

## ADDRESSING OBSTACLES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT BY VITO BORELLO AND REYNA HERNANDEZ.

Educators are trying, but effective family engagement is going to necessitate state and federal policy and systems change. Authors review a few promising, yet nascent, stories of federal and statewide capacity building efforts to better equip educators and improve family engagement.

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This essay was written as part of a Carnegie Corporation-commissioned challenge to explore the role of family engagement in student success. The authors give nod to the growing body of research that identified family engagement as one of the main drivers of student success, but conclude that this common sense approach isn't always common practice. The authors explain how teachers, commonly tasked with involving parents, often lack the strategies and support to do it well. They also explain how school leaders sometimes view family engagement as more of a "public relations" vehicle and not an intrinsic element of student success. The authors note that there has been some progress in recent years and cite the Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA, created the pathway for the creation of what are now called Statewide Family Engagement Centers, SEA. Although the authors say these centers are underfunded at \$10 million, they say that there is "potential for modest progress in practice through ESSA."

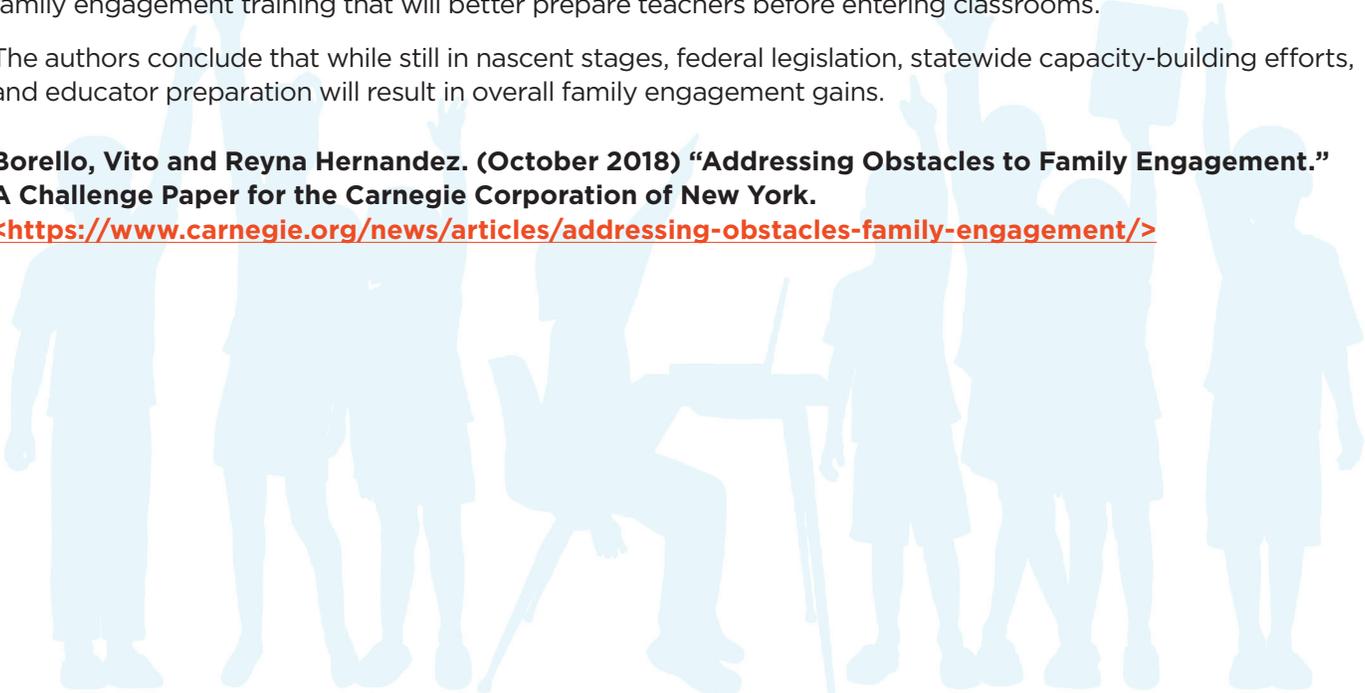
The more significant progress in advancing the family engagement platform, they say, seems to be coming through the fact that other national associations have joined the National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE), including The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO.) Together, they are working to build family engagement frameworks through SEAs for birth through grade 12 students. A total of 19 SEAs are working with the initiative and currently serving one-third of the nation's students and building diverse statewide stakeholder coalitions to co-develop and advance the work. The authors conclude that this step is both significant and potentially transformational.

The authors also cite work and research by the National Education Association (NEA) and NAFSCE regarding teacher preparedness to work with families as holding promise. The two organizations are engaged in work that will result in the SEAs and institutions of higher education co-developing a framework for pre-service family engagement training that will better prepare teachers before entering classrooms.

The authors conclude that while still in nascent stages, federal legislation, statewide capacity-building efforts, and educator preparation will result in overall family engagement gains.

**Borello, Vito and Reyna Hernandez. (October 2018) "Addressing Obstacles to Family Engagement." A Challenge Paper for the Carnegie Corporation of New York.**

<https://www.carnegie.org/news/articles/addressing-obstacles-family-engagement/>



Thanks to generous support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Our Neighborhood*, is a compilation of stories and research from the family engagement field. It is intended to be a living repository and guide for STEM Learning Ecosystems and other communities interested in cultivating strong community partnerships to prepare the next generation.

This annotated bibliography was compiled by TIES for *Our Neighborhood*.