

Family Members on Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Teams

This fact sheet complements the *Family Members on Teams* video produced by Formed Families Forward, family partner to VTSS. The video features a staged meeting and interviews with family members and educators sharing practical suggestions for including family members on decision-making teams.

Strategies for Recruiting Family Members

- Recruit family members who have shown interest in school improvement.
- Recruit family members from diverse backgrounds with students of all ages so the team is representative of the school or division.
- Communicate that family voice is essential and will impact the success of all children.



Decision making in VTSS requires the voices, ideas and perspectives of family members on teams. The inclusion of family members on teams is critical to the successful implementation of the 6 components of authentic family engagement:

- Positive Relationships
- Family Empowerment
- Data-based Decision Making
- Leadership
- Multidimensional Communication & Multi-tiered Approaches
- Collaborative Problem Solving

Sustain the Commitment of Family Members so They Stay Engaged

- Explicitly welcome perspectives that family members bring.
- Take ideas family members raise seriously and implement ideas as appropriate.
- Review data with family members so they can see improvements have occurred as the result of their participation.
- Recognize family member efforts by incentivizing, providing feedback and communicating the value of the commitment.



Running Inclusive Meetings Where Family Members Feel Welcome and Valued

- Be respectful of time. Start and end meetings on schedule.
- Begin meetings with introductions.
- VTSS team leader facilitates meetings.
- Explain the reasons for and value of team behavior norms.
- Acknowledge and restate points made by family members.
- Help family members learn by explaining essential education practices.
- Avoid acronyms and terms family members might not know.
- Be alert to nonverbal cues. Follow up on indications a family member wants to speak or share an idea.
- Keep meetings on topic. Avoid mentioning specific names during meetings.

