership, as does the deepening of parent engagement in the inquiry process.	Parents are always supported to share about who their children are and what outcomes matter for them. They and their children are known and celebrated as individuals. Communication is consistent, transparent, and formative, and learning experiences both draw from and further develop parents' expertise.

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Dimension	Substantially off Track	Getting Started	Looking Promising	Well on Track	Geared for Success
Supporting, valuing, and utilizing partner insights and engagement	Learning partners' ideas are invited in an unstructured way, and they're valued only when they're a comfortable fit with existing ideas and processes. These partners, especially community members without family ties and parents of struggling learners, don't feel welcomed to take on an active role in the school or wider system.	Learners, parents, and members of the community are encouraged to partner with and contribute to the school or school system. Their insights aren't always acted upon, and low levels of engagement are widely attributed to disinterest as opposed to lack of opportunity or support.	The school or school system actively seeks insights and ideas from a range of learning partners, and structures are in place to capture them in real time. There's an understanding of the need to differentiate engagement approaches for different learning partners, but harder-to-reach partners remain unengaged.	The majority of learning partners feel supported to engage in the education process, and their ideas are clearly reflected in the makeup of the school or wider system. Engagement approaches that work are shared and expanded, and there's a strong emphasis on reaching additional partners.	The school or school system has established an environment that's welcoming and characterized by continuous engagement that directly deepens learners' outcomes. Partners know that they and their ideas are valued, and innovative engagement strategies are used to meet all learners' and other learning partners' needs.
Providing opportunities for technology-enhanced, connected learning anytime and anywhere	Digital and other technologies are either not incorporated in learning processes or not incorporated in a meaningful way to connect learning partners and otherwise deepen learners' outcomes. There's a sharp distinction between "school" and "world" that designates school as <i>the</i> place and time for (largely isolated) learning.	It's widely understood that learning has to happen both during and outside of school walls and hours, but technology is widely unavailable to learners outside those confines. When they're used, the emphasis remains on the technologies themselves as opposed to how they can directly develop deeper learning outcomes.	There's a shared understanding among learning partners regarding the opportunities for connection and anytime learning supported by digital technologies. Connections are widely formed and led by teachers, and learners aren't often supported to seek or facilitate meaningful partnerships based on their own interests.	Technology is beginning to connect learners with partners within and outside their school or school system, and learners are supported to form connections based on their interests and needs. The focus is increasingly on how technology can be leveraged to enhance and deepen learning experiences and other processes.	Easy, anytime access to technology supports learners to foster and develop deeper learning outcomes anywhere and in partnership with others all over the world. Learners leverage digital technologies to connect in creative and contributive ways that directly develop their self-understanding, knowledge, and competencies.

Source: The Learner First, 2018

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