

Better Together!

Enhancing Success Through Empowered Family and School Collaboration

APEC PYP #6

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**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Agenda

Relationship Building

Shared Responsibility & Advocacy



Fundamentally, your success in engaging every family will come down to what you think about families, every family, and their value as partners to support student learning.

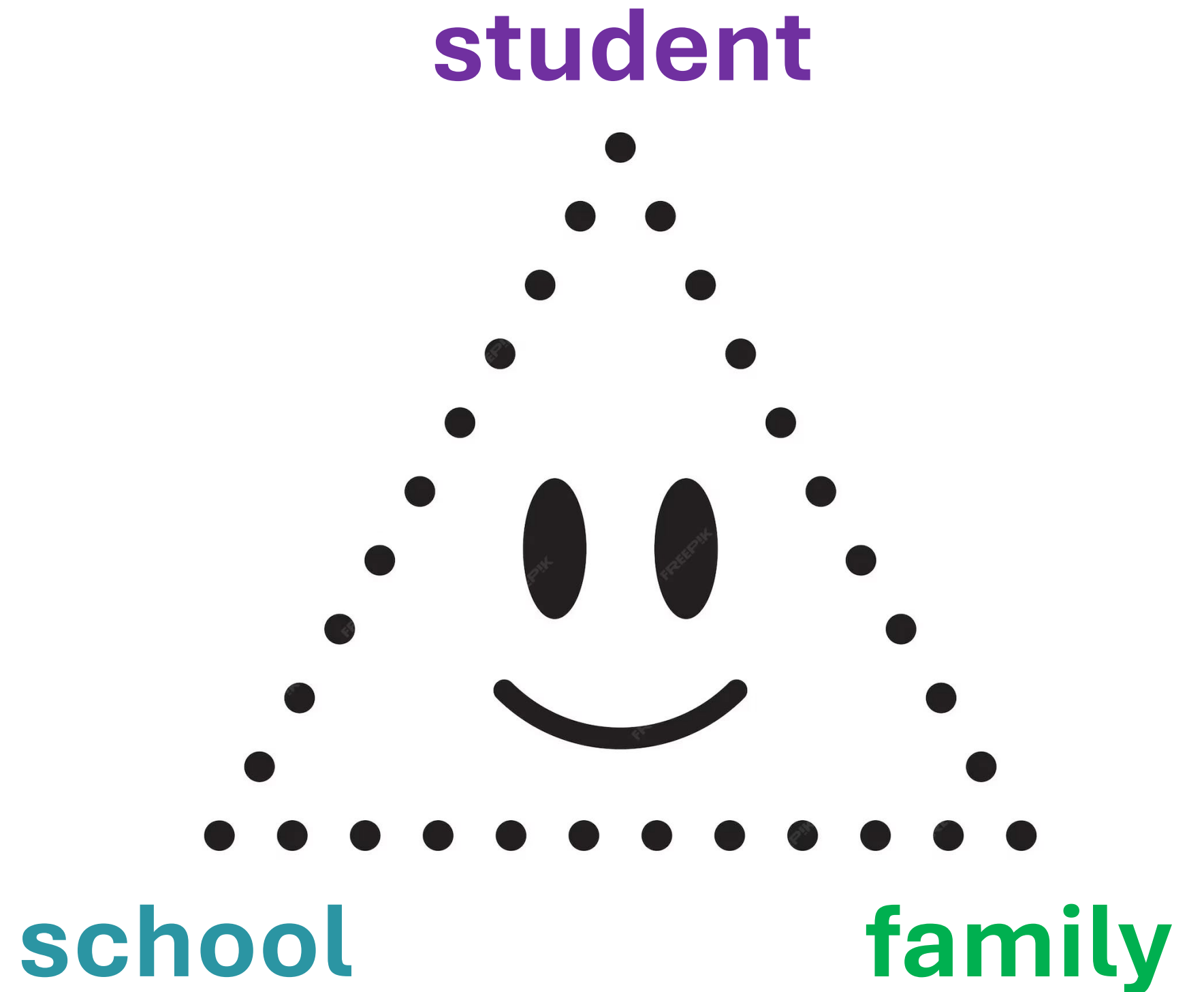
-Dr. Steven Constantino
Engage Every Family



Equity

Inclusion

Sense of
Belonging



Does This Sound Familiar?

“Families just don’t attend! We can’t get them to come to any of our events!”



“We communicate information through numerous channels, yet families still claim they were unaware of our events!”



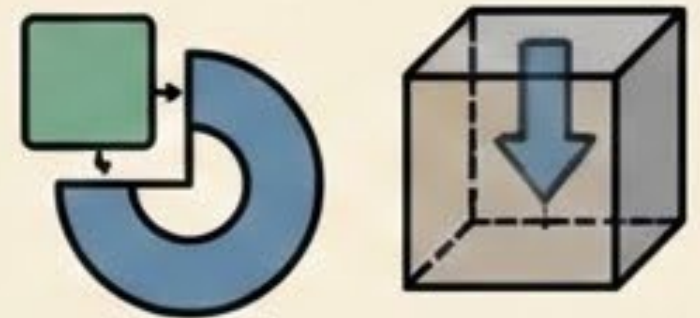
“We struggle to get families to assist with homework or participate in parent/teacher conferences!”



What Connects Them All?

Doing School To Families Instead of *With* Them

- We are not co-creating.
- We are blaming families.
- We expect families to conform to our systems and structures.



How frequently do we engage in shaming and blaming families simply for being who they are?



How is a mother received when she brings her chronically absent child in tardy?



Is she:



Reminded of the start time and reprimanded for the tardiness?



Is she:



Treated with grace and compassion, and affirmed for getting her child to school?

How do you gather information about the unique identities of your families, and how does this data inform decisions and practices within your school?



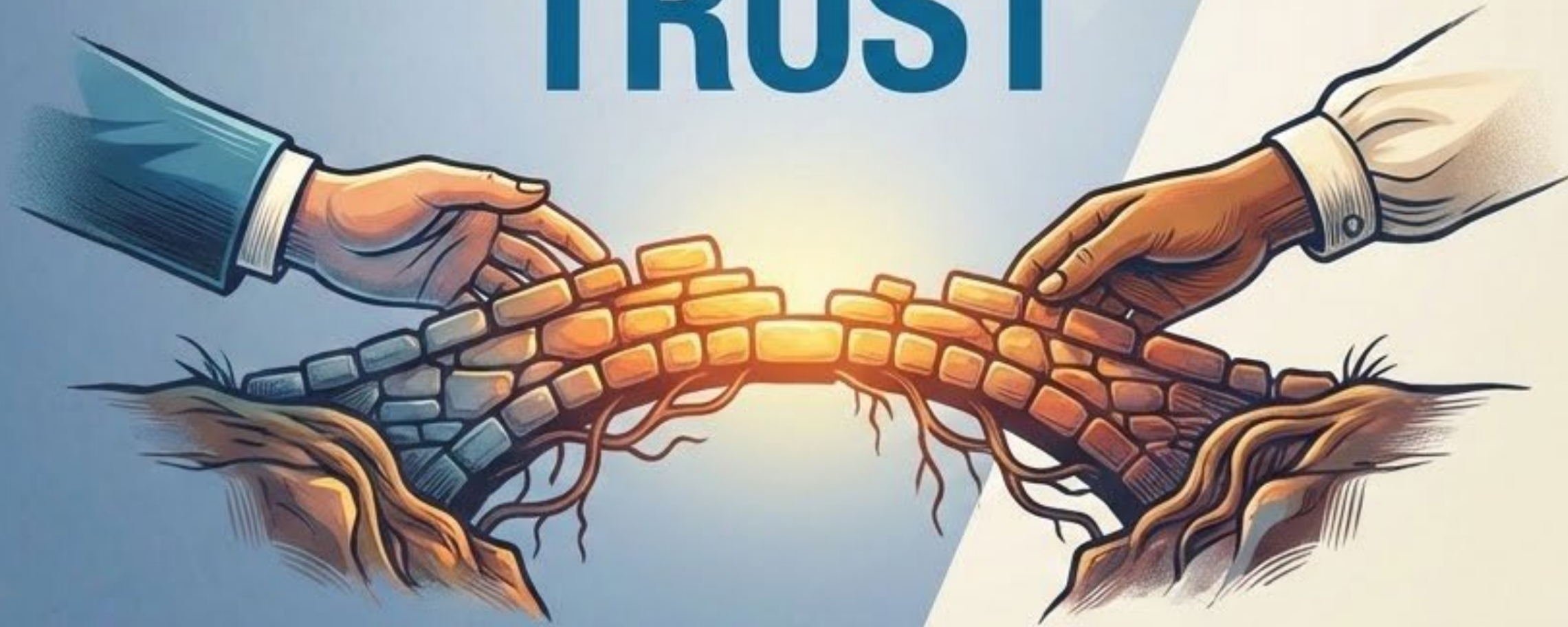
Building Relationships



The foundation of relationships extends beyond a simple smile or welcoming phone call.



TRUST



Consider how your assumptions are affecting your relationships with them.



Remember that you may not be starting from a neutral place; in some cases, you might be starting with a deficit of trust.



Trust issues with families might not be personal.

Welcoming Environment



A WARM AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

The first impression is always the last impression! Are our schools really welcoming our families and saying "C'mon in! This is YOUR school as well!"



Inclusive Environment



Inclusive Environment

Are we making sure that we are including “ALL KINDS” in our school environments?



Sense of Belonging

Great Habits Make Great Leaders



- Positive routines lead to success
- Discipline builds character
- Consistency is key
- Start young, lead forever



Sense of Belonging



The Importance of Representation

Is your building representative of all your students and their families?



Representation Matters



What actions does your school take to say:



You are safe here



You belong here



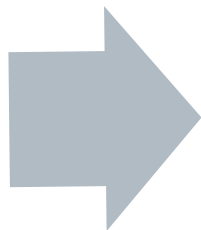
We see you and
you see yourself

How are you intentionally ensuring that all families feel like genuine partners in your school?

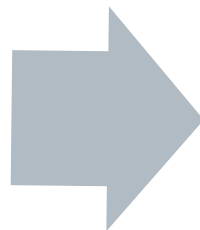


How do you welcome new students/families?

New Student Plan



New student/families ambassadors



Teacher preparation packets



New Student Plan Checklist
Steps for the Ambassador

Student Name _____ Student Phone#: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Assigned Teacher: _____

Transportation: _____

Lunch Seat# _____

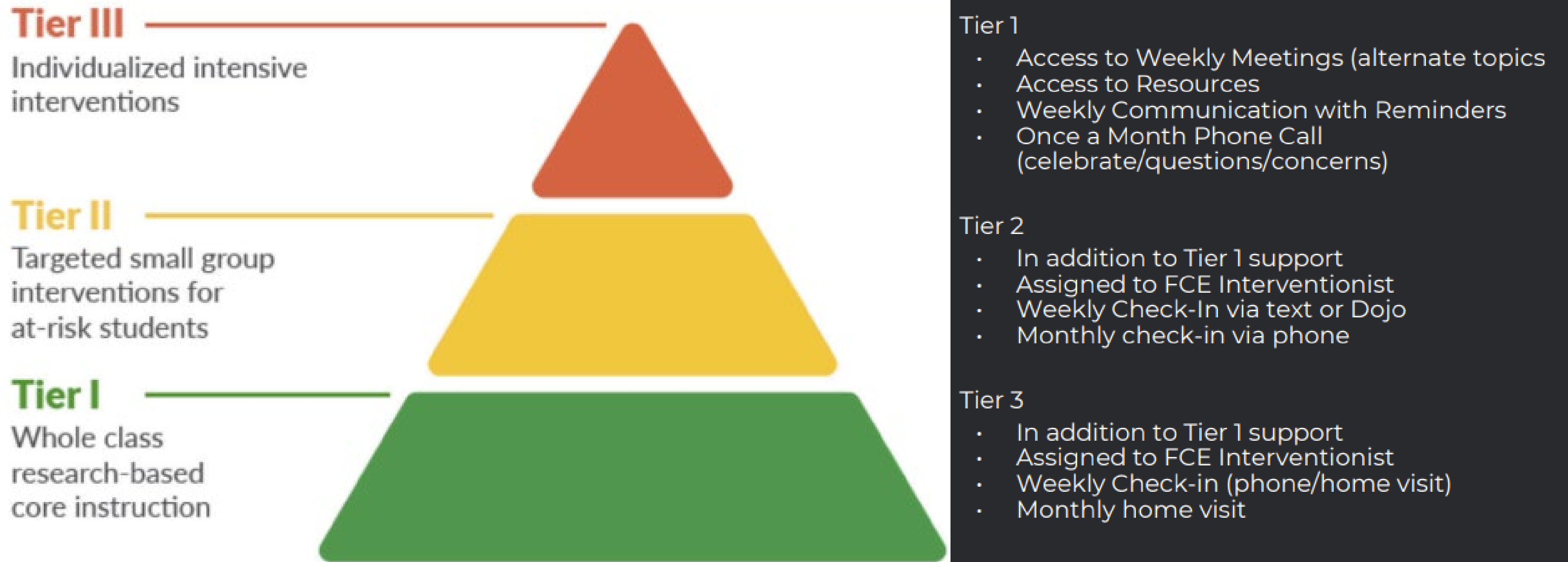
☐	Ambassador greets and welcomes students and family to Kenwood. Escorts to the Community room.
☐	Verifies language and obtains interpreter if needed.
☐	Student provided with: ☐ Kenwood lanyard ☐ supply bag ☐ memento ☐ Chromebook
☐	Photo of the student and/or the family in front of our Welcome to Kenwood board. (Photo can later be posted on Class Dojo and/or a Welcome New Student bulletin board)
☐	Ambassador escorts the student (and family) to the classroom where he is greeted by the teacher.
☐	Family meets with the ambassador to confirm transportation home, emergency contact, and conducts a family interview. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uUPMdrVow8NvcbR0XIF2wD-xR0ZTR03_UdF-sMaYI/edit?usp=sharing Note: If a family is unable to stay due to time commitment, the ambassador schedules a Google Meet to conduct the interview, as well as connecting them with Dojo, Parent Place, Portal, etc.
☐	If family has time, ambassadors connect them with Class Dojo, Parent Place and Parent Portal. Informs family of Wednesday diagnostic testing. Note: If ESL, family/student may also be connected with ESL staff if available.
☐	Family is gifted with a "Home of a Kenwood Kid" yard sign or door hanger
☐	Ambassador ensures cafeteria is informed, obtains a lunch number, and assigns a seat # for student
☐	Prior to dismissal, the ambassador confirms transportation home with the teacher and ensures a student buddy will accompany the new student to the bus or car rider room.
☐	The ambassador checks in with family that evening, and again weekly for the first month.
☐	Note: If student is in grades 3-5, Ambassador assists student in choosing a Friday club



Family Support Groups



MTSS for Families



Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Families

Tier I: Universal Support

Acclimation of new families to the school environment based upon research-based family engagement practices.

- Access to Weekly Meetings (alternating topics)
- Access to Resources
- Weekly Communication with Reminders
- Monthly Phone Call (to celebrate, address questions, or discuss concerns)



Tier II: Targeted Support

Targeted small group family engagement interventions for at-risk families.

- Includes all Tier I support
- Assigned to a FACE Facilitator
- Weekly Check-In (via text or school app)
- Monthly Check-in (via phone)



Tier III: Intensive Support

Individualized intensive family engagement interventions.

- Includes all Tier 1 support
- Assigned to a FACE Facilitator
- Weekly Check-in (phone call or home visit)
- Monthly Home Visit



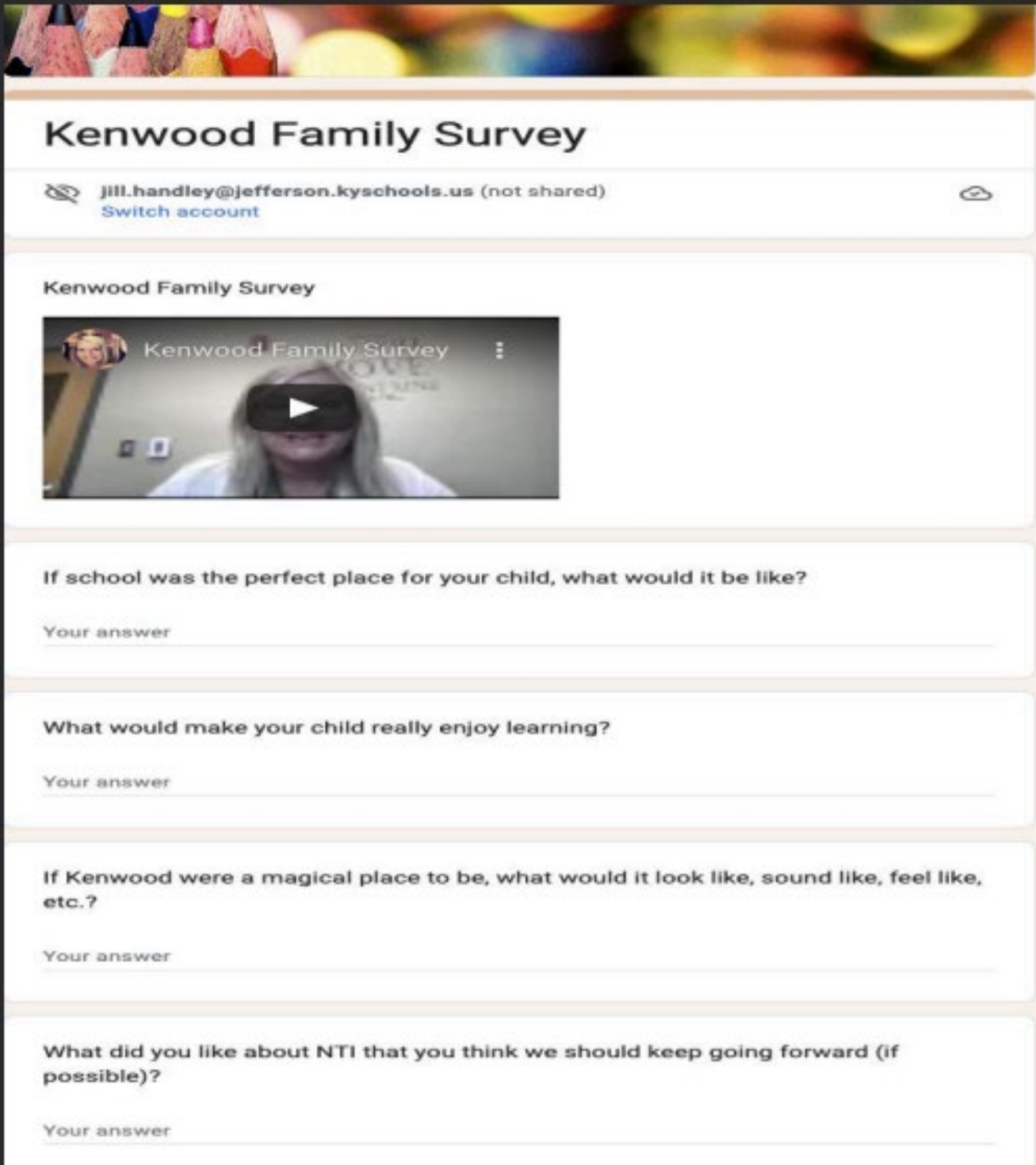


Shared Responsibility and Advocacy



School TO or WITH families?

- ❖ Are you engaging families on the front end of decision making?
- ❖ Is your school ready for families to be advocates and give feedback?
- ❖ Don't ask if you aren't ready to act.
- ❖ Analyze WHO is responding? Are you engaging ALL voices?



The screenshot shows a Google Forms interface for a survey titled "Kenwood Family Survey". At the top, there is a header with a colorful background of pencils and the title "Kenwood Family Survey". Below the title, the user's email "jill.handley@jefferson.kyschools.us (not shared)" is displayed with a "Switch account" link. The main content area features a video thumbnail titled "Kenwood Family Survey" showing a woman speaking. Below the video, there are four open-ended questions, each followed by a "Your answer" text input field:

- Question 1: "If school was the perfect place for your child, what would it be like?"
- Question 2: "What would make your child really enjoy learning?"
- Question 3: "If Kenwood were a magical place to be, what would it look like, sound like, feel like, etc.?"
- Question 4: "What did you like about NTI that you think we should keep going forward (if possible)?"

Effective Family Engagement in Decision-Making



1. Involve in Initial Decisions

How effectively are you involving families in initial decision-making processes?



2. Prepare for Advocacy & Feedback

Is your school prepared for families to become advocates and provide constructive feedback?



3. Commit to Action

Only solicit input if you are committed to taking action based on the responses.



4. Analyze for Equity

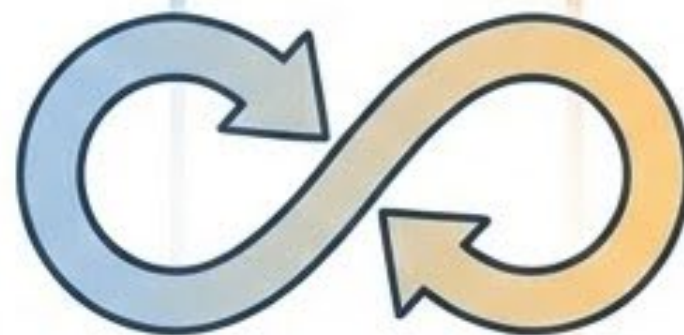
Critically analyze the demographics of those responding. Are all voices being engaged?

VALUE



**The school serves as
the CONTENT EXPERT.**

Focusing on academic knowledge
and curriculum.



**The family is the
STUDENT EXPERT.**

Focusing on the child's unique
needs, history, and home life.

Asset Based



How do you identify the strengths (assets) of your families and communicate that these strengths are valued and utilized within your school?

Honoring Funds

How will you use the information you've learned?



-  Inform culturally responsive lessons.
-  Utilize the expertise of families as teaching partners.
-  Honor and celebrate different cultures.

Co-Creating with Families



Create a welcome video in multiple languages.



Establish a family ambassador group; train family members to give school tours.



Brainstorm with family leaders on strategies to recruit and mentor more families.



Do your parent/guardian/caregiver committees accurately reflect your student population?



Stop expecting families to conform to traditional family engagement systems and structures.

Building Trust with New Families



Prioritize building trust when first engaging new families.



Initial efforts should not always be directly tied to academics; focus on forming a relationship.



Trusting relationships are the essential foundation before connecting to learning outcomes.



Avoiding early academic pressure prevents overwhelming families and discourages participation.



Trusting relationships are the essential foundation before connecting to learning outcomes.

Ways to address the “whole” family

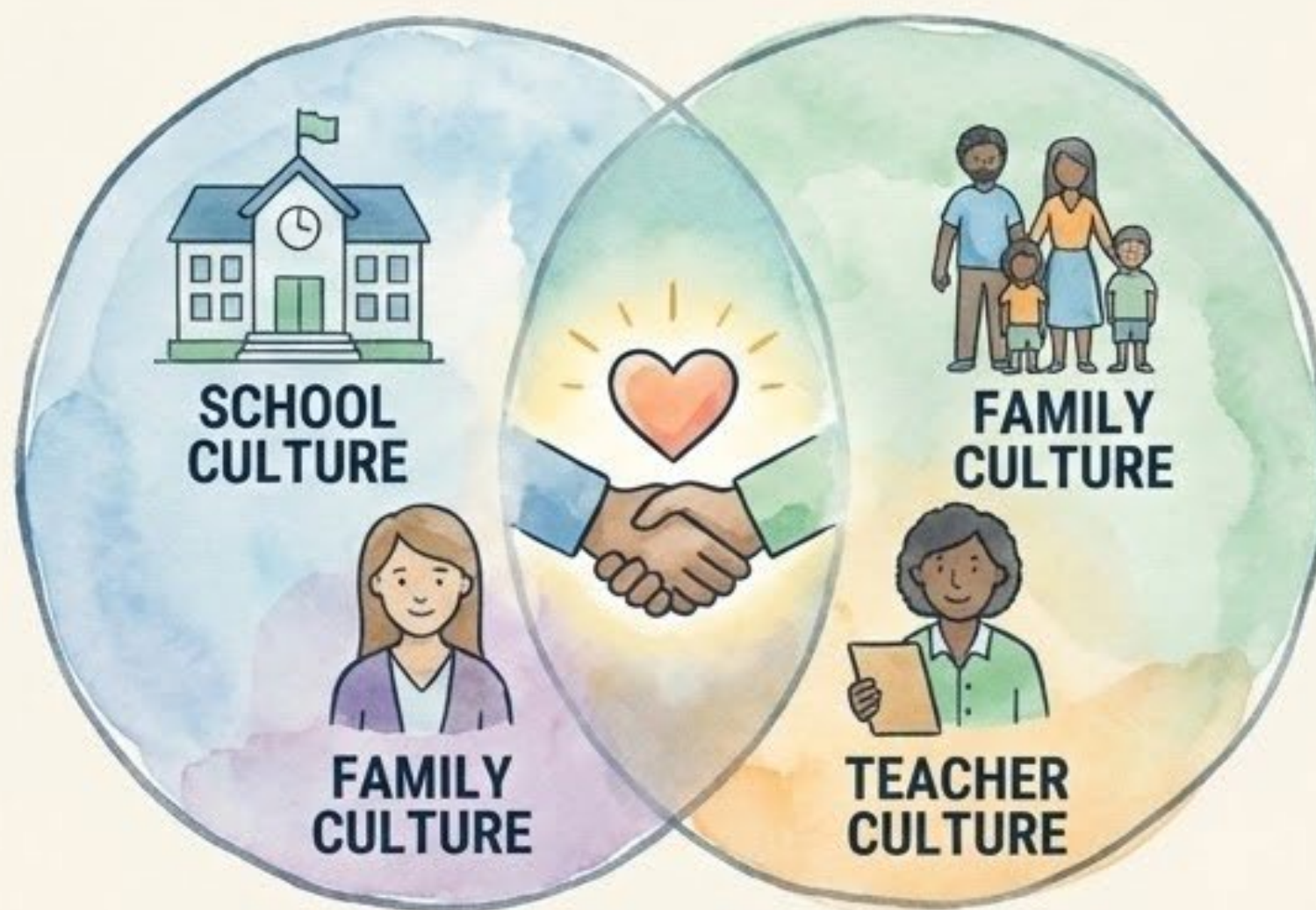


School, Family, and Teacher Culture

To increase the opportunities for the three cultures to overlap, consider the following:



How can you create opportunities for these cultures overlap?



What steps will you take between now and next year?



What are your short-term and long-term goals?

Reflect & Apply

To better honor student and family identities, which system will you modify?



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