



Determining Alignment of State-Level Family Engagement Frameworks with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies: A South Carolina Crosswalk

Kathleen Mooney

Megan Orleans

July 2024

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Determining Alignment of State-Level Family Engagement Frameworks with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies: A South Carolina Crosswalk

The information in this brief provides an example of how State Education Agencies (SEAs) can identify areas of alignment between their state-specific family engagement frameworks and the national NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies, using South Carolina as an example. When implemented, the suggested data crosswalk methodology outlined in this report can be used as a tool by SEAs to foster cross-agency strategic discussions regarding the continuous improvement of state-sponsored family engagement resources.

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Mooney, K., & Orleans, M. (2024). *Determining alignment of state-level family engagement frameworks with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies: A South Carolina crosswalk*. Greensboro, NC: SERVE at UNC Greensboro.

With grateful acknowledgement to Regina H. Thurmond, Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Liaison, South Carolina Department of Education, for her collaboration with SERVE to conduct the crosswalk between the SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework and the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies upon which the examples are created.

A copy of this publication can be downloaded from: The Region 6 Comprehensive Center website at: <https://www.region6cc.org/resources>.

This document was prepared by the Region 6 Comprehensive Center under Award #S283B190055 for the Office of Program and Grantee Support Services (PGSS) within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) of the U.S. Department of Education and is administered by SERVE at UNC Greensboro. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the PGSS or OESE or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

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A. Introduction

The South Carolina State Legislature, as well as the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), have identified family and community engagement practices as core components of student academic success. Similarly, leading organizations such as the [National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement \(NAFSCE\)](#) have been working nationwide to advance high-impact policies and practices for family and community engagement to promote child development and improve student achievement.¹ In recent years, both the SCDE and NAFSCE have developed resources to support the design and implementation of family engagement programs at the state, district, and local levels. Two of the resources developed include the [South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework](#) (SCDE, 2019) and the NAFSCE [Family Engagement Core Competencies](#) (NAFSCE, 2022). The SCDE developed its Family Engagement K-12 Framework in 2019 to improve family engagement practices across the state. After three years of research, NAFSCE published its Family Engagement Core Competencies in 2022 as a tool for enhancing and amplifying existing family engagement frameworks across the country.

The SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework is a resource guide of suggested actions schools and districts can implement to enhance the outcomes of SCDE's [Profile of a South Carolina Graduate](#)².

The information in this brief seeks to provide an example of how State Education Agencies (SEAs) can identify areas of alignment between their state-specific family engagement frameworks and the national NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies, using South Carolina as an example. When implemented, the suggested data crosswalk methodology outlined in this report can be used as a tool by SEAs to foster cross-agency strategic discussions regarding the continuous improvement of state-sponsored family engagement resources.

SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework

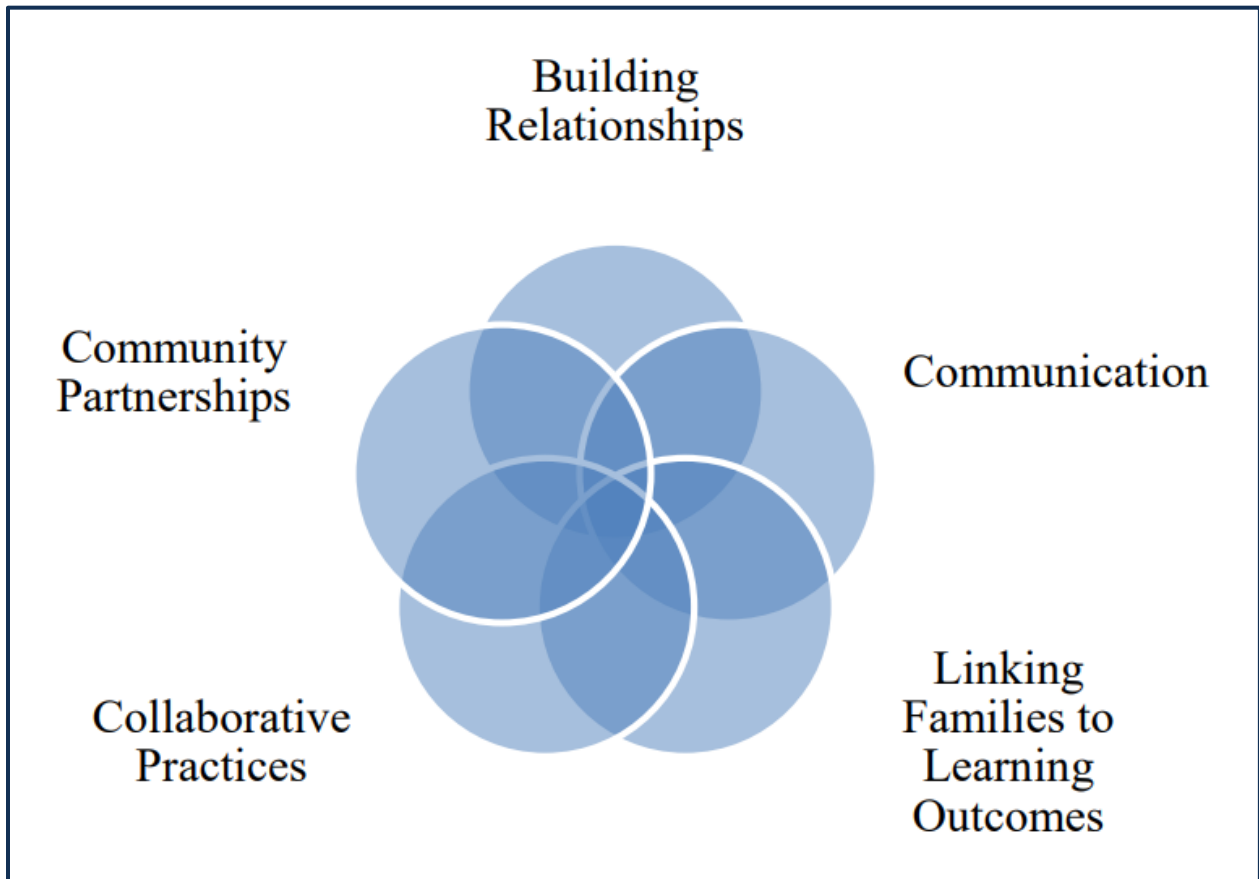
The SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework is a resource guide of suggested actions schools and districts can implement to enhance the outcomes of SCDE's [Profile of a South Carolina Graduate](#)². The Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) worked alongside a wide variety of stakeholders to identify the Family Engagement K-12 Framework's five foundational Strategies for Success: Building Relationships, Communication, Linking Families to Learning Outcomes, Collaborative Practices, and Community Partnerships. SCDE upholds the belief the identified strategies are not "stand-alone strategies but are interlinked to show relational

¹ National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE): <https://nafsce.org/>

² Profile of a South Carolina Graduate: <https://personalizesc.ed.sc.gov/pscg-competencies/>

significance” as demonstrated in Figure 1. (SCDE, 2019, pp. 4-5).

Figure 1. SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework: Strategies for Success



Source: South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework (p. 5).

NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies

NAFSCE worked for two years to “identify and understand the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that family-facing professionals bring to forming . . . strong family, school, and community partnerships” (NAFSCE, 2022, p. 1). Based on the findings, NAFSCE developed a set of nationally agreed upon professional competencies that family-facing professionals can apply in various contexts. The professional competencies are grouped into four domains that capture the core pillars of practice for family-facing professionals: reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead. NAFSCE researchers believe family-facing professionals do not progress linearly through each domain’s competencies; rather, they are continuously developing an understanding and awareness of how to combine multiple competencies and domains in practice. See Table 1 for descriptions of the competencies embedded within each domain.

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Table 1. NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies by Domain

| Reflect | Connect | Collaborate | Lead Alongside Families |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Respect, Honor, and Value Families a. Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities b. Explore, understand, and honor with families how children develop, grow, and change from birth through adulthood across settings, and how these changes affect families</p> | <p>3. Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families a. Cultivate mutual trust b. Communicate effectively c. Create welcoming environments d. Reach out actively to families, especially those who might be most underserved</p> | <p>5. Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families a. Build upon family knowledge as resources for learning b. Join together with families for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning opportunities and services</p> | <p>7. Take Part in Lifelong Learning a. Identify and participate as a member of the family engagement profession b. Engage in professional learning to grow family engagement knowledge and skills c. Use data to assess, evaluate, and improve family and community engagement</p> |
| <p>2. Embrace Equity Throughout Family Engagement a. Look inward to develop cultural humility, cognitive flexibility, and perspective-taking skills to practice anti-bias and equitable family and community engagement. b. Reflect on how history and social context influence family engagement systems and practices</p> | <p>4. Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing a. Build community partnerships to support children and families b. Establish systems to expand how families link to community resources c. Cultivate social support networks and connections among families</p> | <p>6. Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development a. Develop data systems that are accessible to each and every family b. Create conversations around developmental and academic progress c. Expand on family learning in the home and community</p> | <p>8. Advocate for Systems Change a. Identify and examine new and existing policies and practices to further family and community engagement b. Champion equity as an essential element of family and community engagement and stand with families for equitable educational systems and outcomes c. Reframe the conversation around family and community engagement to expand public understanding</p> |

Note: Table 1 was formatted from the original (NAFSCE, 2022, p. 8).

The NAFSCE competencies are designed to identify key practices individuals can employ to sustain an equity-centered, high-quality family engagement program. As noted in Table 1, each of the four NAFSCE domains has two associated competencies; each competency is then defined by specific practices family-facing professionals must implement to demonstrate competency alignment (listed as items a-d under each competency in Table 1).

B. Methodology

This report identifies a data crosswalk method SEAs can use to determine alignment between their state-level family engagement frameworks and the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies. Using South Carolina as an example, the results below outline how the suggested data crosswalk methodology identified areas of alignment between the SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework: Strategies for Success and the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies. For this report, the data crosswalk methodology used in the example considered SCDE strategies to be fully aligned with the NAFSCE competencies (represented by an ‘X’ in Table 2) if the SCDE strategy descriptions addressed (i.e., used the same or similar language and/or concepts) at least half (50%) of the specific practices of any associated NAFSCE competencies. Descriptions of how this data crosswalk methodology was used to determine the alignment status for each SCDE strategy are detailed in the following section.

C. Results

Table 2. NAFSCE Family-Facing Professional Competencies and SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework Crosswalk

| NAFSCE Domain | | Reflect | | Connect | | Collaborate | | Lead Alongside Families | |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| NAFSCE Core Competency | | Respect, Honor, and Value Families | Embrace Equity Throughout Family Engagement | Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families | Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing | Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families | Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development | Take Part in Lifelong Learning | Advocate for Systems Change |
| SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework Strategies for Success | Building Relationships | X | | X | | | X | | |
| | Communication | X | | X | | | X | | |
| | Linking Families to Learning Outcomes | | | | X | X | X | | |
| | Collaborative Practices | X | | | X | X | | | |
| | Community Partnerships | X | | | X | | | | |

SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework Strategies

Using South Carolina as an example, upon completion of the suggested data crosswalk method, it is evident the SCDE strategies demonstrate alignment to multiple NAFSCE competencies across several domains. The NAFSCE domains with the strongest alignment to the SCDE strategies include “Connect” and “Collaborate.”

When using the suggested data crosswalk method, the SEA may identify areas in their state-wide family engagement framework with limited to no alignment with a specific NAFSCE domain. It should be noted the absence of this alignment does not always imply a deficit in state-wide family engagement services or supports within the specific area(s). For example, as seen in Table 2, the current SCDE strategy descriptions did not demonstrate alignment with the NAFSCE “Lead Alongside Families” domain. However, this does not necessarily indicate a lack of advocacy and/or systemic initiatives supporting family engagement across the state; rather, it may suggest the current SCDE strategy descriptions do not capture broader advocacy and professional development work.

The following subsections provide detailed descriptions of how SCDE Strategies for Success align with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies. SEAs can leverage the South Carolina example provided in this report as a model for conducting their own state-wide family engagement framework crosswalk with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies.

Table 3. Building Relationships (SCDE) Detailed Strategy Alignment Crosswalk

| Strategy 1: Building Relationships | | |
|--|--|---|
| SCDE Framework Strategy Description | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Competency | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Practice |
| Foundation of building relationships begins with mutual respect, trust, and valuing diversity | Respect, Honor and Value Families | Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities |
| | Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families | Cultivate mutual trust |
| Relationships encompass the ability to communicate with the purpose of listening and learning | Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families | Communicate effectively |
| Relationships encompass the ability to apprise all partners and advocates of a student’s social-emotional and academic development | Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development | Develop data systems that are accessible to every family Create conversations around developmental and academic progress |

The SCDE “Building Relationships” strategy is aligned with several NAFSCE domains and competencies. The clearest alignment is found between the SCDE “Building Relationships”

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strategy description and the NAFSCE “Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families” competency. Both resources identify communication as a core component of trusting relationships. The SCDE “Building Relationships” strategy components of “listening and learning” are core practices of effective communication as described in the NAFSCE “Communicate Effectively” practices. Additionally, both the NAFSCE competencies of “Respect, Honor and Value Families” and “Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families” as well as the SCDE “Building Relationships” strategy names “trust, respect, and valuing diversity” as underlying components for sustaining authentic relationships between families and family-facing professionals.

The SCDE “Building Relationships” strategy is also aligned with the NAFSCE “Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development” competency. As seen in Table 3, both NAFSCE and SCDE believe successful school-family relationships are rooted in the ability to share information about students’ social-emotional and academic development through conversations and data with all families and advocates.

Table 4. Communication (SCDE) Detailed Strategy Alignment Crosswalk

| Strategy 2: Communication | | |
|---|--|---|
| SCDE Framework Strategy Description | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Competency | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Practice |
| Ability to convey and receive information from families and advocates | Respect, Honor and Value Families | Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities |
| | Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families | Communicate effectively |
| Establishing a two-way communication system using multiple approaches and methods | Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families | Communicate effectively |
| | Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development | Create conversations around developmental and academic progress |
| | Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development | Develop data systems that are accessible to each and every family |
| Clear and on-going communication between schools, families, and communities | Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families | Reach out actively to families, especially those who might be underserved. |

The SCDE “Communication” strategy is also closely aligned with both the NAFSCE “Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families” and the “Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development” competencies (see Table 4). Like the SCDE “Building Relationships” strategy, the SCDE “Communication” strategy identified “two-way, effective communication practices” as specific actions family-facing professionals can utilize to foster and sustain successful relationships with students’ families and advocates. It is assumed

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the ability to convey and receive information effectively, as stated in the SCDE strategy description, requires family-facing professionals to “respect and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities,” a specific practice outlined in the NAFSCE competencies. Therefore, there is also demonstrated alignment between the SCDE “Communication” strategy and the NAFSCE “Respect, Honor and Value Families” competency.

The SCDE “Communication” strategy appears to build upon the foundation of the SCDE “Building Relationships” strategy by more explicitly stating the importance of engaging in “multiple approaches and methods” of communication. The NAFSCE “Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development” competency then provides examples of multiple methods and approaches to communication (e.g., conversations, data systems) to further support alignment between the two documents. Additionally, the SCDE “Communication” strategy identified “ongoing communication” as a core strategy for successful family engagement. This action closely aligned with the NAFSCE “Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families” specific practice of “actively reaching out to families to create authentic, effective, and supportive relationships.”

Table 5. Linking Families to Learning Outcomes (SCDE) Detailed Strategy Alignment Crosswalk

| Strategy 3: Linking Families to Learning Outcomes | | |
|---|--|---|
| SCDE Framework Strategy Description | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Competency | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Practice |
| Connecting families to learning outcomes supports the cultivation of their buy-in for their student’s overall attainment of the <i>Profile</i> | Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families | N/A – The SCDE ‘Linking Families to Learning Outcomes’ <i>Strategies for Success</i> description did not define specific practices. |
| “...parents are more likely to become partners in their children’s education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices to involve parents at school” (Epstein and Dauber, 1991, p. 297) | Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development | |

The SCDE “Linking Families to Learning Outcomes” strategy description outlines several evidence-based outcomes schools and districts may achieve if they successfully engage families in student learning. The narrative overview provided for this strategy demonstrates high-level thematic alignment with three NAFSCE competencies: “Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing,” “Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families,” and “Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development.” The NAFSCE competencies of “Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing” and “Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families,” as well as the SCDE “Link Families to Learning Outcomes” strategy, address the importance of cultivating networks to support children and families, as well as fostering family buy-in.

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Additionally, the “Linking Families to Learning Outcomes” strategy suggests families are “more likely to become partners in their children’s education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices for involving [parents and caregivers].” This idea aligns thematically with NAFSCE’s “Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development” competency, as the competency’s specific practices outline actions practitioners can take to develop strong connections between families and student learning outcomes. Unlike the NAFSCE competencies, the SCDE strategy description for “Linking Families to Learning Outcomes” does not identify specific practices schools and/or districts can take to foster and sustain the connections between families and learning. This does not mean family engagement efforts in South Carolina are not utilizing specific practices to maintain connections between families and learning, but rather it may suggest the specific local level implementation efforts of this strategy are not captured within the statewide framework.

Table 6. Collaborative Practices (SCDE) Detailed Strategy Alignment Crosswalk

| Strategy 4: Collaborative Practices | | |
|---|---|--|
| SCDE Framework Strategy Description | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Competency | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Practice |
| Strive to bring families and staff together so they can learn from and with each other | Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families | Join together with families for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning opportunities and services |
| Relationships between families and practitioners are reciprocal and build upon the strengths of both parties | Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families | Build upon family knowledge as resources |
| Everyone is viewed through an asset-based lens: teachers, families, community members and students | Respect, Honor and Value Families | Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities |
| | Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families | Build upon family knowledge as resources |
| Collaborative practices allow for the sharing of information and working together to deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working in silos | Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families | Join together with families for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning opportunities and services |
| | Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing | Establish systems to expand how families link to community resources |
| | | Cultivate social support networks and connections among families |

As seen in Table 6., The SCDE “Collaborative Practices” strategy demonstrates strongest alignment with NAFSCE’s “Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families” competency. Both the SCDE “Collaborative Practices” strategy and NAFSCE’s “Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families” competencies emphasize the importance of bringing families together with school staff to learn from one another, share information, and work together to support enhanced student learning. Additionally, the SCDE “Collaborative Practices” strategy highlights the impact family engagement programs can have when all stakeholders are “sharing information and working together to deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively

achieved by working in silos.” This concept is supported by the NAFSCE “Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Wellbeing” competency as the competency names “[cultivating] social support networks and connections among families” and “[establishing] systems to expand how families link to community resources” as key practices for sustaining holistic student supports through family engagement programs.

The SCDE “Collaborative Practices” strategy exhibits alignment with the NAFSCE “Respect, Honor and Value Families” competency. Both sources affirm the essential practice of viewing all stakeholders through an asset-based lens. The SCDE strategy names the high-level practice (i.e., “viewed through an asset-based lens”) and the NAFSCE competency identifies the specific actions required to sustain an asset-based lens (i.e., “examine, respect and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities”).

Table 7. Community Partnerships (SCDE) Detailed Strategy Alignment Crosswalk

| Strategy 5: Community Partnerships | | |
|--|---|--|
| SCDE Framework Strategy Description | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Competency | Aligned NAFSCE Specific Practice |
| Mutual commitments and an ongoing practice in which community organizations and schools engage families in relevant and culturally suitable ways | Respect, Honor and Value Families | Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities |
| | | Explore, understand, and honor with families how children develop grow and change from birth through adulthood across settings, and how these changes affect families. |
| Community Partnerships can take a variety of forms | Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing | Build community partnerships to support children and families |
| Partnership activities also may have multiple foci; activities may be student, family, school, or community centered | | Establish systems to expand how families link to community resources |

The SCDE “Community Partnerships” strategy indicates the strongest alignment to two NAFSCE competencies: “Respect, Honor and Value Families” and “Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Wellbeing.” Like several other SCDE strategy descriptions, the “Community Partnerships” strategy emphasizes the foundational practice of engaging with families in “relevant and culturally suitable ways.” The NAFSCE “Respect, Honor and Value Families” competency builds upon this high-level theme by providing key actions schools and practitioners, including community partners, can take to foster and sustain culturally relevant programming and welcoming environments for families.

Additionally, the SCDE “Community Partnerships” strategy specifically names the importance of “on-going practice.” The NAFSCE “Respect, Honor and Value Families” competency continues to build upon this theme by encouraging family-facing professionals and community organizations to continuously “explore, understand and honor with families how children change from birth

to adulthood” and offer developmentally appropriate supports to families throughout this trajectory.

Lastly, both the NAFSCE competencies and the SCDE strategies highlight the importance of offering a variety of community partnerships to provide wide-reaching supports to the broader school community. The NAFSCE “Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing” competency identifies the key practices of “building community partnerships to support children and families” as well as “[establishing] systems to expand how families link to community resources.” The SCDE “Community Partnerships” strategy takes these practices a step further by naming suggested partners (e.g., universities, businesses, faith-based organizations, health care organizations) that schools and districts may consider involving when developing a strategic vision for family-centered community partnerships.

D. Conclusion

After implementing the suggested data crosswalk methodology, it is evident the current SCDE Family Engagement K-12 Framework: Strategies for Success demonstrates strong alignment with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies. Upon analyzing the crosswalk results, the SCDE strategies align across almost all NAFSCE domains and core competencies with the exceptions of (a) partial alignment to the competencies in the “Reflect” domain and (b) no alignment to the competencies in the “Lead Alongside Families” domain.

Like SCDE, other SEAs with state-wide frameworks for family engagement can utilize the report’s suggested data crosswalk method to determine their alignment with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies. It is suggested SEAs form a cross-agency team of individuals representing family engagement efforts across the state to ensure that a broad array of viewpoints are present while conducting the crosswalk and data analysis. Upon completion of the crosswalk, SEAs may also consider having this cross-agency team use the data to facilitate continuous improvement conversations with a wide range of family-facing professionals to further enhance state-wide frameworks and discuss NAFSCE Core Competencies alignment with the broader field.

Overall, as systems-level family engagement organizations continue to develop national guidelines and resources, SEAs nationwide should continue discussing ways to further align their state-wide family engagement frameworks with the NAFSCE Family Engagement Core Competencies and/or other relevant national standards in the future.

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