Implementing Successful Community Engagement Across Targeted Districts: A Study
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Purpose
This document was created with the purpose of understanding the steps successful districts are taking to increase purposeful engagement throughout the community. This document further seeks to serve as a potential model for districts interested in increasing engagement within their own communities.

Summary and Methodologies
The following case studies were based on conversations with board members and district superintendents during a three-week period beginning in early November 2015. Each district was identified based on support from MSAN president Madeline Hafner for their ability to successfully implement community engagement strategies that influenced outcomes for kids. Each profiled district is a member of MSAN, with the exception of Cecil County, Maryland, which was identified through support from the Center for Public Education and the National School Public Relations Association.

Community Engagement refers to the creation of processes or structures involving collaborative practices between groups seeking a shared vision. The word "engagement" was self-defined by each district individually and tailored to the needs of the individual district. Some districts adopted a more structured definition of engagement practices, while others viewed engagement as an ongoing conversation centered around fundamental relationship building and inclusion within the community. Districts adopting structured definitions often built engagement structures geared toward including a targeted population, while districts adopting a relationship-based approach created a variety of engagement opportunities stemming from community conversations.

Prior to the development of individual case studies, research and literature reviews were completed to identify both direct and indirect areas of focus within engagement structures. Potential districts were identified through this process for their successful implementation of engagement practices (see included reference document). Each case study was developed through a series of conversations, often involving the support and input of both Board members and district leadership. After completion of each case study, it was checked for accuracy by the corresponding district and approved for dissemination to the District 97 Board for purposes of resource sharing and best practices.

Research Questions
All Board members and district staff were asked the following questions, in order to frame the conversation and allow for comparisons throughout district profiles:
1. How did you choose which issues to center your engagement around?
   a. What were the steps leading to the identification of issues?
   b. Which community partnerships, if any, helped support issue identification?
2. Can you briefly outline which engagement practices led to your successful implementation of these strategies?
   a. What were the timelines involved in each phase of implementation?
   b. What necessitated these specific engagement structures?
3. What was the community reception to these engagement strategies?
   a. How did these engagement practices lead to student achievement?
   b. If applicable, how did community reception shift over time?

Key Findings
1. Having a strong mission and vision for the end-goal of the engagement strategy is essential. Each district was purposeful in determining which communities they wanted to engage further, and often had different engagement strategies broken down by individual school need and targeted demographics. Each approach was tailored according to the unique needs of each individual community.

a. Understanding which engagement practices work on a school level v. a wider district level, and how these practices can work collaboratively, impacts student success
b. Utilize different strategies to increase the engagement of all community members outside of structures that may not promote inclusivity
2. Forming the foundations of the relationship first, before asking for engagement support, is important for building trust. Some districts utilized principals or teachers in helping to identify and link relationships to the parents or community members they wished to engage.
3. Successful engagement practices were often developed by engaging community members "on their own turf" and away from district buildings. This allowed for a more comfortable, inviting setting for community members to engage away from the alienation of a separate space.
a. Focusing on foundational relationship building without an agenda builds trust
4. Creating a feedback loop for engagement strategies based on need serves best practices
a. These processes are continual and can shift according to changing demographics and community need
5. Visibility in your community is essential for trust building

Each district profiled has a demographic overview in order to provide a snapshot of the students served within the district. A brief profile of District 97 is provided below for context and comparison.

Overview and Demographic
District 97
Enrollment: 5950 students
Demographics and Composition: District 97 is racially and economically diverse, and includes a low ELL student population. There are 22% students qualifying for free/reduced lunch. The total English Language Learner population is 2%; 15% are students with disabilities. The district student racial breakdown includes the following: 57% White; 21% Black; 6% Hispanic.
Schools: 8 elementary schools; 2 middle schools.

For reference, we also provide statistics for two of the schools in the district. Horace Mann Elementary School has the least racial diversity, with a majority white, affluent population. 74.3% of students are white; 6.3% are Black; and 4.1% are Hispanic. The homeless population has hovered between 0-1% for the past five years, and 6.7% of students are identified as low-income and receive free/reduced lunch (FRL). Irving Elementary school is the most diverse school within the district. 51.6% of students are White; 23% are Black; and 9.1% are Hispanic. There is a homeless student population of 4%, and 27.2 percent of students are identified as low-income and receive FRL.

The following case studies are meant to provide examples of potential engagement strategies that may be implemented based on the unique needs of District 97.

Study 1: Farmington School District, Michigan

Interviewee
Naomi Khalil is the Director of Instructional Equity of the Farmington Public School District in Michigan.

Overview and Demographics
Enrollment: 10,000 students
Demographics: ¼ of all enrolled students are English Language Learners (ELL), with over 100 languages spoken within this population. 27% of all enrolled students are African American, and 10% are Asian. The district is a majority minority district, and 26% of the student population qualifies for FRL.
Composition: 6 years ago, the district had 12,000 students at 19% F/R; 10% Asian and 20% African American with about 15% ELL.

Program Beginnings and Community Need
Farmington has an "incredibly powerful" PTA board at every school within the district. Most PTA boards include predominately white and economically advantaged families. The PTA is well-structured, but not representative of the district's demographics. Sheila Clay, a current board member, studied the academic data of the district and approached the superintendent about engaging underrepresented Black families and community members through coffee nights at Sheila's home. By having the conversations in Shelia's home, and not in a district building, parents and community members felt more comfortable participating in the conversation, since it was within their own neighborhood. These coffee nights promoted dialogues about test scores for Black students, and led to the development of the Farmington African American Parent Network (FAAPN).

Engagement Practices Leading to Successful Implementation
The Farmington School District has been intentional about wanting their voices and engagement practices to be as diverse as their population. They have developed models that target elementary parents, so that their engagement efforts can move up as their students age, and structures can strengthen over time. Some engagement areas include the development of the following:

Farmington African American Parent Network: The FAAPN began as a very grassroots organizing structure, and had support from the district in terms of facility usage. FAAPN developed from the need of the district to have representation for Black families and community members apart from the majority white and privileged PTA structure. The district studied research that shows that intra- and inter-racial groups are needed to best represent and support the needs of the community. FAPPN was initially driven by a core group of 30 parent leaders predominantly at the high-school level, who led the inception of tutoring services for at-risk students identified through academic data offered through the schools. These tutoring services were 100% parent-run and supported by Naomi as the Director of Instructional Equity for the district.

Current FAAPN leadership is run by elementary parents. Many of FAAPN's struggles originate from its replication of PTA structures; as a result, FAAPN can have the same barriers to engagement as the PTA. As Naomi acknowledged: "Some of the challenges that we find are that membership and participation while initially wide reaching quickly turns into an exclusive group with "the know" and honor very hierarchical structures of organization (executive boards, membership fees, etc). A true break from these traditional structures, such as taking meetings to the parents homes, clubhouse, community centers and a rotating leadership structure, brings its own challenges, such as lack of consistency for communication. Traditional structures are often intimidating for parents that were not raised in our educational system (many ESL parents) or for parents that work multiple jobs and can't engage in these typical/traditional ways. We need to help all parent groups redefine what engagement looks like, which could be weekend activities or skills contribution (parents that work in construction, for example, maybe could lend their own skills to projects, etc). In short, traditional meetings with highly cerebral topics only cater to one type of parent, regardless of race, but it is this structure that gets replicated as it is what dominant culture has deemed as the model for parent groups."

In order to combat this, the Director of Instructional Equity is leading joint meetings between FAAPN and the PTA in forming a collective plan for collaborative engagement. One of the members of the PTA board has been named as a liaison to FAAPN to help bridge this structure.

Recognizing that ¼ of the student population are ESL learners, the district attempted to intentionally engage these families within a multi-engagement structure. The district realized that the representation of families from different countries was incredibly diverse, and families struggled with finding areas of commonality within this diversity. Title I funds were put into place for shared facilities for families to use and engagement forums and supports were offered within this space. Additionally, Title III funds have been allocated for various staff led parent outreach meetings, educational forums and support classes for English language learner families.

Successes and Reflections: Farmington asked families and parents what they needed in order to support engagement work between the district and community. These conversations were held within the communities they wanted to target. FAAPN was successfully developed because it was held within the community in which they wanted to increase engagement, and members felt comfortable to organize when the meetings were within their own communities, instead of a school or district building. This led to a redevelopment of engagement strategies within the district that were based on conversations within the community, and provided a model of success.

Through conversations and surveys with families, FAAPN shifted their structure from all-member monthly meetings, to an events-based structure that is more task-directed. From these survey information, FAAPN developed literacy nights, recruiting fairs for colleges, and tutoring initiatives.

Study 2: Arlington School District, Virginia

Interviewee
Dr. Rosa Briceno is the Family and Community Engagement Specialist in the Department of Instruction for Arlington Public Schools.

Overview and Demographics
Enrollment: rounding numbers: 25,000 students
Demographics: Highly diverse student population hail from 96 nations and speak 81 languages. White students are about half of the student population (47%); Latinos are 28%; Black/African American 10%; Asian 9%. 31% are on FRL
Composition: There are 23 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 4 high schools, 1 secondary grades 6-12 and 4 other programs. Schools in the southern half of Arlington are more diverse than schools in the northern half, which is also more affluent and more White.

Program Beginnings and Community Need
Arlington has many initiatives and programs to serve families, and a long established volunteer and partnership program that brings business and professional people as resources into the schools. However, the district has been lacking on some key organizational conditions that research has shown are critical for school systems to be able to sustain and scale up efforts across the school system. For several years, the leadership has wrestled with the question of how to go about creating a more integrated, systemic and coordinated approach to engaging families and community in student learning.

Engagement Practices Leading to Successful Implementation
Exemplary Project on Family Engagement
In the late 1990s, schools were given the opportunity to establish special projects to address particular needs in their school communities. Project Interaction, developed in 1997, has focused on promoting family engagement at Barrett Elementary. At the time of its inception, Barrett was comprised mostly of immigrant students. The student composition has changed in the past decade and currently about 50% are Latino while the White student population has grown from 15 to 40% reflecting changes in the housing market. Project Interaction provides the resources needed for a teacher to be dedicated to designing and implementing a family engagement program that is aligned with district goals and the school's management plan, responsive to the needs of the school community, and integrated into the school's yearly calendar of activities.

Dr. Briceno began surveying families and staff to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities. Based on this and other periodic needs assessment, she implemented a wide range of strategies grounded in the research and best practices in the field. Successful programs operating to date include a monthly library night program, a Hispanic parents group that volunteer and meet on a weekly basis, a school compact, a heritage and cultural identity educational program, K-Days and Pre-K Days, and PARTICIPA, a series of workshops to help immigrant families navigate the school system.

PARTICIPA Workshop Series
In 2010, with support from the ESOL/HILT program that serves English language learners, PARTICIPA was developed into a curriculum to be used system-wide. It is designed for immigrant parents who want to deepen their understanding of how the school system works to be able to navigate it effectively in order to strengthen their ability to support and advocate for their child's education. The curriculum consists of workshops on topics such as Walking the Educational Path from K to the University, Asking Effective Questions, Interpreting the Report Cards, and Knowing Parents Rights and Responsibilities.

PARTICIPA has been offered in partnership with Edu-Futuro--a local non-profit organization dedicated to empowering Latino students and their families--in several of Arlington's elementary schools with a high percentage of Latino population. About 500 parents have graduated from PARTICIPA since 2010. The plan is to expand this program to all schools with high number of Latino students as well as offer it to parents from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds

Scaling UP: Family and Community Engagement Working Group
In 2013, the School Board appointed a citizens working group charged with reviewing Arlington's community engagement policy and identifying a framework to guide the district's work in this area. The group was facilitated by School Board member Dr. Emma Violand-Sanchez, a former ESOL/HILT Supervisor and a strong advocate of family engagement.

This workgroup drafted a new FACE policy that encapsulates Arlington's vision for effective family and community engagement and provides a working definition, set of standards and district responsibilities in this area. This group also made a number of recommendations including:
1. Appointing a FACE Action Team co-chaired by both a parent leader and a senior administrator who work together to develop an implementation plan that is well-designed, integrated and owned by all partners
2. Create a FACE specialist position to facilitate systemic coordination and technical assistance with capacity-building and collaboration between the various school departments and community organizations. The working group felt strongly that this position should be in the Department of Instruction since FACE's ultimate purpose is to support student success in school and healthy social and emotional development.

Purposeful Engagement within Neighborhoods
Monica Lozano, an APS Minority Achievement Coordinator, led the effort to engage parents at Swanson Middle School in their own community, leading to increased minority parent participation. Monica held quarterly meetings with parents in a Community Center located in the neighborhood where many of their Latino families live. She also has held parent meetings in apartment buildings where many of the families reside. After seeing the success of engaging the community within their own neighborhoods, they led an initiative to provide students with tutoring and homework help at the community center through staff in the evenings. Monica has expanded her outreach initiatives to Gunston Middle School and is establishing relationships with community members through partnerships with the local church with the idea of holding meetings in the churches in which her community congregates.

Most Recent Steps
The school board adopted the new FACE Policy in Fall 2014. With their encouragement, the Superintendent took action to create a part time FACE Specialist position which in September 2015 became a position in the Department of Instruction. Dr. Briceno assumed that role and proceeded to form a FACE Action Team composed by parents, teachers and administrators who are helping to roll out and guide the work.

Main components of the work at this stage include:
1. *Developing the required Policy Implementation Procedure (PIP).* The FACE Action Team devised a mechanism for consultations with different groups of stakeholders to inform the PIP. The draft was submitted to the senior leadership in June 2015 and the school system adopted it November 2015.
2. *Branding FACE*—currently working to design a FACE logo and website as well as a strategy to educate staff and families about new policy and framework. Social media helps with branding.
3. *Identifying best practices in the schools.* FACE specialist is surveying schools to identify what is working in order to build on strengths and offer peer to peer learning opportunities.
4. *Building parent leadership capacity.* In 2014, Dr. Briceno launched an initiative to develop leadership capacity among immigrant parents with support from ESOL/HILT and the county Council of PTAs and a second Parent Leadership Facilitation (PLF) training was offered this past August. Many of them are PARTICIPA graduates and have now step up to serve in advisory committees and parent groups in their children's schools. PLF graduates (30 to date) have formed a Parent Leadership Facilitation Network that meets quarterly for additional learning and coaching with the FACE specialist.
5. *Providing family engagement opportunities linked to learning.* The school Board asked the FACE specialist to help plan a system-wide event with Latino families for 2015 Hispanic Heritage Month. Using the input received from consultations for the PIP about the need for more interactive and two-way communications with families, the event was turned into a community conversation that

targeted this demographic. After a plenary session with testimonies from a group of parents and students, parents engaged in circle conversations on questions of their interest. There were 14 topics and two rotations for a total of 28 circle conversations. Experts on the topic, as well as Parent Leader Facilitators, were assigned to each circle conversation to make sure there was opportunity for interaction. Feedback was very positive, noting the power of having meaningful conversations and seeing parents contributing in leadership roles. 160 parents and 140 attended. Parents left feeling equipped with ideas, information and contacts about programs, opportunities and support as well as energized and committed to work hand in hand with the schools in "harvesting dreams for our children."

Study 3: Harrisonburg School District, Virginia

Interviewees
Dany Fleming is a recently resigned board member of the Harrisonburg School District in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Dr. Scott Kizner is the current Superintendent of Harrisonburg School District, and J. Patrick Lintner is the current Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in the district. The Harrisonburg district has been a member of MSAN for two years.

Overview and Demographics
Enrollment: 5900 students, including the pre-K programs. There are 5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 1 high school within the district
Demographics: Most diverse population in the state of Virginia, with over 50% of the population qualified as English Language Learners speaking between 45-50 different languages in the district. The district has a high population receiving FRL, with 70-75% qualifying at any year
Composition: Growth rates are averaging a 4% annual jump, but there is low unemployment in the district and a stable economy owed partially to its position within a university town

Program Beginnings and Community Need
Engagement and outreach was necessitated by the high English as a Second Language (ESL) population in the district. Harrisonburg is unique in that they receive a high number of refugees each year, and may only get a month's notice that several families will be relocating to the district and need school accommodations. The district realized that they needed to develop a system of connecting with these families, or risk losing exposure, since they often had difficulty navigating the school systems independently. They also knew that trust was key to engagement; as a result, many engagement practices were completed in neighborhoods and communities in which the Board wanted to target.

Harrisonburg's engagement practices are not based on a strategic, structured model; as Superintendent Dr. Kizner states: "it's a mindset—we exist because our communities send their kids to our schools and we want to provide as many engagement practices as possible. The message is heard; people feel very open about engaging and asking questions." The district has been intentional about developing engagement practices outside of the PTA or PTO structures, and instead focuses on outreach to support relationship building.

Engagement Practices Leading to Successful Implementation
The district built professional development geared at engaging their staff in feedback around support services that were benefiting the students new to the district. The district was intentional about engaging these staff members because they valued the time staff invested with these families. Some program developments include the following:

Newcomer Program: At any point, the district may have a large percentage of its student population who has not had prior exposure to the English alphabet, or have varying degrees of mastery of the English language. Specialists work with these students in small groups within controlled environments in order to track progress before students enter the larger classroom. There is a Welcome Center to welcome new families into the district, and translators are provided to help families navigate school structures.

Home-School Liaisons: The district has home-school liaisons whose sole job is to go to homes and meet newly arrived families. These staff members partner with counseling support staff, and are mission-aligned on the importance of developing the social-emotional needs of the child before they step into the classroom. Many newly arrived families are skeptical of the district since they aren't familiar with the systems or resources within the larger district. The home-school liaison acts as the point-person for bridging the initial fundamental relationship, and in helping families navigate the process.

All home-school liaisons are assigned schools and serve the entire school district. These full-time staff positions partner with the principal to identify school need, and reach into the community to provide constant support to the families they serve. Their role is separate from the home-visits from teachers,

which also take place multiple times during the school year and serve to create relationships between teachers and families.

Staff and Leadership Visibility: Starting with the superintendent, home visits are completed across grades within the district. The superintendent attends all community meetings and is incredibly visible. The principals lead home visits with the ESL population, and with students who have been "gap-identified" as at-risk. Staff members continue these home visits with these identified students, in order to create a foundation of trust. The home-visits are not aimed at providing academic solutions; rather, the goal of the home visits is to build the beginnings of a relationship between the staff and leadership at the school, and targeted families in order to create long-term investment.

The district is intentional about modeling the core value of Trust within their engagement practices by engaging families within their own neighborhoods. These trust structures include parent-student relationships; parent-staff relationships; and district-family relationships. The district engages the community on their own turf, outside of the school or district buildings. Elementary and middle schools will identify a housing project and descend on that community with board games and snacks, in order to encourage students to come out. These small movements help build the foundations of trust because they take place outside of the classroom, in spaces where families feel comfortable to engage.

Using these trust-based engagement practices, the district was able to create investment in needs-based pre-K programs through family relationships. The district prioritizes creating the foundation of their relationships with families who are about to be parents, so that they can have relationships with these families as their children enter the school system. 100% of students in these free pre-K programs are on reading level by grade 3.

Uniquely, the district also creates partnerships with the health department and other organizations as necessary to promote transparency in addressing problems students may be facing. Through conversations with community members, it was identified that some high school students may struggle with the introduction of a new drug in the community. Instead of dealing with the issue solely within the individual high school level, the district created health partnerships and developed resources for kids. The district further shared these resources with community members in the school board meetings in an effort to promote transparency.

Equity and Excellence in the Classroom: The district has developed a STEM program and fine arts academy for middle-to-high school students and uses data to ensure that there is equity throughout the programs. The district studies graduation rates and rates of representation throughout all AP coursework and have incorporated integrated learning practices into their classrooms. They have dismantled the majority of "gifted" programs, and have developed inclusive classrooms strengthened by the investment of coaching programs for teachers in differentiated instruction practices. The district weathered the flight of parents, mainly White, 8-10 years ago in response to rising rates of ESL students and inclusive classroom structures, and have families re-entering the district as the district has established itself as one of the local leaders of academic success and proficiency.

The district has also engaged families and students by offering literacy workshops and strategies aimed at English Language Development. These reading strategies are used, in turn, for the entire population of students, since they target word development. The district further uses data to identify non-ESL families to target GED training programs for families.

Using the adopted phrase "equity through excellence," the district is intentional about understanding that high and struggling performers come from all parts of the demographic diversity. There is a strong push, led by the Superintendent and School Board, for a culture shift and competency in the organization, since few faculty members reflect the international and low-income population. In response, the district has created a Division Leadership Team comprised of about 60 people who meet monthly and focus on creating "equity through excellence." The group reads 1-2 books per semester in order to drive discussion topics, and brings in speakers on related issues. The board will also read the books in order to remain mission-aligned. This has created constructive, continuous and informed conversations among staff and

has promoted an atmosphere of productivity and risk-taking. The Division Leadership Team also utilizes data in identifying issues and possible solutions.

Utilizing Partnerships for Purposeful Engagement
The district has created partnerships with the following organizations to increase participation, build trust and allow for a myriad of representation within the community.

Inter-faith Council: The Superintendent serves on a committee of church leaders within an inter-faith council representing leaders of various churches and places of worship. As a representative of the school district, the Superintendent is able to build on the relationships with these various stakeholders, and use them to integrate members of the community.

Business Advisory Council Partnership: The district and business leaders recognize that the school community and business community are on a parallel track, and success is interrelated. The district uses the interest of their student population to create internships with private and public businesses in the community as a way to create a system of support between local business leaders and graduating students. The district works with students in supporting them through mock interviews and work skills, and local businesses mentor students within the business sector.

The district hosts events with businesses interested in participating in this mentorship through a "principal of the day" program. The business leaders spend an authentic day with the principal, learning about the processes involved in leading a school. The principals, in turn, spend a day with the business leaders, creating a professional relationship between the two parties. The district is currently in the process of building two new schools, and leveraged these relationships with local business leaders to help support the budget.

The district has also helped create business partnerships for initiatives for Latino students to attend college, and is constantly involved in conversations for expanding learning opportunities for students.

Local Universities Partnership: The district partners with James Madison University to create residency programs for aspiring teachers around working in a diverse community. The district further partners with Eastern Mennonite University in creating development around restorative justice principles and the district supports their staff in enabling them to reach certification in this area through graduate level coursework. The Superintendent meets with these two local universities twice a year to identify new areas of partnership in course design, based on the needs of the district schools.

The district has also created a collaborative partnership between the Carnegie Foundation and James Madison University to work with the middle schools in reflecting on teaching practices and in supporting students in self-reflection on their own identification as learners. This is part of Carnegie's research science in building a networked community, and allows staff to partner with other members nationally and attend development on improving student productiveness, understanding non-cognitive practices, and the practices and values that each contribute to student engagement and achievement.

Rotary Club Partnership: In order to supplement literacy practices and increase senior involvement in the community, the district has created a partnership with the Rotary Club aimed at partnering seniors with elementary schools. These seniors work with elementary students in the mornings and have led to further principal-led volunteer programs for the elderly within the schools.

Study 4: Cecil County School District, Maryland

Interviewee
Dawn Branch is the current school board president of Cecil County, Maryland. The school board of Cecil County has focused on increased family and community engagement as its targeted growth area for the past several years, and has laid a foundation that has led to engagement growth and increasingly positive community feedback. Dawn is an active member of the National Boards Association and works with their engagement workshops.

Overview and Demographics
Enrollment: 15,859 students
Demographics: The poverty rate is 44.64%, but can be as high as 72.71% in some schools, with the lowest school percentage of poverty around 24%. The homeless population includes 740 students. There are 233 students qualified as ELL
Composition: The district includes 17 elementary schools; 6 middle schools; and 5 high schools, with 1 qualified as a technology-focused high school

Program Beginnings and Community Need
Cecil County initially framed engagement practices over a desire to increase support for the budget. From indirect feedback through board and town hall meetings, the board understood that there was a huge lack of trust from the greater community. The board identified the following as areas of concern that needed a targeted response: 1. lack of community trust, despite transparency in budget line items; 2. community representation from a core group of parents, with little diversity; 3. a lack of inclusion for community voice outside of those most directly affected by the school system (students, parents, etc.).

The school board first developed parent engagement through the developed of the SAC (school engagement committee). In order to be inclusive, the committee was intentional in its selection of parents, who were identified and led by principals at each of its 30 school sites. The school sites developed their own meeting agendas and times, and met as a whole group a few times a year to share best practices.

Engagement Practices Leading to Successful Implementation
Parents were invited to board meetings outside of budget season to tell their unique story within the school system. Parents shared concerns that they felt personally impacted the success of their students, including increased class sizes, lack of resources, lack of support and teacher preparation. Each school had representation, and principals sought out parents who were often not included in the core group of parent supporters with the intention of hearing a more representative voice.

The school board also benefited from including business stakeholders through the implementation of BEPAC (Business and Education Partner Alliance Council). BEPAC includes members who are separate from the parent engagement group, and creates mentorship opportunities between local businesses and students. With the support of the board, each business is partnered with one of the individual 30 school sites, and specific internship opportunities are offered for students at these sites when possible.

BEPAC serves just under 16,000 students at these partnership sites. Local businesses have the option of creating mentorship and/or financial partnerships, and have a voice in supporting the Cecil County Public School system at the local and state levels. The board gets a monthly report on the status of these partnerships, the students served, grants to schools, and tracks the impact of this program.

Contacts and References

Madeline Hafner, Executive Director of the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN)
Naomi Khalil, Director of Instructional Equity for Farmington Public School District, Michigan
Dr. Rosa Briceno, Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Arlington Public Schools
Dany Fleming, former Board Member of the Harrisonburg School District, Virginia
Dr. Scott Kizner, Superintendent for Harrisonburg School District, Virginia
J. Patrick Lintner, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Harrisonburg School District, Virginia
Dawn Branch, School Board President for Cecil County, Maryland

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