

# Preparing Educational Leaders to Partner with Diverse Families

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# Welcome

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- Goal of the Presentation:
  - To present the need for school leaders to engage culturally and linguistically diverse families in schools
  - To share an assessment project from UTB that may serve as a tool for preparing aspiring school leaders to cultivate authentic family-school partnerships

# Under Prepared School Leaders

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- 89% of school leaders – colleges, schools and departments of education agree it is very important to prepare principals to work with all families.
- Only 19% agreed that graduates received adequate preparation.
  - (Epstein and Sanders 2008)

# Instruction and Experiences

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- The instruction and experiences received by school leaders often emphasize **traditional family involvement.**
  - Transmit the idea that it is the school's job to "contain, train or manage parents in line with the school agenda."

(Auerbach 2010, p. 728)

# Enrollment Trends

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- ❑ The five states with the fastest percentage growth rates are North Carolina, Nevada, Georgia, Arkansas and Nebraska.
- ❑ According to 2005-2006 data, there are 16 million children with at least one immigrant parent, this is twice the number of children compared to the year 1990. The states with the largest percentage of immigrant parents include California, Texas, New York, Florida and New Jersey.

(Fortuny & Chaudry, 2009).

# Minority are the Majority

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- Texas
- California
- Hawaii
- New Mexico

(Morello & Melnik, 2012)

# A Preparation Need....

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- ▣ It is increasingly important for educational leaders to be prepared to work with all families.

(Christenson, 2004).

# Authentic Partnerships

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- Leaders need to develop **authentic** [genuine] partnerships all with families.



# Benefits of Family Engagement

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- ❑ Students achieve higher grades
- ❑ Students earn higher standardized test scores
- ❑ Students have higher graduation rates
- ❑ Student enrollment in post secondary education increased



# Benefits of Family Engagement

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- ❑ Increased readiness for schools
- ❑ Better school attendance
- ❑ More homework completion



# Benefits of Family Engagement

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- ❑ Schools that have high levels of family involvement benefit from the increased level of trust between the school and families.
- ❑ Such schools report that parents have more confidence in the school, and rank teachers higher.
- ❑ A better understanding of the role of the teacher by parents, and a high level of respect for parents as the child's first teacher.
- ❑ Schools with involved families enjoy a better reputation in the community.

# What Families Want

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- Educational leaders who are successful in developing these partnerships **find out what families need and want** from the families rather than assuming the school already knows what is best for them.
  - (Auerbach, 2010; Rubin, Abrego & Sutterby, 2012)

# School Leaders ...

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- “Superintendents and principals build capacity for family engagement, both in their districts, and schools and among families.”
  - (Weiss, Krieder, Lopez & Chatman-Nelson, 2010)

# Critical Examination of Our Program

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- ❑ Sought program recognition from the Educational Leadership Constituency Council (ELCC) for NCATE accreditation.
- ❑ Needed EDLR program aligned with national standards and the TeXes Principal Standards

# What Our EDLR Program Found

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- ❑ When examining the state and national standards, our program **identified the need** to **further** develop the dispositions and skills of aspiring principals to work with families and communities. (Alignment Gap)
- ❑ The program had occasionally offered special project opportunities or special topic courses on engaging families based on a faculty member's interest.
- ❑ We did not consistently address this standard within our preparation program with all candidates. Nor was this standard specifically measured.

# ELCC Standard 4

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“A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs.... **building and sustaining positive school relationships with families and caregivers; and cultivating productive school relationships with community partners.**”

Educational Leadership Program Standards for 2011 ELCC Building Level



# Leading Student Impact: Family Support Session Assessment #5

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- ❑ Designed and developed a professional skills assessment project to measure the skills and dispositions of our candidates related to ELCC standard 4.
- ❑ This assessment project would be embedded into our course: EDLR 6386 Administration of Pupil Personnel Services
- ❑ Administered the assessment across the 2011-2012 school year and collected data on student results. (2 semesters)

# Introductory Statement to Assessment

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Engaging families as partners in schools has been shown to help improve students' academic achievement. This assessment seeks to measure the **candidate's ability to impact student learning through the engagement of families** and community members in the school.

# Description of the Assessment Project:

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- In this project, candidates will work **to identify a school issue/area to strengthen families' abilities to navigate school related tasks and activities.**
- Of particular interest to this project is diversity, including those families who are culturally and linguistically diverse and are often defined as **'hard to reach' families.**

## Directions to the Candidates:

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Candidates will research, design, deliver and evaluate a family support session for the school community based on the topic identified through the campus needs assessment/family surveys.

# Assessment Part #1:

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With approval from the campus principal, the candidate **will develop and administer a school survey/needs assessment to families** in an effort to identify a topic in which families are in need of additional information and guidance.

# Assessment Part #2:

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- Candidates will be responsible for **researching, designing, delivering and evaluating the family support session.**

# Assessment Part #3:

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- Candidates will **develop a plan to evaluate** the family support session and its impact on the school community.

# Assessment Part #4

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- Candidates **must furnish documentation** to show completion of the project.



# How Project is Assessed

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- ❑ A rubric has been developed that assesses the project.
- ❑ Rubric is aligned with national standard – ELCC #4
- ❑ Students are judged on a 3 point scale
  - Exceeds targets
  - Meets targets
  - Does not meet target

# Candidate Results for 51 students

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- The data indicates that students have met expectations for every element.
  - Meets expectations is defined as the basic understanding of the role of a school leader.
- Responding to community interests and needs is the lowest sub element at 2.72 (on a 3 point scale)

# Project Sample

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- ❑ One project led to a high school reaching out to Spanish speaking parents attending ARD (admission, review and dismissal) meetings.
- ❑ After each ARD meeting parents are now regularly surveyed in Spanish to identify a topic they would like to learn more about related to Special Education.
- ❑ The topic selected by parents was that of transition.
- ❑ Attendance at special education meetings for the high school has increased.

# Popular Topics

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- ❑ What services offered by the school
- ❑ Developing children's vocabulary
- ❑ Afterschool programs and summer camps
- ❑ STAAR testing
- ❑ Dual Enrollment
- ❑ College and Career Readiness
- ❑ Credit Recovery
- ❑ Special Education Transitions
- ❑ Bullying Prevention

# Project Impact on Campuses

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- ❑ Low response on a parent survey, (11 responses) prompted the superintendent to require that the family survey be issued at the beginning of every school year in order to find out what families need.
- ❑ The 11 family responses identified improving your child's reading.

# Challenges in Conducting the Project

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- ❑ Permission to conduct needs assessment with families.
- ❑ Some principals did not value the activity and provide needed support for candidates in completing the family support sessions.
- ❑ Need to Revise Surveys before sending them out to families
  - Students' initial surveys often focus on traditional means of involvement rather than truly finding out what parents want.
  - Development of all materials in English and Spanish

# Suggested Text for Principal Preparation Programs and Educators in the Field

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- ❑ ***Engaging the Families of ELLs: Ideas, Resources and Activities (2012)*** by Renee Rubin, Michelle Abrego and John Sutterby. Eye on Education ISBN 978-1-59667-220-8



# Further questions?

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