

STANDARD INDICATOR 5.2

ENGAGEMENT WITH CAREGIVERS AND COMMUNITY

The teacher engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with students' homes and caregivers and takes advantage of community resources to enhance student learning and school effectiveness.

Accomplished teachers communicate regularly with students' parents and guardians. Teachers inform them about their children's accomplishments and challenges, responding to their questions, listening to their concerns, and respecting their views. Teachers encourage families to become active participants in their children's education by acquainting them with school programs and enlisting their help to develop skill sets and foster lifelong learning. For instance, a kindergarten teacher may discuss the importance of reading stories at home and show a grandparent why engaging her child in conversation is critical to literacy development. Accomplished teachers share the education of children with families. Ideally, teachers and parents become mutually reinforcing partners in the education of young people. However, various circumstances can complicate relationships, such as divergent interests or mistrust. Accomplished teachers are alert to those issues and tailor their practice to enhance student achievement. Understanding that some families may take more time than others to gain confidence in school-home relationships, teachers proceed patiently, learning about cultures, beliefs, and priorities while expressing respect for families and demonstrating their attention to students. Throughout the process, educators develop skills and understandings that help them avoid pitfalls while working to foster positive, collaborative relationships between schools and families.

The changing structure of families in our society creates both challenges and opportunities. Accomplished teachers must possess a thorough knowledge of their students as individuals to work creatively and effectively with family members. Advancing the intellectual development of students is a teacher's foremost responsibility, but accomplished teachers understand that a broad range of student needs can influence that goal, such as the need for informed caregivers to provide guidance and support. By learning the dynamics within their students' homes, teachers appreciate how they can work with families to address student needs and advance educational gains. The distinctive mission of teaching is the promotion of learning—a complex undertaking in and of itself; but accomplished teachers understand that the physical, emotional, and social well-being of students cannot be separated from their intellectual growth.

Accomplished teachers cultivate their students' knowledge of the local community as a powerful resource for learning. Opportunities abound for enriching lessons, projects, and topics of study; for example, observing the city council in action, collecting oral histories from senior citizens, studying ecology at a public park, visiting a museum, drawing the local architecture, or exploring career options in small businesses. Any community—urban, suburban, rural, wealthy, or poor—can become a laboratory for learning under the guidance of an accomplished teacher. The Internet can extend those experiences, giving students the chance to investigate local towns further or to explore cities, states, and countries farther afield. Within all those communities, instructional partners such as government officials, organizational volunteers, and corporate leaders can serve as valuable assets, supplementing and enhancing the education of students. Accomplished teachers need not teach alone.

Teachers also explore the concept of culture within their communities and its influence on children and young adults. Accomplished educators encourage students to appreciate linguistic traditions and ethnic contributions, to study social influences on their expectations and aspirations, and to discuss the effects that economic conditions can have on political views and outlooks. Although careful attention to diversity may challenge teachers, learning about a wealth of cultures can help them work meaningfully with students. An understanding of multiculturalism promotes an acknowledgment of differences and similarities, which, in turn, inspires students to accept individuals and to adopt civic ideals. Accomplished teachers capitalize on those opportunities so they can respond productively to their students' diverse backgrounds.

Core Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities.

Such work rests on a delicate balance. Teachers cannot alleviate all the social problems they encounter, but they can be sensitive to those issues and caring toward students as they fulfill their professional responsibilities as educators. Teachers confront the human condition daily in all its splendor and misery; what they choose to share, how they respond, and how they prepare students in the face of it all are the factors that distinguish teachers who are truly accomplished.

Adapted from NBPTS, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, 2nd ed. (2016, pp. 38–39).

Key Elements of Teacher Practice Related to Standard Indicator 5.2

- Regular two-way communication with parents and guardians, listening to their concerns and respecting their perspective, enlisting their support in fostering learning and good habits, informing them of their child's accomplishments and successes, and educating them about school programs;
- Alertness to the importance of home-school relationships and tailoring practice accordingly to enhance student achievement;
- Skills and understanding to foster collaborative relationships between school and family;
- Cultivation of knowledge of the local community as a powerful resource for learning;
- Bringing the community into the classroom and students out into the community as appropriate to build relationships and enhance learning;
- An appreciation of ethnic and linguistic differences, of cultural influences on students' aspirations and expectations, and of the effects of poverty and affluence; and
- Advocacy for the support and resources necessary to meet the needs of learners and their families.

Questions for Reflection and Planning

- Do I effectively use two-way communication practices to communicate with parents and caregivers? For what reasons?
- What resources do I provide to families to help them understand how to best support their children's learning?
- How I make myself regularly available to all parents/caregivers?
- How do I solicit input from parents/caregivers about their children's learning?
- How do I build on the family, cultural, and community values in the interest of student learning?
- In what ways do I help families feel included in the school community?
- How do I communicate student accomplishments, successes, and means for accomplishing higher goals?
- How do I make parents feel comfortable and welcome in my classroom and in our school?
- What are some ways I can collaborate with the community to provide opportunities for enriching projects and lessons to support student learning?
- How can I bring community members into the classroom in meaningful ways?
- How can my understanding of the diversity of the community and my understanding of the backgrounds of my students enhance the teaching and learning in my classroom?

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5.2 LEVEL 1	
Standard Indicator 5.2. Engagement With Caregivers and Community. The teacher engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with students’ homes and caregivers and takes advantage of community resources to enhance student learning and school effectiveness.	
Level 1, Ineffective	
Performance-Level Descriptors	<p>The teacher communicates student progress and other school-related events and resources in accordance with the minimum level required by school policy.</p> <p>The teacher makes little to no attempt to learn about beliefs, values, cultures, language differences, and priorities present in the community. This sometimes leads to misunderstandings, conflicts, or poor relationships between the teacher and families.</p> <p>The teacher rarely uses provided community resources to enhance student learning and well-being.</p>
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher communicates with parents and caregivers only as required and does it at a minimal level. ■ The teacher does not work to develop skills that foster collaborative relationships between school and family and does not communicate to enlist their support in fostering learning and good habits. ■ The teacher does not inform parents and caregivers about school programs and makes no efforts to encourage them to attend. ■ The teacher has little to no knowledge of their school’s community as a powerful resource for learning. ■ The teacher has little to no understanding of ethnic and linguistic differences, of cultural influences on students’ aspirations and expectations, or of the effects of poverty and affluence.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A teacher uses only the quarterly progress report to communicate with parents about areas where their child might be excelling or struggling. ■ When one of her third-grade students regularly does not complete homework the teacher makes no attempt to contact the home to see if she can provide assistance or respond to questions. ■ The teacher does not communicate with parents about the Back to School Night because the principal mentioned it in the newsletter sent to all parents during the summer. ■ A teacher states, “It takes too much time to schedule parents in to volunteer, so I don’t bother with it.” ■ The historical society in the local community is very active and has numerous resources to share, but the high school history teacher does not return calls from the organization or attempt to contact them to see how they might enhance his curriculum. ■ Five of the kindergarten teacher’s students come from Spanish-speaking homes, and she makes no attempt to find assistance in communicating with them in their primary language.
Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)	<i>Develop the ability to:</i> Engage collaboratively with families and the community.

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Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Build skills in working collaboratively with families and the community.

- Seek feedback and mentoring to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to more effectively engage with families and the community.
- Seek mentoring in ways to interact with diverse families.

Build skills and strategies for communicating with caregivers.

- Work with a coach, school social worker, guidance counselor, or other colleague to learn a variety of communication strategies and technologies or media to ensure that caregivers have the opportunity to receive and respond to information about their child's progress.
- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis in order to facilitate dialogue and discuss issues.

Build community connections.

- Research and identify key organizations and people in the community who can support the learning in your classroom.

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5.2 LEVEL 2	
Standard Indicator 5.2. Engagement With Caregivers and Community. The teacher engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with students' homes and caregivers and takes advantage of community resources to enhance student learning and school effectiveness.	
Level 2, Developing	
Performance-Level Descriptors	<p>The teacher uses primarily one-way communication to share with caregivers information regarding student progress and other school-related events and resources, sometimes encouraging caregivers to participate in conversations and correspondence about student progress.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to learn about beliefs, values, cultures, language differences, and priorities present in the community that sometimes lead to positive, collaborative relationships between the school and families and support student learning.</p> <p>The teacher uses community resources, when provided, to enhance student learning and well-being.</p>
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher communicates regularly with parents and caregivers, but communication is generally one-way with little to no input from the home or community. ■ The teacher occasionally sends information to inform parents and caregivers of their child's accomplishments and successes and to educate them about school programs. ■ The teacher has a limited understanding of how to work to foster collaborative relationships between school and family. ■ The teacher rarely cultivates knowledge of their school's community but will use readily available resources that are provided. ■ The teacher has a beginning level of understanding about ethnic and linguistic differences, of cultural influences on students' aspirations and expectations, and of the effects of poverty and affluence.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A teacher sends home the school's required progress report and report card and sometimes adds a personal note but does not have a process or system for caregivers to respond. ■ A teacher instructs his students on the importance of giving their parents the information he is sending home about school programs and events. ■ Participation during required parent-teacher conferences is often the only time a teacher interacts with most of the parents and caregivers of her students. ■ During a unit on community helpers, a teacher invites in members of the local fire department to speak to the students. ■ A teacher has some awareness of the culture and diversity of the community and occasionally uses that understanding when planning units and selecting resources.
Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)	<i>Develop the ability to:</i> Engage collaboratively with families and the community.

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- Seek feedback and mentoring to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to more effectively engage with families and the community.
- Seek mentoring in ways to interact with diverse families.

Build skills and strategies for communicating with caregivers.

- Work with a coach, school social worker, guidance counselor, or other colleague to learn a variety of communication strategies and technologies or media to ensure that caregivers have the opportunity to receive and respond to information about their child's progress.
- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis to facilitate dialogue and discuss issues.

Build community connections.

- Research and identify key organizations and people in the community who can support the learning in the classroom.

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5.2 LEVEL 3

Standard Indicator 5.2. Engagement With Caregivers and Community. The teacher engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with students’ homes and caregivers and takes advantage of community resources to enhance student learning and school effectiveness.

Level 3, Effective

Performance-Level Descriptors

The teacher uses multiple modes of two-way communication to inform caregivers of student progress, gather information about learners, and enlist caregiver support in fostering learning and productive learning habits.

The teacher learns about beliefs, values, cultures, language differences, and priorities present in the community to foster positive, collaborative relationships between the school and families and support student learning.

The teacher seeks out and uses appropriate community resources to enhance student learning and well-being.

- Critical Attributes**
- The teacher communicates regularly with parents and caregivers, listening to their concerns and respecting their perspective, enlisting their support in fostering learning and good habits.
 - The teacher informs parents and caregivers of their child’s accomplishments and successes and encourages them to learn about and attend school programs.
 - The teacher uses skills and strategies designed to foster collaborative relationships between school and family.
 - The teacher cultivates knowledge of their school’s community as a powerful resource for learning.
 - The teacher develops an appreciation of ethnic and linguistic differences, of cultural influences on students’ aspirations and expectations, and of the effects of poverty and affluence.

- Possible Examples**
- Parents and caregivers receive a monthly progress report to inform them of student progress and classroom behavior, with a section to return that asks parents to respond and ask questions.
 - Parents and caregivers receive a monthly newsletter about the instructional objectives, classroom activities, ways they can support the learning in the classroom, and information on how to access resources and classroom events on the classroom website.
 - At the beginning of each unit, a high school art teacher sends home information about the work students will be doing with brief explanations about each project.
 - A kindergarten teacher contacts each parent by phone at the beginning of the year to establish a good working relationship.
 - Coaches at the middle and high school have a strong relationship with the community to develop support for needed resources and to connect with professionals in the health field to talk about safety and proper conditioning.
 - A school counselor participates with students in the community annual career fair.
 - To build rapport with the community and enthusiasm for reading, a teacher invites members of various service organizations to be guest readers in the classroom.
 - Realizing that she has a limited understanding of the various languages and cultures of some of her students, a teacher seeks assistance from the bilingual staff in communicating with non-English-speaking caregivers and in preparing written notes home.

Implications for Professional Learning
(adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)

Develop the ability to: Engage collaboratively with families and the community and develop leadership skills in varied collaborative contexts.

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Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Expand skills and strategies for communicating with caregivers.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis to facilitate dialogue and discuss issues.

Expand skills in working collaboratively with families and the community.

- Seek feedback and mentoring to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to engage with families and the community more effectively.
- Seek out alternative ways to interact with diverse families.

Build community connections.

- Research and identify key organizations and people in the community that can support the learning in the classroom.

Develop leadership skills.

- Identify opportunities to lead or coordinate efforts that support the school's improvement plan and create opportunities for students and families.
- Seek out leadership mentors within the school and greater communities.

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5.2 LEVEL 4

Standard Indicator 5.2. Engagement With Caregivers and Community. The teacher engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with students’ homes and caregivers and takes advantage of community resources to enhance student learning and school effectiveness.

Level 4, Distinguished

<p>Performance-Level Descriptors</p>	<p>The teacher initiates multiple modes of communication to promote ongoing two-way dialogue with caregivers about student progress and school-related events and resources, to gather information about learners, and to enlist caregiver support in fostering learning and productive lifelong learning habits.</p> <p>The teacher learns about beliefs, values, cultures, language differences, and priorities present in the community to foster positive, collaborative relationships between the school and families and support student learning. Teacher advocates in the school and greater community as appropriate to meet the needs of learners and their families.</p> <p>The teacher seeks out and builds ongoing connections to community resources to enhance student learning and well-being.</p>
<p>Critical Attributes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher communicates regularly with parents and caregivers, listening to their concerns and respecting their perspective, enlisting their support in fostering learning and good habits. ■ The teacher informs parents and caregivers of their child’s accomplishments and successes and reaches out to them to encourage them to learn about and participate in school programs. ■ The teacher uses effective strategies designed to foster collaborative relationships between school and family and seeks out alternative ways to contact hard-to-reach families. ■ The teacher cultivates knowledge of the school’s community as a powerful resource for learning, and brings it into the classroom and sends students out into the community to enhance learning. ■ The teacher demonstrates an appreciation of ethnic and linguistic differences of cultural influences on students’ aspirations and expectations and of the effects of poverty and affluence, and advocates in the school and community to meet student needs. ■ The teacher advocates within the school and the community for resources and structures to best meet the needs of learners.
<p>Possible Examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents and caregivers receive a weekly teacher-developed folder containing student work and showing student progress, with a space for the parent to respond to the work, ask questions, and return the folder. ■ Students in an English class keep an electronic portfolio of their writing that they share with parents. Parents are encouraged to respond to the work. ■ Parents and caregivers are invited to a monthly Books and Breakfast activity in the classroom, where they eat breakfast together, receive resources to read with their children, and learn reading strategies. ■ A middle school social studies teacher has organized classes to teach the English language to Spanish-speaking parents and other community members to develop relationships and improve communication. ■ A teacher trains a group of volunteer tutors who are fluent in languages that are spoken in the school to assist the EL students and communicate with their families. ■ Each student in a teacher’s class is involved in a yearlong community service project with a biweekly discussion to share progress.

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- Students in the teacher's orchestra class and jazz band perform regularly at community events.
- A teacher has organized meetings where community members of various backgrounds give presentations about their cultures.
- When noticing the lack of resources to support before-school and afterschool care at the school, a teacher brings it to the attention of the staff and the school site council to develop a plan to remedy this issue.

Implications for Professional Learning
(adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)

Develop the ability to: Deepen collaborate engagement with families and the community and develop leadership skills in various collaborative contexts.

Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Expand skills in working collaboratively with families and the community.

- Seek feedback and mentoring to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to more effectively engage with families and the community.
- Seek out alternative ways to interact with diverse families.

Expand skills and strategies for communicating productively with caregivers.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection and synthesis in order to facilitate dialogue and discuss issues.
- Use technology to build collaborative skills.

Expand community connections.

- Research and identify key organizations and people in the community who can support the learning in the classroom and develop strategic plans to inform them of the importance of working together on issues of school improvement.

Strengthen analysis and reflection on strengths and weaknesses in collaborative work.

- Seek feedback from colleagues on the use of strategies to support collaboration with families and the community.
- Participate in a professional organization to develop leadership skills (e.g., evaluation and problem solving).
- Identify opportunities to lead or coordinate efforts that support the school's improvement plan and create opportunities for students and families.
- Seek out leadership mentors within the school and greater communities.
- Read current literature on leadership and how to apply these strategies to collaborative processes connecting schools with the community.