

EVERYONE WINS! STUDY GUIDE

Reflection Questions for Literacy Leaders

Welcome to the *Everyone Wins!* Study Guide. Our aim is to help you frame, deepen, and extend your conversations about our book. What are you learning as you read the book, and how does what you learn—from both the book and your collaborative conversations with colleagues—change what you understand about the nature of teaching and learning, instruction, and family and community engagement?

We offer reflection questions for each chapter to help guide your thinking and discussions. These reflection questions can be used in several ways:

- Individual readers can deepen their understanding by pondering them after reading each chapter.
- A group (teachers, administrators, parents, community members) can read a chapter in advance, then meet to discuss the questions.
- Colleagues can do a book study during a staff meeting: 1. Divide into small groups. 2. Each group reads a section of a chapter (e.g., one “Big Story”) and responds to the questions. 3. Small groups report to the whole group about their section of the chapter.
- A similar process may be used in a professional development workshop. Teachers could also use the questions to stimulate discussions with parents and students.

Here’s to your learning!

—Karen Mapp, Anne Henderson, Stephany Cuevas,
Martha C. Franco, and Suzanna Ewert
The *Everyone Wins!* authors

Reflection Questions for the Introduction

1. **Opening:** Do you feel that momentum for improving family engagement is building in your school district? If yes, what are the signs you have seen? If no, what do you think is holding it back? Does the training and professional development offered help teachers, administrators, and other staff to build relationships with families and other educators? In what ways?
2. **Growing evidence:** Have you noticed positive effects when teachers reach out to families and engage them in improving their children's learning? If yes, what have you seen? If no, what do you think is happening?
3. **Defining family engagement:** How do you feel about our definition of family engagement: "A full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators, and community partners to promote children's learning and development, from birth through college and career"? What do you like about it? What concerns you? How could you use it?

Key concepts

- **High-impact:** The studies we cover in the book use strategies to engage families that yield major and long-lasting results. Many traditional practices are lower impact. Do you feel your school and district are working to implement more effective practices? What are they doing? Or do you think they mostly are doing what has always been done? Why?
- **Transformational effects happen when beliefs and mindsets change.** What is the most transformational experience you have had with family engagement, perhaps after attending a workshop or trying a new approach to working with families?
- **Equity-driven:** How do you feel about our definition of equity: "Giving ALL children what they need to succeed"? What does equity mean to you? How is achieving more equitable outcomes for children emphasized (or not) in your school or district? What additional efforts would you like to see?

Reflection Questions for Chapter 1: Family Engagement and Students

1. **Early childhood programs:** Why does adding a family engagement component to early childhood programs tend to yield long-term benefits for children? What features of the programs described do you think are most important?
2. **Developing trust:** How and why do "close conversations to promote learning" between parents and teachers appear to build trust? How do these conversations, as described in the research, differ from traditional parent-teacher conferences? Do such conversations need to happen only at a scheduled conference, or could they be offered in other settings?
3. **Linking to learning:** How do families in your school/district learn about what their children are learning and doing in class and what grade-level student work looks like? What strategies are schools using to give families tips and information about how to support learning at home? If the schools are using text-messaging apps to send information, do they also include personal contact?

4. **Transition to middle/high school:** What transition services do schools in your district offer families and students to smooth the pathway from elementary to secondary school? How do they balance students' need for support with their growing independence? What is your school/district doing well? What changes would you like to see?
5. **Healing trauma:** "Trauma-informed" approaches do not necessarily address the factors that caused the trauma in the first place. How does "radical healing" address root causes, as well as build strength and resilience in students and families? What ideas could you use in your setting?
6. **Collaborating to remove structural inequities:** Do you feel your school and district have identified structural inequities that hold students back? Which ones? Does your school offer opportunities for teachers and other staff to take action with families on an issue or problem? Looking at the changes in school culture and learning resources accomplished by Austin Interfaith, what would you like to see happen in your schools?

Reflection Questions for Chapter 2: Family Engagement and Educators

1. **Vignette:** What struck you about the vignette about Robert Cordova? What about his experience felt familiar to you? What felt different? In what ways does his experience have you thinking about your own mindset about family engagement?
2. **Shifts in beliefs and mindsets:** What opportunities exist to listen to and learn from families about their hopes and dreams for their children's education? Are there intentional strategies in place to build trust between home and school? What steps could be taken to create the space for shared dialog between families and educators? How can families' "funds of knowledge" about their children be leveraged?
3. **Redefining family engagement:** Create two columns, one titled "Involvement" and the other titled "Engagement." In thinking about your current or past policies, practices, or initiatives, in which column would you place them? What steps can you take to convert "involvement" to "engagement"?
4. **Shifts in practice:** What "mental models" currently exist—with you, your institution, your community—about engaging with families? How do these mental models help or constrain family engagement practice and policy? Do these mental models help or constrain building positive and trusting relationships with families? How might these models be shifted to foster effective family engagement practice?
5. **Influence on school culture and retention:** How would you describe your school culture or work environment? Which climate and culture outcomes from family engagement most resonated with you?
6. **Skills, mindsets, and dispositions:** Of the skills, mindsets, and dispositions identified in this section, which do you see as strengths that you have? Which need improvement and support? What opportunities exist or can be created to increase family engagement capacity at the individual, school, or institutional level?

- 7. Resources, leadership, and infrastructure:** Ask around and use the internet to explore the local, state, and federal resources available to you and your community on family engagement. What already exists? What needs to be added? What small steps could be taken to expand resources and support?

Reflection Questions for Chapter 3: Family Engagement and Families

- 1. Self-efficacy:** How do strong and trusting relationships between families and educators impact families' understanding of their role in their children's education? From your perspective, how do you develop these strong and trusting relationships? What may be some challenges to developing these relationships? How can you overcome these challenges?
- 2. Leadership capabilities:** Why is it important to invest in family and parent leadership development? Who benefits from this (e.g., students, teachers, after-school programs)? How? From your experiences, what are some examples of family and parent leadership you have witnessed? How did they impact you and your work?
- 3. Barriers:** One of the biggest challenges to family engagement work is that "schools do not value parents as equal partners in students' education." Why do you think this is the case? How are you actively working on changing this notion? How can your school or organization work with families and parents to change this?
- 4. Families' daily lives:** Think about the families you work with. Considering their life contexts, what do you need to learn more about? What may be some of the daily challenges families face? How do these impact your family engagement efforts? What can you do to alleviate these challenges?
- 5. Communication:** From your experience, what is the best way to communicate with the families you work with? What are families most responsive to? What kinds of information do they often request from you? How can you improve the lines of communication with the families you work with?

Reflection Questions for Chapter 4: Family Engagement and Schools, Districts, and Community Institutions

- 1. Essential practice:** Why is family engagement considered an essential component of school improvement? How do family engagement practices work together with other strategies for school improvement to achieve results? In your context, what could or does a school-wide emphasis on family partnerships look like?
- 2. Balance power:** In what ways can family engagement lead to systemic change in schools and communities? How does systemic oppression look in your own community—who are the families affected? What strategies would work to give them equal voice and power in school decision-making? What opportunities for partnership in your own community can you think of that could improve relations between the school and local stakeholders?

- 3. Supports:** How do material and capacity-building supports for fostering family engagement practices look at each level of the school system (i.e., classroom, school, district office)? Think about your own level of influence—are you a parent, teacher, administrator, etc.? What supports would help you to improve your practice? What supports could you provide that would build the capacity of others?
- 4. Build trust:** How is trust between educators and families foundational for school improvement? How trusting are the relationships between you and the families you work with, i.e., does the trust go both ways? What strategies can you think of that would improve or maintain collaborative relationships between educators and families in your context?

Reflection Questions for Chapter 5: Implications for Practice: Acting on the Research

- 1. Dual Capacity-Building Framework:** Review the dual capacity-building framework, especially the essential conditions for successful family-school partnerships. (You can also visit dualcapacity.org for more information.) Considering your specific school or organization, which of these conditions need the most development? What do you need to accomplish this? How do the findings of this book support you in accomplishing this?
- 2. Major findings:** Considering the book's major findings, which one stood out the most to you? Did any of the findings surprise you? Why? Which one is most applicable to your work? How so?
- 3. Recommendations for practice:**
 - a.** In your opinion, how are family engagement practices related to overcoming educational inequalities, including racial and socioeconomic inequities? Why?
 - b.** Identify at least one recommendation for practice that is applicable and/or related to your work. How can you embed this recommendation into your family engagement work? What is the first step you need to take to make this happen? How does the research presented in this book support you in accomplishing this?
 - c.** Family engagement practices benefit from vast networks and partnerships with diverse stakeholders. What partnerships does your school or organization have access to? How can you leverage these to improve your family engagement practices? What other partnerships do you wish to develop?
 - d.** Considering the research and recommendations presented in this book, what areas of family engagement and family-school partnerships do you need to learn more about? How are you going to hold yourself accountable to learn and develop this information and/or skills?