

PIC Minutes - Region 1 October 8, 2014

I. Welcome

Michelle Sandrock, Parent Engagement Program Manager, opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance, introducing the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Parent Engagement team and thanking Cherokee County for hosting the meeting. She briefly went over announcements. She informed the PICs about an upcoming 8-week live webinar series that will be taking place in January of 2015. She also informed them of the opportunity to get one-on-one feedback on their compliance documents at the conclusion of the meeting.

She then informed the PICs of the 'I CAN Play A Role' Campaign that the GaDOE will be launching for Parent Engagement Month, and explained to them that the GaDOE will be creating pledge cards. Each school must do their own campaign in an effort to reach 50,000 pledges statewide. She urged the PICs to think about the impact the campaign would have if every parent signed one pledge. She advised them to start planning and thinking about what they will do in November, and request an "I CAN Play Role" communications packet.

She informed the PICs of the Georgia Family-Friendly School Partnership Awards application deadline on 11/13/14. She encouraged PICs to apply but advised them to first go online and go through the initiatives to prepare, because she has found that schools that go through the process first typically become finalists.

Michelle briefly discussed the Parent Engagement Program's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, before discussing the [Georgia PIC Network Blog](#). She informed the PICs of the many resources that are currently available on the Blog as well as ones that will be available in the near future including an Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) educational resource library and a larger video library. She also encouraged the PICs to participate in PIC spotlight, because the GaDOE Parent Engagement team really wants to highlight the great work that the PICs are doing.

Michelle Sandrock continued by asking Nate Schult to share some additional information with the group about the Local Learning Communities initiative.

II. LLC Chair Presentation

Nate Schult welcomed everyone and shared that it is always a pleasure seeing everyone at the PIC meetings as these meetings are one of the only opportunities for everyone to network and share ideas. Last year, the GaDOE developed an opportunity for PICs to continue the conversation outside of these meetings through the Local Learning Communities (LLCs). He explained that LLCs are smaller, sub-regions of the PIC Network that are led by a school or district PIC who works in that region. These small regions allow PICs who work in closer proximity to communicate with colleagues who work with similar populations and face similar challenges. Another advantage of this group is that it allows school and district PICs the opportunity to meet and talk independently without the GaDOE at the table. During the meeting this morning, participants had a chance to meet the chairs for the LLCs that comprise Region 1. With that, Nate introduced Karen Alywin, Title I Parent Involvement Specialist for Paulding County Schools.

Karen introduced herself and explained that the Region 1 East & West LLC is actually led by Tina Black, but she was unable to attend the meeting this morning. She started her presentation by stating that the responsibility of ensuring that Title I Parental Involvement requirements are met at the district and school level is the assignment of personnel in a variety of positions:

- Title I Director
- Director of a number of Federal Programs, including Title I
- District level Parent Involvement Coordinator/Specialist
- School-based Title I Staff (Instructional Lead Teacher, Parent Involvement Coordinator)
- School Principal
- Other

As a result, she stated that you could feel that no one quite understands *how much* or even *what* we do. She then stated that the solution is to start interacting with colleagues and that is where LLC comes to the rescue. She shared that the goals of the Region 1 LLC are:

- Gather to share
 - Successes
 - Struggles
- Build a network of resources that can be accessed to as we work with families
- Build relationships that are supportive, and available when needed
- Strengthen our capacity to serve families effectively

She then shared the following upcoming opportunities:

- November LLC Meeting (location TBD)
- Communicate via email
 - sharing successes
 - sharing resources
 - requesting ideas
 - sharing of upcoming events

Nate thanked Karen and then informed the PICs that they can find and join their LLC on the [Join Your LLC](#) page of the Georgia PIC Network Blog. Michelle then moved into the host's presentation and she brought Teresa Henry, the District Title I Parent involvement Coordinator for Cherokee County up to introduce her team.

III. Learning from Each Other: Cherokee County Schools PIC Presentation

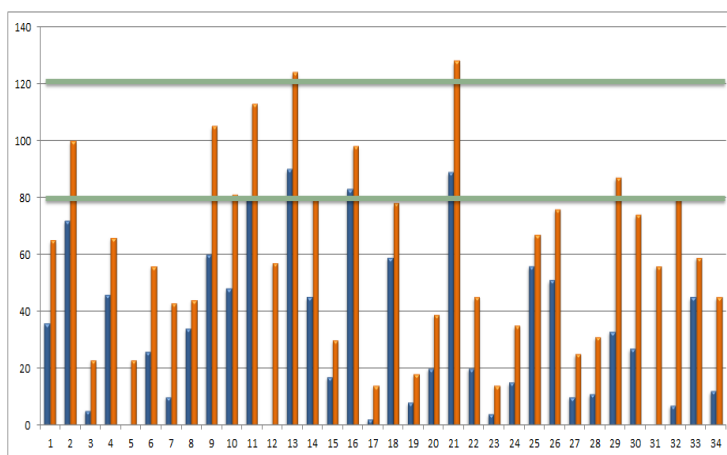
Teresa greeted the group and introduced her Cherokee County parent engagement team, which she refers to as Parent Involvement Facilitators. She shared a little about Cherokee County, and brings up Deana Beardan, Parent Facilitator for Canton Elementary, to share information about an initiative called Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT).

Deana stated that Canton was first introduced to APTT at the 2014 Family Engagement Conference. She explained that APTT is a family engagement model that replaces the usual parent teacher meeting. The model is composed of three very intentional 75-minute meetings and one individual meeting. Canton is one of ten schools in Georgia implementing APTT; and they are implementing at the kindergarten, first, and second grade levels. She shares the six essential elements of APTT:

1. Develop Meaningful Relationships
2. Focus on Grade-Level Learning Skills
3. Data-Driven Decision Making
4. Modeling Home Practice Activities
5. Parent Practice with Activities and Materials
6. Set Short-Term Learning Goals

She stated that they are focusing in on data-driven decision making. She proceeded to show a model graph that is used for the APTT meetings:

3rd Grade Reading Fluency Classroom Data



- Bottom horizontal line is the current benchmark
- Top line is the End of The Year benchmark
- Blue bar is where your child started at the beginning of the year
- Orange bar is where your child currently tested.
- The difference between the two bars shows how much progress your child has made.

Deana stated that because Canton has a language barrier, the graph is a very effective visual aid to convey to the parents where their child is. She also showed the group the folder that APTT uses and informed them that each child has a confidential number and the parent can see where their child is as it relates to the rest of the group. She showed activity examples of what they give parents in their APTT packets and stated that the parents leave knowing exactly what they need to do. Deana closed her presentation by sharing some successes Canton has experienced by implementing APTT, which are:

- Parent attendance for August showed a large increase; 72 percent attendance rate average for school (some classes showed 90 percent) in comparison to last year's 30 percent.
- More students turning in homework.

Next, Gloria Davila and Gwen Freeman, from Canton Elementary School and Hasty Elementary School, introduced themselves and discussed the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) started by United Way in their schools. Gloria stated that their schools are sister schools because they face many of the same challenges; such as large portion of parent populations are illiterate, language barriers, and high poverty. The goal of the FLI is to:

- Build the skill and capacity of the parent to take greater leadership roles in the systems serving their children.
- Strengthen their ability to advocate for their children.
- Engage in school and community.

The training is free; breakfast, lunch, transportation, and childcare is provided; and interpreters are available for ESL parents. They stated that there are 6 modules:

- Family support
- I am a leader
- I am a leader in my family
- I am a leader in my child's academic success
- I am a leader in my child's school
- I am a leader in my community

They shared that the overall goals of the FLI is to:

- Increase volunteerism in the classroom
- Increase parent participation
- Increase involvement in their child's academic success
- Create parent leaders to create positive change

Gwen takes over and stated that United Way asked them to identify ten parents who have leadership parents. She stated that in order to reach the community she picked a parent from each group: African-American, Hispanic, Caucasian, and special needs. She stated that some parents that were chosen only had a 1st or 2nd grade education, but they were the ones who benefitted the most. She was happy to share that FLI has had the following positive impacts on Hasty Elementary:

- 4 of 10 parents joined to serve on our PTA Board
- 3 of 10 parents serve as volunteers in the ESOL classroom working in Centers
- 10 of 10 became leaders and active volunteers
- Help with transportation for Parent Nights
- Reached out to the community to get help and direction to build a Love Our Neighbor Care Closet
- Have teamed up to work and learn together to ensure their children are meeting state standards and to support our school

She also shared that FLI has had the following positive impacts on Canton Elementary:

- Tripled PTA Board membership and representation
- Increased volunteerism and visibility
- Parent advocates and recruiters
- Fundamental in the implementation of the APTT Program

Gwen then shared a story of having witnessed a Caucasian, an African-American, and a Hispanic parent were sitting in a van conversing and it was because they met in this parent group. Gloria concluded the presentation by sharing that a parent, who was very shy when she started FLI, is now the PTA Co-President for this year and an interpreter for Canton. She stated that FLI has given these parents voice and empowered them. Before turning the podium back to Teresa Henry, Gwen informed the group that they can receive more information on FLI by contacting Laura Miller, Director of Partners Advancing Childhood Education for United Way of Greater Atlanta at lmiller@uwma.org.


Teresa echoed Gloria and Gwen's sentiments about FLI and stated that it is a great way to build parent leaders in a district. Teresa then turned the floor over to Nora Vizuite to speak about training teachers with Edmodo. Nora started her presentation by stating that teachers are busy and they don't want to spend anymore time at work, but she stated that Edmodo can help them alleviate that and encourages the PICs to create an Edmodo. She explained that Edmodo is similar to Facebook but with more features. She stated that with Edmodo you are able to set up a small group, view presentations, and teachers are able to write comments. In concluding her presentation she showed a few screen shots to showcase Edmodo's capabilities:

Parent Engagement


[Quiz Overview](#) [All Submissions](#)

Assigned to: [Staff](#), [Staff Training](#)


High Scores




Emily Ingram
3/3




Lauren Abrams
3/3




Ashley Murphy
3/3



Shannon Vickers
3/3




Claire Burns
3/3




Christa Baggett
3/3

Question Breakdown


3 questions | 1:00:00



Question #1
Do you have...
Multiple Choice




Question #2
Did you learn...
Multiple Choice




Question #3
Are you plan...
Multiple Choice

Please review the Power Point Training on The Basics of Parent Engagement. You will need to complete the quiz that will follow the assignment. Thank you! submission by Mrs. Garland




I am thrilled that our school is working hard to ensure that are parents are involved in their child's learning. The benefits are a win-win for all involved...child, family, school, and community!

Please review the Power Point Training on The Basics of Parent Engagement. You will need to complete the quiz that will follow the assignment. Thank you! submission by Mrs. Barber



Great PowerPoint!

Please review the Power Point Training on The Basics of Parent Engagement. You will need to complete the quiz that will follow the assignment. Thank you! submission by Mrs. Garmon



Lots of useful information. Will be great for starting off the next school year on a positive note with parents.



Me to [Staff Training](#)

Please review the Power Point Training on The Basics of Parent Engagement. You will need to complete the quiz that will follow the assignment. Thank you!

Turned in (13)

Due Apr 11, 2014

Power Point Training on The Basics of Parent Engagement



the_basics_of_parent_engagement_trainings5.pptx
PPTX File

Reply

Mar 24, 2014



Smerker to [Staff Training](#)

I joined!!!

React · Reply (1) · Share

Mar 6, 2014



Ms. Vickers · Mar 24, 2014

Parental Involvement really is the key to success. Good communication is key. I liked the V.I.P. badge which stands for Very Important Parent.

Teresa Henry continued the presentation by stating that she requires three staff trainings per year. She shared that one thing she did this year was provide a district training at each school to teach the purpose and designation of Title 1. She shared the following information about the district training:

1. Parent Revision Meeting to revise Parent Involvement Policy, Compact, School Improvement Plan/Schoolwide Plan, CLIP
2. Staff Revision Meeting to revise Parent Involvement Policy, Compact, School Improvement Plan/Schoolwide Plan, CLIP.
3. Distribute Parent Involvement Policy in multiple ways.
4. Evidence of school compact revised, signed, and dated.

5. Convene an Annual Title I Meeting to inform parents of Title I and their rights to be involved.
6. Conduct an annual evaluation of the parent involvement program (spring survey).
7. Evidence that the school has carried out the six requirement to build parents' capacity:
 - a. Assist parents in understanding the state's academic content standards, state assessments and how to monitor their child's progress (Curriculum Night)
 - b. Provide materials and training on how to improved their child's achievement through literacy and using technology to foster parent involvement
 - c. Educate teachers and staff in the value of parent involvement; how to reach out and communicate with parents as equal partners, and build ties between parent and school (I have required 3 trainings or contact via email.)
 - d. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs with preschool and middle school transition (ESOL teacher meetings with parents could also be documented in this folder.)
 - e. Parent notification and communication in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language parents can understand.
 - f. Provide *reasonable* support for parent involvement activities as parents may request
8. Inform parents about the parent resource center, where applicable.

Teresa then introduced Elaine Herrmann from Oak Grove Elementary School Fine Arts Academy to talk about collaborating with the community. Many of Oak Grove's parents were having trouble with transportation so the school decided to go to them. Elaine stated that one third of Oak Grove's student population live in a particular mobile home community called Hidden Falls. Oak Grove utilized this and decided to use Hidden Fall's clubhouse for parent communities, summer reading clubs, etc. The school reached out to Hidden Fall's owner and orchestrated sending out flyers and monthly newsletters (in English and Spanish) with the bill statement.

Teresa then took a moment to show the group the certificate that she gives to teachers that go above and beyond and emphasized the importance of rewarding great work.



Teresa turned the floor over to Ginger Blanton, Academic Coach from R.M. Moore Elementary, to talk about her initiative “Pie with Parents”. Ginger introduced herself and began her presentation by stating that Moore Elementary has a high level of poverty with 50% percent free or reduced lunch. She shared that she attended this school as a child and she understands the community and the effect that poverty can have. After brainstorming ways to get parents in the school, she decided to host an event with food. Because Thanksgiving was approaching, she sent home an invitation to parents encouraging them to get to know her over a slice of pie. She stated that she used the 15 topics from the ‘Play A Role’ brochure to help structure the meeting. She happily shared that 14 parents attended that first “Pie with Parents” and there was subsequently an increase in participation in parent workshops following the success of “Pie with Parents.”

Upon the conclusion of Ginger’s presentation, Doris Cardenes introduced herself as the Parent Involvement Facilitator from Teasley Middle School. She begins her presentation with a short video about a book called “Enrique’s Journey” which sums up the message that it is not that parents do not want to participate; rather, it is that they don’t know how. To combat this, she sends home a first day pack with students, which includes the compact and volunteer opportunities and events. To ensure that the parent has received the pack, the students are not assigned a locker until the compact is returned with their parent’s signature.

Following Doris’ presentation, Jessica Ruiz, Parent Involvement Facilitator from Woodstock Elementary School, introduced herself and stated her school has incorporated school tours as a best practice. As a result of parents having a choice of schools that their child can attend, Woodstock encourage parents to take a tour of the school. She stated that at Woodstock, they look at school tours as an opportunity to explain what Title I is and meet the parents one on one and communicate their needs. With school tours, Woodstock opens up their doors and encourages the parents to view the school as not just the student’s but also the parent’s as well. She proudly shared that Woodstock was a Family-Friendly School Partnership Award winner two years ago, and urged the group to start the process well before they plan to apply, because it takes some time to implement the practices effectively. She then shared the definitive list of Woodstock’s best practices:

- School Tours

- Family Friendly Committee
 - 2012-2013
 - Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Award Winner
 - 2013-2014
 - International Festival
 - 2014-2015
 - Kids Hope USA School-Church Partnership
 - Updating School Webpage

Lastly, Jessica then shared that they placed a checkbox on forms that enabled parents to opt out on receiving phone calls to volunteer. They also added a box where parents could choose what language they preferred to be spoken to. This enabled teachers to know how to best reach out to particular families and promoted more effective communication.

Jessica turned the floor over to her colleague, Bonny Keheley, Academic Coach at Woodstock, who shared an initiative called Camp Learnalotta. This camp was developed as part the RTI process with the goal for Woodstock to increase capacity college graduation. She stated that Camp Learnalotta is an in-house volunteer tutoring program that takes place during the school day. Bonny shared the following information about the camp:

- Award winning in-house volunteer tutoring program currently in its fifth year of operation
- Designed to assist K-5 students with 1:1 or small group instruction to remediate, maintain, or accelerate academic skills
- Recruitment involves coordinating with Jessica Ruiz, our Parent Involvement Facilitator, for making connections with our parents for volunteering opportunities and
- Reaching out to the community and local churches for additional volunteers
- Creating a space and coordinating services between teachers and volunteers using research-based materials and activities in one location
- Communicating strengths and weaknesses as well as concerns or accolades to all stakeholders involved: students, teachers, parents, and volunteers

Teresa Henry thanked her team for their great work and briefly went over the compliance documentation that can be found in their folder:

- PIF School Checklist
- Monitoring Checklist
- Parent Survey

Michelle Sandrock thanked the Cherokee County team and dismissed the group for a ten-minute break.

IV. Break

V. Charting a Path Toward High-Impact Family Engagement

Michelle Sandrock laid out the objective for this section of the training as follows:

- Understand why family engagement matters

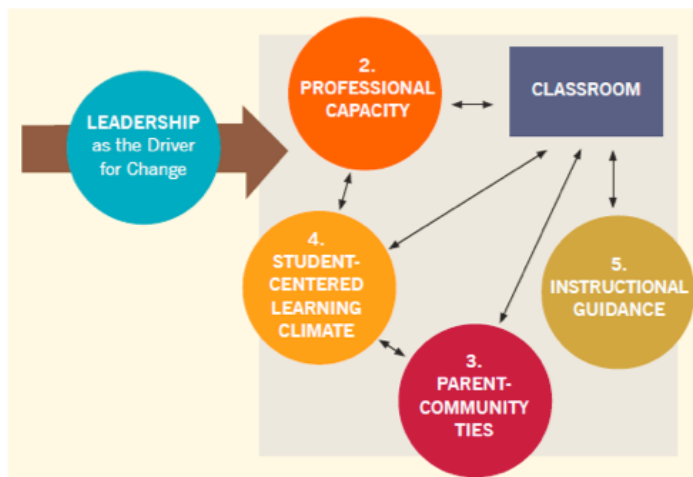
- Learn about the new US ED Framework for Family-School Partnerships
- Evaluate your current family engagement practices
- Discover high-impact strategies for family engagement
- Learn how to simplify Title I Parental Involvement compliance mandates while increasing effectiveness

She encouraged the PICs to look at the “Partners in Education” framework. She stated that it lays out the framework and is also an interesting read. Renowned family engagement guru, Dr. Karen Mapp, had a hand in this work and it is very user friendly and easy to read.

She stated that over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in their child’s education with indicators of increased student achievement in the form of:

- Student grades
- Students’ beliefs about the importance of education
- Achievement test scores
- Students’ efficacy for learning
- Students’ sense of personal competence
- Lower drop-out rates

A long-term study of Chicago schools found five essential supports for school improvement as illustrated by the following graphic:



The study found that in 90% of these schools, all five factors had to be present for school improvement. Michelle stated that this is the first study that followed schools for 15 years and showed what they did that made a difference and zeroed in on the five central supports. Furthermore, the study showed that parent-community ties and a student centered learning climate were the foundation for the other keys. Students who had a strong presence of parent-community ties were four times for likely to improve in reading and ten times more likely to improve in math.

How did they measure it?

- **Teachers' ties to community:** Understand student culture and local community, spend time in community, and use local resources.
- **Teacher outreach to parents:** Invite parents to observe in class, try to understand parents' concerns, and embrace parents as partners to engage them in the process of strengthening student learning.
- **Parent response:** Become involved in school activities, monitor student-learning goals, and respond to teacher concerns about schoolwork.

Michelle stated that the federal government put all the requirements in place but staff never had any training. She then asked how many former teachers had any training on how to work with families, to which no one raised their hand. As a result, we have a law but staff who aren't equipped and families that facing barriers. This causes a lack of collective capacity to implement and sustain home-school relationships. In an effort to address this, the U.S. Department of Education rolled out a new framework, which is shown below:



Michelle urged the PICs to utilize this framework as a compass to guide them toward family engagement. She stated that the first part, the challenge, is a lack of opportunity to build capacity in staff and parents.



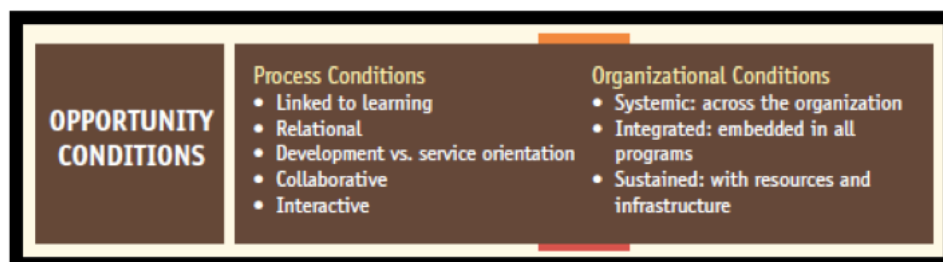
The second part, opportunity conditions, is made up of two subcategories: process conditions and organizational conditions.

The Process Conditions:

- Linked to learning
Connected to teaching and learning goals for students
- Relational
Building respectful and trusting relationships between home and school
- Developmental
Building intellectual, social and human capital of stakeholders
- Collective/Collaborative
Learning is conducted in group versus individual settings
- Interactive
Skill mastery requires coaching and practice

The Organizational Conditions:

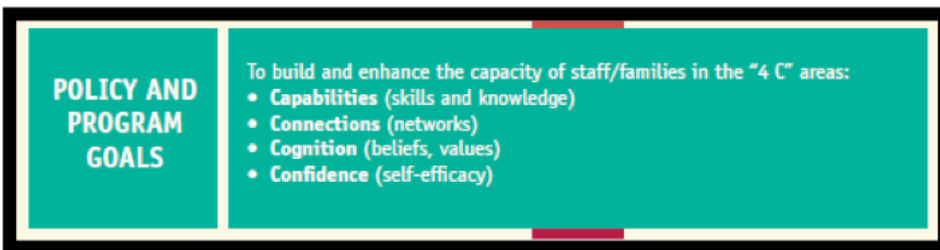
- Systemic
Core component of educational goals
- Integrated
Embedded into structures and processes
- Sustained
Operating with adequate resources and infrastructure support



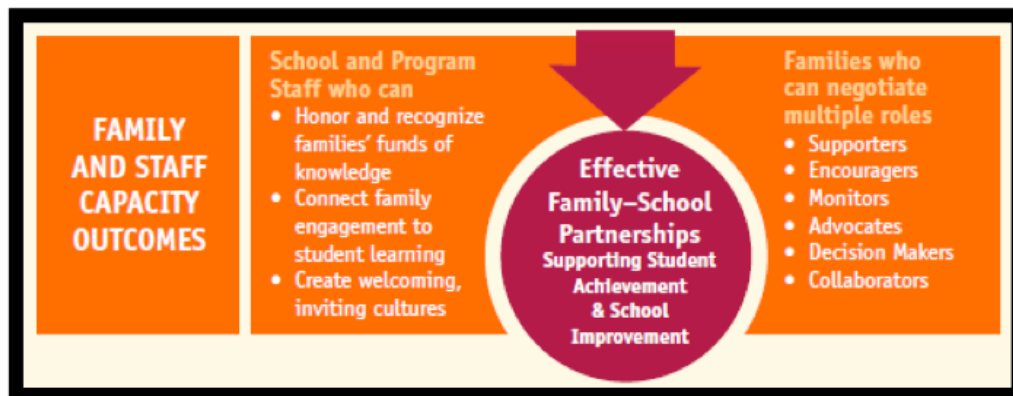
The third section, policy and program goals, refers to building capacity which is defined by the four C's:

- Capabilities

- Staff need to knowledgeable of what is available
- Parents needs access to how the school works
- Connections
 - Social capital. These networks should not just be parent to parent. You are looking at your sphere of influence. Does it draw meaningful connection?)
- Cognition
 - People must believe in it. You are changing mindsets.
- Confidence
 - Staff and families need a level of comfort to be able to work.



The fourth section, family and staff capacity outcomes state that if you're effective in building capacities you will build increase family engagement and student achievement.



Michelle then directed the PICs to the Link to Learning activity and asked them to think about what the difference is between family involvement and parent engagement. She then asked them to write down everything that they do at the school to involve families and then asked them to put a star next to the things that have to do with learning. Then she told them to look at what they have starred and then circle everything they invite parents to that is focused on grade level or subject level learning goals. She advised that their circled items are where their focus should be because it is best to focus energy on the events that have the highest impact. She then asked the group to draw an arrow next to every item in which school district staff were provided professional development opportunities specifically on that item to effectively build capacity within themselves to work with families.

She stated that parental involvement is everything we do to bring parents into the school. And family engagement is what parents take with them in the form of learning and skills to apply in the home with their child to achieve academic success.

Michelle advised the PICs to remember that High Impact Strategies are not simply random acts of kindness. High impact strategies must be ongoing throughout the year. If it is just a one time workshop, it is not a high impact strategy. She listed the high impact strategies as:

- ✓ Link to learning
- ✓ Build relationships
- ✓ Develop dual capacity

Michelle shared the definition of the new family engagement framework provided by US ED. She stated that the Georgia Department of Education will be using US ED's new Family Engagement framework as part of the discussion to guide the outcome-based monitoring process to help encourage effective family and staff partnerships. She continued by explaining that the GaDOE will be moving towards a results-based monitoring this year to measure the outcomes of what schools are doing. For example, looking at whether or not the funds being spent are actually making an impact. There will be an added interview element this year but the state will be not sharing the questions in advance. Those asked to participate in the interview will be the Title I Director, a district level PIC (or school principal) and a school level PIC (or someone at the school level responsible for parent engagement). Michelle explained that US ED's framework will be used to develop some of the questions to be asked during the monitoring interview. One advantage is this will allow the state an opportunity to provide more feedback and point out what the schools are doing well during the monitoring process. Additionally, schools and LEAs will only be monitored on seven indicators this year in order to reduce the burden of paperwork. However, it is important to note that districts and schools are still responsible for implementing the requirements under the law, but Michelle stated that they will only have to provide documentation for seven parental involvement indicators this year. She encouraged any districts who will be monitored this year to attend the upcoming LEA Cross Functional Monitoring trainings.

Michelle continued by asking the audience if their life ever feels like a checklist referring to the Title I parental involvement requirements. She asked how we can change the mindset so we are not only focused on checking the boxes but still remain in compliance. She stated that the framework compliments compliance by giving us a reason and compass for our compliance work. Begin with data, and talk with parents and teachers - then pick a high impact strategy. By doing this, most schools will find the majority of the boxes will be checked off – no more random family activities – just serious activities so parents know that when the school holds an event it is important and serious. Next, Michelle illustrated this point by sharing different high-impact strategies.

She asked attendees to review their lists and identify what strategy builds dual capacity. Look at the one thing that will produce the desired results and possibly cross off the other things that are not having any effect.

The first high-impact strategy that Michelle reviewed was Academic Parent-Teacher Teams, by playing a brief video featuring Stanton Elementary School in Washington, DC that implemented APTT with successful results. She shared that the APTT model repurposes traditional parent– teacher conferences with a focus on group learning and collaboration. Family members of all the children in a single class meet together with the teacher three times a year for 75 minutes, along with a single 30-minute individual parent–teacher conference. The APTT initiative provides a structure for parents to meet with teachers and

converse, build networks with other parents, and learn ways to support their child's academic skill development.

She continued by explaining that the GaDOE has partnered with WestED to bring the APPT Model to Georgia schools. Ten districts, one school in each district, participated in training last year to implement APTT this school year.

Michelle then explained why APTT is a high impact strategy:

- Building relationships
- Establishing trust
- Sharing knowledge and goals for child
- Explaining data
- Focusing on skills
- Developing a plan/Set goals
- Sharing progress
- Evaluating

She stated that APTT is a supplement to parent teacher conferences. There are 6 essential elements:

1. Develop Meaningful Relationships
2. Focus on Grade-Level Learning Skills
3. Data-Driven Decision Making
4. Modeling Home Practice Activities
5. Parent Practice with Activities and Materials
6. Set Short-Term Learning Goals

Student data from APTT provides a sense of urgency or a sense of pride in the parent. APTT's model is 'I do, we do, you do'. The teacher coaches the parent to set realistic goals for their child. As a result, the parents have ownership, and they leave feeling like partners. Michelle then informed the districts that GaDOE is still accepting 4 slots.

She then shared Boston Public Schools' experience with high impact strategies. She stated that their staff plays a leadership role in the school's family engagement. The teachers are also family engagement coaches because they found that when it was just a parent coordinator engaging parents, the staff saw it as just the coordinator's job and not theirs. Boston Public School focused on building school and district capacity by:

- Conducting needs assessment
- Explaining student skills and knowledge at each grade
- Equipping teachers with guidance and tools/training courses
- Integrating family engagement in school improvement plans
- Linking to curriculum materials
- Developing family engagement coaches
- Labeling as "essential" in district

Michelle then discussed Shiloh Middle School's Parent Observation days. Shiloh has eight days in a year that are designated parent observation days, where the parent can observe their child throughout the day. The staff was slightly apprehensive, but once the school focused on building staff capacity, the teachers began to love and value it because it helped them to build relationships with their parents and families. Parent Observation days are high impact strategies because:

- They invite families to follow their child's schedule eight days throughout the year
- Have parents observe how and what their child is being taught
- Train school staff on communication with parents and ways to help supplement student/parent learning
- Build trust and communication between school staff and parents
- Set expectation of parents as partners in student learning

Michelle then directed the group to the high impact strategy criteria sheet in their folder, separated them into small groups, and asked them to share the high impact strategies they do in their schools and/or districts. Then as a group they select which one they want to work on. After the activity, Michelle said that her hope was that they now think about high impact strategies in a different way. She urged them to limit their activities to always make them meaningful and purposeful, because when the school calls we want to parent to know that it is for something important.

VI. Working Lunch

During the working lunch, Nate Schult introduced Deana Bearden who shared how important it is for the PICs to talk to and encourage parent volunteers because she started as one. She then shared her story of how, with the encouragement of Teresa Henry, she transitioned from parent to a Parent Involvement Coordinator.

VII. Discover the Missing Piece: Educating Staff to Build Ties between Parents and Schools

Nate Schult facilitated this portion of the meeting. He informed the group that this afternoon would be an opportunity to talk about that missing piece in family engagement, which is educating staff. He stated that although parent engagement has increased over the past 25 years, it still remains a challenge for many schools, because it still falls to one person - the parent involvement coordinator, and that is not an effective way to increase engagement. Nate then introduces an icebreaker activity called 'What in the World?' The icebreaker had the following questions:

1. Why in the world are you here?
2. What in the work do you hope to get out of this session?
3. Where in the world have you been?
4. Where in the world do you want to go?

Nate stated that this icebreaker is an opportunity to help the presenter to see what the audience wants to know. He urged the PICs to not underestimate the value of an icebreaker, even if you think you know everyone, because they are helpful for learning opportunities.

He stated that to build capacity we must educate our staff, and not just in the schools but also in the districts. He stressed that not educating staff is a lost opportunity to increase parent engagement. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education identified this as a weakness in parent engagement. He urged the PICs to not just focus on this as this is your job, but to let their fellow staff know that it is everyone's responsibility.

Nate stated that the first thing that PICs must do is understand the reality. Educators have a lot of responsibilities. He urged the PICs to think outside the box, focus on pre and post planning, look at ways to help staff increase family engagement. Nate then asked the PICs to share what are barriers they have faced in providing professional learning. They said:

- Scheduling/time
- No incentive for parents/teachers
- Fear
- Too much responsibility
- Buy-in from leadership
- Resistance to change

Nate urged the group to get their staff to see parent engagement as something that will make their job easier. The first step is to get them to buy in and see the value in parent engagement. He then directed the group to take out the Changing Perspectives handout and in smalls group discuss it and brainstorm ideas to change staff perspectives.

Some counter-attacks to common staff excuses:

- We're equal partners
- Teaching is a gift be excited
- Families aren't going away
- Parent support leads to student achievement
- Are you making school an inviting place for parents?

Nate urged the PICs to share the benefits of parent engagement with their staff. When staff learn about family engagement, they:

- Address assumptions and perceptions
- Discuss barriers
- Discover strategies
- Practice behaviors
- Combine resources and efforts
- Stay informed
- Improve communication

He stressed the importance of making sure to not just have one event. If an event is systemic, ongoing, focused, and collaborative the professional learning has a greater chance of making a difference and making a difference. Professional learning doesn't have to be a meeting, it can learning groups, case

studies, mentoring programs, activities, videos, parent panels, etc. He urged the group to change the way they view professional learning and consider new ideas to provide it to their staff. He stated that to provide meaningful learning for educators PICs must:

- Provide support
 - *Give feedback and follow-up*
- Flip the learning
 - *Send information before meeting*
- Make an investment
 - *Alter the traditional paradigm*
- Utilize Resources
 - *Inspire all staff to design trainings*
- Develop New Skills
 - Practice makes perfect
- Build a Plan
 - *Move from schedule-based to outcome based*
- Increase Exposure
 - *Embed family engagement ideas and information in a wide range of ideas*
- Start from the Top
 - *Encourage administrators to participate*
- Make a Connection
 - *Link the staff training to school wide programs*

Nate then asked for four volunteers who are parents of high school or middle school aged children. He stated that these four parents will be an example of a parent panel. Nate asked the parents the following questions:

1. What do you do to help your child at home?
2. How have you reached out to teachers?
3. What obstacles or challenges have you experienced?
4. What is one thing your teacher has done that you appreciated?
5. What is one thing that you would like to tell a teacher?

Upon the conclusion of the parent panel, Nate stated that he hoped that helped the group to really see the parent perspective. He urged the group to utilize parent panels in their schools to help with changing staff perspective.

Nate then discussed how important communication is in professional learning. He stressed that it is not always about talking – but also listening. He also advised the PICs to make sure the school has the resources to ensure that staff can successfully communicate with parents. He then shared questions to consider:

- What message do you hope to convey?
- What do you want to happen?
- Who is my audience?

- What is my preferred method of communication? How is this different than the parent of my students?
- What approach will open and enhance communication?

He directed the group to take out the 'Family Engagement Teaching Cases' handout in their folder. He stated that this is a great tool they can use to address situations that happen in the building, but not point any fingers. Nate then showed them another resource from Head Start; an online world where they role-play different scenarios involving engaging parents and families. He then instructed the group to locate the 'What's Your Experience' handout and tally up how many boxes they checked from the left column and right column. The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate to your staff how parent engagement has shifted over the years. He stated that the left column describes more traditional activities and the right column describes more reciprocal ones.

Nate then discussed additional family engagement topics connected to school goals to consider:

- "Create a Family-Friendly School... and Classroom!"
- "Connect Family Engagement to Academic Success"
- "Host a Productive Parent-Teacher Conference"
- "Plan a Successful Student-Led Conference"
- "Improve Parent-Teacher Communication"
- "Build Family and Community Partnerships"
- "Host the Best Parent Workshop"
- "Develop Interactive Homework"
- "Improve Cultural Awareness"
- "Help Parents Ace the Test!"
- "Share Data with Parents"

Nate urged the PICs to utilize the PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships because it provides a lot of great ideas. He stated that these help teachers work with families more effectively. He also mentioned the plethora of resources on the GaDOE Parent Engagement website and urged the PICs to utilize them. He then gave the PICs ten take away tips for teachers, which are:

1. Practice the 4 Ps – Positive, Personalized, Proactive, Partnership
2. Contact three new, "less-engaged" parents each month
3. Ask parents for their suggestions – "*What can I do to help?*"
4. Include tips for parents in newsletters, websites, and homework
5. Greet parents at drop-off and pick-up
6. Thank parents for their contributions
7. Organize a parent telephone tree
8. Practice active listening - "*If I understand correctly, it sounds like*"
9. Provide and advertise flexible and convenient meeting times
10. Dedicate time to share family engagement strategies with peers
11. Send a welcome letter to parents and when new students arrive

He then asked for any last questions or comments, before bringing Michelle Sandrock up to facilitate the next segment of the meeting.

VIII. Speed Networking

Michelle stated that PICs expressed their desire for more networking opportunities, as a result a speed networking segment was added to the meeting. For the speed networking activity, the PICs were instructed to locate someone they did not know who works with Title I Parent Engagement at the same level as them (elementary, middle, high, or district). The group was then asked to discuss the answers to three different scenarios. The PICs at the district level were given the following scenarios:

1. While Title I schools actually implement many of the parental involvement programs, activities, and procedures mandated by federal law, it is ultimately the District's responsibility to ensure that these requirements are being met both at the school level and District level. This requires strong procedures and thoughtful organization. *Share with your partner some tips and strategies that you use to maintain proper documentation and provide proper technical assistance to ensure compliance for all Title I schools. How, as a District, do you ensure compliance and effectiveness of family engagement at each individual school level?*
2. The District oversees the final decision regarding how parental involvement funds are spent by Title I schools. *First, discuss with your partner how your district determines if the money spent is providing the desired effect for family engagement and its impact on student achievement. Secondly, share some examples of how Title I schools in your district use their parent involvement funds to improve the quality of family engagement and build parent capacity.*
3. When it comes to effectively engaging all families in their child's education, the District establishes the expectations and sets the tone for schools to follow. Often viewed as something nice to do when time allows, family engagement should become the expected way rather than the exceptional idea. *Talk with your partner about the District's role in building a universal approach to meaningful family engagement for schools to follow. How do you establish buy-in from your district colleagues and school administrators? How is family engagement embedded into district expectations?*

The PICs at the various school levels were given the following scenarios:

1. A certain percentage of parents will almost always participate and show up when called upon by the school. While there are other families who may need the information, but rarely participate in events/activities or communicate with the school. In order to make a difference, schools need to engage the families who are disengaged. *Share with your partner some methods and ideas your school has used to successfully reach those hard to reach families in order to build relationships, communicate and provide them with helpful resources. Does your definition of family engagement change when working with these families?*
2. Schools rely on a core group of parents each year to support and assist the school in various roles. These parent leaders, unfortunately, are only available for a few short years while their child attends the school. *Discuss with your partner how your school identifies, trains, and sustains*

parent leaders to ensure continuity and availability of this important group of parents. What does vertical alignment and transition look like with our parent leaders? Do we consider this with our parents in the same way that we address it with our students?

3. Engaging families in their child's education is sometimes viewed as the responsibility of a select person in the school rather than a collective commitment of all staff. Furthermore, not all educators feel that it is a valuable use of their time to contact, assist, and work with parents to help them support their child. *Talk with your partner about how you help change the mindset to get staff on board to view family engagement as an effective strategy to improve student academic achievement. How do you gather administrator and staff buy-in for this important work?*

Michelle encouraged the PICs to not just talk to their friends, but to branch out and talk to people they do not know, and urged them to keep in contact with new acquaintances.

IX. Closing

After this successful networking activity, Michelle kindly asked the group to fill out the evaluation forms located in their folders. She stated that the evaluations are especially useful to the GaDOE Parent Engagement team because feedback is taken into consideration when planning future meetings. Participants were also informed of the optional compliance segment designed to answer questions one on one with districts. All participants collected their certificate of attendance and the meeting was adjourned.