

# NCSE

- The National Center for School Engagement
- An initiative of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children
- Launched in September 2003
- Promotes school success



# Mission

*To ensure school success for at-risk youth and their families by improving school engagement.*



# School Success

- Children and families are engaged in learning in their schools to ensure achievement and school completion for every child.
- School, Family and Community partnerships are created and result in achievement and school completion for every child.



# School Success

- Children and youth are educated, literate, and critical thinkers
- Communities have high rates of school completion and graduation
- Nationally there is an educated workforce and community of life-long learners



# Strategies

- Identify and promote best practices that are evidence and research-based
- Collaborate with schools, families/communities, private/public agencies, courts and law enforcement



# Strategies

- Utilize approaches that are culturally competent, family-centered, and strengths-based
- Implement methods to integrate the *3 A's of School Engagement*

ATTENDANCE  
ATTACHMENT  
ACHIEVEMENT



# 3 A's of School Engagement

- **Attendance**—Schools, families, courts, and law enforcement use culturally-responsive, evidence-based strategies to improve student attendance.
- Includes reducing truancy, addressing barriers to attendance, and issues of high mobility.

# ATTENDANCE



# 3 A's of School Engagement

- **Attachment**–Schools establish meaningful connections with youth and their families through caring, support, and mutually-defined expectations.
- Includes after school programs, prevention and family support programs, parent/school collaborations, welcoming school environments...

# ATTACHMENT



# 3 A's of School Engagement

- **Achievement**—Communities, schools, and families assure that students have the tools and resources to complete courses and graduate from high school. Involves planning for success, closing the achievement gap...

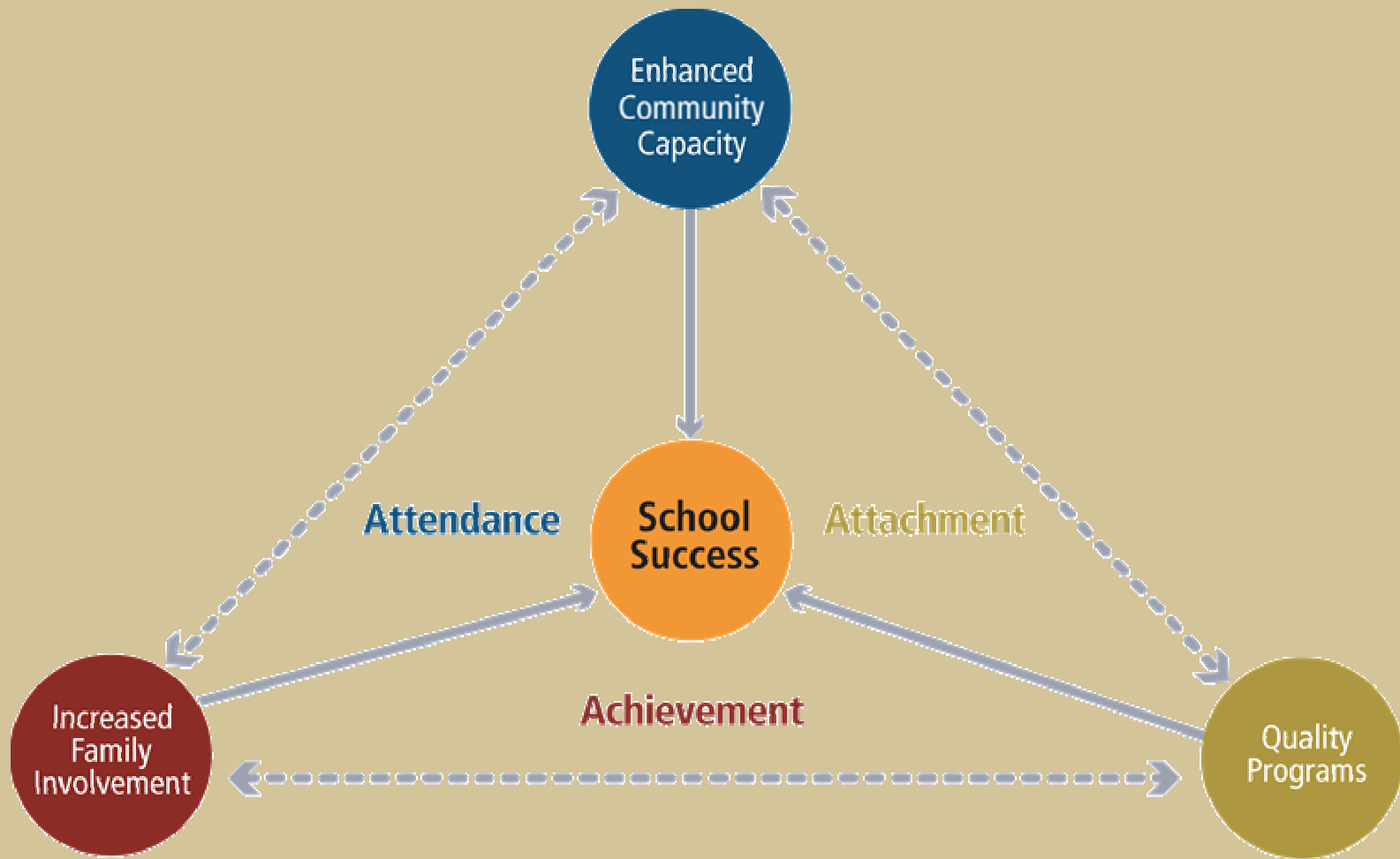
# ACHIEVEMENT



# Theory of Change

- School success is based on integration of attachment, attendance, and achievement.
- NCSE uses the Theory of Change to develop and implement strategies that ensure school success and school completion.





# Components

- Advocacy and leadership development
- Knowledge and information sharing
- Research and evaluation
- Training and technical assistance



# Partners in School Engagement

- Sponsors
- Public and Private Partners
- Families and Students
- Juvenile Court Systems
- Law Enforcement and District Attorneys



# Stakeholder Groups

- Local Communities
- Local and State School Systems
- Policy Makers
- Researchers and Evaluators



# Stakeholder Groups

- School Administrators and Teams
- Service Providers addressing truancy, bullying, homelessness, health issues, dropping out of school...
- Students





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**Lessoned Learned**  
**2005-2006**

# Overview

- **What Is School Engagement?**
- **Why is it Important?**
- **What Have We Learned?**
- **How is it Measured?**
- **What's Next?**



# School Engagement?

Integration of the 3 A's



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# **“Real life” examples of policies, practices, and strategies**



# A “Compulsory School Attendance” law for children and youth 7 to 16 years of age

**What do you think?**

Does this legislation promote school engagement through high expectations?



# Suspending students for being chronically truant

**What do you think...**

Does this practice promote school engagement or does it push-out students?



# High Stakes Standardized Assessment Testing

**What do you think...**

Does this strategy promote academic achievement or promote push-out policies?



# **Keeping Lights On After School (programs, classes, community meetings)**

**What do you think...**

Does this strategy promote school  
engagement?



**We've often said to children,  
"You can be whatever you want,  
as long as you work hard enough."**

**But children need access and support  
in order for that to happen."**

*From: Engagement, Capacity and Continuity: A  
Trilogy for Student Success"*

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# Importance of School Engagement

## When students are not engaged...

- they are less likely to stay in school
- less likely to achieve
- more likely to have discipline issues



# Lessons Learned

- Parent Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Student Engagement

*ATTENDANCE*  
*ATTACHMENT*  
*ACHIEVEMENT*



# Parent Engagement

- Provide a **variety of opportunities** for schools, families, and communities to work together.
- Base programs upon “**mutual respect and interdependence of home, school, and community.**”

*Source: [www.directionservice.org/cadre](http://www.directionservice.org/cadre).*



# ***Parent Engagement Models are most effective when they ...***

- **Build on strengths** of the family and culture of the community
- **Develop mutually-respectful relationships** between students, families, school staff, and community members



*Models are most effective when they ...*

- **Clarify the roles** of all parties involved
- **Expectations are explicit**
- **Identify goals** and define success



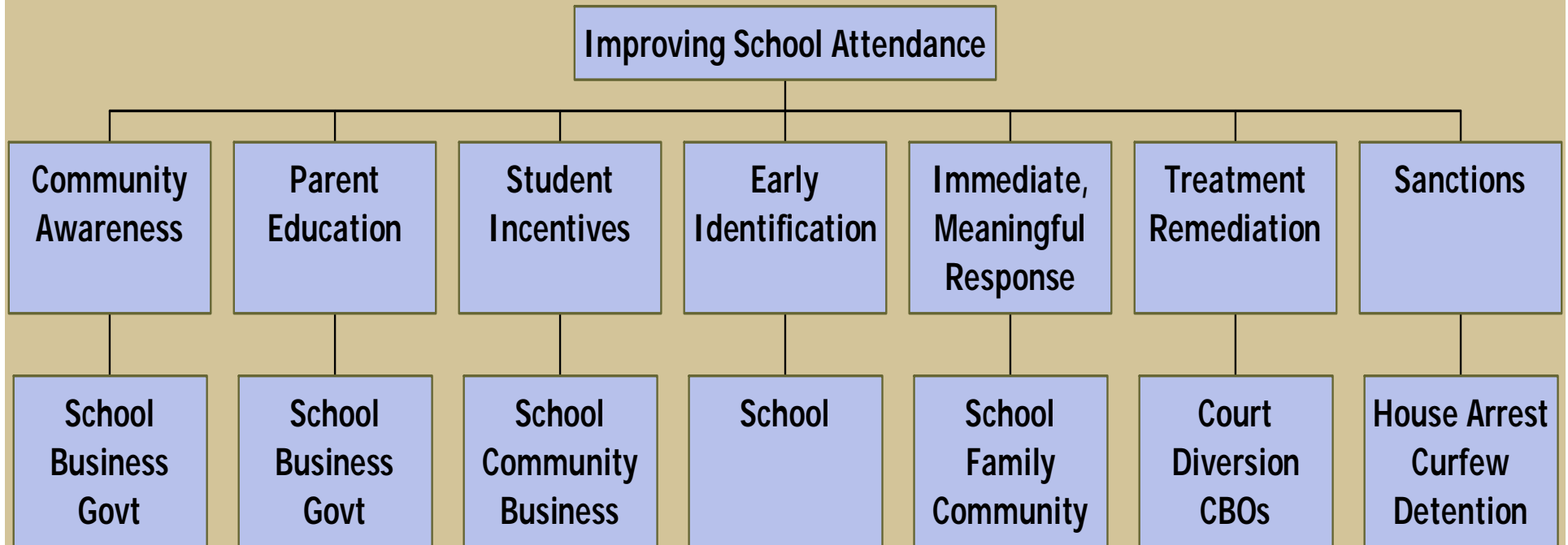
# Community Engagement

Resources and services from the community strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

*Source: Epstein's 6 Type of Parent Involvement*



# A Continuum of Support



# Welcoming Schools

- What do people see when they visit your school?
- Does the school entrance invite visitors in or keep them out?
- How are visitors welcomed in the front office?



# When planning events and activities remember...



**FOOD**



**FUN!**



**FAMILY**



# Measuring Student Engagement



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# Why Student Engagement?

- An antidote to declining academic motivation and achievement
- Engagement is malleable
- Schools can do something about it
- Routes to engagement may be social or academic
- Stems from classroom opportunities for participation, social relationships, intellectual challenge



# What is Student Engagement?

- It is the connectedness or bonding that students feel to school.
- It incorporates the idea of commitment or investment in one's education.
- Can be influenced by relationships with teachers and peers, class work, studying, school behavior, and more.



# Behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional Engagement

- **Cognitive engagement** is the effort students put into mastering school subjects.
- **Emotional engagement** includes the feelings students have for teachers, classmates, academics, and school.
- **Behavioral engagement** involves positive conduct, classroom participation, and involvement in school-related activities.



# Emotional Engagement

## Example Questions:

- I like most of my teachers.
- My classroom is a fun place to be.
- Most of my teachers praise me when I work hard.
- I feel like I belong in my school.
- When I first walked into my school I thought
- it was good.



# Cognitive Engagement

## Example Questions:

- I try my best at school.
- I read extra books to learn about things we do in school.
- I study at home even when I don't have a test.
- I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.



# Behavioral Engagement

## Example Questions:

I come to class prepared.

I treat my classmates with respect.

I treat my teachers with respect.

I follow the rules in school

I pay attention in class.



# Attachment Surveys

- Developed by examining existing school engagement research and choosing questions from other instruments
- Existing school engagement research varies in terms of how rigorous it is.
- Tested first version of student engagement on National Truancy Reduction Model Demonstration program funded by OJJDP



# Moving Forward

- Continue to **collect schoolwide data** from middle and high schools
- **Conduct focus groups** with students who are high achieving, at-risk, and ethnically diverse about the survey questions.
- **Publish the instrument** in peer-reviewed scientific journals.



# What's Next in Measuring School Engagement?



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# Creating *Triple A Schools*

School reform must be matched by a will to assess and cooperatively deliver an environment in which **every student**, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, special need, or income has tools necessary to succeed...

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***We need your expertise and  
experience to help  
school communities  
in self assessing...***

*ATTENDANCE*

*ATTACHMENT*

*ACHIEVEMENT*





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***WELCOME***

***and***

***Thank You For Your Attendance Today!***