

# ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

- The webinar will start shortly.
- Connect to audio using your computer's microphone and speaker or dial in on your phone.dd text





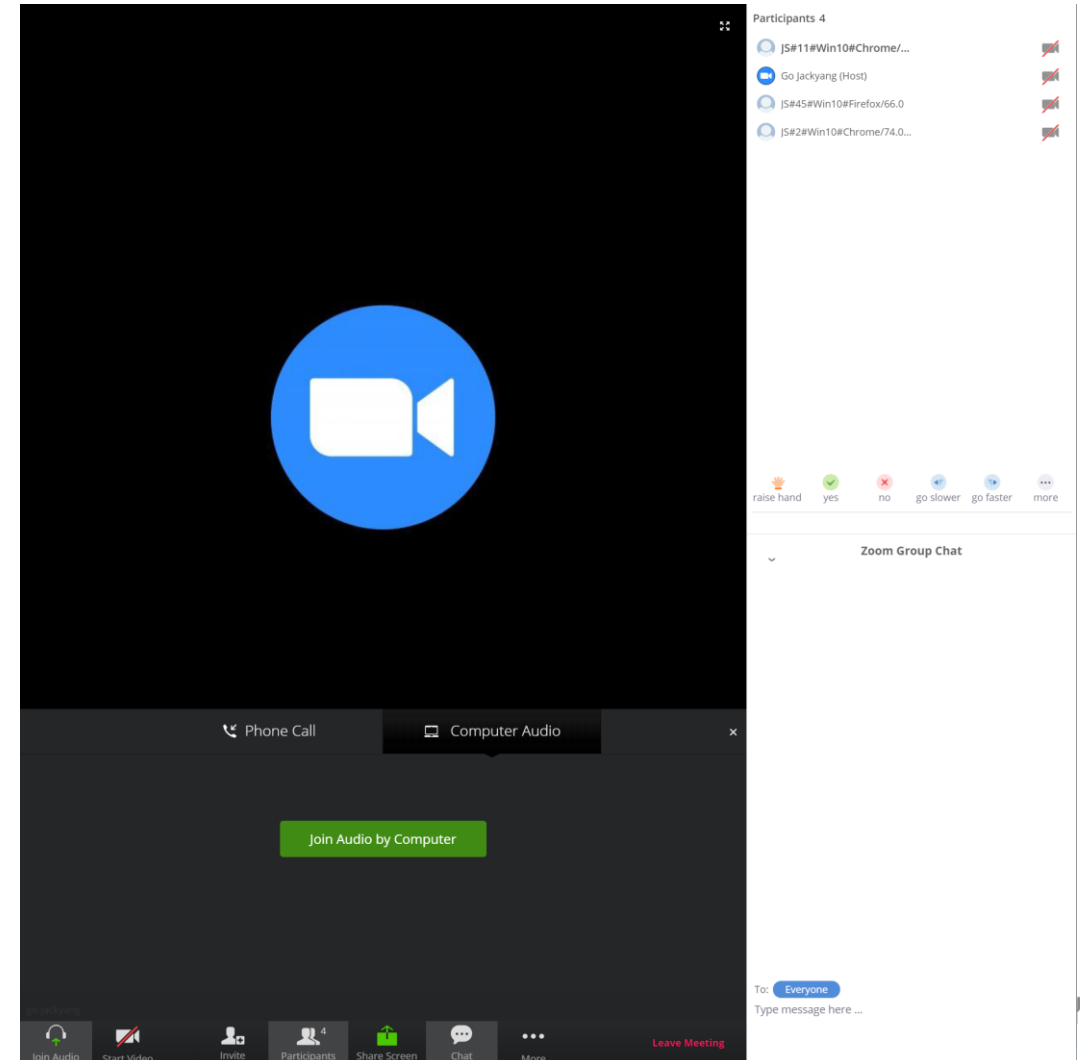
**ACTION** FOR  
HEALTHY  
KIDS 

# Staying Connected with Staff and Families Amidst Uncertainty

September 10, 2020

# Webinar Logistics

- Telephone or speakers
- Everyone is muted
- Submit a question
- This call is being recorded
- Link to recording and handouts will be sent out following the call



# Today's Presenters



**Heidi Milby**

Director of Programs  
and Field Operations  
Action for Healthy Kids



**Sean Wade**

Director, Family and  
Volunteer Engagement  
Action for Healthy Kids



## What We'll Cover:

- » Introductions
- » The Power of Connection
- » Staying Connected with:
  - » Students
  - » Families
  - » Colleagues
- » Q&A

# Who Are We?

Action for Healthy Kids is a national nonprofit organization committed to the belief that healthy kids create a better world. We mobilize family-school partnerships to prepare kids to be healthy in body and mind.



# Let's Connect!

## What is your role?

- a. School Staff
- b. District Staff
- c. Parent/Caregiver
- d. Community Organization/Member
- e. Other (Type in Chat Box)



# Let's Connect!



Tell us a boring fact about yourself.

Use the Chat button in your navigation menu below to share your responses.





# Power of Connection

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Maslow's Hierarchy shows that beyond our basic needs, a sense of belonging and connection with others is important for survival [1](#)



Connection with others creates space to:

- Discuss feelings and emotions
- Navigate challenges
- Learn from one another

# Creating Space

To build strong, nurturing relationships between adults and children, we must first create space.



- Dedicate a regular time and place
- Model discussions around feelings and emotions
- Pair conversations with activities children enjoy most
- Encourage but don't push

**“Children who develop warm, positive relationships with their kindergarten teachers are more excited about learning, more positive about coming to school, more self-confident, and achieve more in the classroom.”**



# 3 Strategies for Staying Connected with Students

# Morning Meetings

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- » Relevant for all ages
- » Important part of routine
- » Lasts for 10-30 minutes
- » Builds community, trust and social-emotional skills
- » Sets a positive tone for learning



1. Greeting
2. Sharing
3. Group Activity
4. Morning Message

# Meet informally, without an academic agenda

- » **“Tasty Tuesdays”** - Breakfast or lunch via video with students
- » After school clubs (e.g. book club, arts & crafts)
- » Virtual game nights (e.g. Charades, Pictionary, Scavenger Hunt)
- » **Talent shows**
- » Virtual movie nights
- » Virtual dance parties



# Individualized Student Interaction

## Teacher-Student Relationships

- » Introductory get-to-know you calls
- » Regular one-on-one video chats or phone calls
- » Virtual "office hours"

## Student-Student Relationships

- » Virtual classroom jobs
- » Learning circles
- » Notes of gratitude

**"Students with a high sense of belonging are happier, healthier, and more engaged learners... and less likely to skip school, abuse substances, have emotional distress, or be involved in fighting or bullying behavior."**

# Let's Connect!



What strategies have you tried to stay connected with students?

Use the Chat button in your navigation menu below to share your responses.

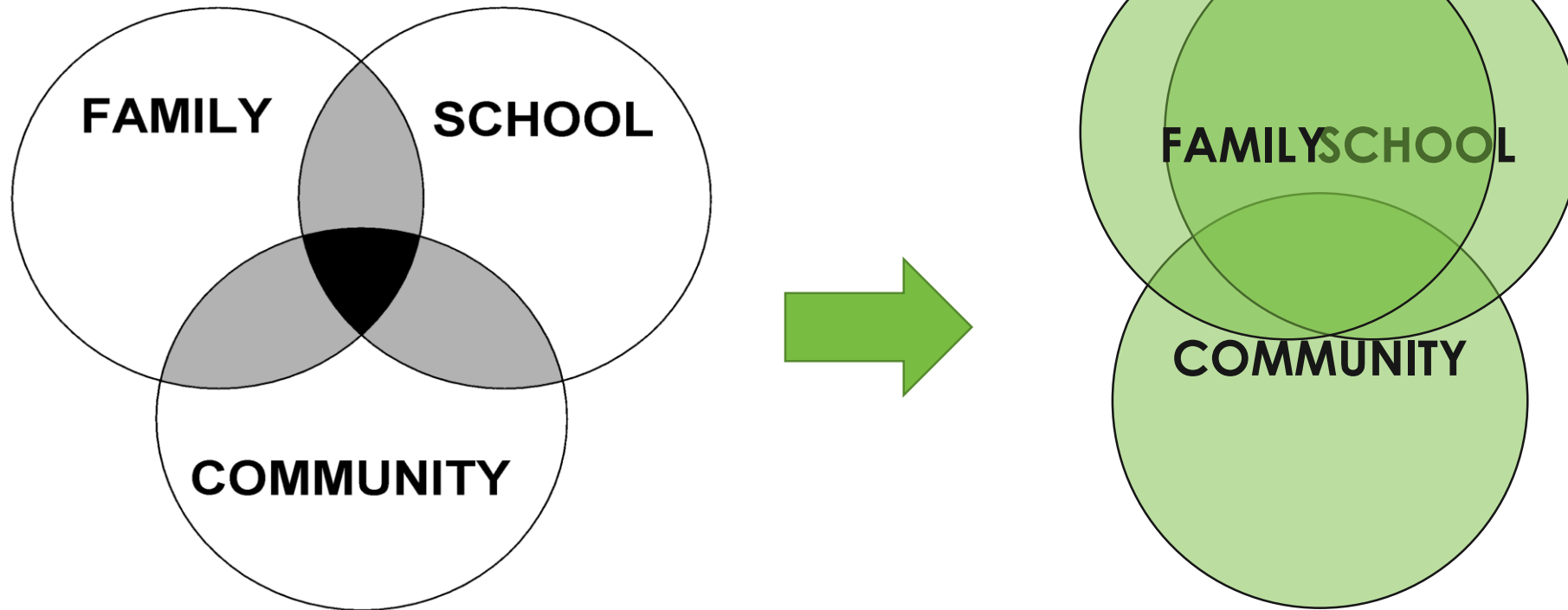




# 3 Strategies for Staying Connected with Families

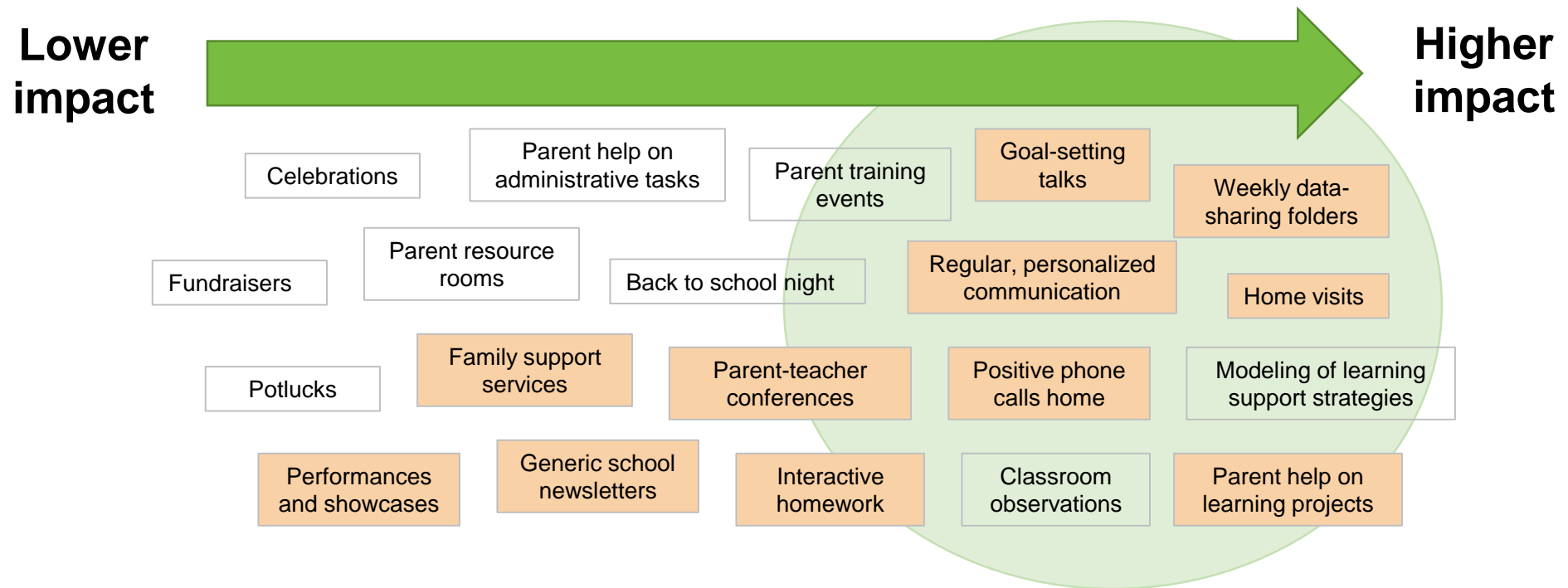
# Importance of Family-School Partnerships

## Overlapping Spheres of Influence



*Research consistently confirms that family engagement is one of the most powerful predictors of children's development, educational attainment, and success in school and life. – Global Family Research Project, October 2018*

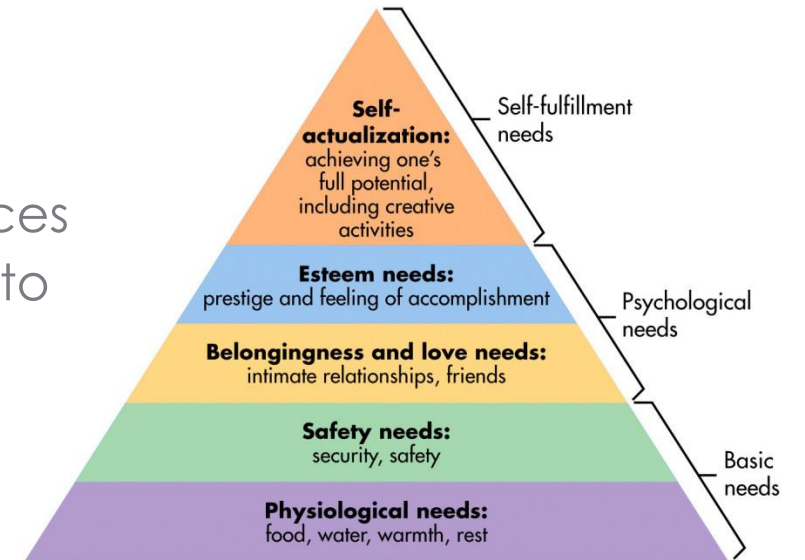
# Importance of Family-School Partnerships



*Flamboyant Foundation defines family engagement as collaboration between families and educators that accelerates student learning.*

# Focus on Basic Needs

- » Check in regularly on basic needs, especially among the most vulnerable families
  - Food access: Contact your district nutrition services department or local food banks
  - Mental health: Contact your school counselor or district's counseling dept and share information on accessing services
  - Health, housing and financial security: encourage families to [take the benefits.gov survey](#) to find government support
- » Connect families to tools needed to do support learning successfully
  - Internet access and packet pick-up for remote learning
  - Inform families about what's required to send their children to school (like well-child visits, immunizations and testing), safety protocols at school, and who to contact with questions.



# Create a Welcoming Environment

- » Show families that their input is desired, respected and valued
- » Get to know your families – ask about their lives and concerns and let go of pre-conceived notions you may have about how parents want to be involved
- » Provide quality interpretation and try to conduct meetings primarily in the language spoken by the majority of participants.
- » Be flexible and give families options
- » Provide sample schedules/routines



# Maintain Regular, Two-Way Communication



*Communication is one of the highest impact activities you can do right now – and one of the most challenging!*

- » Make it clear to your families who they should be contacting with needs
- » Communicate regularly and with purpose
  - Keep it short and sweet
  - Consider weekly “office hours”
- » Set clear boundaries and clear expectations

# Maintain Regular, Two-Way Communication

- » Figure out the best way to reach each of your families
  - Consider phone calls, texting, “office hours”, emails, apps, snail mail
- » Make mode of teaching/learning dynamic
  - Pre-recorded video mini-lessons, paper worksheets, project-based learning, discussions with other students/family members, etc.
- » Provide opportunities for enrichment for those that have the capacity for more
- » Make positive phone calls/virtual home visits



# Let's Connect!



What strategies have you tried to stay connected with families?

Use the Chat button in your navigation menu below to share your responses.





# 3 Strategies for Staying Connected with Staff

# School Health Teams

- » School Health Teams typically support school wellness policy implementation and healthy school environments
- » Continue to meet and evolve these teams to increase focus on Employee Wellness
- » Plan activities such as:
  - Virtual Fitness Classes
  - Happy Hours
  - Coffee Chats
  - Spirit Days

## Best Practices:

- Meet at least quarterly
- 5+ team members representing a variety of roles



# Meetings – Staff, Grade Level, Learning Communities



- » Talk to staff rather than at staff
- » Make socialization/connection an agenda item
- » Keep it short and focused
- » Establish meeting norms and stick to them
- » Great opportunity to model technology use

# Support Adult Social-Emotional Learning

## SEL begins with adults

Just as research shows the important SEL for children, studies show adult social-emotional development can lead to:

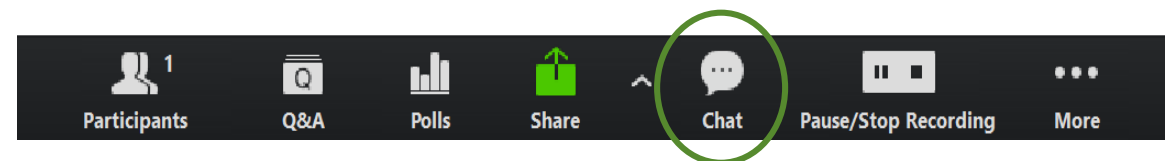
- » Improved mental health and well-being, stress management and job satisfaction<sup>1</sup>
- » Improved student outcomes in social-emotional and academic learning<sup>2</sup>
- » Positive influences on nurturing student-adult relationships and safe and supportive learning environments<sup>3</sup>

# Let's Connect!



What strategies have you tried to stay connected with colleagues?

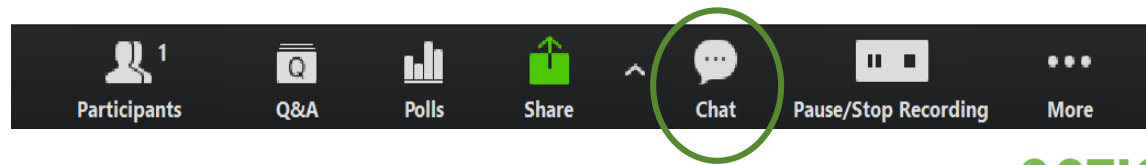
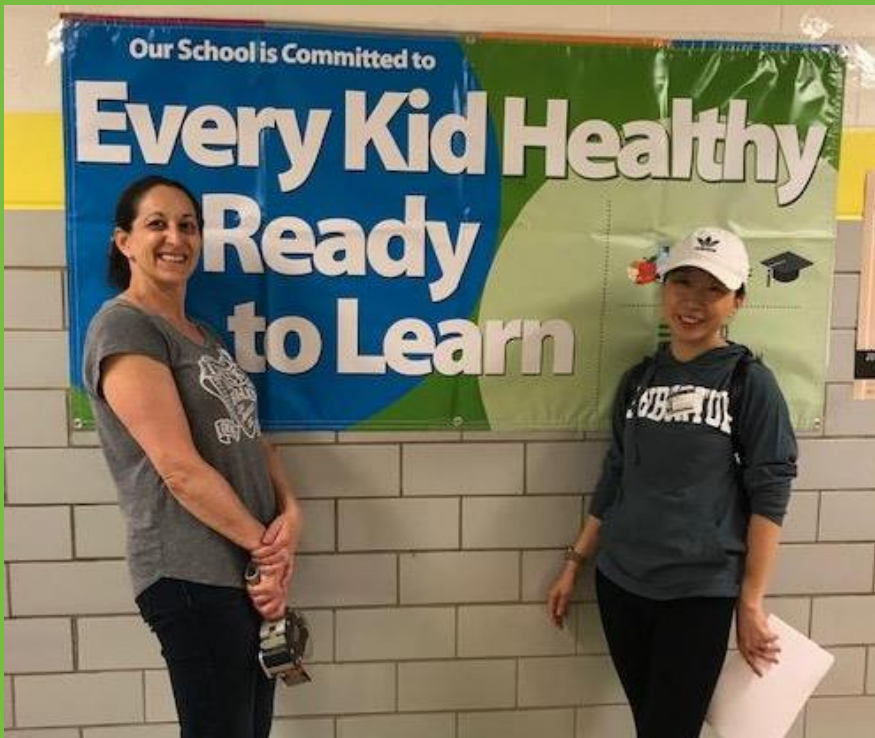
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# Tell Us About Your Takeaways

What is one thing you will do to stay connected with students, families or colleagues this school year?

Use the Chat button in your navigation menu below to share your answers.



# Questions?

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**Every kid healthy, active and ready to learn**

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