Elements of Professional Learning

- **Active Learning**
  Icebreakers
  Activities
  Skill Practicing
- **Curriculum**
  Resources
  Strategies
  Standards
- **Support**
  Goal Setting
  Feedback
  Evaluation

Georgia Department of Education
Parent Engagement Program

The Missing *Piece*

Meaningful Professional Learning to Improve Family Engagement

The research is clear that when schools and families support each other, students of all backgrounds and various abilities achieve academically at higher levels. However, school faculty and staff often report that they are unprepared to actively engage parents and receive little or no training in developing effective practices to work with families. Title I schools are required to build capacity in parents and the school by educating all staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and schools. As more evidence and research continues to point towards family engagement as an effective strategy for school improvement, teaching certification and evaluation systems are also incorporating professional standards for family engagement. Therefore, designing and providing ongoing and impactful opportunities for faculty and staff to learn and practice family engagement techniques is an essential element to incorporate into a school's parent engagement program.

Professional Learning Strategies

Singular events rarely achieve significant results. Effective professional learning opportunities can be achieved through different methods other than a faculty meeting.

- Training Video
- Small Learning Groups
- Peer Mentoring
- Parent Panel
- Role Playing
- Case Study
- Webinar
- Mock Parent Conference
- Book Study

Similar to successful family engagement strategies, meaningful professional learning opportunities should also be systemic, sustainable, and integrated.

- Connect to school programs and academic goals
- Ask staff and parents to design trainings and materials
- Encourage administrative participation and leadership support
- Focus on achieving outcomes rather than finding time
- Embed strategies and resources

Engaging Topics

- Creating Welcoming Environments
- Strengthening Communication Between the School and Parents
- Hosting a Productive Parent-Teacher Conference
- Developing Interactive Homework
- Sharing Data with Parents
- Improving Cultural Awareness
- Planning a Successful Student-Led Conference
- Preparing Families for Transition
- Planning Parent Meetings and Events
- Developing Family-Friendly Materials
- Connecting Family Engagement to Student Academic Achievement
- Developing Community Partnerships