



Family Engagement in K-8 Mathematics Curricula

Family engagement in mathematics matters because children’s mathematical understanding develops not only in schools, but also through everyday interactions, conversations, routines, and relationships at home and in the community. As schools adopt new instructional approaches in mathematics, curricula can play an important role in shaping how families understand math learning, support children at home, and connect with teachers and schools. Consequently, curriculum materials have become an important driver of whether family-school partnerships in mathematics feel accessible, collaborative, and equitable.

This brief outlines the findings of a landscape scan examining how several leading K-8 mathematics curricula support connections between classroom instruction and learning within families’ homes.. The scan was designed to identify features schools and districts may wish to consider when selecting mathematics curricula that meaningfully support family engagement and to highlight emerging strategies that can strengthen family engagement supports.

How We Approached the Landscape Scan

We first compiled a list of K-8 mathematics curricula using state and large-district adoption lists, then compared those results with two recent studies of mathematics curriculum use and selection. The curricula appearing most frequently across these sources were used to narrow the landscape to ten widely adopted or recommended curricula. We then sought information from the curriculum developers through interviews, demonstrations, and publicly available materials. Four curriculum developers participated in interviews, and one provided access to a student demonstration account. Interview questions focused on family-facing resources, formats and languages, supports for teachers, family-school communication, and the extent to which families’ perspectives informed resource development.

Across the materials and conversations, six themes emerged.

1. Family Engagement is Being Built Into the Core Infrastructure of Mathematics Curricula

Across the curricula we examined, family engagement is often treated as part of the core instructional approach rather than as an “extra” or optional add-on. Most of the curricula reviewed include centralized family hubs, caregiver portals, family-facing resource centers, unit guides, at-home activities, or direct access to materials intended to connect home and school learning.

Math curriculum developers reflect recognition that families are essential partners in learning. Rather than expecting teachers to independently create family resources, curriculum developers are embedding family engagement supports directly into the curriculum ecosystem.

2. Curricula Aim to Demystify “New Math” for Families

A major trend across the curricula reviewed is helping caregivers understand *why* mathematics is being taught differently today. Many of the curricula reviewed provide a range of explanations, videos, visual models, and conceptual walkthroughs that position families as collaborative learning partners rather than homework monitors.

Curriculum developers recognize that many caregivers feel disconnected from contemporary math instruction. Family-facing resources attempt to reduce confusion, build trust, and strengthen caregiver confidence so that families can more meaningfully support children’s learning. Examples include unit progressions, videos explaining lessons and concepts, questions families can ask children, and plain-language explanations of visual or conceptual strategies that may differ from more traditional approaches to mathematics instruction.

3. Equity is Being Addressed through Flexible and Multimodal Resource Design

The curricula reviewed provide family-facing resources in multiple formats, languages, and delivery modes. These approaches acknowledge that equitable family engagement requires more than simply making resources available online. Families access and engage with learning differently based on language, technology access, time, and learning preferences, so flexible delivery systems are an important design consideration. Across the curricula reviewed, examples included printed student materials with built-in family components, multilingual family resources, digital activities, and video libraries that visually explain lessons and mathematical concepts.

4. Curricula Strive to Reduce Communication Burdens on Teachers

The supports examined reflect an effort to reduce reliance on teachers creating materials from scratch. These tools aim to streamline communication, increase consistency between school and home messaging, and make family outreach more feasible within teachers’ workloads. The scan identified examples such as family letters embedded in teacher materials, shareable progress reports and benchmark data, ready-made math night presentations, and family access to some of the same instructional resources used by educators.

5. Family Engagement Is Becoming a Curriculum Development Priority

Several curriculum developers are not only providing family resources, but also actively researching how caregivers engage with mathematics materials and whom families trust as messengers. Among the curricula examined, family engagement is treated as a measurable and research-informed component of curriculum design rather than a peripheral support feature. Some developers reported gathering feedback from parents, caregivers, students, and/or educators to inform the design and refinement of family-facing resources and communication strategies.

6. Implementation and Communication Gaps Limit the Impact of Family Engagement Supports

Across the curricula reviewed, curriculum developers have invested significantly in creating robust family and community engagement supports; however, the scan also revealed a

persistent awareness gap among both teachers and caregivers regarding the existence and use of these resources. Despite the quality and breadth of available supports, many family engagement supports appear underutilized due to inconsistent communication and implementation practices.

The long-term success of family engagement supports depends not only on the development of strong resources, but also on how effectively schools and educators introduce, communicate, and integrate those resources into ongoing family-school partnerships. Sustainable impact requires intentional rollout strategies, educator training, and clear communication channels that help families meaningfully access and use available supports.

Implications for Practitioners

The findings suggest that family engagement is a visible and intentional feature of many of the K-8 mathematics curricula reviewed. Across the curricula reviewed, family-facing resources are being built into the core infrastructure of mathematics curricula, offering tools that help caregivers understand current instructional approaches, access activities and explanations in multiple formats, and receive more consistent communication from schools. These efforts reflect an important shift away from viewing family engagement in mathematics as limited to homework help and toward building shared understanding and responsibility between families, teachers, and schools.

At the same time, strong resources alone are not sufficient. Their impact depends on whether teachers know they exist, whether families are introduced to them clearly, and whether schools have the time and structures to use them consistently. When reviewing or implementing mathematics curricula, educators, schools, and districts may want to look beyond whether family-facing resources exist and toward how well the curriculum supports meaningful family engagement in students' mathematical learning.

Questions to Consider When Reviewing Family Engagement Supports in Mathematics Curricula

- How well does the curriculum help families understand and feel confident about current approaches to math instruction?
- How well does the curriculum ensure every family—regardless of language, technology access, or prior math experience—can access family engagement supports?
- How well does the curriculum help teachers build trusting, two-way communication with families about math learning?
- How well does the curriculum position families as partners in their child's math learning, rather than passive recipients of information?
- How well does the curriculum help families understand and support their child's progress in math?
- How well does the curriculum align with—and help advance—the district's equity and family engagement goals?

For a practical reflection tool to help districts evaluate how well mathematics curricula support meaningful family engagement, see [here](#).

References

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