

Eliminating Gaps

Eliminating gaps will require the collaboration of all members of a community, not just staff in a school building and students' families.



Family
Engagement
Coordinator

Eliminating gaps will require changes in how I think about and work in the following areas:

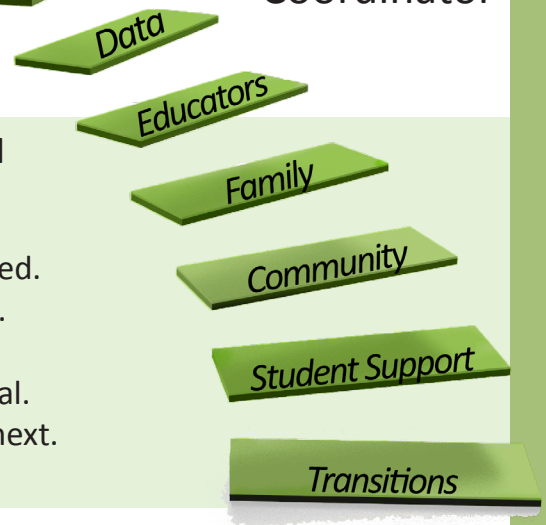
Data — what and how data is collected; who sees it and how it is used.

Educators — recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, and training.

Family/community — engagement in students' education.

Student support — academic, physical, social-emotional, and cultural.

Transitions — students' transitions from one academic level to the next.



As a family engagement coordinator, what I do makes a difference!

Data: I need to consider multiple data elements and use data differently.

- **Assessments:** How do I help parents and guardians get information about how their student has performed on the state and district assessments? How do I explain what the scores mean for a student—if he or she needs extra academic help or maybe a more challenging program?
- **Grades: How do parents and families access students' grades, attendance, and discipline records?** Do I encourage my families to regularly ask their students about their grades? Do my families know they should check their student's grades (at least once a week), and do they know where to call if they have a question about their student's grades or about missing work?
- **School:** Do my families know where to get general data about the school—scores, attendance, teacher information—and how to tell if the school is “doing well” or not?

Educators: I need to help my families recognize promising educators, support quality teachers and principals, and help connect educators to training, when appropriate.

- **Effective instruction:** Do my families know to ask their students regularly about how school is going? Do my families know how to determine if teachers are doing a good job and if their students are learning? Do my families know what to do if their studentren are not learning?
- **Talking to teachers:** Do my families know what to do if they are concerned about something that is happening or not happening in a classroom?) Do my families feel comfortable talking with teachers? If not, how do I partner with them to help them develop those skills?
- **Supporting teachers:** Do my families know how they can support teachers—sending thank-you notes, offering to translate documents, volunteering to read with students? Do my families have expertise they could share with their student's teacher(s)?

As a family support worker, what I do makes a difference!

Family/community: I need to engage families and communities.

- **Welcoming environment:** How can I ensure that my families have been personally invited to attend school events? How do I know my families feel welcome at their students' schools? How can I help the school be more inviting to families and community members?
- **Understanding expectations:** How do I help families understand the school's expectations of their students in academics and behavior? How do I support the family to resolve student to student conflict and student to adult conflict, especially when families may lack trust or feel unsafe with educators?
- **Supporting students:** How do I help my families develop the skills they need to engage their students in conversations about school and homework? How do I help families who are unable to speak the language and don't know how to support their students? What can families do who are unable to come to the school building for work or other reasons to support students?

Student support: I need to make sure students have the support they need to be successful.

- **Academic:** Do my families know who to talk to or where to go to get help for their student when s/he is having a problem with school work? Do they have access to tutoring support for their student?
- **Physical:** How do I support families who need help with housing, food, clothing, school supplies, or mental/physical healthcare?
- **Mentors:** How do I help my families find mentors or role models for their students?

Transitions: I help students make seamless transitions from one academic level to the next.

- **Critical events:** How do I help my families decide which events are critical to attend to help their students move smoothly from one level to the next? How do I ensure support for students who do not have a parent/guardian who can attend these events?
How can I help my families communicate with educators about what has worked or not worked for their students in the past?
- **Summer opportunities:** How can I partner with the school and families to find appropriate activities for students to participate in during the summer? Do my families know how to support their students during other breaks or on weekends, especially if they are behind academically or do not speak Academic English as a first language?
- **Inner preparedness:** How am I helping parents prepare students to become more responsible, to take initiative and persevere in solving problems, and to care about and work cooperatively with others?



For more information about addressing opportunity gaps:

www.yourlearningcenter.org
360-725-6503

Washington State Report Card:
www.k12.wa.us