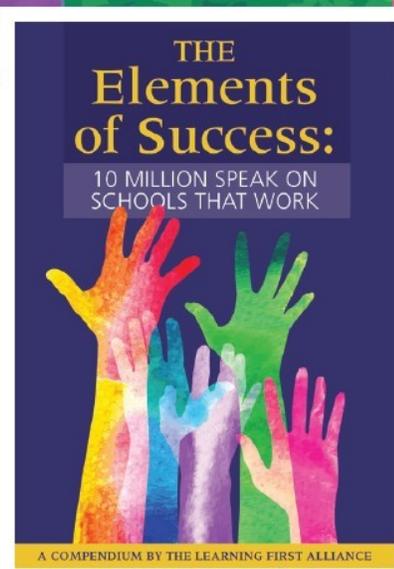


# Family and Community Engagement



**W**hat do successful schools look like? There is no one answer. Each successful school reflects the beliefs and character of its community, and each addresses the needs of its students in its own way. However, in *The Elements of Success: 10 Million Speak on Schools That Work*, the Learning First Alliance identifies six elements common to all successful schools. Members of the Alliance, who represent more than 10 million educators, parents and local policymakers, agree these are the factors needed for a school to perform at a high level and help all students succeed, while understanding these elements don't look the same in each school. How they are achieved and integrated depends greatly on context.

One of these elements is family and community engagement.

What does that mean? Family engagement is a critical component of successful schools. These schools believe every parent wants the best for their child, and they work to identify and overcome barriers to family engagement. They build trust and proactively invite families to participate in their child's education. They also use evidence-based family engagement practices and guidance such as the National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

Successful schools also are transparent and accountable to their communities. The most successful engage the broader community in many ways, building support for schools and student learning and development that goes beyond basic funding. This engagement takes a variety of forms, with the needs of the local community driving the work that schools and their partners do together. Examples include:

- Extending learning beyond school walls, such as through workplace learning opportunities, field trips building on classroom lessons or after-school activities.
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- Partnering to provide services and supports for students and their families, such as health clinics or English language instruction, or connecting families to housing or food assistance.
  - Advocating for schools, with community organizations such as businesses providing support for schools in bond elections and legislative debates.

While the strategies used to engage families and communities vary based on context, the need for such engagement is met in all successful schools.

Of course, just because a school effectively engages families and communities does not mean that it will thrive; it is a necessary, but not sufficient, factor in success. For example, a school with poor leadership or that lacks a commitment to equity will struggle even with strong family and community engagement. True success requires all six elements of successful schools:

- Focus on the Total Child
- Commitment to Equity and Access
- Family and Community Engagement
- Distributed Leadership
- Strong, Supported Teaching Force and Staff
- Relationship-Oriented School Climate

*To learn more and read the full report or executive summary, visit <https://learningfirst.org/elementsofsuccess>.*

## Learning First Alliance Members

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; AASA, The School Superintendents Association; American Federation of Teachers; American School Counselor Association; Consortium for School Networking; Learning Forward; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Education Association; National PTA; National School Boards Association; National School Public Relations Association