



Creative Ways to Gather Meaningful Family Feedback

By Cynthia Cardenas and Jerod Phillips Sr.

Face-to-face conversations and surveys with families are critical to the success of a school. When you are new to your leadership role, the more information you gather, the more informed you will be about making decisions that will engage your students, staff, and community in a positive way.

Assegid (AZ) Habtewold, CEO of Success Pathways, said it best: “The people who care about you may not tell you your blind spots fearing to offend/hurt you. Open up and ask their feedback and get enlightened.”

Most school families care about the school you lead being successful because their child attends the school. Each interaction with a parent or family member, whether it occurs at bus duty, curriculum nights, concerts, or any other event, should be used as an opportunity to gather feedback from parents.

Go Back to Basics

Want the easiest way to open a dialogue with families? Ask this question when you’re speaking one-on-one with family members: “How is [child’s name] liking school so far this year?”

Get ready for the floodgates to open because parents—in our experience—don’t usually sugarcoat their answers. Then, just listen. This could lead to positive affirmations of the school’s work, or it could lead to scheduling a time to meet with this parent within the next several days for a follow-up conversation.

Identify Blind Spots

You might have a specific program or leadership strategy in mind that you think is going well, but it might not be so successful from a parent’s perspective.

Initiating conversations with school families enables you to gather feedback—good and bad—to help identify blind spots in your leadership practice.

Make Connections

Chances are, if one parent offers feedback, others might be thinking it, too. It’s important with follow-up conversations to find out if any other parents should be invited to the table to discuss an issue. Taking this feedback, you can create a plan of action, leading to a better solution for the school and strengthened connections with school families.

Survey Families—Strategically

Sending formal surveys out to families is a way to collect strategic information. Using surveys can be very daunting. Some say if you don’t have thick skin, you shouldn’t be in a leadership position. Sending out a survey is one way to test whether your skin is thick enough.

But it doesn’t need to be that way if you know how to use the survey to gain specific information you will use to reflect and lead. Here’s how to tailor a survey to get the most useful, honest feedback:

First, identify a real or perceived concern. Then, create a short, strategic survey that will provide guidance in meeting that need.

Keep the survey short, with only about 10 questions, mixing multiple

choice, Likert Scale, matrix tables, and open-ended comment areas so they can elaborate. Make sure it takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

Tailor each question to align with aspects of the culture we wanted to achieve. For example: Did the school create a positive learning environment? Was there a level of trust with the teacher, office staff, and administrative team? Did your child feel included and supported? Did you feel included and supported? How familiar are you with the school’s mission, vision, and values?

The information you gather directly from school families will help you stay focused on building a unified community, knowing which areas are strong and which need more support. This type of survey, along with face-to-face conversations, can help refine your practice and direct your leadership by creating a community that feels connected because they have the opportunity to be heard.

Cynthia Cardenas is principal of Orchard Elementary School in Orem, Utah.

Jerod Phillips Sr. is principal of David E. Robinson Elementary School in Magnolia, Delaware. (Via naesp.org)

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”
-Eleanor Roosevelt



KAESP has entered into a joint membership agreement with our national association, NAESP. This means you will join both associations at the same time.

Ways to Save Big on UNITED Registration

Registration is now open for [UNITED: The National Conference on School Leadership](#), presented by NAESP and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This conference, tailored for pre-K through grade 12 school leaders, will be held in Nashville from July 15-17, 2024..

NAESP is offering three opportunities to save on conference registration.

1. Conference Package Giveaway

Just by registering for UNITED, NAESP members will be entered into a drawing to receive:

- Full conference registration;
- Hotel accommodations for three (3) nights; and
- A \$100 American Express gift card.

To be eligible, you must be an NAESP member and [registered for conference](#). If selected, you will receive a full refund for your registration that is non-transferable. The winner will be notified March 1.

2. Team Discounts

By bringing your team to the conference, you can maximize your learning and networking opportunities. Register five people and pay for only four! That's right, you can bring a group of five people to UNITED and get one registration for free. Registration is \$770 for NAESP members and \$1,029 for non-NAESP members. The discount is automatically applied when you register five people.

3. Ann Henley Conference Scholarship

The annual Ann Henley Conference Scholarship has been established in honor and memory of longtime NAESP staffer, Ann Henley. The scholarship is awarded annually to three NAESP members attending the annual NAESP conference for the first time. Applicants must be active members of NAESP and first-time attendees at the annual conference.

KAESP is Looking for Board Members!

Do you have an interest in serving on the KAESP Board of Directors? The full board only meets about two times a year with most business conducted via email. Regional representatives are asked to recruit members from their region, attend KAESP functions, and provide leadership in KAESP. If you are interested in being a more active member, please contact Rosie Young at ryoung@bellarmine.edu.



Welcome New KAESP Sponsor! ZoomQ

ZoomQ is a web-based app that makes it easy for guardians and school and daycare staff to dismiss children safely and efficiently at the end of the day! ZoomQ allows guardians to control who can pick up children and to initiate pickups creating staffing flexibility for schools. ZoomQ uses an advanced QView screen to display arrivals on a screen, monitor, tablet, or smartphone so teachers and staff can quickly gather and efficiently release children to the appropriate car. Please visit their website at: <https://www.zoomq.com/> and see how they can help keep your students safe.



More information about KAESP can be found at <https://kaespky.org/>

News from the Kentucky Department of Education

At its [meeting on March 8, the Kentucky Board of Education](#) (KBE) Interview Committee voted to recommend three candidates as finalists in the search for Kentucky's next commissioner of education. The full KBE will interview the finalists in Louisville on March 18-19, and hope to have a new commissioner named and submitted to the Kentucky Senate for consideration of confirmation by the end of the month.

The candidates include:

Buddy Berry, Ed.D.: Berry has been serving as superintendent of Eminence Independent Schools since 2010. He began his teaching career as a high school mathematics teacher in Owen County and Jefferson County.

Robbie Fletcher, Ed.D.: Fletcher serves as the superintendent of Lawrence County Schools, a position he has held since July 2014. Prior to this role, he served as a part-time faculty member at Asbury University, and as a

part-time faculty member at Asbury University, and as a principal, assistant principal and mathematics teacher in Martin County.

Jim Flynn, Ed.D.: Flynn currently serves as the executive director of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, a position he has held since 2019. He served as the superintendent of Simpson County Schools from 2003 to 2019. Flynn has also held positions as a high school principal in Shelby County, and served as vice principal and high school science teacher in Warren County.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is seeking feedback on the [draft Kentucky Academic Standards \(KAS\) for the Visual and Performing Arts](#). The draft was developed by the Advisory Panels and Review Committee, each made up of arts educators from around the state.

To provide feedback on the draft KAS document for *he Visual and*

.Performing Arts, use the [public feedback comment form](#).

The public comment period will last until April 4. Due to the amount of text within the survey, it is recommended that surveys be completed on a full-size computer or laptop screen.

KAESP visits Capitol Hill

Jason McGlone, principal of Prichard Elementary in Carter County, John Ansan, retired JCPS administrator, and Rosie Young, KAESP Executive Director, participated in the joint NAESP/NASSP National School Leadership Advocacy Conference in March.

Two days were spent in listening to presenters on education needs, advocacy, and policies. On the third day, we visited our national legislators to advocate for education funding and support. One of the highlights was Secretary of Education Cardona. He expressed his strong support for education and his funding priorities.

If you haven't invited a state or national legislator to your school, please consider doing so.





From the Executive Director, Dr. Rosie Young

News from KAESP:

Our recent trip to Washington, DC, was a great opportunity to connect with colleagues across the nation. Be assured that all school leaders are experiencing the same stress and overload as our Kentucky colleagues. In spite of this, as with our KY leaders, they remain passionate about the work and committed to the profession.

We were able to meet with staff members of all legislators except Sen. Rand Paul. The staff members were supportive and understand the needs of our students and schools. We shared a number of bills that would support teacher shortage, principal pipelines, student wellness and emotional needs, and funding for our schools. We are hopeful the message was clear and education will receive the funding and support it needs.

If you have never done so, I would encourage you to invite your state and national legislators to your schools to share your great work and communicate the needs of your school.

-Rosie

KAESP has joined with a number of other state associations to launch the Ed Leaders Network.

The Ed Leaders Network (ELN) is grounded in the belief that educational leaders impact student performance. With this foundational belief at the ELN's core, multiple state principal associations have partnered together to provide you high quality, on-demand professional development webinars to enhance your leadership growth.

A dynamic professional networking community has also been created to allow you to interact with your peers and leadership experts from across the country. In short, the ELN's mission is to provide you the professional development content and capacity building professional network you need to do what's best for your students and learning community.

Please visit the website at www.edleadersnetwork.org to take a tour of the site.



Join NAESP!

If you are not familiar with the many benefits of NAESP membership, please visit the website at www.naesp.org to see what our National Association has to offer. Your membership could help us become a Goal Buster Plus award winner again! School funds can be used for the Institutional Active membership category and you will receive a set of publications for your school as well as an active membership. Please join!!!

KAESP to Become a Joint Membership State with NAESP

KAESP has entered into a joint membership agreement with NAESP. This will mean that you will need to join both organizations when you become a member of either association.

This will allow us to provide you with more resources that are offered through NAESP. These include liability insurance, outstanding publications and professional developments, and other amazing opportunities.



News from NAESP

NAESP is pleased to introduce the [candidates](#) running for the office of Vice President of the NAESP Board of Directors. The vice president will serve in that capacity for a year, followed by a year as president-elect, and then a year as president of NAESP. We invite you to learn more about each of the candidates below.



Ann-Marie Gleason, Ed.D.

Principal
Harpeth Valley Elementary School
Nashville, Tennessee

If selected as the Vice President of NAESP, I commit to supporting, empowering, and connecting with NAESP members through the following actions:

Support: Supporting state level organizations' success as they grow their NAESP membership base; Ad-

vocating on behalf of our principals on Capitol Hill

Empower: Identifying challenges that principals face and providing guidance and professional development to increase principals' confidence to courageously lead their school communities (though professional learning opportunities, publications, on-line NAESP resources)

Connect: Recognizing and sharing best practices from each state organization so that we continue to refine our craft as both building level administrators and as leaders in our national/ state organization



Jon Wennstrom

Principal
Riley Upper Elementary School
Livonia, Michigan

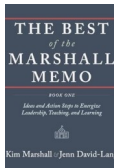
My goal as Vice President is to inspire and support educational leaders across the country through a three-pronged approach of celebrating our profession, connecting our existing members, and cultivating new leaders. I will work with my colleagues on the board of directors to create a dynamic and energizing environment for principals and educational leaders from PreK through eighth grade, making sure educators from all backgrounds and communities feel represented and empowered.

Eligible voters will vote for NAESP vice president from March 12 – 22, 2024.

Make sure your email is current with NAESP by calling toll-free at (800) 386-2377 or emailing membership@naesp.org. Add this email address - noreply@directvote.net - to your email contacts and safe senders list.



The Best of the Marshall Memo: Book One: Ideas and Action Steps to Energize Leadership, Teaching and Learning
by [Kim Marshall](#) (Author), [Jenn David-Lang](#) (Author)



The Best of the Marshall Memo is organized in three broad categories: high-leverage practices, maximizing teachers' impact, and classroom structures for successful learning.

Each chapter focuses on a high-priority topic followed by detailed professional learning suggestions.



5 Strategies to Unlock the Power of Family Engagement

By Dawn Bridges

Meaningful family engagement is critical to students' success in school. Numerous studies show that parental involvement is positively associated with student achievement. Evidence also shows that students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores;
 - Pass their classes and graduate;
 - Attend school regularly; and
- Have better social skills and behavior.

Following are five ways to help get families more interested and involved.

1. Designate a Family Engagement Leader

Having a point person at the district or school level makes it easier to align family engagement initiatives and activities with strategic goals and priorities. A family engagement leader can establish systems, protocols, and expectations for staff and build their capacity to reach out to families in a positive, productive way.

2. Create a Comprehensive Communication Program

One of the top barriers that prevents many families from getting more involved is their busy schedules. This is why active, positive communication between educators and students' families is essential. Ongoing communication makes it easier for busy parents to stay up to date on their child's education and build strong, trusting relationships with teachers and leaders.

The use of multiple communication channels can greatly increase the chances of reaching every family. To distribute general information, for example, schools might choose to use online portals and social media or paper flyers and newsletters. More personal interactions can be conducted via email, text, telephone calls, and face-

*The mission of the KAESP, the collective voice of Kentucky's elementary and middle level principals, in partnership with other education leaders, is to **develop citizens that can succeed in a global society**, by delivering to our members a network for support, professional development, visionary leadership, and by pro-active involvement in shaping education policy.*

KAESP Officers

Dr. John Ansman, Treasurer, JCPS, Retired, Louisville, KY

Jason McGlone, NAESP State Representative
Principal of Prichard Elementary, Grayson, KY

Want to join us? —Send an email to Rosie Young at kaespy@gmail.com or ryoung@bellarmine.edu



-to-face meetings. Families might also prefer different modes of communication depending on the resources available to them (e.g., internet access).

When using multiple channels, it is important to coordinate the volume and timing of communications. Families might feel overwhelmed—or miss important messages—if they're buried in a daily deluge of announcements from their children's teachers, schools, and district.

3. Make Time for One-on-One Conversations

Having dedicated time for discussion and relationship-building is important, too. One-on-one conversations between teachers and families can be orchestrated through planned school events such as back-to-school nights and parent-teacher conferences. Or, if it's difficult to meet face-to-face due to parents' schedules, personal phone calls are a convenient way to keep them informed about their child's progress. If phone calls take too much time or parents are difficult to reach, teachers can use other tools like email or an online portal to initiate conversations.

Speaking one-on-one also makes it easier to prevent or address misunderstandings. As a result, teacher-family relationships have a better chance of strengthening, which makes collaboration more likely and much easier.

4. Support a Two-Way Flow of Information

In any communication program—especially one designed to boost family engagement—information should flow both ways. This makes it easier for schools and families to cocreate strategies that enable everyone to stay informed.

Two-way communication helps educators, too. Instead of the responsibility falling solely on the teacher's shoulders, families can share feedback and ideas. If, for example, the quality of a student's work or their behavior has changed, the family might be able to provide insights into the cause (e.g., a health issue, the loss of a pet or family member, or a parent's financial worries).

5. Provide Opportunities to Connect Before and After School

Child care needs are also a common barrier to family engagement. Offering before and after school enrichment programs on campus not only provides a welcome solution to child care challenges, but it also can increase the capacity to connect with families and provide students with support that bolsters success. Studies have shown that family engagement in afterschool programs can improve student learning in and out of school and lead to increased involvement in school events, assistance with homework, and encouragement for reading.

Dawn Bridges is a 25-year veteran in education and currently serves as vice president of educational affairs for Right At School



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Kentucky Association of Elementary School Principal

