



# Branch Alliance

for Educator Diversity

## *A Higher Standard*

### Family Engagement Enhance, Unify, and Amplify Transcript

**0:00:05.2 Kim Igwe:** We are thrilled to have you all here today for Family Engagement: Enhance, Unify, and Amplify. And as we wait for our LinkedIn live streaming to start, please share in the chat your name and where you're joining from. We can't wait to get started. We would love to know who's in the room with us, so if you could share in the chat your name and where you're joining from. Bonus points if you wanna share weather, I'm always up for a weather report, and I hear it's snowing in some parts of the North. Josh, welcome from Senior West, we're thrilled to have you here today. Chattanooga, Tennessee, Diana, great to have you. We are thrilled to see so many of you here today. Texas, I doubt it's snowing there, but I don't know. You'll have to keep me posted. Aliya, welcome. Great to have you all here today. We are gonna get started, and as we get started, please keep sharing who you are, your name, and where you're joining from. My name is Kim Igwe, and I'm the Professional Development Manager here at BranchED, and I'm joining from Charlotte, North Carolina, where we are sunny, but not very cold. But with that, I wanna briefly share a little bit about BranchED by starting with our commitment.

**0:01:37.3 Kim Igwe:** Our commitment is to achieve sustainable programmatic transformation, leading to improved outcomes for diverse educators who by extension benefit all students by preparing them to thrive in our heterogeneous society. We believe that every student deserves access to caring, adaptive, and well-prepared teachers, that every teacher deserves preparation that fuses quality with diversity, and that every person benefits when we create a higher standard of education together. Thank you for joining us today. We'd love to know a little bit more about all of those of you who are joining us, so you'll see a poll pop up on your screen to tell us a little bit more about yourself. So you should see the poll on your screen, if you can share your response, I see there's a lot of higher ED faculty with us, some other organizations, some higher ED administrators. Great, I



see some PK through 12 people in the room. Welcome, welcome, we're thrilled to have you. Especially as a former 8th grade ELA teacher myself, it's always great to have you here. Perfect, thank you so much for joining us. We are excited to have you all here with us. A little bit more about this series. This is the fourth of BranchED's, 2023-2024 Nuts and Bolts webinar series. And the last of the 2023 year.

**0:03:16.6 Kim Igwe:** The series focuses on the educational ecosystem. At BranchED we believe transforming education happens within an educational ecosystem in which there is a strong connection and collaboration between and among stakeholders to ensure all children have the support they need to thrive. This ecosystem includes but is not limited to; children, families, caregivers, community, community organizations, healthcare systems, local education agencies, post-secondary education providers, industry, business partners, and government agencies. These stakeholders have unique and complementary roles that converge and diverge to benefit all children by preparing them to thrive in our heterogeneous society. Today's webinar is an interactive conversation with the National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement, also known as NAFSCE, and they're highly anticipated Family Engagement core competencies. This webinar will explore ways in which these core competencies can be embedded into research practice partnerships with higher education, districts and communities to enhance, unify and amplify, family and community engagement. Before we get started, I wanna share a couple of housekeeping items.

**0:04:32.0 Kim Igwe:** So, one, we are recording this on LinkedIn, so you can visit us there or go back to there if you wanna see it again, we'll also have it on our resource portal, and we'll send that link out to you once it's ready. You can find resources and links in the chat. Please use the chat if you have any questions or technical difficulties, and if you have questions for our panelists, we'll have time at the end for them to answer those questions so you can use the Q&A feature in Zoom. A little bit, I would love to introduce our panelists and a little bit about them. Dr. Margaret Caspe is NAFSCE's Senior Research Consultant, she co-leads the Pre-Service Family Engagement Consortium, which is a collaborative of National Partners and state and higher education teams dedicated to supporting Educator Preparation and Family Engagement. Over the past 20 years, she has studied how partnerships among families, schools and communities influence children's development in a variety of areas, including language and literacy and bilingualism, as well as science, technology, engineering, and math.

**0:05:41.9 Kim Igwe:** Prior joining NAFSCE, she worked with the Global Family Research Project and Harvard Family Research Project, where she developed tools to support faculty and developing courses on family engagement topics and oversaw a project to amplify family engagement in public libraries. Reyna Hernandez, is NAFSCE's Senior Director of Research and Policy. She is a long-time community advocate who supports education, leadership development and capacity building in the Latino community. Prior to joining NAFSCE, Reyna worked as the Community Wellness Director at Latinos Progresando. She

also served as an assistant superintendent at Illinois State Board of Education for five years. Overseeing the division of English language learners, Early Childhood and Family and Community Engagement. Before we begin, we would love to know what you're hoping to get out of today's webinar in the chat, please share what you hope to get out of today. And I'd love to hand it over to... And Reyna.

**0:06:51.9 Reyna Hernandez:** Thank you so much. We are very excited to be able to share. I think we'll give a lot of very quick information, but all of it will be available, is available on our website in the subsequent workshop, so there are lots of great opportunities to keep engaging with this information. So, for those of you who don't already know NAFSCE, we are the National Association for Family School and Community Engagement, and we really are committed to addressing policy practice and research around family school community partnerships in ways that advance student learning, student achievement, and school improvement. We really see this as a strategy for sort of building out. So, with that, I'll hand it over to Maggie.

**0:07:41.0 Margaret Caspe:** Thanks so much, Reyna. Hi everyone, we're really excited to be here today. So, we wanted to really start our conversation with a little case study, and this vignette was written for a recent monograph, you can see on the screen that Reyna and I co-edited, and this case was written by Yasmin Morales-Alexander, who is an amazing faculty member at Lehman College in New York. And she writes, "As I walked into my teaching social studies class, my graduate students, most of whom are already practicing teachers, were animatedly engaged in conversation, I heard I have so many reports to write and scheduling is so hard, I'm going to be on Zoom all day. I realized for them, it was that vexing time of year, parent teacher conferences. Yes, it's a lot of work. I chimed in, and then a student said, "Professor, I hate talking to parents," and it was this latter statement that gave me the greatest moment of pause. We dedicated the next two hours to unpacking what it means when we say things like, "I hate talking to parents," or "Parents don't wanna hear it," and some parents just don't care about their kids. And although it was initially jarring to hear from my talented and committed students, the reality is that many teachers and by extension schools are challenged by the idea of family engagement.

**0:09:17.6 Margaret Caspe:** So, I think Yasmin puts really the crux of the matter really perfectly, and what we're here to talk about today is really how we can put curriculum, clinical experiences, programs and systems in place so that preparation and Family Engagement isn't half hazard, but really full and robust. So maybe just to take a quick step back, the definition of family and community engagement that we at NAFSCE, and many others in the field use, is that family and community engagement is a shared responsibility among family schools and communities to support student learning. So, in this way, family and community engagement is not a one-size-fits-all program or service, but it's really the ways that families are guiding, supporting, and advocating for their children's learning. And for schools and communities, it's about reaching out to families and creating the conditions for families, to not be subordinate to the school, but to be critical partners. And I just wanna

put a fine point on this, what we're talking about is not to be confused with recent efforts that operate under the guise of parental rights that are really designed to polarize and divide schools and communities. What we're talking about here is families, educators and communities coming together to collaborate effectively. And research really points to a number of positive benefits of family and community engagement for everyone involved, when we practice family and community engagement in that way.

**0:10:51.9 Margaret Caspe:** For students, it leads to improved outcomes across the developmental spectrum. For teachers, it leads to increase job satisfaction. For families, it leads to increased family well-being in leadership, and we also know that family engagement is a matter of equity. But there's a problem that exists, and despite all that we know about family and community engagement, it's really often at the periphery of school reform efforts and practices, and there are a lot of reasons for why this is. But perhaps one of the biggest reasons is that family-facing professionals. And I use this term to mean educators, school leaders, family coordinators, really anyone who works with families in child centered settings, very rarely receive opportunities early on and throughout their careers to learn how to partner with families and communities. And data point this out again and again, that family-facing professionals want to engage families meaningfully and equitably, but they just aren't provided opportunities to do this.

**0:12:03.5 Margaret Caspe:** So before we move on, I'm going to open up a quick poll, just to get a sense from all of you out there. Does your program, does your educator preparation program offer a stand-alone course in family and community engagement? And you're gonna see that poll open in a moment. And for those of you who are in higher ED faculty or program, maybe you can even... It's not a scientific poll [chuckle] so maybe you can even think back to your own experience, if you received a course on family and community engagement. And it looks like a lot of our responses are in, if we wanna share those results, it looks like... It looks like, no, 79% of us have not had or do not offer a stand-alone course in family and community engagement. And I'm gonna actually hand it over to Reyna, because we have a lot of data that triangulate and actually corroborate a lot of those... That finding. So, Reyna.

**0:13:12.1 Reyna Hernandez:** That's right. And we think this work is really so essential because this is not... I think sometimes there's the sense that it's adding one more thing to what educators need to do, when in fact, this is about enhancing high quality, culturally relevant, responsive and sustaining teaching practice. It's impossible to be really culturally relevant and responsive without having an understanding of a child's family, of a child's community in that context in which they live, and being able to be trained in this area provides tools, resources, strategies for educators to be able to do that. It supports recruitment, retention, and diversification of the teaching workforce.

**0:14:00.3 Reyna Hernandez:** We know that one of the greatest challenges that teachers have reported in their own practice is particularly in diverse context working with families,

they were not trained for that often times, and in more recent surveying of educators who are considering leaving the profession, one of the factors that's significantly higher in those thinking of leaving the profession is whether or not they feel respected and valued by the parents of their students, and so how do we prepare educators to really build those relationships and build that trust? And this is a strategy, and there's research that shows that there are ties to having high quality family engagement practice and student achievement, school improvement even.

**0:14:44.2 Reyna Hernandez:** So ultimately, all of this, we think it will advance equity. And so we've conducted a number of different studies and have done some surveying we'll include... You'll see some of the QR codes for these. But really looking at what the landscape looks like for educator preparation at the state policy level, at the higher education level, and what family-facing professionals themselves kind of feel, perceive what their experience has been. And as we've done this work, one of the things that we found is we did a landscape analysis of the 56 states and territories, is that only 17 of them actually addressed across the board, four of the key areas that we think are really essential in doing this work from communication to addressing diversity and inclusion of families, really thinking about what this looks like in kind of incorporated into practice, and that's 14 out of 56, so we know that our systems are not asking for, or requiring that there be this kind of preparation. When you look at higher education and sort of where this is taught, it doesn't have to be taught in the stand-alone course, but stand-alone courses can really help to focus the content. Only 51% of educator preparation programs reported that they offered at least one class in family engagement, and often that class was within one particular department, like early childhood or special education, often was not mandatory.

**0:16:25.3 Reyna Hernandez:** So then the question is, Well, might this content be integrated across other courses? According to department heads, family and community engagement was incorporated less than 25% of the time in courses like culturally sustaining pedagogy, classroom management, and teaching language and literacy. Then when we look at courses like preparation for STEM or educational leadership, it was incorporated even less of the time, less than 10%. So this isn't being taught in stand-alone courses, it isn't being integrated, and what does that mean for family-facing professionals? Well, 40% of them report that the core competencies that we're going to be talking about today, were fully covered by their preparation program. We really think these are essential for all educators, so 40% is just too low. So in your opinion, you'll see another poll pop up, how prepared are candidates to engage families and communities when they leave your program in comparison to other areas? As you're addressing teaching and learning, and pedagogy, and family and community engagement, do you feel they are less prepared, more prepared or equally prepared? We'll give that just a couple of minutes. So it's great to see that some of you are seeing that there might be more prepared.

**0:18:05.4 Reyna Hernandez:** That's phenomenal. We wanna hear what you're doing, if you responded more prepared, drop in the chat some of what your program does to be so

intentional about it. I'm seeing some equally prepared, but more than 50% is really seeing less preparation in this area. So, with that... And that's one of the reasons why we do think that these family-facing or competencies are so essential, and I'll turn it back over to Maggie to help kind of build that picture for what it is, it takes more than just caring to do this work. There are a series of competencies and things that really can strengthen the preparation, Maggie.

**0:18:54.0 Margaret Caspe:** Thanks, Reyna. So, to respond to the gap that we're seeing and that Reyna so nicely laid out. What we really wanted to do is we wanted to drill down on the core competencies that family-facing professionals develop and practice to partner with families and communities. And this is really important because as a field, it's really the foundation for our roles and it helps to really set the sequence and scope for building courses, clinical experiences, and even professional learning when educators are in classrooms. So, the resulting report that you see on the screen, the Family Engagement Core Competencies, was really created to document these knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

**0:20:00.0 Margaret Caspe:** And what sets this work apart is that while there are a number of standards documents that stress the importance of family-facing professionals and educators having family engagement competencies, these standards are really typically aligned to roles within specific fields or placed at the organizational level or specific to particular points in children's development. So, the goal of this document is really to center core competencies of family engagement for educators regardless of role and setting. And just to be really clear, our intention is not to replace or supplant existing work that's come before but really rather to enhance, unify, and amplify it.

**0:20:24.5 Margaret Caspe:** And I'll get more in depth on each of these elements in a little bit. But what we mean is that when family-facing professionals reflect, they look inward and outward to respect and value the diversity of families. They connect when they build trusting relationships with families. They collaborate when they amplify those relationships for learning. And family-facing professionals lead alongside families when they take part in the broader field and advocate for systems change. And it's important to note that we need to see these domains collectively, these domains of reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead.

**0:21:10.9 Margaret Caspe:** We present them separately, but they're not modular or discrete. Instead, it's really the synergy among them that creates change. And just a very quick note on our methods. We developed these core competencies in a six-phase process. In our first phase, we convened a committee of family engagement experts to really unpack with us what it is that educators need to know and be able to do in family and community engagement. In phase two and three, we synthesized these themes and then conducted a literature to ground the emerging competencies in an evidence base. And then in phase four, we really conducted a comprehensive crosswalk of the emerging competencies against the standards of major national organizations to understand the ways

that they talk and lift up family and community engagement.

**0:22:04.4 Margaret Caspe:** And there are two here that I just want to draw everyone's eyes to and highlight in particular. The first is to draw attention, and you can see it on the screen, the elements of the core competencies that are present in CAPE's revised accreditation standards that just went into effect last year. And this is a big shift because these standards the accreditation standards are the first time that CAPE has mentioned families in these standards. So this is a little bit of a change. So in standard one, the revised CAPE standards call for educator preparation providers to be intentional in the development of their curriculum and clinical experience so the candidates effectively work with students and their families.

**0:22:58.7 Margaret Caspe:** In standards two, quality clinical practices are now defined as those which offer candidates experience in working with students, schools, families, and communities. And also even more in standard four, providers must have data showing that employers are satisfied with their completers' preparation for their assigned responsibilities in working with diverse P2-P12 students and their families. And really, just very quickly, I won't go through all of this, but the second set of standards I want to draw your attention to as well is some alignment with the in-task standards. You all probably be familiar with these because these are the standards that really lay out a generally agreed upon vision for teaching.

**0:23:43.7 Margaret Caspe:** And you'll see that working with families is present in 8 of the 10 standard areas, including learning development, learning differences, learner environments, planning for instruction, instructional strategies, professional learning, and especially leadership and collaboration, where teachers are specifically called upon to respect families' beliefs, norms, and expectations and work collaboratively with families to engage in mutual ongoing communication. And so just to close the loop and finish our methodology, in phase five, we engaged in a series of focus groups. And in phase six, we conducted a large-scale national study with over 500 family-facing professionals to understand how those competencies can be validated. So, Reyna, I'm going to hand it back over to you at this point because I want you to share a little bit about how these core competencies can be embedded in a larger system of educator preparation.

**0:24:50.3 Reyna Hernandez:** Absolutely. We will share with you just very briefly this educator preparation framework that we have been working on, as Maggie mentioned. So, it's available to you, but we have other sessions where you can learn more about it. Ultimately, for this space, we just really wanted you to see and understand a little bit of our thinking around just systemically, what does it look like when this is incorporated into educator preparation? Because ultimately, the core competencies themselves, it's very challenging content to learn from reading a chapter in a book. And so the preparation framework itself gives you examples, it gives you some case studies, some very concrete actions that can be taken within educator preparation programs.

**0:25:43.8 Reyna Hernandez:** But one of the key things, as you look at the framework itself, is really thinking about this focus area, if you look at the far left, about partnerships. I really, for this conversation, wanted to make sure that we hit home this point that the partners involved, educator preparation programs are often leads on this work. But for this work to really happen well, and you'll hear more from examples later, this work has to happen in partnership with community and family organizations or partners, with schools and districts that are the placements, that are the mentors, that are often where practice opportunities are taking place. And also those state education agencies, the regulators, accreditors, the bodies that are overseeing licensure and supporting educator preparation programs.

**0:26:42.1 Reyna Hernandez:** If there isn't that kind of coordination and alignment, a lot of this becomes really challenging. And so what we're putting forward in the framework is really thinking about shifting and rethinking how programs are designed, creating new opportunities, both through coursework and also through field experiences, that create opportunities to start living and experiencing family and community engagement. And that requires policy and systems to change. It really requires, and for that to happen, often we're talking about advocacy and mobilization, because change doesn't just happen on its own. And we know that there is a need, a great need for this kind of work, but oftentimes, and we'll talk about this in a minute, it just feels like the field is saturated. There are so many things that need to happen.

**0:27:31.5 Reyna Hernandez:** So being able to really focus on this is important. We think ultimately what this is going to lead to, amongst other things, is having a much more interconnected system and leading to educators who really can reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead. And we'll talk more about that in just a few minutes. It was so great when we saw the educational ecosystem approach that BranchED Alliance uses, because it just perfectly aligned and resonated for us. As we think about our teacher candidates and teacher educators, just that beautiful mirroring of saying, effective family and community engagement happens in partnership, so effective preparation should also happen in partnership. And really thinking about the role communities play, the role that schools play, is so key.

**0:28:21.6 Reyna Hernandez:** So, what would you say is the biggest barrier for you in preparing educators for family and community engagement? And we know that there are many other reasons, but we're just throwing out there a few of those. Too many other courses, a partner school's limiting contact candidates might have with families, it being seen as an add-on, or it not being part of policy. It's not a requirement for licensure, for accreditation, or it's not within the standards in a way that we have to address it. And if there are other challenges, feel free to drop those in the chat.

**0:29:02.6 Reyna Hernandez:** Okay, we're seeing both the add-on, the too many courses, and this idea of saturation in the field in a lot of ways. All right. So, with that, here are some



of the barriers that department heads reported. Ultimately, as we asked them in the survey, too many courses overwhelmingly came up. And it's come up in conversations that we've had this idea of having to add one more thing. And then in a number of contexts, the idea that the schools that are receiving candidates were not reinforcing or creating opportunities for that family and community experience. But then there were also challenges around licensure, faculty support, the familiarity that the faculty themselves who should be teaching this have with family and community partnerships.

**0:30:02.8 Reyna Hernandez:** And you can find the rest of these findings kind of more fully in the report if you're interested. So, what does this look like in practice? I will... As we're looking at this work, a lot of programs say, "We want to do this. It's important, but we don't know how." So, we're going to share some of the experiences that we've seen very, very closely through an innovation grant project that we hosted. The idea behind this innovation grant was to really incubate new ideas. Think about how the framework overall speaks to a variety of different levers. But what does it look like as each institution is really looking at their own context and implementing at least one innovation aligned to that framework that we shared.

**0:30:57.9 Reyna Hernandez:** And creating a platform for the sharing of ideas, sharing out some of those practices, starting to create a space where all of these bright spots can really gain more moment and energy. So, we have nine projects that have been working over the last year. And they spent basically six months implementing an innovation. We're now continuing to track the kind of the progress. And we're going to talk a little bit about some of the overall takeaways that we've learned from the innovation project. And then share back what that looks like as we think about each of the core competencies and how there are different strategies that might work for your institution around that preparation.

**0:31:47.2 Margaret Caspe:** So as Reyna mentioned, on the screen you see the map of where each of our innovation grantees are doing their work all the way from Washington over to Maryland and New York. And before we go into some of the nitty gritty and examples of how these programs are making incremental change and family and community engagement. We just wanted to share some of the emerging outcomes that in aggregate these innovation grantees have brought about. So through the workshop courses, field experiences, focus groups, data summits, book clubs, all of the activities that you're going to hear about in a few moments.

**0:32:23.7 Margaret Caspe:** What we found from the data collection that took place in each of these individual sites was that teacher candidates began to increase their engagement with families. Became more inclined to stay in education, increased their confidence in their ability to engage with families, and became more connected to community. Assignments, projects, and curriculum became more family-centered. Practicing educators, those mentor and collaborating teachers who worked with education candidates themselves became more knowledgeable around family and community engagement and increased their

capacity to teach family and community engagement. We saw that faculty increased their confidence and knowledge and also that families and communities themselves became more engaged in the educator preparation process.

**0:33:26.3 Margaret Caspe:** So, on the screen, we're going to share what each of these nine grantees have done. And we're going to put them into the lens of Reflect, Connect, Collaborate, and Lead. Reyna, do you want to share a little bit on the background of Reflect?

**0:33:51.0 Reyna Hernandez:** Absolutely. So, when we talk about Reflect, we're really thinking about, first, how you honor, respect, and value families. Get to know them, understand their funds of knowledge, really see families as experts in their own lived experiences, in their children, in their communities. And think about how you can build from those funds of knowledge. The second area around Reflect for us is really thinking about both embracing equity throughout practice. Equity is not something we like to put in a box, but here it's really important to be intentional about both looking inward, thinking about your own biases, your own experience, your own story. And understanding that of the families and how history, context, really play a role in the relationships that we're going to be building together. And understanding how all of that interrelates. So Reflection, in some ways, is very much a foundation, but it's also something that's always happening throughout practice.

**0:35:00.9 Margaret Caspe:** So I'm going to share a really great example of Reflection from our innovation grantees from Bank Street College Graduate School of Education over in New York. This project is being led by Jessica Charles and Sooyoung Park. But in partnership with Bronx Community Charter School and the Bank Street Head Start program, the innovation engaged in a series of focus groups with families and children to really redesign and understand its early childhood special education preparation program. So, faculty and pre-service teachers and practicing teachers together really had a chance to reflect on what's valuable in a teacher and what we want teachers to know and be able to do to engage families while they're learning. And as you see on the screen, even children got a chance to do some reflections, as well as draw some of their favorite teachers and what they enjoyed most about seeing families and teachers joining together.

**0:36:02.3 Margaret Caspe:** Another really great example of Reflect comes from our colleagues at Michigan State University led by Patricia Edwards. And their innovation really focused on using case studies, just like the one that we used at the beginning of this webinar. But using case studies to help collaborating teachers, as well as pre-service teachers, reflect on really difficult real-life dilemmas that happened around family and community engagement. And two hold book clubs where collaborating teachers could really raise questions that they had and learn from different collaborating teachers from across different states in how to solve those problems. And what we're finding from that work is that that act of reflecting is starting to really improve how mentor teachers mentor

education candidates in their clinical experiences around family and community engagement.

**0:37:15.1 Reyna Hernandez:** And so, the second domain area of Connect has two competencies. Again, first, thinking about and actually putting into action building those reciprocal trusting relationships with families. Recognizing that until there is that kind of trust, oftentimes there can't be additional collaboration or expectations. And building trust requires having effective communication, transparency, following through on commitments made to families, being welcoming and supportive. And really recognizing that not all families may feel comfortable showing up sort of at the school. Family engagement can take place in a number of different places. Really being intentional about reaching the families that may not just show up at the beginning or that may not be responsive or be connecting is really important. And then fostering community partnerships, both to support learning and the well-being of the family as a whole. Recognizing that kids live in community, that oftentimes the school doesn't have to be all things for all children. But through those partnerships, there are ways of supporting families across different needs and experiences.

**0:38:50.5 Reyna Hernandez:** But it's important to not only know who those partners are and build relationships with them, but also make sure that others who are reaching and touching those families have that information. So if you're the parent liaison and you're building those partnerships, do educators within the school know how to access those resources or who to reach out to? So it's about building those systems and networks to make sure that we can reach families and address family needs in different ways. And recognizing that those community partners can be a real asset, even for the training of teachers. So the partnerships can really be very supportive.

**0:39:16.0 Margaret Caspe:** Yeah, and from our innovations, we actually have some really great examples of ways that educator preparation programs are really taking the work of preparing educators and moving it into the community so that education candidates have an opportunity to really connect and build relationships with families and community partners. For example, one of our grantees, Evergreen State College, led by Michael Bowman and Kate Napolitano, they have been working to really strengthen their community teaching pathway degree program, which really focuses on teachers in high school. And often, we don't think about family and community engagement with secondary teacher candidates, but we do know from research that family and community engagement is just as, or even more important in those later years. So, what we know from their work is that they have partnered with a number of indigenous local communities and a number of health and land-related projects to really create community gardens and spaces where curriculum in STEM and literacy and language can value and uphold indigenous communities' knowledge and be incorporated into the curriculum.

**0:40:41.9 Margaret Caspe:** Another really neat example comes to us from Loyola University of Maryland's Center for Equity, Leadership and Social Justice in Education, who partnered

with Townsend University in Baltimore. And this is being led by Jessica Schiller and Stephanie Flores-Koulish. And in their innovation, education candidates were placed for their clinical experiences in community schools, which many of you might be familiar with, is really a model where in-school services are wrapped around by out-of-school service supports, like after-school programs and early childhood programs.

**0:41:21.6 Margaret Caspe:** And community schools are really held together. The glue of them comes from community coordinators, those family advocates and family liaisons. So education candidates for their clinical experiences were placed not just with mentor teachers in the classroom, but were actually paired with community coordinators for 10 hours a week to really do the hands-on work and hands-on projects of what a community coordinator does. And one other project I really want to point to here is an innovation led by Walicia Scaife, who's a pastor at Union Missionary Baptist Church, and worked in partnership with Eva Zygmunt from Ball State University, in which they really worked together to create a welcome to the community orientation, so that all education candidates, whether they are in a clinical experience or doing volunteer work, are required to come to an orientation about the community, led by community members who share the cultural wealth and share just the strengths that the community brings and the history of the community, so that any education candidate who steps forward into the school or community is really knowledgeable about the history and the strengths that the community brings. So that's an exciting example as well.

**0:42:49.5 Reyna Hernandez:** The third competency area is around collaborate. So in a lot of ways, I tend to think of this as being one of the major applications of that understanding families, going through the reflection process, building those trusting relationships with both families and community partners, collaborating then, in a lot of ways, the fifth competencies around co-constructing learning opportunities with families, recognizing that it's not enough to just understand and know that families have these funds of knowledge, but being able to apply that to pedagogy. We have a Center for Family Math, for example, where we really talk about math in context. Not every family engages with math in the same ways, but math is present in all households. So how do you understand what that context looks like and then apply that? And so, there's some really phenomenal examples of these activities happening both in school and at home and in after school that reflect things that are happening every day where kids go, "Oh, we just did that, or we're about to do that for Christmas or for the holidays."

**0:44:03.6 Reyna Hernandez:** So, recognizing kind of in the sixth competency area that it's really essential to link family and community engagement to learning and development. It's great to do events that are for networking, for informing families about what's happening in the school. That's really important. But families can also be part of the learning process. And so thinking about ways of reaching families around literacy, Math, SEL, just really bringing in information. The number one question parents tend to have is how is my child doing? So sharing that data and understanding. So, Maggie will share some examples of collaborating.

**0:44:46.1 Margaret Caspe:** I'm going to share two really cool examples. The first example comes from our friends from the Indiana University School of Education led by Jeremy Price and Christina Santamaria Groth. And they're working together within a family as faculty model. And family as faculty actually comes from the health field. But the idea is that family leaders actually come into classes and become the faculty members and teach the courses, both in university settings, as well as outside in community settings, so that education candidates are having that opportunity to learn directly from families and seeing them as the experts from the beginning. So, the project that they're working on is, like Reyna said, really helping to see education candidates to see really the strengths that families bring, both in STEM, as well as to children's learning, especially those families of children with special needs. And in the second example, our colleague Francis Harper from the University of Tennessee partnered with three really innovative community partners, including Muse Knoxville, which is a children's museum, El Centro Hispanico, which is a full-service community center for Latino families throughout the community, as well as for the love of reading.

**0:46:17.8 Margaret Caspe:** And families within each of those community spaces came together to help develop modules for education candidates, so that these modules could be used by different faculty across the curriculum and slotted into the curriculum. And in a moment, I can share in the chat box a link to those modules that have been developed in partnership with families and those community providers. So, Reyna, do you want to share the last and final competency?

**0:46:55.4 Reyna Hernandez:** Sure. LEAD really captures a couple of things. This is one of the areas when we look at other standards, there's a professionalism to sort of where we see leadership. And this is true across, these competencies apply to family-facing professionals, whatever your sphere of influence is, whether you are a principal that has a lot of authority within a school, or sometimes we have parent liaisons or family specialists who say, "You don't have very much authority." What can I change? But for the first part, really understanding you're a lifelong learner, this is a process that is not a destination that you've arrived to, and being part of professional learning, professional growth, understanding that this is work that could be measured, could be evaluated, could be assessed. It's not just a nice to do, this is really a core part of practice. And then advocating for systems change, whether you are the person who has the authority to make some of those changes, or you're someone who is working day to day with families, and you're seeing some of those systemic issues, some of the challenges families are facing in engaging, and you're able to really champion to bring those voices in, recognizing one of the major equity issues, and I just want to draw your eye to that 8B, this idea that our systems, in order to be equitable within education, we have to bring the voices of those who have traditionally been marginalized.

**0:48:33.4 Reyna Hernandez:** And that takes a lot of intentionality, and that takes building

that trust, building those relationships, building those skill sets. So really thinking about how we can be drivers and change agents for this work, so that it's not such a challenge to engage families, and for families to be engaged.

**0:48:53.6 Margaret Caspe:** And I know we're running towards the end of our time, but just some quick examples of what this looks like in practice. The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is an organization that works throughout Kentucky, and as part of their innovation work, they have been partnering with multiple educator preparation programs throughout the state, in partnership with their Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, to create family and community engagement coursework, based on the family engagement core competencies that educator preparation programs can use throughout the state. And then the final sort of leadership innovation that I want to highlight comes to us from the Colorado, sorry, Department of Higher Education, and the Colorado Department of Education. As a statewide initiative, they bring together their educator preparation programs throughout the state, with parent leaders, to talk about educator preparation of family and community engagement in a community of practice on a monthly basis. And this group, as part of their innovation, developed a series of survey tools that we'll be publishing soon, widely, for everyone to be able to use. But these survey tools have been co-created and co-designed with families, so that educator preparation programs can use them to help design and improve and continuously augment the work that they're doing.

**0:50:36.3 Margaret Caspe:** So we wanted to close with one final poll, because we know that we're going to have an opportunity in the future to speak again in a workshop setting. So, taking all that we've learned today about the core competencies, in which area would you maybe want to learn more, or would you maybe need the most support in thinking about how you might begin to embed the core competencies into your work? We're thinking about Reflect, Connect, Collaborate, and Lead. And it looks like a pretty even distribution across connect, collaborate, and lead. Oh, with Collaborate coming in [chuckle] at the last moment. Looking for how can we really focus on this notion of collaborate, and especially really co-constructing our work with families, communities, and educator preparation programs. I want to say thank you. I'm going to hand it over to Reina for some closing thoughts on her end, and then I know we're going to pass it back to Kim in the BranchED folks. But Reyna?

**0:51:53.3 Reyna Hernandez:** Yeah, no, I guess I would just say this is really challenging work, but for us it has to come from a place of equity, seeing families as actual true partners in this work, and seeing communities as real sources for creating and contextualizing opportunities for educators to really work with not only students, but also the families. And understanding the context that students are coming from. So, thank you for for all of the time you've spent with us today, but hopefully if you're interested in learning more, we will be sharing more resources.

**0:52:38.5 Kim Igwe:** Thank you so much. The chat, the Q&A are lit up. People are excited.

And the innovative projects especially got people ignited, and they have some questions for you. The first one is, "I am interested in engaging my EPP in innovation in this area of family and community engagement. See the sparks, the interest, the innovation. Are there grant opportunities that you can direct me to?" So I know that's probably by state, by state, but if there's any suggestions you would give folks around grant opportunities.

**0:53:20.4 Reyna Hernandez:** One of the things, I think funding is always a challenge. We keep an eye out, track us at some point, there may be another opportunity. There isn't one just yet. But we're seeing movement in states to try to create either opportunities or resources. The state of Connecticut, for example, is exploring the idea of being able to create a grant opportunity like this one for EPPs in their state. We're trying to create more opportunities for sure, but one of the neat... When we put out this, the innovation grant project, I'll share with you that the max someone could apply for was \$17,500. These were very small grants. We were concerned we weren't gonna get six, which is what we were looking for. We knew we had some colleagues that were interested, but we didn't want it to be just the EPPs we already knew. We ended up receiving 76 applications and it was very short turnaround. And what we've heard back from a number of those EPPs, we've encountered them in other spaces after the fact, and one of them said, "Hi, I just wanted to introduce myself. I had applied for your program and I didn't get the grant." [laughter]

**0:54:38.4 Reyna Hernandez:** I'm so sorry. She's like, "No, no, no. I wanted to thank you all because the grant opportunity forced conversations for partnership," and this was one of the other questions where someone had said, "Well, is the school a partner on all of these? Because if the school isn't a partner, then things don't necessarily work very well." We totally agree. And they said in order to design a project where we had required, you have to have an EPP, you have to have at least one community partner, school, district, parent group, they started those conversations. They co-designed this quick turnaround opportunity, something that often doesn't happen. What we'd heard is some EPPs, will like, they'll approach the school and say, "This is what we're doing. We need we need to play some teachers," or they'll approach a nonprofit and say, "We'd like to create this opportunity. Here, they were thinking together, they were designing together, and so we've heard from several of the folks that didn't get the grant, that conversation created expectations, it created energy, and we're going forward anyway.

**0:55:44.2 Reyna Hernandez:** We're not going to be able to do a couple things like create certain stipends or things that we were going to use with that bit of money, we've realized that like we can pull from someplace else, or we're pitching it to a foundation or kind of a local funder.

**0:56:00.7 Margaret Caspe:** And I think, Reyna, I'll just, I'll tag on to that. One of the things that we've been hearing in aggregate from our innovation grantees is really that, thinking about where funding comes from doesn't necessarily have to come from the EPP side. There's a lot of community foundations that can fund work like this, and the funds don't

even need to go to, I know that sometimes institutes of higher education have really high overhead costs, whereas community organizations or schools, that might be less. So, because this is such a collaborative partnership, finding creative ways was really something that was a lesson learned among our innovation grantees for that.

**0:56:48.6 Kim Igwe:** Last question before time runs up on us, the surveys you shared and designed, will they be available or are they available for folks to use and adapt if they'd like?

**0:57:01.2 Margaret Caspe:** Yes, those are available on our website, and I can drop the link in again. And if, in most cases, the questions and items are available within the reports, but we can also, if you contact us, we'd be happy to share those with you. Because one of the things that Kentucky did as part of their innovation grant is they took those items and they did a very Kentucky-focused survey, a statewide survey of the National Survey, and actually received information that was very much aligned to what we received at a national level. So we'd be more than happy to share that with you as well.

**0:57:44.6 Kim Igwe:** So much, Maggie, Reyna, thank you for sharing, for igniting us, for sparking interest, and really getting us ready to go in thinking about how we can all take our next step in ensuring we're including everyone in the conversation. So thank you so much. I am going to share the book that is out. It just was released, I believe, this week from NAFSCE, and our two panelists here are the editors of this book. So I highly recommend you grab your phone right now, get this QR code, which will take you to the book so you can get your own copy. I know I'm excited to have mine for this winter holiday. So make sure you grab your copy so you can continue in on this conversation and continue thinking about this. If you want to further engage with this webinar is X, we have captured some highlights from the webinar there and would love to connect. You can find us at Branch Alliance. In addition to learn about events like this one, please connect with us on social media, our website, and our resource portal.

**0:58:55.9 Kim Igwe:** Our upcoming Nuts & Bolts series, we're going to take a little break for the holidays, and we will be back in February for our next Nuts & Bolts webinar, a father's place, the important role that fathers and families have in their child's education with Michael Hall from Strong Fathers, Strong Families. So please register there. He's fun to learn from, I can say, as an attendee of one of his webinars. And we also have a virtual workshop coming up in February. We would love to have you there. Those are a little bit more, a little longer and a little bit more engaging, and you can register for that now. It's cultivating welcoming classrooms and communities.

**0:59:40.3 Kim Igwe:** Lastly, we would love to hear about your experience today, so please take a moment to fill out this quick poll. And we will see you next time in February for our events. Again, thank you to our presenters, Reyna and Maggie, thank you so much for sharing. I can't wait to read the book and learn more from both of you. Thank you so much. Thanks all for joining. Have a great rest of your day.



**1:00:07.8 Margaret Caspe:** Thank you.