

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES TO WATCH

## Molokai Learning, Investing, Vigorously, Everyday (Molokai LIVE)

Molokai LIVE	
<b>Urbanicity:</b> Rural	<b>Percentage of All Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch:</b> 100%
<b>Location:</b> Kaneohe, Hawaii	<b>Demographics:</b> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 81%, Asian: 15%, White: 3%, Other: 1%
<b>Grades:</b> 5-12	<b>Hours of 21st CCLC Program Operation:</b> Monday through Thursday, 3-6 p.m.
<b>21st CCLC Enrollment:</b> 234	

Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships Opportunity Conditions Addressed
<b>Process Conditions:</b> Linked to Learning Relational Developmental Collaborative Interactive
<b>Organizational Conditions:</b> Systemic Integrated Sustained

### Claiming Local Strengths Through Family Engagement

An overarching goal of Molokai Learning, Investing, Vigorously, Everyday (LIVE) is to support students to feel a sense of pride about their school and education. For years, this has been missing among students and community members in Molokai. “If students don’t have sense of place and belonging in school and buy in to their education, they will not want to attain more education or go to college,” says Lyn Bonk, Director of Molokai LIVE. Although the program was only launched 1.5 years ago, it is undertaking impressive work with ambitious goals.

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#### Developing a Molokai Certificate

The program is helping to create a shift in culture so students claim their strengths and see themselves with a sense of purpose. The program is working with a range of partners in the school, business community, and elsewhere in Molokai to develop a Molokai Certificate. This certificate will reflect student learning, citizenship, and other skills so the island can define success on its own terms. “Within five years, we will have our first graduates who will have this certification,” Bonk says. The certificates will be awarded with high school diplomas and will encourage students’ aspirations.

#### College and Career Readiness Meets Families Where They Are

Molokai is a rural, isolated island. Community members care deeply for each other and have a deep sense of belonging. Because a majority of the population is on public assistance, part of Molokai LIVE’s work with families is to let them know that they aren’t alone in exploring college and career readiness options for their children. Attending college means leaving Molokai and going to the mainland. Finding a job on the island can be challenging. There are few jobs available, and the majority of the population is self-employed. Tapping into Molokai’s strengths to create college and career readiness efforts that speak to Molokai residents has been challenging and is important. For Molokai LIVE staff, showing up at athletic games to talk with students and families, rescheduling program times so they don’t conflict with sports, and making sure families understand the connection between the program’s academic support and athletics have all been key. Phone calls and targeted outreach to families are also important. Meeting with families to review students’ academic records and financial aid and college applications and facilitating “talk story” conversations among families, teachers, staff, and students are built into the program. Bonk describes the work as “breadcrumbs.” There are many small steps needed to get to where they want to be.

*“One of our biggest tasks is to help people see, that, while money is an obstacle, it doesn’t mean that the door to college is closed.”—Lyn Bonk, Director of Molokai LIVE*

#### TIPS FOR PROMISING PRACTICES

- **Connect with families to learn about college and career options as much as you connect young people.**
  - o Many first generation college students and their parents need to learn about college and career pathways. Families need to know how to support their children with practical, manageable steps.

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- **Meet families where they are.**
  - o Whether at athletic events, performances, or elsewhere, show up where families are and connect around what matters most to them.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

- Be creative and persistent with family outreach and relationship building. There is more than one way to connect with families. Phone calls and targeted outreach work with some families. Others benefit from specific connections to academic outcomes. Use a variety of strategies to reach all families, recognizing that some families will take longer to respond.

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