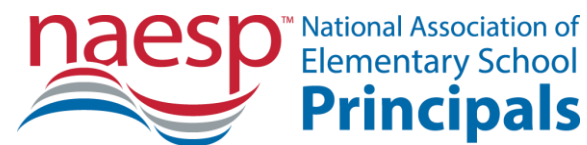


**LEARNING  
HEROES**

# Leading in the Time of a Pandemic: Effective Family Engagement Strategies and Resources

October 15, 2020



# Presenters



**Windy Lopez-Aflitto**  
*VP Content and  
Partnerships*  
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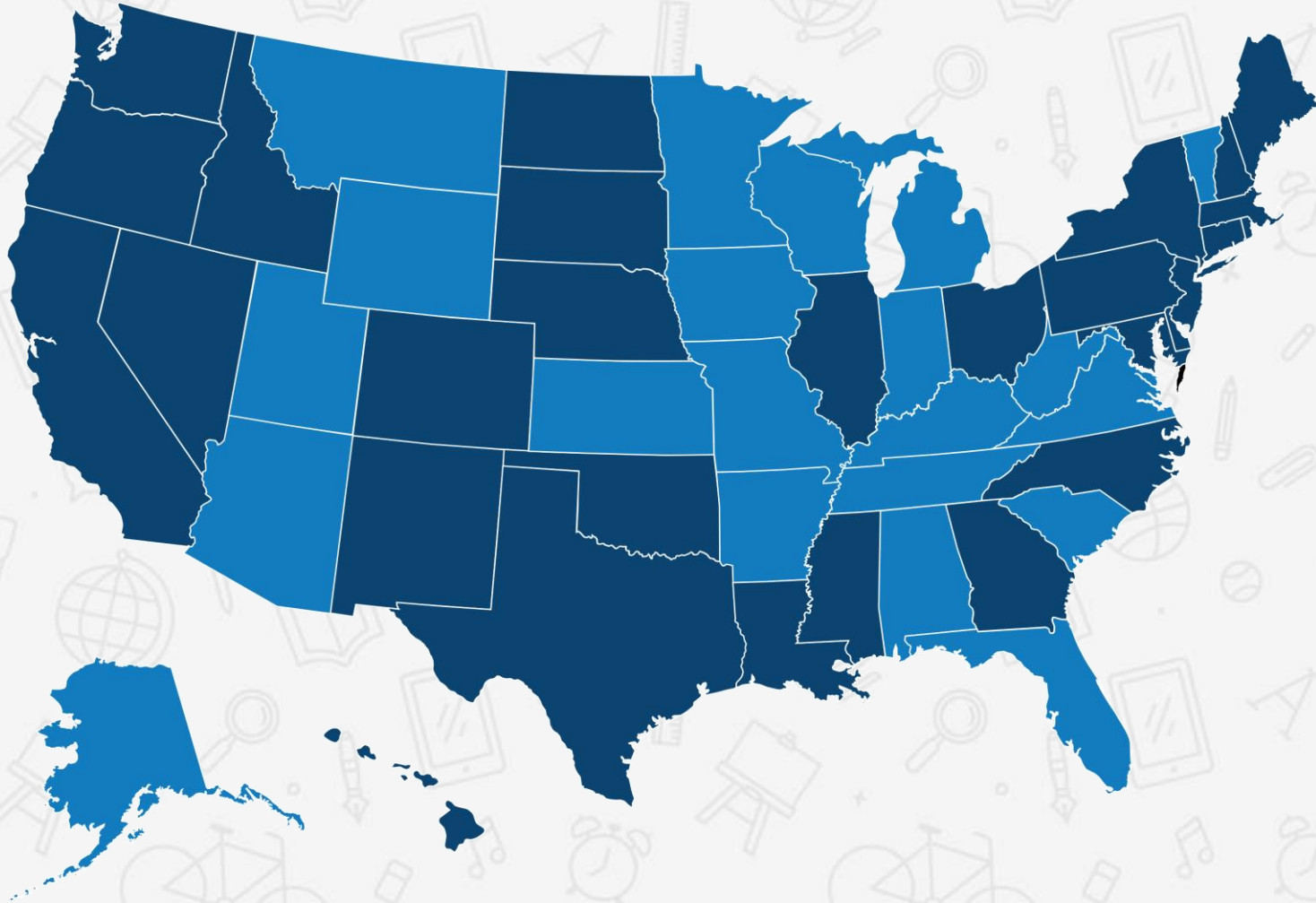
**Ron Mirr**  
*President*  
**RM Consulting**

# Today, we will...

- ☆ Discover actionable insights from new national parent research
- ☆ Get family engagement strategies/resources from the new *Principal's Guide to Leading in the Time of a Pandemic*
- ☆ Consider how it can support your work with teachers and families



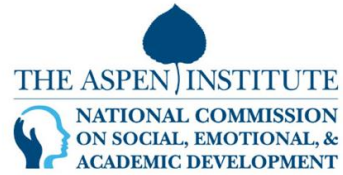
# Listening to Parents



- ★ 15 national surveys
- ★ 200+ qualitative sessions
- ★ All in English & Spanish
- ★ Focus on low income parents & parents of color

Dark blue states represent locations where qualitative research was conducted by Learning Heroes





# Participant Poll

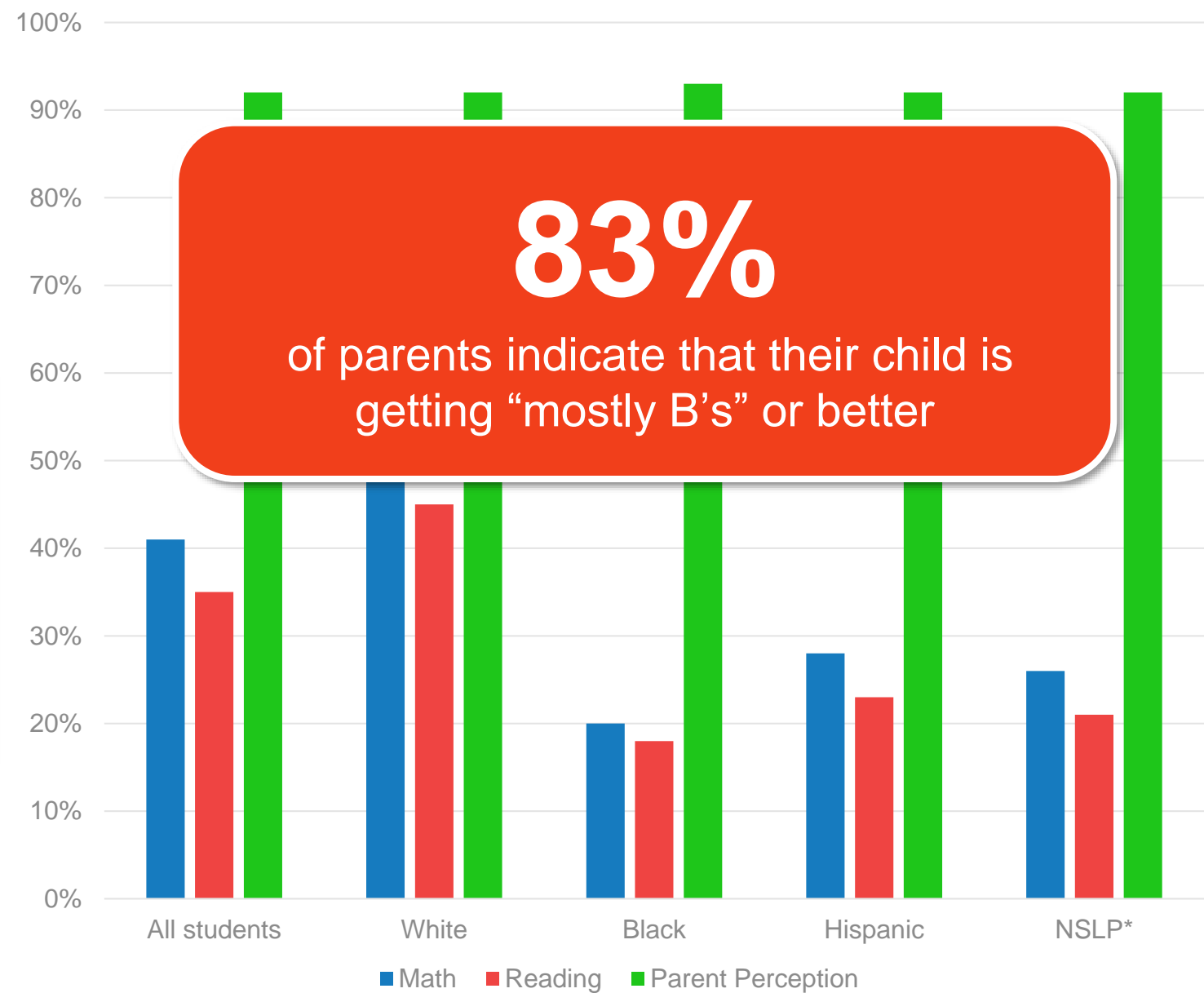
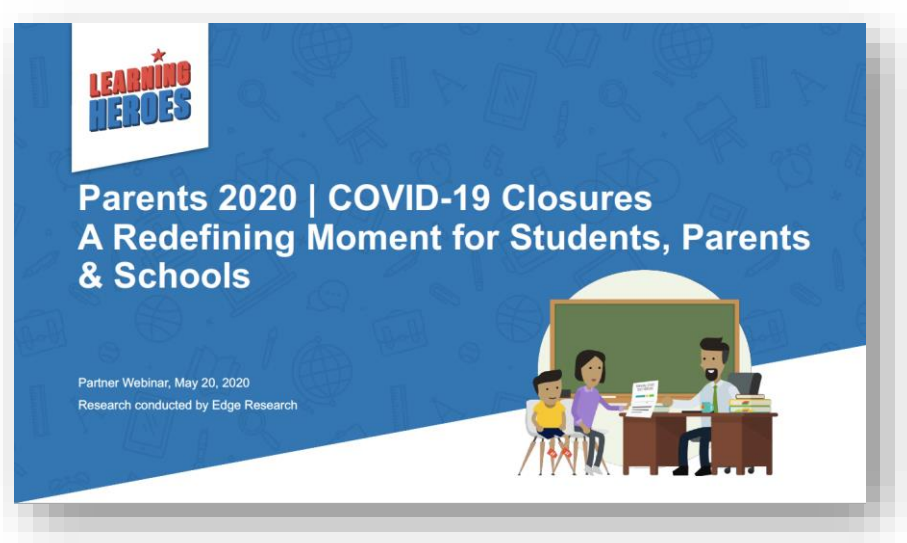


**Poll Question:** What percentage of parents believe their child is at or above grade level in reading and math?

- a) 65%
- b) 39%
- c) 92%
- d) 25%



# Student Proficiency: Perception vs. Reality



2019: National NAEP Scores for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Reading At/Above NAEP Proficient

# Parents 2020

## Initial Insights | Opportunity to Redefine Relationships

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### **PARENTS ARE ACTIVATED**

From their new front row seat and despite significant challenges, parents are engaging deeply in their children's remote schooling and will show up differently next school year.



### **PARENTS DESERVE AN ACCURATE PICTURE**

Even with more hands-on time, parents still have an inflated view of their children's grade level ability – 92% report their children are at/above grade level in reading and math. It is closer to 37% (2019 NAEP).



### **RELATIONSHIP REDEFINED**

This is a moment to establish clear expectations for parent, teacher relationships grounded in a shared understanding of the child's progress and academic achievement.



# The Opportunity: Parents are Activated

## Likelihood to Do During Upcoming School Year...

(% very/somewhat likely)

■ Somewhat likely ■ Very likely

			African American	Hispanic	White
Get a better understanding of what my child is expected to learn at his/her new grade level.	33%	73%	80%	81%	69%
Find more time to talk to my children about their everyday assignments.	33%	72%	80%	80%	69%
Seek a better understanding of where my child is academically.	32%	69%	81%	80%	64%
Talk to the teacher about what I noticed regarding my child's learning/schoolwork during the school closure.	28%	64%	72%	73%	61%
Develop a stronger relationship with my child's teacher(s) than I've had in the past.	25%	60%	66%	72%	55%
Demand a better understanding of where my child is academically.	25%	57%	65%	67%	53%
Demand that the school provide better support for students' mental health and emotional well-being going forward.	20%	45%	56%	58%	39%
Lower my academic expectations for my child due to this year's disruption of my child's education.	12%	34%	35%	46%	32%

# Effective Family Engagement Strategies and Resources





## A Principal's Guide to Leading in the Time of a Pandemic: Effective Family Engagement Strategies and Resources

### FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Schools in the U.S. are navigating uncharted territory. Depending on the school, students may attend in-person, participate in a hybrid model, or begin the year in a completely virtual learning environment. One thing that is true for all schools is that strong partnerships with families are more important than ever. Regardless of the model your school has adopted, the following ideas can help you share critical information about what is happening, strengthen relationships with families, provide student data in a parent-friendly way, and help all parents know how to use the resources you provide.

- As much as possible, help your team select as **few platforms** for students/families to reduce access barriers and confusion. Encourage your teachers to use the same apps whenever possible and ensure it is easy for parents to monitor their children's school experience.
- Provide key information in multimedia formats and translated into family native languages. Post **brief videos** that share important updates and reassures parents that children are safe (in the case of in-person models).
- Develop a short and easy-to-use curated **list of helpful links** to navigate this new reality. Include school-based and community-based resources and sort them by topic.
- Post an **FAQ** about returning to school and share with parents via email, texts, social media posts, school website, and apps (e.g., Remind, Class Dojo, Kinvoled). Co-host a [community conversation](#) in partnership your school's parent group, such as a PTA, on the concerns and questions parents have about their child's education during the pandemic.
- Consider having grade level teams post **video tutorials** showing families how to use your learning platform and any apps. Urge teachers to encourage parents to ask questions and provide feedback. Provide links to the tutorials via email, texts, social media, etc.
- Use social media and teacher apps to **ask families** what they need most from you and your school right now. Consider also having a designated phone number and email address for parent questions and a staff member assigned to fielding the questions.
- Use this [PTA resource](#) for additional ideas on transformative family engagement, and click [here](#) for more on building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive PTA.



# A Principal's Guide to Leading in the Time of a Pandemic


- As much as possible, help your team select as few platforms as possible for students/families to reduce access barriers and confusion. Encourage your teachers to use the same apps whenever possible. Ensure your teachers make it easy for parents to monitor their children's school experience.
- Provide key information in multimedia formats and translated in native home languages. Post a brief video each week (or biweekly) that shares important updates and reassures parents that their children are safe (in the case of in-person models). Use social media to direct parents to your video update links.

# A Principal's Guide to Leading in the Time of a Pandemic

- Develop a short and easy-to-use curated [list of helpful links](#) to navigate this new reality. Include school-based and community-based resources and sort them by topic.
- Post an [FAQ](#) for issues about returning to school and share the list with parents via email, texts, social media posts, school website, and teacher apps (e.g., Remind, Class Dojo, Kinvolved).







1

Build Trust—  
Make a positive,  
**personal connection**  
with every family.

2

Help families  
understand how well their  
child is **performing**.

3

**Empower**  
families to support  
learning at home.

# 1. Build Trust--Make a Personal Connection

**Welcoming Calls/Virtual Visits**—Make these during the first weeks of school to help build trust. Share a bit about you and ask parents to share their child's interests, strengths, areas for support. Ask parents what's the best way to stay in touch.

**Good News Email/Text**—Send a piece of “good news” to each family via email or text in the first weeks following the welcoming call.

**Feedback Loops to Address Concerns and Elicit Ideas**—Use existing communication platforms to ask families what they need most from you and the school right now. Don't shy away from their feedback and questions, even the tough ones.



## 2. Help families understand how their child is performing

**Share Diagnostic/Benchmark Data with Parents**—Use visuals (simple graphs/charts) to help illustrate performance against benchmarks (STAR, iReady & MAP Growth). Explain what the data means and how you will use the information to help their child.

**Provide Tools that Show Progress with Key Skills**—The Readiness Check is a digital tool that helps parents see how their child has learned key skills needed for success this year.

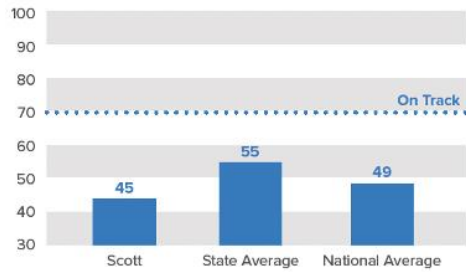
**Start a Family Learning Lab**—Provide open time for families to learn together and network virtually. Invite parents to identify topics/skills to be covered in breakout rooms. Families can host the weekly event or in partnership with other school staff (e.g. counselors, psychologists, assistant principals, etc)



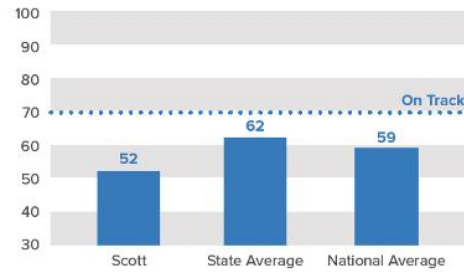
# Putting the Research into Action: A Parent Teacher Planning Tool

## 2020–2021 Middle Parent/Teacher Planning Tool

### Reading Benchmark Results



### Math Benchmark Results



## 1 IDENTIFYING ACADEMIC STARTING POINTS

### Teacher Input

At the beginning of the year, every student took a short test in reading and math to identify where they are doing well or need more practice. Teachers use these results to inform instruction and parents can use them.

### Parent Input

Your observations of Scott's academic strengths and weaknesses:

LEARNING HEROES 2020–2021 Middle Parent/Teacher Planning Tool | 2

1 PINPOINT  
ACADEMIC NEEDS

2 PAY ATTENTION  
TO LIFE SKILLS

3 PARTNER UP  
ON A PLAN



## PARENT-TEACHER PLANNING TOOL

LEARNING  
HEROES

## Teacher Discussion Guide: Frequently Asked Parent Questions

In 2018, Learning Heroes surveyed teachers and found that many of them find it difficult to have honest conversations with parents about student performance for several reasons, including that teachers would be blamed, or may not be believed by parents, especially if it contradicts what parents say they've seen in the past. Distance learning and extended school closures have only made these candid conversations more difficult, as many students likely experienced some level of unfinished learning and may not be fully prepared for this school year.

An open exchange of information and ideas can improve a parent's understanding of their child's performance. Encourage families to ask questions and don't think of the "tough" ones as problematic. Understanding the answer to these questions will help parents partner with you to ensure student academic and social/emotional growth.



At Learning Heroes, we've been listening to parents across the country in focus groups, interviews and surveys, hearing their concerns and questions. This list reflects some of the most frequently asked questions—including the tough ones—along with guidance on how to approach them.

## COVID-19 PLANS

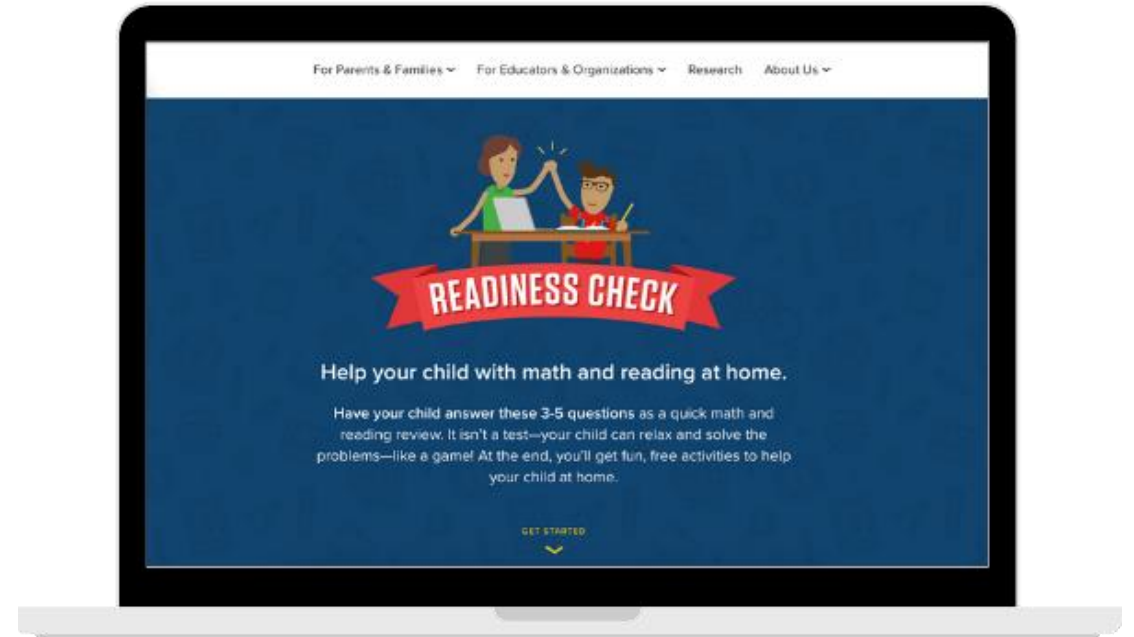
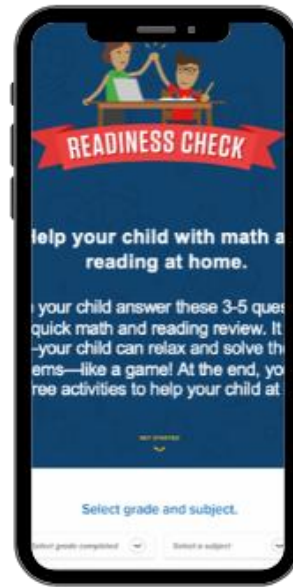
### What is the district/school plan for this year?

- Have the most current details available about your building's/district's plan and be prepared to explain what you know about the new safety policies as well as academic related changes around grading or attendance. For details you don't know, give parents a timeframe for when the school will be updating details and where parents can find that information.
- Respectfully ask parents to be as flexible as possible given that the COVID-19 situation may lead to changes to the current plan.
- Share helpful links with the most current information about changes to the school/district plan as well as other community resources.
- Encourage parents to reach out to you if they have any questions or concerns.



# Readiness Check

- ☆ Like a game, students answer 3 to 5 questions as a quick review of math and reading.
- ☆ Parents see how their child is progressing with key skills needed for this year.
- ☆ At the end, get connected to skill specific videos, resources, and more to support learning at home!
- ☆ The digital tool is mobile-friendly and bilingual (English/Spanish), designed to support ELLs.



*Find this tool at [ReadinessCheck.org](https://ReadinessCheck.org)*



# 3. Empower families to support learning at home

**Co-Create a Plan focused on Key Skills**—"Do Less to Do More". Share 3 main skills in reading and math and 3 strategies and resources to support learning at home.

**Host Game Nights**—Grade level teams or support staff can come together to host weekly (or monthly) family games that are aligned to instructional goals and are easy for families to replicate.

**Connect Parents to Outside Resources**—e.g. community organizations, tutoring, social/emotional supports so parents know where to get help.





How do you PREPARE and SUPPORT your teachers to build partnerships with families?



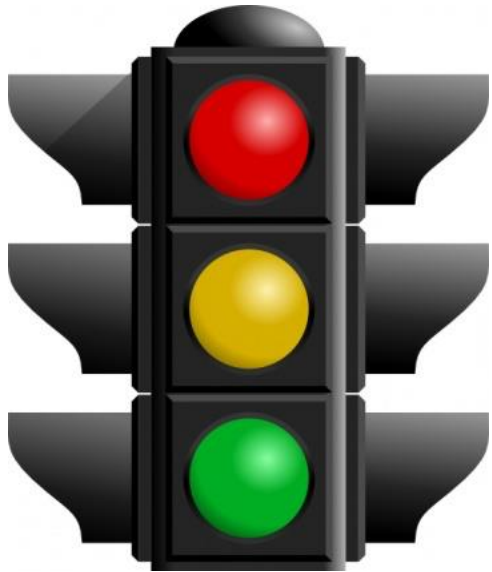
| Give the Gift of Time





Role play

# Closing Reflection and Questions



As it relates to Family Engagement, think about:

- ✓ One thing you will stop doing that isn't working
- ✓ One new thing you will try
- ✓ One thing you will keep doing and improve on





## Contact

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