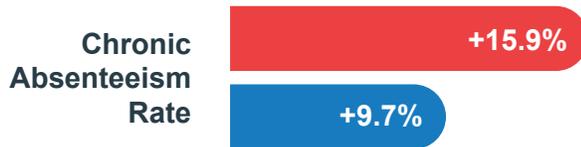


# Our mixed-methods Family Engagement Impact Study investigates the relationship between family engagement and student outcomes.

## STAGE 1 FINDINGS (QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS)

While student attendance and learning outcomes got worse during the pandemic, schools with strong family engagement experienced much smaller increases in chronic absenteeism, and smaller decreases in attendance and achievement.

### Average change in outcomes from 2018-19 to 2021-22



■ Weak Engagement    ■ Strong Engagement

### Additional Key Data

- ★ A school's pre-pandemic family engagement was more strongly related to chronic absenteeism than the percent of low-income students it serves.
- ★ These findings applied to different types of schools – elementary/middle/high; urban/suburban/rural; in low/mid/high poverty communities.

### Data Sources & Methodology

- ★ Strength of family engagement is measured using the Involved Families index on the [5Essentials](#) teacher survey, which is administered statewide in Illinois.
- ★ Strong family engagement is for a typical school that scored in the 90th percentile on the Involved Families score. Weak family engagement is for a typical school in the 10th percentile.
- ★ We used statistical models for this analysis, controlling for a wide range of publicly-available data on school and community characteristics.



Scan or click here for the full report.

# STAGE 2 FINDINGS (QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS)

We identified “Bright Spot” schools – those that consistently outperform expectations on family engagement – and compared them to “Partner” schools in their same community. We found four distinguishing factors that set Bright Spot schools apart.

## Distinguishing Factor 1

### Mindsets: Families as Equal Partners

Educators and families emphasize a shared belief that they are on the same team and are equal partners in helping students succeed.

## Distinguishing Factor 2

### Leadership: Clear Vision, Inspiration, Expectations & Infrastructure

Leaders provide a cohesive vision for family engagement and inspire their staff by modeling its importance, communicating clear expectations, and creating accountability structures.

## Distinguishing Factor 3

### Communication: One-on-One, Academically Focused, Unwavering

Schools emphasize proactive, consistent, and persistent communication with families in one-on-one interactions focused on academics.

## Distinguishing Factor 4

### Relationships: Personal & Enduring

Schools show evidence of deep, personal connections with students and families that extend beyond the school building and the school year.

### Additional key data:

- ★ We found that Partner schools were more likely to describe barriers to effective engagement—and when Bright Spots mentioned barriers, they were not treated as insurmountable
- ★ In communities with large English Learner populations, Partner schools emphasized traditional supports like translation, while Bright Spots also emphasized practices that go beyond what’s required, such as student-mediated interactions to bridge cultural differences.

### Data Sources & Methodology

- ★ We created an expected 5Essentials Involved Families score using publicly available data (e.g. enrollment, per-pupil spending, low-income percentage). We then compared expected scores to actual scores, allowing us to identify “Bright Spots” that outperform expectations, as well as matched Partner schools that closely resembled their Bright Spot peers, but had weaker engagement and lower outcomes. We then built a representative sample of matched Bright Spot-Partner pairs for the state.
- ★ We conducted 100+ one-on-one interviews at Bright Spot and Partner schools, including every principal, and dozens of teachers and families. Family interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.
- ★ To code and analyze the interviews, we combined the work of human researchers with a secure, private generative AI platform.



Scan or click here to see the Technical Appendix with all Stage 1 & 2 methodologies and findings.