



## Assistant Principal *Ex*celeration

### Show Notes, Episode 25: Parents and Community

About this show:

“We need to increase family engagement.” I hear this all the time. We know what we want from families, but do we know what families want from us? Today’s episode will take us beyond reading rallies and pizza nights and even beyond my favorite parent event - donuts for dads. Today we focus on what teachers can do to build stronger parent partnerships and how school leaders can support those partnerships.

#### Notable Quotes

**Leigh Ann Alford-Keith**

“We need to be addressing power dynamics that are present in the ways that our schools are set up. When we focus on events and when we focus on what we can do for families instead of what families can do for us, we are perpetuating the typical power dynamics in a school and that excludes a lot of our diverse families”

“we want to provide culturally relevant instruction, but we don’t necessarily know about their cultures. And their families do know about their cultures, so if we engage their families as partners and there is information available to us, information that the family has about the way that their children learn or what is culturally important to them, that is not information we are able to have on our own”

“If we aren’t seeing families as partners, we are missing out on really important information that could help us better educate their children”

“We talk a lot about social emotional learning and the whole child, but the whole child includes the family”

“Research tells us that effective family engagement increases teachers’ efficacy and they feel that they are better able to do their jobs”

“Sometimes the parents come to us in a combative way because of their past experiences. Because they did not have the best experience in school, because they experienced being ostracized”

“Even teachers who would never say ‘those kids’ will say ‘those families’. In fact, there are interesting studies that indicate that teachers’ perceptions of families become more negative in their first year of teaching because it is something that we indoctrinate each other into.”

“There is a lack of trust between schools and families”

<https://www.frederickbuskey.com/apex-members-page.html>



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“We want our schools to be community centers, and that’s why it hurts us when nobody comes to our events... if our events were surrounded around something related to a community goal... those events are well attended because they relate to community goals and what is important to the community”

“Families know who respects them, who is coming from a place of genuine inquiry, who views them as a partner and who doesn’t.”

### **Frederick**

“When we think about events, we are thinking about tasks. Partnerships are first and foremost about working with people in ways that grow all of the participants”

“When parents come in and they are combative, they are advocating for their kid, and they are doing what they think they should be doing as parents... If we can see those actions as advocacy, then we are flipping the script from “this is an angry, uneducated parent” to “this is a parent who really cares about their kid””

“Looking at the school as a part of the community more than just the community being a part of the school is so important and is just a mind-shift”

“Change begins inside and how we look at these things. And I think that is a message we don’t really like to hear because it feels kind of squishy... but that inner work is doing something, and sometimes that is the hardest work. And if you can’t flip your inner narrative about how you view families, then all of the other stuff, won’t be wasted, but it won’t have the impact”

“Teachers have to be willing to be vulnerable. We have to be willing to say ‘I don’t have all of the answers’”

### **Links:**

My email: [frederick@frederickbuskey.com](mailto:frederick@frederickbuskey.com)

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