



Advancing Family and Community Engagement

A Regional Collaborative

The Region 15 Comprehensive Center (R15CC) is federally funded to provide high-impact, customized, and responsive capacity-building technical assistance to state education agencies (SEAs) in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah.

In 2022, R15CC established a regional Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Collaborative for SEA leaders in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. The needs-sensing work undertaken during the development phase highlighted several characteristics of the region's family and community engagement leadership efforts. Understanding how these characteristics affect the consistency and distribution of programs and services across each state critically impacted the design of this FACE Collaborative.

Design Best Practices

Designing a Leadership Collaborative

Needs-Sensing Insights

The four-state collaborative aimed to address current obstacles standing in the way of effective family and community engagement efforts. R15CC staff engaged in designing and implementing the Collaborative uncovered key insights through a needs-sensing process:

- **Diverse leadership structures:** During the design and implementation of the Collaborative, it became evident that leadership structures for family and community engagement varied significantly among the four states.
- **Communication challenges:** Limited information sharing and communication across SEAs impeded progress.



- **Coordination complexity:** The absence of streamlined coordination efforts within each state posed difficulties in assessing the scope of family and community engagement activities.

Building a Strong Collaborative Leadership Infrastructure

Defining and articulating meeting processes centered on building relationships, pooling knowledge, and sharing research laid the foundation for a robust collaborative leadership infrastructure.

Fostering Collaborative Leadership

The Collaborative's efforts resulted in a regional network of leaders who

- **Supported each other:** Leaders supported each other in building an active practice-centered knowledge base.
- **Shared best practices:** Leaders shared and discussed current resources and evidence-based best practices.
- **Learned from experts:** Leaders learned from experts about emerging and effective family and community engagement practices.
- **Amplified impact:** Leaders amplified their teams' work in the states.
- **Inspired partnerships:** Leaders inspired partnerships to design and implement effective family and community engagement practices.

Collaboration in Action

Participatory Systems Approach

The participatory systems approach in the Collaborative's design and practice fostered relationship building, collaboration, and active knowledge acquisition.

Building State-Level Leadership Capacity

- **Empathy was incorporated into the design process.** The needs-sensing work brought forward specific strengths and leadership opportunities unique to family and community engagement. The Collaborative created a space to build professional relationships in an environment of mutual trust by validating the strengths of practice and sensitively uncovering pain points as opportunities for growth.



- **Inclusion was embedded in the infrastructure.** To have fruitful collaborations, it was important to understand how and where family and community engagement initiatives are planned and implemented in each state. Are activities coordinated by a single department or created in a disbursed environment? When developing the four-state collaborative, a key objective was to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing across and within states regardless of each state's structure.
- **The consultancy protocol developed leadership.** Each leader had the opportunity to invite the team to think expansively about a specific family engagement problem of practice. Through a structured process, the team participated in a rigorous discovery discussion that supported the leader in developing the next steps.

Promoting Leader Agency

The Collaborative promoted leader agency to explore and innovate new family and community engagement practices.

A Collaborative Vignette: Envisioning a Statewide Family and Community Engagement Award

Alberto Quintero, Nevada's Education Programs Professional for Family and Community Engagement, wanted to create a competitive award celebrating family engagement efforts. He collaborated with regional colleagues and found the support and motivation to bring his vision to life. Through the consultancy protocol, he shared his vision and received valuable feedback while discovering new tools and strategies. Alberto now updates the Collaborative on his progress, completing the cycle of support.

Leaders in this four-state Collaborative hold this much-valued space to share knowledge and contribute to developing innovative projects they can implement in their state.

Chronicling Success

As the Collaborative's efforts continue, both as a collective and among individuals, it is vital to disseminate insights and refined practices and recognize significant accomplishments. The R15CC will share 'Bright Spots' that document the region's family and community engagement best practices.