

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Goal 1: Understanding How the School System Works: Do parents know how the local school and district operate and how to raise questions or concerns about school and district programs, policies, and activities? Do they understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state law as well as local ordinances and policies?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 Excelling Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 Progressing Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 Emerging Limited level of development and implementation	
Understanding how the school and district operate	<p>The school district offers workshops for family members about school and district programs, policies, and resources, and the skills to access them. The workshops are offered in various languages and locations in the community.</p> <p><i>For example, workshops are offered on parent and student rights under Title 1.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school collaborate to inform the school community about how the school and school district operate and the role of parent involvement in the school.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group and school staff cohost a fall orientation where families can learn about programs for academic and social growth, tour the school, and meet the entire school staff. Interpreters are available.</i></p>	<p>The principal provides all parents with information on the school's mission, goals, and organizational structure.</p> <p><i>For example, the school handbook is available in print and on the school website. It is also available in various languages as needed.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: Excelling	Level 2: Progressing	Level 1: Emerging	
<p>Understanding rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws</p>	<p>A network of PTA/parent group members helps other families exercise their rights under state and federal education laws.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group engages its members to use state and federal mandates to develop a Parent Bill of Rights.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group invites district staff to talk about parent rights and responsibilities under state and federal laws.</p> <p><i>For example, parent advocates help families understand their options if their school does not make adequate yearly progress under NCLB.*</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group distributes written materials about parent involvement mandates in state and federal programs, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)**</p> <p><i>For example, information about each of these mandates is posted on the school's website with links to other programs related to these mandates.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<p>Learning about resources</p>	<p>Guidance counselors, parent advocates, and teachers work with families to take advantage of resources and programs that support student success. They target families who may not know how to access these resources.</p> <p><i>For example, they work with families whose children are underrepresented in advanced classes to encourage their sons and daughters to take higher-level courses.</i></p>	<p>Meetings at school and in the community help families better understand students' options for extra academic support or enrichment.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group and school cosponsor informational sessions on after-school and summer learning programs.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group helps develop and distribute information about available programs and resources, such as magnet programs in math, science, and Advanced Placement classes.</p> <p><i>For example, the school and parent group create a school handbook with academic resources that is available in all languages spoken in the community.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

* The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reauthorized a number of federal programs aimed at improving the performance of U.S. schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools. NCLB is the current name for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965.

**The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services.

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: Excelling	Level 2: Progressing	Level 1: Emerging	
Resolving problems and conflicts	<p>School staff and the PTA/parent group jointly plan strategies to help parents, teachers, and students identify and resolve problems and conflicts at school.</p> <p><i>For example, conflict resolution classes are offered to help parents, students, and teachers learn effective ways to resolve conflicts at home and at school.</i></p>	<p>The school has a clear, written procedure for resolving concerns or problems.</p> <p><i>For example, a committee of school staff and PTA/parent group leaders is established to ensure that concerns have been addressed, and that further action is taken if needed.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group provides information to all parents on how to resolve problems at school.</p> <p><i>For example, a Guide to Identifying and Resolving Problems at School is developed and made available on the school website and in print, in appropriate languages.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Goal 2: Empowering Families to Support Their Own and Other Children’s Success in School: Are parents prepared to monitor students’ progress and guide them toward their goals through high school graduation, postsecondary education, and a career?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: Excelling	Level 2: Progressing	Level 1: Emerging	
Developing families’ capacity to be effective advocates	<p>The PTA/parent group works with the principal to establish school policies that support parents as advocates.</p> <p><i>For example, the school handbook includes a number of resources (e.g., information on parent rights under federal and state education mandates, local district policies, requirements for promotion and/or graduation, and numbers to call for additional support) that help prepare parents to be advocates for their and other children.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group offers parents opportunities to learn advocacy strategies and techniques.</p> <p><i>For example, workshops and other information sessions are offered to help parents learn how to ask the right questions about their child’s progress in school.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group collects and disseminates useful information on how to be an effective advocate for student success.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group provides monthly tips (on the school website and in print) on how to be an advocate for student success.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
Planning for the future	<p>The school has created partnerships with colleges and universities and local businesses to expand opportunities for career exploration and preparation.</p> <p><i>For example, advanced students have opportunities to take courses at the local college or university. Businesses offer internships for students during the school year and summer.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school staff help prepare parents and students to make informed decisions that connect career interests with academic programs.</p> <p><i>For example, information sessions are offered to help parents and students identify career interests and goals. They then can focus on the skills and education needed to be successful in that career.</i></p>	<p>With support from the PTA/parent group, the school offers opportunities for students to explore careers.</p> <p><i>For example, local employers are invited to speak at a school career expo, and asked to offer field trips to work sites.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
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Smoothing transitions	<p>A transition program developed by PTA/parent group leaders and school staff helps parents feel connected and remain involved as their children progress through school.</p> <p><i>For example, informational sessions explain how expectations, standards, and approaches to teaching change from elementary to middle and high school.</i></p>	<p>School staff and PTA/parent group leaders reach out to new students and their families before the next school year starts, offering an orientation to the school, opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities, and to meet other students and parents.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group assigns “buddies” to new students and connects families to parent mentors.</i></p>	<p>Spring orientation programs cosponsored by the school and PTA/parent group help prepare students for the next grade level or school.</p> <p><i>For example, an elementary school organizes visits to the middle school for parents and students, who are given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new environment and to ask questions.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: Excelling	Level 2: Progressing	Level 1: Emerging	
Engaging in civic advocacy for student achievement	<p>The PTA/parent group partners with other education advocates to mobilize school and community support around issues that affect student learning.</p> <p><i>For example, “parent café conversations” are held on the need for smaller class sizes, after-school programs, or funding for a middle school science lab, resulting in families advocating for these improvements before the school board.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders offer discussions on policy issues and organize families to testify at local public hearings on school needs.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group invites school board members to give an informal budget briefing and holds a voter registration drive.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders help families learn about political issues affecting education.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group sponsors local candidate forums during election campaigns.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.