

Family Engagement in RtI/ MTSS Survey: Family Version (FERS:F)

Description and Purpose

Theoretical Background

The *Family Engagement in RtI/MTSS Survey: Family Version (FERS:F)* was developed by Project staff to assess families' (a) beliefs about family engagement, (b) perceptions of knowledge and skills for participating in family engagement activities, (c) perceptions of the degree to which they engage in activities to support student learning, and (d) their perception of the degree to which educators engage in family outreach efforts. Research suggests cognitive components (beliefs about family engagement, perceptions of knowledge and skills for family engagement) and behavioral components (families' active support for student learning) impact the degree to which families and educators form positive, collaborative partnerships for the purpose of supporting student learning. Beliefs, knowledge and skills, and behaviors and practices represent interrelated constructs that impact the degree to which the outcome of effective family engagement is achieved. The degree to which families believe that family engagement is important, perceive that they know how to participate in educationally supportive activities, and perceive educators want families to participate in collaborative ways to support student learning is related to the degree to which families actually engage in educationally supportive activities. The converse holds true as well, suggesting that families' increased practice at supporting student learning is related to their success at supporting student learning, which translates to positive beliefs and increased perceptions of knowledge and skills for participating in educationally supportive behaviors.

Effective family-school engagement is the result of a functional partnership between families and educators. Obtaining reliable and valid information from families and educators informs the development of plans to engage families effectively in RtI/MTSS implementation.

Description

The *Family Engagement in RtI/MTSS Survey: Family Version (FERS:F)* is a 40-item instrument that measures families' (a) beliefs about the importance of family engagement, (b) perceptions of knowledge and skills for participating in family engagement activities, (c) perceptions of their own practices for supporting student learning, and (d) perceptions of educators' practices to reach out to and engage

families in student learning. Respondents use the following scale when completing items from the survey: *1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree*. Respondents use the following scale when completing items that measure families' activities to support student learning (i.e., communication with the school, providing direct educational support to students during non-school hours): *1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; or 5 = Not Applicable*. The *Not Applicable* option is available for those items that families may not engage in at all because it is not related to their child's schooling experience (e.g., parents of a child that is performing above grade-level learning standards would indicate *Not Applicable* to questions about participation in problem-solving meetings as their child's schooling experience would not require intensive problem-solving among a team of educators and their family).

Purpose

Data obtained from the *FERS:F* is intended to inform the school's plans and practices to engage families in RtI/MTSS practices. The *FERS:F* has two primary purposes. First, the survey measure families' beliefs about the importance of family engagement, perceptions of their knowledge and skills for working with educators and their child to support student learning, families' perceptions of the degree to which educators implement various family engagement practices and the frequency with which families participate in educationally supportive activities. Data obtained from the *FERS:F* can inform plans and practices designed to build both educators' and families' capacity for working together to support student learning.

Second, the survey measures changes in these constructs (i.e., beliefs about family engagement, knowledge and skills for family engagement, family engagement practices) overtime. Therefore, the survey can be used to measure the impact of capacity-building efforts on family beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices.

Intended Audience

Who should complete the Family Engagement in RtI/MTSS Survey: Family Version?

A family member (parents, legal guardian, primary caregiver) of each student attending the school.

Who should use the results of the survey for decision-making?

The School-Based Leadership Team (SBLT) members and families should receive and review the aggregated results from the *FERS:F*. SBLTs are comprised of approximately six to eight staff members selected to take a leadership role in facilitating RtI/MTSS implementation in a school. (See other chapters in this manual for more information on composition and function of SBLTs.)

District-Based Leadership Team (DBLT) members should also receive and review the aggregated results for the district's schools individually as well as aggregated at the district level. Members of the DBLT provide leadership to schools imple-

menting RtI/MTSS practices. Staff included on the team mirrors the SBLT in terms of representation of disciplines and roles and responsibilities. Examples of leadership provided by DBLT members include:

- facilitating the creation of policies, procedures, and districtwide action plans to support family engagement in RtI/MTSS implementation (e.g., establishing pre- and post-meeting procedures for SBLT members to support families' full participation in problem-solving meetings),
 - providing access to internal (district provided) and external (community-based) resources and supports that would help to build educators' and families' capacity for family-school relationships,
 - and meeting with schools to review implementation and student outcomes (e.g., discussing strategies for making direct links between the school's family engagement efforts and student outcomes [e.g., reading, math, behavior]).
- Results of the *FERS:F* should also be shared with the instructional staff and with families (e.g., during school-sponsored family meetings, posted on the school's website, shared in written notes home to parents). Sharing the results with instructional staff and with families can be used as a strategy for facilitating discussions about each school's goals and priorities for family engagement and as a strategy to obtain input on improving existing family engagement plans and practices.

Directions for Administration

Venues and Methods of Administration

The *FERS:F* can be administered in various ways depending on the school. Existing options for collecting information from families should be considered along with online administration (use of email and SurveyMonkey®), hard-copy administration (paper copy of the survey sent home and return to the school), and U.S. Mail administration. Regardless of the method chosen to administer the surveys, every effort should be made to ensure high return rates from families so that the information gathered adequately reflects the families in the school. Regardless of the method used, it is suggested that those administering the survey follow the procedures outlined below for providing directions to families completing the survey.

Step 1. Prior to administration, it is highly recommended that an explanation of the purpose of the *FERS:F*, how it will be used, and how it ties to the priorities of the school and district is provided to those individuals completing the survey. It is also important to emphasize that the survey results are anonymous because no personally identifying information is requested. If personally identifiable information is collected, ensure that it will be removed from survey responses upon reception of the data and aggregated with other families' responses when analyzing the data.

Step 2. Select appropriate venue/method (e.g., paper pencil, SurveyMonkey®) for disseminating the survey. Consider strategies for increasing the rate of return (e.g., provide families with data regarding completion rate and the goal on a regular

basis, provide incentives to students who return survey, provide incentives to families for the grade-levels with highest completion rates) that are appropriate and fit within the context of the school.

Step 3. Disseminate survey according to plan identified in Step 2. It is important to provide families with specific instructions for completing the survey.

Step 4. Ensure there is a process or method available for families to have their questions regarding the purpose of the survey or how to complete the survey answered.

Step 5. Identify a specific deadline for survey completion. Typically, a two to four week period is sufficient with a prompt provided to families at the halfway point.

Frequency of Use

The *FERS:F* is sensitive to changes in beliefs, perceptions of knowledge and skill, and practices. Therefore, the frequency of survey administration is determined by the purpose of survey administration. Typically, the survey is given the first time to establish a baseline level of beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices. Repeated administrations of the survey are conducted over time (e.g., annually) to measure changes in those beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices as a result of intentional activities, such as professional development and opportunities for families to receive direct support from educators.

Although schools and districts will need to make adjustments based on the resources available, general recommendations for completing the *FERS:F* are provided below. General recommendations are to administer the survey to families:

- Prior to implementing districtwide or schoolwide efforts to increase family engagement in RtI/MTSS.
- At the end of the first year of implementing family engagement efforts to determine the extent to which beliefs about family engagement, knowledge and skills for family engagement, and family engagement behaviors and perceptions of practices changed.
- At least one time each subsequent year to monitor family engagement in RtI/MTSS over time. Administration at the end of each year can be used to provide information on the relationship between family engagement efforts and the degree to which families participate in educationally supportive activities during the year as well as serve as a baseline for the impact of next year's activities.
- **Technical Adequacy**

Content Validity Evidence

To create the items for the *FERS:F*, the family engagement/school-family partnerships/family involvement literature along with existing measures of family engagement were reviewed (see Westmoreland, Bouffard, O'Carroll, & Rosenberg, 2009). Items were constructed that were similar in content and wording to

Content validity: Content-related validity evidence refers to the extent to which the sample of items on an instrument is representative of the area of interest the instrument is designed to measure. In the context of the *FERS:F*, content-related validity evidence is based on a judgment that the sample of items on the *FERS:F* is representative of the beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices associated with effective family engagement in RtI/MTSS implementation.

Construct validity:

Construct-related validity evidence refers to the extent to which the individuals' scores derived from the instrument represent a meaningful measure of a domain or characteristic. In the case of the *FERS:F*, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to assess the internal structure of the measure as well as to develop evidence to support the validity of interpretations based on individuals' scores on the resultant factors. Results of the factor analysis suggest that the *FERS:F* measures six underlying domains (or factors).

Internal consistency reliability:

Internal consistency reliability evidence is based on the degree of homogeneity of scores (i.e., the extent to which the scores cluster together) on items measuring the same domain. In the context of the *FERS:F*, internal consistency reliability estimates provide a measure of the extent to which educators who responded one way to an item measuring a domain (or factor) tended to respond the same way to other items measuring the same domain.

existing, psychometrically sound measures of family engagement (Westmoreland et al., 2009). However, items were adapted to reflect RtI/MTSS implementation language, content, and activities. The *FERS:F* was developed with items reflecting beliefs about family engagement, perceptions of knowledge and skills for participating in educationally supportive activities, perceptions of educator outreach and frequency of participating in educationally supportive activities.

A draft of the instrument was sent to an Expert Validation Panel (EVP) for review and evaluation. The EVP consisted of educators from varying disciplines with knowledge of RtI/MTSS and family engagement. The EVP provided feedback on the representativeness of the items covered, clarity and quality of the individual items, and suggested modifications to items before the final version of the survey was developed. Finally, a small pilot study was conducted with families ($n = 10$) to determine the clarity of directions for completing the survey, wording of survey items, and amount of time required to complete the survey. More information on the EVP used to examine the content validity of the survey is available from the Project by contacting Devon Minch at dminch@usf.edu.

Construct Validity Evidence (Factor Analysis)

An exploratory common factor analytic (EFA) procedure was used to determine the underlying factor structure of the survey. The EFA was conducted using responses from 396 families in 40 schools in a single school district. The school district was one of the seven school districts that participated in the FL PS/RtI pilot project. Maximum likelihood (ML) extraction method and standard errors corrected for the nested data structure (i.e., families nested within schools) were used in the analysis. Examination of the data suggested retention of four to seven factors. A six-factor solution yielded the best fit of the data including simple structure and interpretability of factors. The factors were labeled as follows: Factor 1 – *Family Engagement Activities*, Factor 2 – *Family Initiated School Communication*, Factor 3 – *Educators' Family Engagement Practices*, Factor 4 – *RtI/MTSS Engagement*, Factor 5 – *Family Beliefs about Family Engagement*, and Factor 6 – *Family Knowledge and Skills for Family Engagement*. Importantly, the final factor solution was generally consistent with the way in which the survey items were developed.

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability estimates (as measured by Cronbach's alpha) for the survey is provided below.

- **Factor One** (*Family Engagement Activities*): $\alpha = .77$
- **Factor Two** (*Family Initiated School Communication*): $\alpha = .85$
- **Factor Three** (*Educators' Family Engagement Practices*): $\alpha = .66$
- **Factor Four** (*RtI/MTSS Engagement*): $\alpha = .73$
- **Factor Five** (*Family Beliefs about Family Engagement*): $\alpha = .91$
- **Factor Six** (*Family Knowledge and Skills for Family Engagement*): $\alpha = .95$

Scoring, Interpretation, and Use of the Data

Examination of Broad Domains & Item Responses

The Florida PS/RtI Project primarily uses two techniques for analyzing survey responses for evaluation purposes. First, the mean rating for each item can be calculated to determine the average level of beliefs, knowledge and skills, or practices for family engagement reported by families who completed the survey. Second, the frequency distribution of each response option selected (e.g., *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither Disagree nor Agree*, *Agree*, *Strongly Agree*) can be calculated for each survey item.

Calculating item means provides an overall impression of the beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices of those individuals within a school, district, etc. Calculating averages can be done at the domain (i.e., factor) and/or individual item levels. A score for each of the six domains (i.e., factors) measured by the instrument may be computed for each respondent, or groups of respondents, to the survey by calculating the sum of the ratings of the items that comprise the domain. These values can be added together and divided by the number of items within the domain to **determine the average level of beliefs/perceptions of knowledge and skills/perceptions of educator outreach/family engagement behaviors for each domain.** (See Figure 18 on page 244 for an example of school-level domain averages.) The items that comprise each domain are as follows:

- **Factor 1** (*Family Engagement Activities*): Items 1, 3-6
- **Factor 2** (*Family Initiated School Communication*): Items 2, 7-10
- **Factor 3** (*Educators' Family Engagement Practices*): Items 25-40
- **Factor 4** (*RtI/MTSS Engagement*): Items 20-24
- **Factor 5** (*Family Beliefs about Family Engagement*): Items 11-14
- **Factor 6** (*Family Knowledge and Skills for Family Engagement*): Items 15-19

Average levels of beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices for family engagement can also be examined by item. Calculating the mean rating for each item provides an analysis of the extent to which families agree with particular items. This information can be used to identify specific beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices that may facilitate or hinder the implementation of family engagement efforts, but does not provide much information on the variability of responses to items.

Calculating the frequency of families who selected each response option (i.e., *SD*, *D*, *N*, *A*, *SA*) for an item provides information on the variability of beliefs/knowledge and skills/practices for family engagement. (See Figure 19 on page 245 for an example of frequency distribution graph by item.) This information can be used to determine what percentage of respondents agree or disagree that they hold a particular belief/possess certain knowledge and skills/or implement particular practices. When planning family engagement efforts, information on the percentage of families who endorse particular beliefs, knowledge and skills, or practice items

For example, if a family member selected *N*, *A*, *A*, and *SA* when completing the 4 items that comprise Factor 5 "Beliefs about Family Engagement" domain, the values corresponding with those responses would be added together to obtain a total value of 16 (i.e., $3+4+4+5 = 16$). The total value of 16 would be divided by the number of items (4) to obtain the average domain score (i.e., $16/4=4$). An average domain score of 4 could be interpreted as the family member, on average, agreeing with belief statements regarding the importance of family engagement for student learning.

can help to inform decisions regarding the implementation of family engagement efforts.

It is recommended that key stakeholders analyze *FERS:F* survey data in ways that best inform the evaluation questions they are asking. The data collected from the instrument can be used to answer a number of broad and specific questions regarding family engagement. To facilitate formative decision-making, stakeholders should consider aligning the analysis and display of the data with specific evaluation questions. Example evaluation questions and data sources are illustrated below.

- **Evaluation question:** What is the general trend in family beliefs regarding the importance of family engagement over time?
- **Data source:** Displaying the average Belief domain score across all families in the school on the y-axis with each corresponding time point on the x-axis.
- **Example graph:**

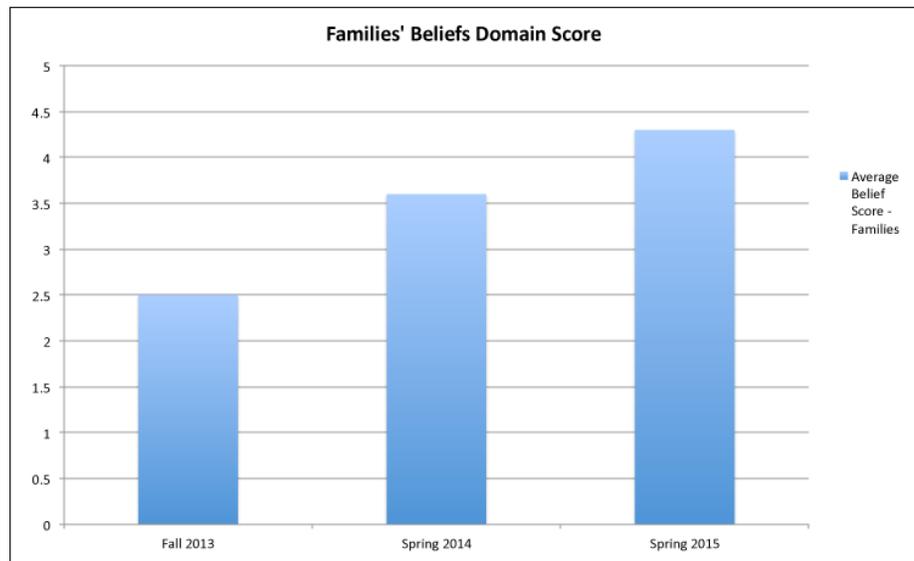


Figure 18. Example One

- **Evaluation question:** What specific beliefs about the importance of family engagement do families tend to agree, remain neutral, or disagree? How have these beliefs changed over three time points?
- **Data source:** Displaying the percentage of families that report disagreement, neutrality, or agreement with each item in the Belief domain on the y-axis and the belief items listed across the x-axis. The three bars for each item represent three data collection points over time. Of note, the *SD* and *D* response options were collapsed into red while *A* and *SA* were collapsed into green, and these were contrasted with *N* in yellow to allow for easy comparison of *Disagree*, *Neutral*, and *Agree*.
- **Example graph:**

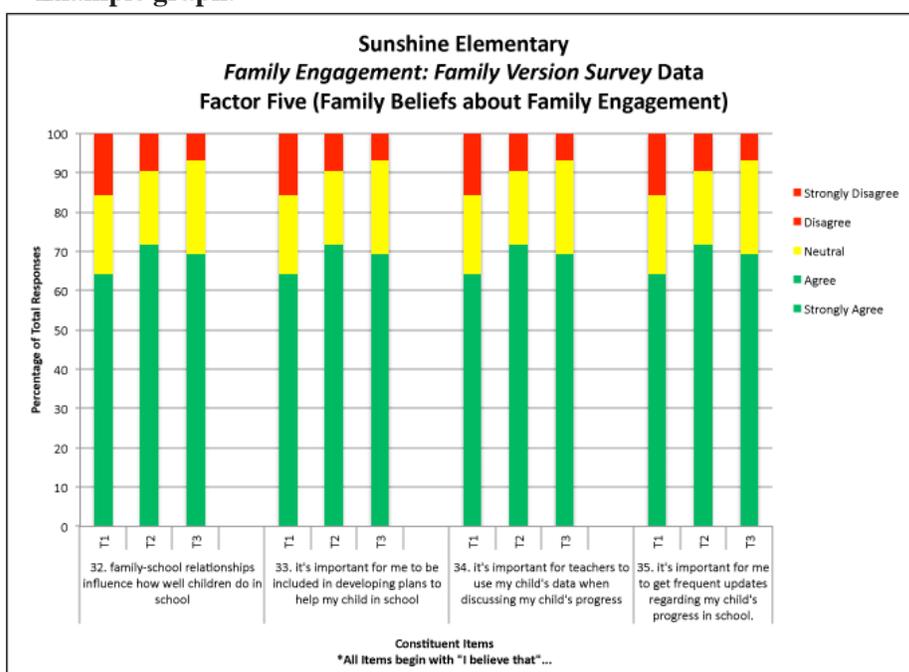


Figure 19. Example Two

Identifying which evaluation question(s) are currently being asked will guide how to analyze the data and communicate the information to facilitate decision-making.

Data Dissemination to Stakeholders

It is recommended that the data be shared with DBLTs and SBLTs, instructional school staff, families, and any other relevant stakeholders as quickly and frequently as possible following survey administrations. Quick access to the data allows stakeholders in leadership positions to discuss the results from the family engagement survey, develop and/or modify family engagement goals, and develop and implement more effective family engagement plans that include professional development and outreach activities. SBLT members can use the data presented to facilitate discussions among staff and families to obtain consensus for the importance of family engagement and to obtain input regarding factors that contribute to, or hinder, effective family engagement.

One helpful strategy for facilitating discussions about family engagement survey data is to provide families and educators with guiding questions. The use of guiding questions is designed to facilitate discussions about issues related to the school's family engagement efforts. Listed below are examples of guiding questions that can be used to facilitate discussions among educators and families when examining data from the *FERS:F*.

Given the nature of family engagement as a partnership between families and educators, it is important to obtain educators' perspectives as well. Thus, the questions below also reference data obtained from the *Family Engagement in RtI/MTSS Survey: Educator Version (FERS:E)*; see the previous section on *FERS:E* for additional information on this tool.) The questions were developed to provide scaffolding when interpreting the data and focus discussions around the development of effective family engagement plans. Stakeholders in leadership positions can generate additional guiding questions to better meet their particular needs.

- Did your building's beliefs about family engagement change from the first administration to the second administration?
 - ♦ For families? For educators?
 - ♦ If yes, what beliefs made the greatest change? Why do you think they might have changed in that way?
- Did your building's knowledge and skills for engaging families change from the first administration to the second administration?
 - ♦ For families? For educators?
 - ♦ If yes, what knowledge and skills made the greatest change? Why do you think they might have changed in that way?
- What skills and practices have been identified as areas in need of improvement?
 - ♦ By educators? By families?
 - ♦ What implications does this have for professional development and ongoing coaching support for your staff?
- Did your building's family engagement practices change from the first administration to the second administration?
 - ♦ Did families perceive that educators implemented more/less family engagement practices?
 - What practices changed the most? Changed the least?
 - ♦ Did families report engaging in more/less activities to support student learning?
 - What activities changed the most? Changed the least?
 - ♦ Did educators report implementing more/less outreach efforts to engage families in student learning?
 - What practices changed the most? Changed the least?
- Currently, do families and educators hold similar perceptions of family engagement?

- Do families and educators hold similarly positive beliefs about family engagement?
- Do families and educators report having the skills necessary to engage in partnership activities?
- Do families and educators report that educators are reaching out to and engaging families in student learning?
- What do you think these data mean in the context of engaging families in RtI/MTSS in your building?
 - ♦ How can these data inform efforts to build families' capacity to support student learning?
 - ♦ How can these data inform professional development and on-site coaching support targeting educators' family engagement beliefs, knowledge and skills, or practices?
- What additional questions do we have? What additional data may be needed?

Technology Support

When possible, consider using district supported or commercially available technology resources to facilitate collection and analysis of the data. Software and web-based programs vary in terms of the extent to which they can support administration of an instrument (e.g., SurveyMonkey®) and automatic analysis of data, as well as their degree of user-friendliness. Decisions about the technology used to facilitate data analysis should be made based on available resources as well as the knowledge and skills possessed by those responsible for managing and analyzing survey data. If your district and/or school has a SurveyMonkey® Select (paid) account and you are interested in having the surveys transferred to your account, please contact the project at judihyde@usf.edu.

Training Required

Training resources for administering the survey as well as data analysis and interpretation can be accessed on the Florida RtI website: http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/topic/parent_resources/index.html.

Training Recommended for Administering the Family Engagement Survey

A brief training is recommended prior to administering the *Family Engagement in RtI/MTSS Survey: Family Version*. Although administering surveys is common in school settings, issues such as specific administration procedures and the amount of questions administrators are likely to receive about survey content vary. Therefore, trainings of individuals responsible for administering the survey should include the components listed below. The contents of this manual, as well as resources on the Project website, can serve as resources for developing and conducting trainings on the measure.

- Theoretical background on the relationship between beliefs, knowledge and skills, and practices/behaviors related to family engagement.

- Description of the instrument including information on the items and how they relate to each other (e.g., domains of family engagement that the items assess).
- Administration procedures developed and/or adopted.
- Common issues that arise during administration such as frequently asked questions and strategies to facilitate higher return rates in school settings.
- ***Training Recommended for Analyzing, Interpreting, and Disseminating Survey Data***
 - Appropriate use of the survey given its purpose and technical adequacy
 - Guidelines for analyzing and displaying data derived from the survey
 - Guidelines for interpreting and disseminating results
 - Guidelines for using data to inform decision-making specific to family engagement in RtI/MTSS implementation

School-level Example of Family Engagement Data

The following example demonstrates how key stakeholders may use data derived from the *FERS:F* to inform the school's efforts to engage families in RtI/MTSS implementation. Data from the survey is displayed graphically. Following the graphs, background information on the school's initiative and an explanation of what is represented on each graph is provided. Finally, the section reviews ways in which the school used data to identify family engagement needs and monitor progress with implementation of efforts to improve family engagement. Importantly, although the example occurs at the school-level, the concepts discussed can be generalized to other units of analysis (e.g., district-level, state-level).

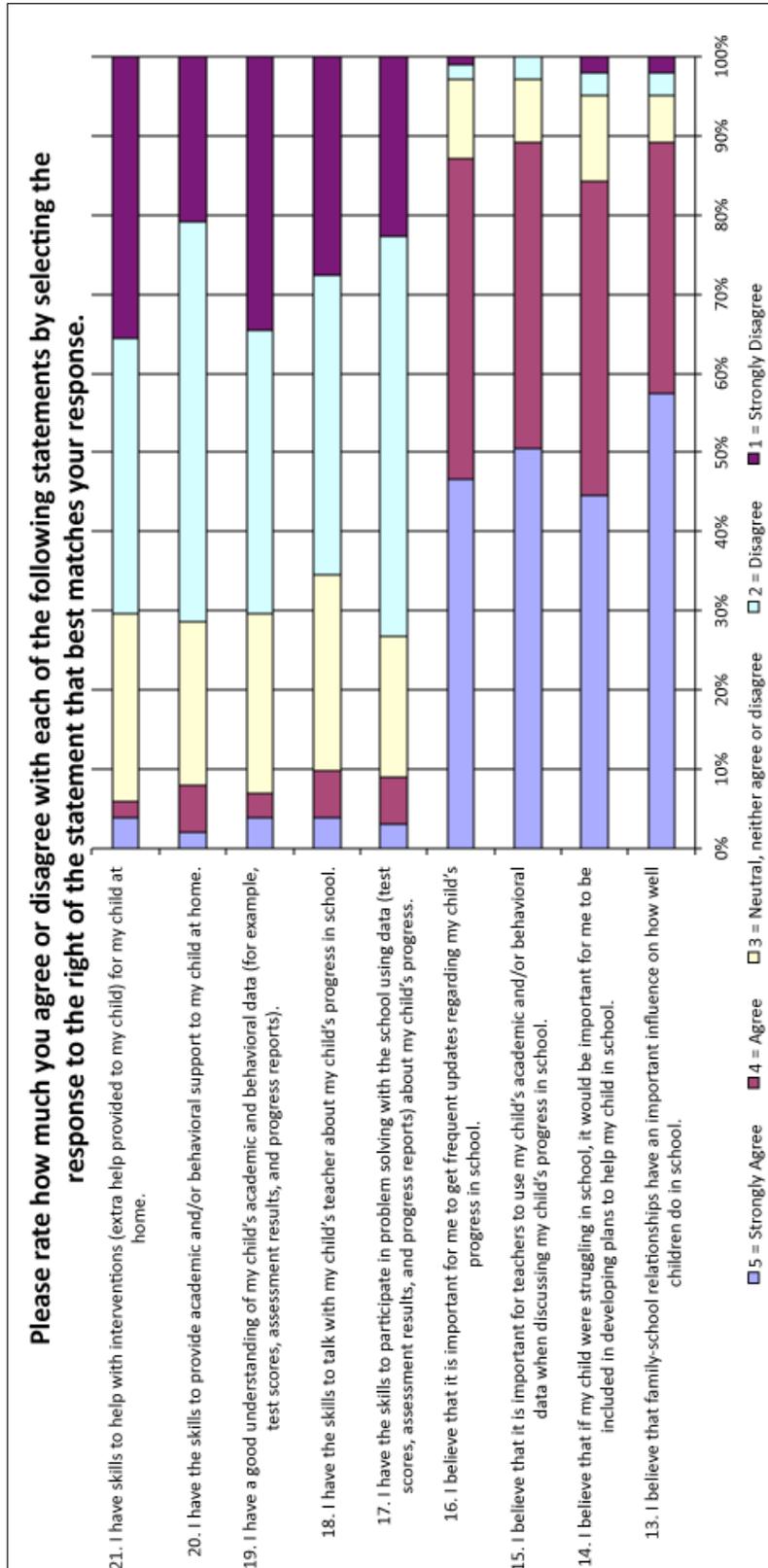


Figure 20. Example FERS:F Graph of Items from Factor 5... Family Beliefs about Family Engagement and Factor 6... Family Knowledge and Skills for Family Engagement

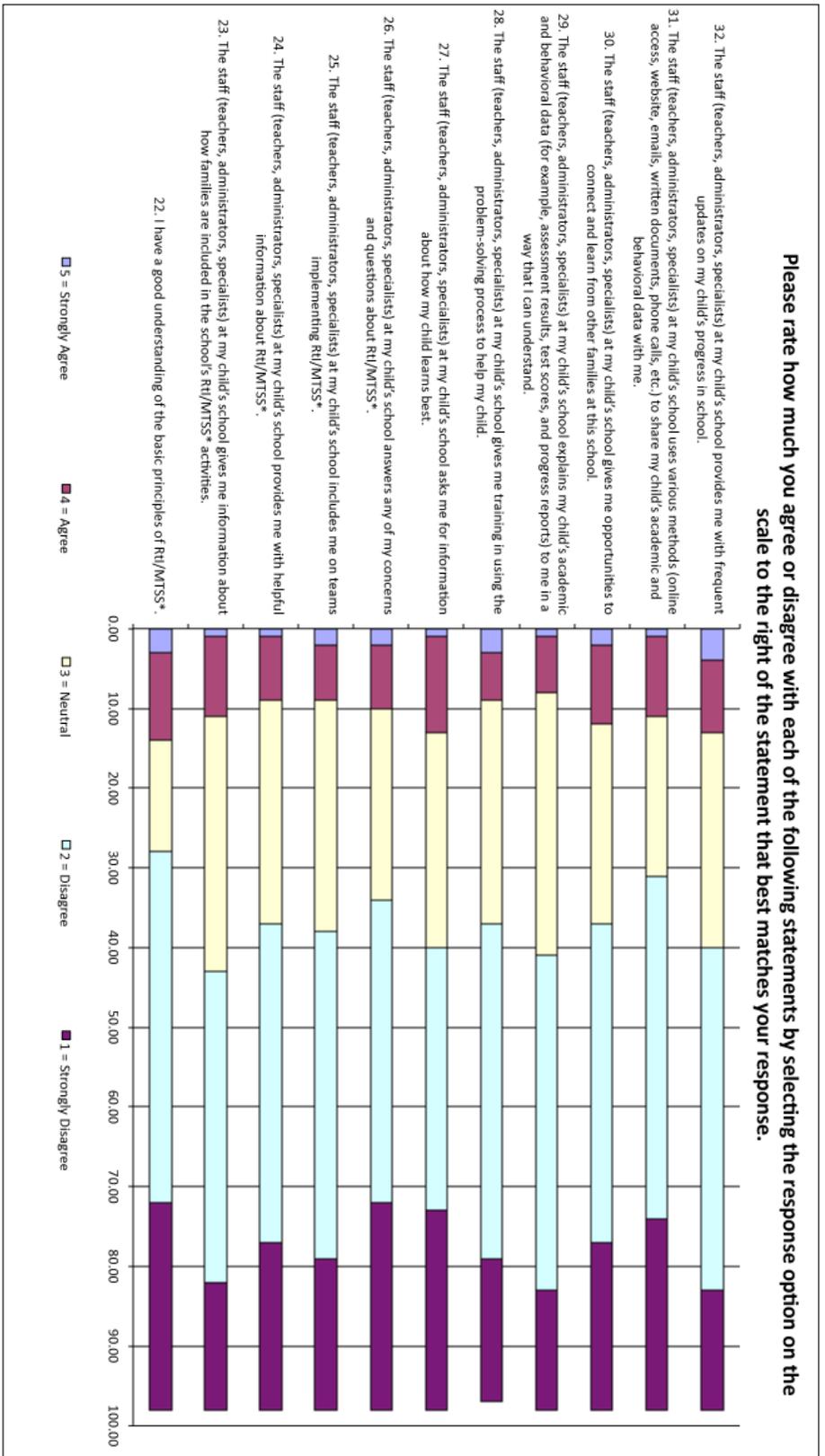


Figure 21. Example FERS: F. Graph of Items from Factor 4:—Rt/MTSS Engagement and Part 1 of Factor 3:—Educators' Family Engagement Practices.

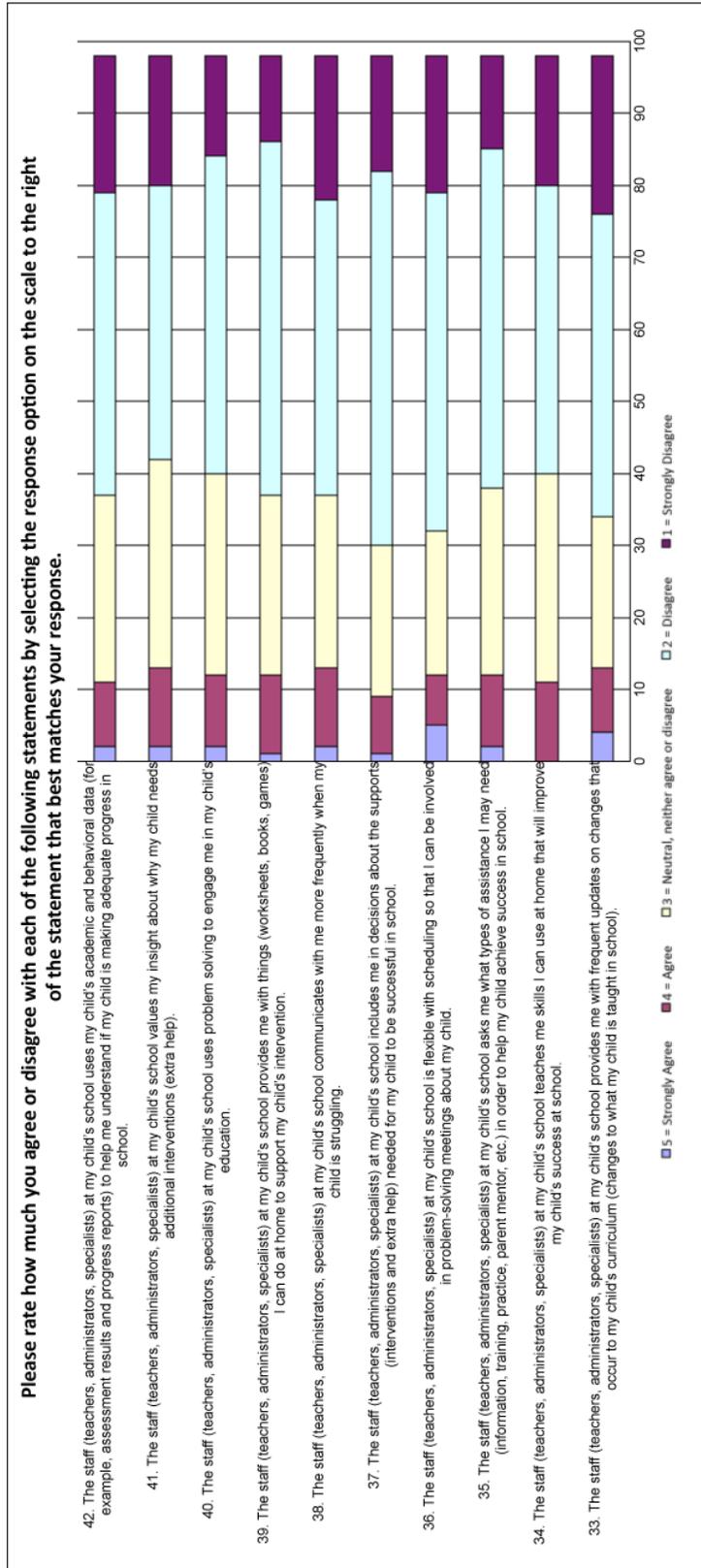


Figure 22. Example FERS:F Graph of Items from Part II of Factor 3: Educators' Family Engagement Practices.....

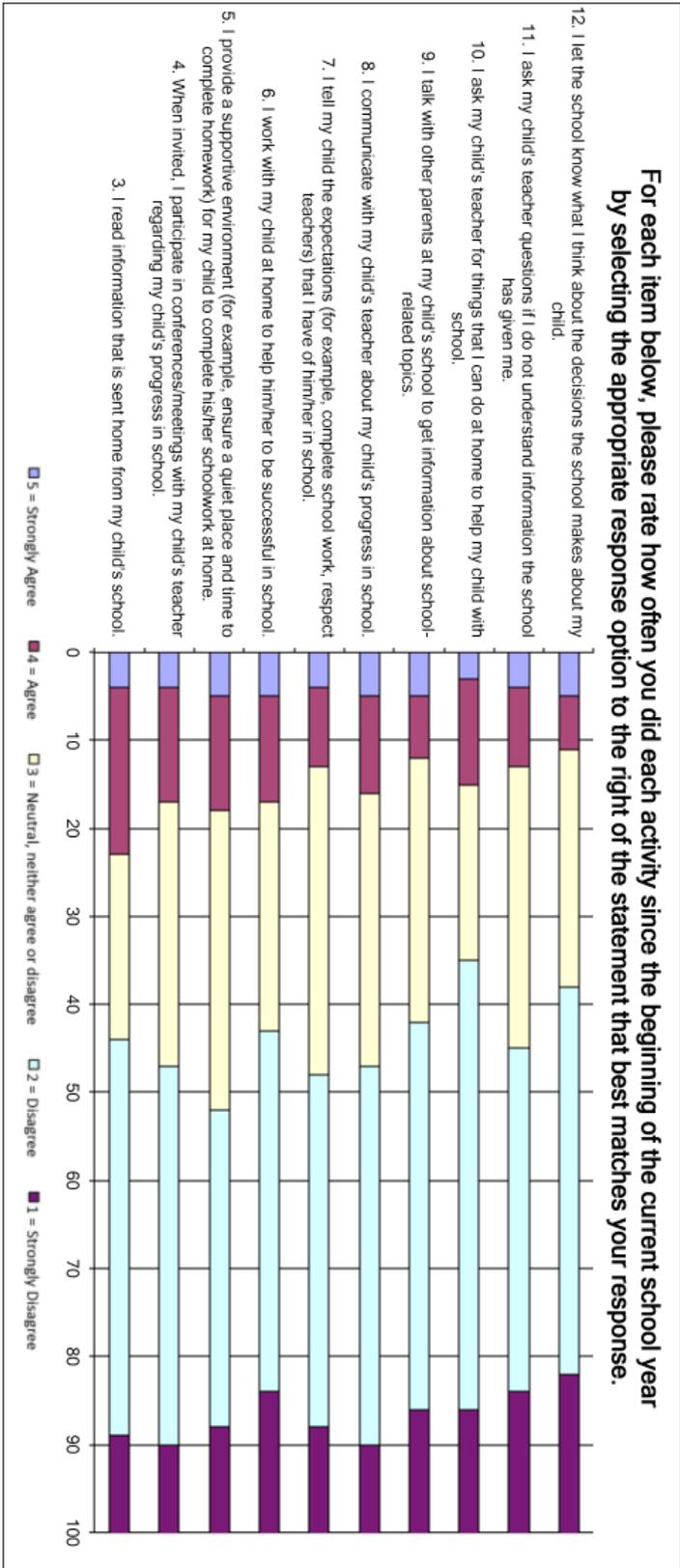


Figure 23. Example FERS-F. Graph of Items from Factor 1...Family Engagement Activities and Factor 2...Family Initiated School Communication.....

Explanation of the Graphs

The SBLT at Sunshine Elementary wanted to support the development and implementation of effective family engagement efforts. In order to ensure a comprehensive plan, the SBLT wanted to assess the following: (a) the degree to which the beliefs of family members aligned with the core beliefs of effective family engagement, (b) family perceived skill levels for participating in educationally supportive activities, (c) the degree to which families perceived that staff were implementing family engagement practices, and (d) the degree to which families were engaging in educationally supportive activities.

In order to evaluate family beliefs, perceptions of knowledge and skills for family engagement, perceptions of educators' family engagement practices, and families' self-reported engagement behaviors, the SBLT members decided to administer the *FERS:F* at the beginning and end of the first year of RtI/MTSS implementation and at the end of each subsequent year. Sunshine Elementary also administered the *FERS:E* each year. The results of the *FERS:E* are discussed in the section of this chapter on the *FERS:E*.

Results from the initial survey administration during which Sunshine Elementary determined baseline levels of family engagement. The items were generally organized by factor to allow for easy comparison of domains:

- Beliefs and Skills domains/factors are on one graph (Figure 20)
- Perceptions of Educators' Practices are on two graphs due to the number of items (Figures 21 and 22)
- Frequencies of Families' Educationally Supportive Behaviors are on a fourth graph (Figure 23)

Each graph provides data for a single time point, the beginning of the first year of implementation (baseline). Graphs indicate the percentage of staff that chose each response option (*Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither Disagree nor Agree*, *Agree*, *Strongly Agree*) with a different color for each item. These data were shared with school staff and families shortly after administration of the survey.

Sunshine Elementary's Use of the Data for Decision Making

When examining data after each survey administration, Sunshine Elementary SBLT members started by visually analyzing items within each of the four graphs. Following a review of broad domains, SBLT members drilled down into the data to analyze the data by item. Discussions of each graph follow.

Beliefs about Family Engagement/Skills for Family Engagement. Visual analysis of Figure 20 indicates that between 80-90% of the families tended to agree or strongly agree with items representing the importance of family engagement. Although there was not significant variability among the beliefs items, there were higher percentages of families who indicated neutral and disagreement with items #11, #12, and #14. Given that 10% of families indicated neutral or disagreement, Sunshine Elementary might follow-up with those families of children receiving

additional support (i.e., tier 2 or 3 interventions) to ensure they understood and felt comfortable in their role as an active member of the problem-solving team.

For the *Knowledge and Skills* items (Figure 20), approximately 90% of families did not indicate any level of agreement that they felt they had the knowledge and skills to participate in educationally supportive behaviors. This would suggest a potential target for further discussion with families to understand what types of supports would be helpful for families to feel as they thought they could participate in educationally supportive behaviors with some level of success.

Perceptions of Educator Practices for Family Engagement (Figures 20 and 21). Next, the SBLT examined staff perceptions of educators' family engagement practices. Generally, 50-60% of families indicated disagreement that educators were implementing any of the family engagement practices represented by the survey items. Of note, there were less than 20% of families that agreed that any of the practices were implemented by educators. This would be important to compare with results from the *FERS:E* and to gain additional information to understand any discrepancies that may exist between what educators report implementing and what families report educators implementing. Discrepancies could be indicative of ineffective family engagement strategies that are failing to successfully reach families.

Parent Engagement Behaviors (Figure 23). The graph indicates that approximately 10-20% of families report participating in any type of educationally supportive activity and over 50% report disagreement that they implement any of those activities. This would be an area to follow-up with families to determine the types of support they would find helpful to be able to engage in those types of activities with educators and with their child.

Educator Perspectives. Of note, the SBLT also reviewed the data collected from the *FERS:E*. The graphs and data are discussed more in depth in the section on the Educator Version of the survey. However, it should be noted that the SBLT noticed that educators tended to report implementing more practices than families perceived receiving from educators. These data are helpful as the discrepancy in perspectives may be indicative of ineffective outreach efforts that are failing to reach all families. The SBLT kept this information in mind during small group discussions and planning efforts.

Conclusions from the Data

At a staff meeting the SBLT organized the staff into small groups and presented each small group with graphs of the data described above in addition to guiding questions to facilitate discussions. The guiding questions included:

1. What trends do you see in family beliefs about family engagement, knowledge and skills for participating in family engagement activities, perceptions of educators' family engagement practices, and frequency of participating in educationally supportive activities?

2. What factors contributed to the variability and specifically, the low levels of agreement for some of the items? What are the barriers to implementing family engagement practices?
3. What factors contributed to the high levels of agreement for some of the items?
4. What could be done to address the identified factors for #2 considering the discussion of the factors that worked well (#4)? What can the leadership do to help address the barriers identified in #2?
5. What do the data indicate in terms of professional development and support needs of the staff? What do the data indicate in terms of direct services provided to families?

The SBLT members considered the feedback from the group discussion and created a family engagement action plan that addressed professional development needs and ongoing coaching support to facilitate sustainable implementation of practices. The action plan included a data collection schedule to monitor changes in family (and staff) beliefs, skills, and practices over time as a result of increased support and professional development. Additional items on the action plan included specific responsibilities for family engagement outlined for teachers that they were asked to perform weekly during planning periods and downtime (e.g., positive phone calls home to families of the lowest performing students). The principal established a system that allowed teachers to request class coverage for up to 30 minutes each week in order to implement family engagement practices. Additional action plan items focused on professional development (PD), on-site coaching support, and direct services and support provided to families that targeted the importance of family engagement for obtaining student outcomes and particularly, family engagement in data-based problem-solving meetings (e.g., Conjoint Behavioral Consultation [CBC]; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008) for those students receiving the most intensive levels of support (i.e., tier 2 or tier 3 support). Furthermore, the professional development plan targeted strategies for implementing effective home-school communication practices (e.g., see Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Staff were provided with models of effective practices and given opportunities to demonstrate newly learned skills and receive feedback from peers. The content of the PD was focused on strategies for using student data as a primary vehicle for engaging and communicating with families.

The plan included detailed activities to collect further information from families regarding the supports and activities that would be most beneficial to them in order to support student learning during out-of-school time. Plans to assess parental needs were created and subsequent plans to develop activities and supports to meet those needs were developed.

Blank Family Engagement in RtI/MTSS Survey: Family Version

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Please complete this survey in order to help us better understand how families and schools can work together to use Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (RtI/MTSS) at your child's school. RtI/MTSS helps all students succeed in school by providing instruction and intervention (additional help) and educational support at different levels (called Tiers 1, 2, 3) based on students' individual academic and/or behavioral needs. Schools implementing RtI/MTSS use a data-based problem-solving process to make decisions about the help that students receive. A data-based problem-solving process includes 4 steps:

- (1) Identifying a child's academic or behavioral problem
- (2) Determining why the problem is occurring
- (3) Identifying what needs to be done in order to solve the problem, and
- (4) Determining how the student responded to the help or intervention.

Family engagement, including families' participation in the problem-solving process, is important for successful RtI/MTSS implementation.

*Please answer the following questions about your family. **Please complete this survey for only one child.** If you have more than one child enrolled in the same school, please think about your overall experiences with the school and answer the survey questions accordingly.*

What school does your child currently attend? _____

In what grade is your child currently enrolled? (select one):

- Grade K Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 5
 Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8 Grade 9 Grade 10 Grade 11
 Grade 12

Does your child currently receive Exceptional Student Education (ESE-Special Education) services? (select one):

- Yes No

During last school year or this school year, did the school provide your child with additional interventions (any extra, intensive help or support) in addition to the regular instruction students receive in their classrooms? (select one):

- Yes No

For each item below, **please rate how often you did each activity since the beginning of the current school year** by shading in the circle to the right of the statement that best matches your response. Please use the following response scale:

- ① = Never
- ② = Rarely
- ③ = Sometimes
- ④ = Often
- ⑤ = N/A - Not Applicable (does not apply to your child or family)

Statement	Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	N/A
1. I read information that is sent home from my child's school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. When invited, I participate in conferences/meetings with my child's teacher(s) regarding my child's progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. I provide a supportive environment (for example, ensure a quiet place and time to complete homework) for my child to complete his/her schoolwork at home.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. I work with my child at home to help him/her to be successful in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. I tell my child the expectations (for example, complete school work, respect teachers) that I have of him/her in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. I communicate with my child's teacher(s) about my child's progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. I talk with other parents at my child's school to get information about school-related topics.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. I ask my child's teacher(s) for things that I can do at home to help my child with school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. I ask my child's teacher(s) questions if I do not understand information the school has given me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. I let the school know what I think about the decisions the school makes about my child.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by shading the response option on the scale to the right of the statement that best matches your response:

- ① = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- ② = Disagree (D)
- ③ = Neutral, neither agree or disagree (N)
- ④ = Agree (A)
- ⑤ = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. I believe that family-school relationships have an important influence on how well children do in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12. I believe that if my child were struggling in school, it would be important for me to be included in developing plans to help my child in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤

*RtI/MTSS = Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

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Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by shading the response option on the scale to the right of the statement that best matches your response:

- ① = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- ② = Disagree (D)
- ③ = Neutral, neither agree or disagree (N)
- ④ = Agree (A)
- ⑤ = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
13. I believe that it is important for teachers to use my child's academic and/or behavioral data (information from test scores, assessments, and progress reports) when discussing my child's progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14. I believe that it is important for me to get frequent updates regarding my child's progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15. I have the skills to participate in problem solving with the school using data (for example, test scores, assessment results, and progress reports) about my child's progress.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16. I have the skills to talk with my child's teacher(s) about my child's progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17. I have a good understanding of my child's academic and behavioral data (for example, test scores, assessment results, and progress reports).	①	②	③	④	⑤
18. I have the skills to provide academic and/or behavioral support to my child at home.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19. I have skills to help with interventions (extra help provided to my child) for my child at home.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Thinking about your child's school, please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by shading the response option on the scale to the right of the statement that best matches your response:

- ① = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- ② = Disagree (D)
- ③ = Neutral, neither agree or disagree (N)
- ④ = Agree (A)
- ⑤ = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
20. I have a good understanding of the basic principles of RtI/MTSS*.	①	②	③	④	⑤
21. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child's school gives me information about how families are included in the school's RtI/MTSS* activities.	①	②	③	④	⑤
22. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child's school provides me with helpful information about RtI/MTSS*.	①	②	③	④	⑤
23. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child's school includes me on teams implementing RtI/MTSS*.	①	②	③	④	⑤

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Thinking about your child’s school, please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by shading the response option on the scale to the right of the statement that best matches your response:

- ① = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- ② = Disagree (D)
- ③ = Neutral, neither agree or disagree (N)
- ④ = Agree (A)
- ⑤ = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
24. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school answers any of my concerns and questions about RtI/MTSS*.	①	②	③	④	⑤
25. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school asks me for information about how my child learns best.	①	②	③	④	⑤
26. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school gives me training in using the problem-solving process to help my child.	①	②	③	④	⑤
27. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school explains my child’s academic and behavioral data (for example, assessment results, test scores, and progress reports) to me in a way that I can understand.	①	②	③	④	⑤
28. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school gives me opportunities to connect and learn from other families at this school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
29. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school uses various methods (for example, online access, website, emails, written documents, phone calls, etc.) to share my child’s academic and behavioral data (test scores, assessment results, and progress reports) with me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
30. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school provides me with frequent updates on my child’s progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
31. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school provides me with frequent updates on changes that occur to my child’s curriculum (changes to what my child is taught in school).	①	②	③	④	⑤
32. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school teaches me skills I can use at home that will improve my child’s success at school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
33. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school asks me what types of assistance I may need (information, training, practice, parent mentor, etc.) in order to help my child achieve success in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤

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Thinking about your child’s school, please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by shading the response option on the scale to the right of the statement that best matches your response:

- ① = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- ② = Disagree (D)
- ③ = Neutral, neither agree or disagree (N)
- ④ = Agree (A)
- ⑤ = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
34. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school is flexible with scheduling so that I can be involved in problem-solving meetings about my child.	①	②	③	④	⑤
35. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school includes me in decisions about the supports (interventions and extra help) needed for my child to be successful in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
36. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school communicates with me more frequently when my child is struggling.	①	②	③	④	⑤
37. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school provides me with things (worksheets, books, games) I can do at home to support my child’s intervention.	①	②	③	④	⑤
38. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school uses problem solving to engage me in my child’s education.	①	②	③	④	⑤
39. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school values my insight about why my child needs additional interventions (extra help).	①	②	③	④	⑤
40. The staff (teachers, administrators, specialists) at my child’s school uses my child’s academic and behavioral data (for example, assessment results and progress reports) to help me understand if my child is making adequate progress in school.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Thank you for completing this survey.