

Preparing for Your Community Engagement Board

Effective preparation of Community Engagement Boards (CEBs) requires organization and planning to create a welcoming and inclusive experience for students and families. The following guidance covers selecting an accessible location, addressing language and accessibility needs, developing a well-structured agenda, and other necessary planning that will foster meaningful engagement.

Location of CEB Meetings

A first step in implementing Community Engagement Boards is selecting a location, whether in person or virtual, that fosters a safe and supportive environment for uncovering the root causes of attendance challenges. The space should be easily accessible to families and board members while ensuring privacy and encouraging open conversations.

Determine Set or Flexible Schedule

As a team, discuss whether you will host CEBs at regular time(s) each month or if you will adopt a more flexible approach and schedule CEBs as needed, or both. We include some pros and cons about each approach below.

Set Schedule & Participants

The benefits of a set schedule are:

- Supports both school staff and community volunteers' availability
- Allows district to reserve space to meet with students and families
- Have community partners and resources represented at the CEB

If you do decide to use a set schedule, the following steps are recommended.

- **Schedule all CEB related meetings at the beginning of the year:**
 - Plan meetings
 - Set volunteer training meeting dates and times
 - Schedule Community Engagement Board dates and times
 - Distribute schedules via electronic calendar invitations, email, and provide a paper document of dates and times to all board members
- **Determine Meeting Duration:** Estimate the amount of time needed to meet with each student and family



Flexible Schedule & Membership

The benefits of a flexible approach are:

- CEB occurs at a time when the individual student and parent/caregiver is most likely to be able to attend
- Addresses the specific needs of the student and family by identifying the community members that are most well-suited — similar life experience or culturally/racially similar — and/or can provide the specific resources and supports that are relevant to the unique circumstances or barriers of the individual student and family
- Because this approach does not include all CEB members and volunteers, and therefore this approach makes participation easier for volunteers
- An alternative for when the availability of a set schedule fills and delays meeting with students and their families in need of immediate supports

CEBs can look different and can be implemented at any time in the truancy process. However, one essential factor is that community members are involved in the CEB. If the meeting is taking place without a member(s) from your community, this is a school/district intervention.

Location

In Person

- **Location and Space Reservations:** Secure an accessible location for the CEB. Consider spaces that families would feel are more neutral and conducive to building trust and sharing difficult experiences. See the following list for some commonly used space recommendations:
 - Classroom at a school
 - Court resource room
 - Community centers
 - District office
 - ESD conference rooms
 - Gymnasium at a school
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Public library
 - School library
 - School office
- **Space Requirements:** Determine the number of spaces needed and ensure they are conducive to private conversations
- **Facilitators and Volunteers:** Identify the number of facilitators and volunteers required for each meeting, OSPI strongly recommends there be 2-3 people meeting with a family and no more than 5 volunteers and personnel

- **Expectations and Responsibilities:** Clearly outline the expectations and responsibilities in the agenda for easy review and reference

Virtual

- **Platform Designation:** Choose a virtual platform — Zoom, Teams, Google Chat, e.g.
- **Link Distribution:** Email electronic clickable links; consider providing scannable QR codes in addition to clickable links, but never on their own. People logging in from their phone cannot access the meeting from a QR code!
- **Resources Needed:** Ensure access to computers, internet, charging devices, and phones
- **Virtual Expectations:** Share guidelines for virtual meetings, including camera use and troubleshooting common connection issues
- **Privacy Considerations:** Ensure the virtual space is conducive to private conversation

OSPI recommends if you invite more than one family to use virtual breakout rooms, you can enable the waiting room option and allow families into the main presentation room one at a time, then move the family to the appropriate breakout room with the board volunteers.

Time

When planning, consider whether the scheduled time is accessible for students and families to attend the board meeting. If multiple families are scheduled, ensure there are designated time slots for each family to facilitate smooth transitions.

- **Accessibility:** Ensure the scheduled time is convenient for students and families
- **Time slots:** Schedule specific time slots if more than one family is attending
- **Timekeeper:** Assign a timekeeper to monitor the schedule
- **Signals:** Use a discreet signal to notify board members of time checks during the meeting
- **Breaks and Debriefing:** Allow time for breaks, debriefing, and prepping before the next meeting

Other Key Considerations

When determining the number of students and families to schedule for the CEB, there are several key considerations to account for:

- **Resource Allocation:** Knowing the number of students helps in allocating appropriate resources such as meeting space, materials, and staff support
- **Personalized Attention:** A clear understanding of the number of attendees, the CEB can better plan for personalized attention to each student and their family. This is important for addressing individual attendance challenges and providing tailored support
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Accurate attendance planning helps in collecting and analyzing data on participation and outcomes. This data is essential for making informed decisions and improving the effectiveness of the CEB over time
- **Anticipating Challenges:** Knowing how many students will attend, the CEB can anticipate potential challenges such as transportation, scheduling conflicts, or the need for additional support services

- **Development of Agendas:** Have resources prepared and ready for the CEB; these should be specific to the youth and family in attendance — See [Community Engagement Board Agenda Template](#).

Inviting Students & Families

Importance of the Invitation

The invitation to the CEB serves as documentation of offering a CEB in the truancy process. OSPI recommends that the school district confirm with their local court's jurisdiction on how to demonstrate that they have invited the family to a CEB prior to further court intervention.

Multiple Modes of Communication

To encourage participation in the CEB, use multiple communication methods to invite and prepare the family — e.g. email, letter, phone, and text. Families are more likely to attend if they receive ample notification and have time to prepare for the meeting.

Find OSPI's: [Community Engagement Board Invitation Template here](#).

Mandatory Participants

The CEB shall enter into agreement with the student and parent that establishes school attendance requirements ([RCW 28A.225.030\(2\)\(b\)](#)). If a student arrives without a parent, or a parent arrives without the student, the district should consider rescheduling the meeting or adjusting the process by providing interventions. Recognizing a student's willingness to engage is a positive step.

Key Information to Include when Inviting Families

- **Questions Handout:** Include the list of questions that are commonly asked at the CEB. This allows the family to prepare for the meeting ahead of time. — [Community Engagement Board Questions Handout for Board Members](#).
- **Participants:** Provide a list of who will be present, including partners and the support they can offer
- **Assessment Information:** If the student has not completed an assessment or screener, inform the family that it will be offered at the CEB meeting

Modes of Inviting Families

Here are some helpful tips for processing invitations:

- **Mail Letters:** Send letters at least two weeks prior to the board meeting. Highlight and bold text the date and time for the meeting; including the day of the week — e.g., Wednesday, August 21, 2025.
- **Email:** Send electronic communications, such as calendar invitations or emails
- **Parent Communication Tools:** Send messages through district approved technology such as ParentVue, ParentSquare, Remind, or a text message if your district allows

- **Personal Phone Calls:** Make personal phone calls to ensure the family is aware of the meeting
- **Home Visit Delivery:** Consider delivering the invitation in person through a home visit

Research-Based Communication Methods

Consider using research-based practices to prepare your communication, including your CEB invitations to families. Todd Rogers, PhD, has developed the [Six Principles of Writing for Busy Readers](#) through extensive research to communicate more effectively with busy parents. You can also use AI to help you rewrite your communications using these principles.

Language and Accessibility

OSPI recommends that invitations are provided in the family's home language as well as in English. Check with family to identify if they need translation services and have them available for the meeting.

Roles & Responsibilities

Identifying key roles and responsibilities of volunteers and team members will support smooth implementation. Key roles include:

- Send out invitations
- Communicate with families beforehand
- Facilitator
- Greeter
- Notetaker

Agenda

Creating a structured agenda can be an efficient way to provide your board members with the information needed to develop a supportive and inclusive plan for the students and their families. Consider allocating the first 15-20 minutes of your agenda, prior to student and family arrival, for training on key topics. This allows for the building of your volunteer knowledge.

Offering these mini training courses at every meeting also maintains compliance with [RCW 28A.225.025](#).

See [OSPI's Community Engagement Board Agenda Template](#).

Add Relevant Details

Include necessary information such as in-person meetings, virtual meeting links, materials, and identifying resources to provide to families based on assessments and previous conversations. Provide reminders of meeting structure and a list of helpful questions to guide the conversation.

Agenda Details

School districts shall provide board members with information regarding the expectations of the CEB, and information needed to build a supportive attendance plan in a timely manner. Key details shall include:

- Student and family member names (confirm with student name and pronouns to use in meeting space)
- Age
- Grade
- Credits earned
- Current grades
- Attendance record
- Key school personnel (Administrator, Counselor, Teacher, Case Manager)
- Interventions that have been offered and/or implemented
- Suggested resources and recommendations
- Student goals and aspirations (with student permission prior to meeting)

Read more about Implementing Community Engagement Boards [here](#).

Contact

For questions, please contact Attendance@k12.wa.us.