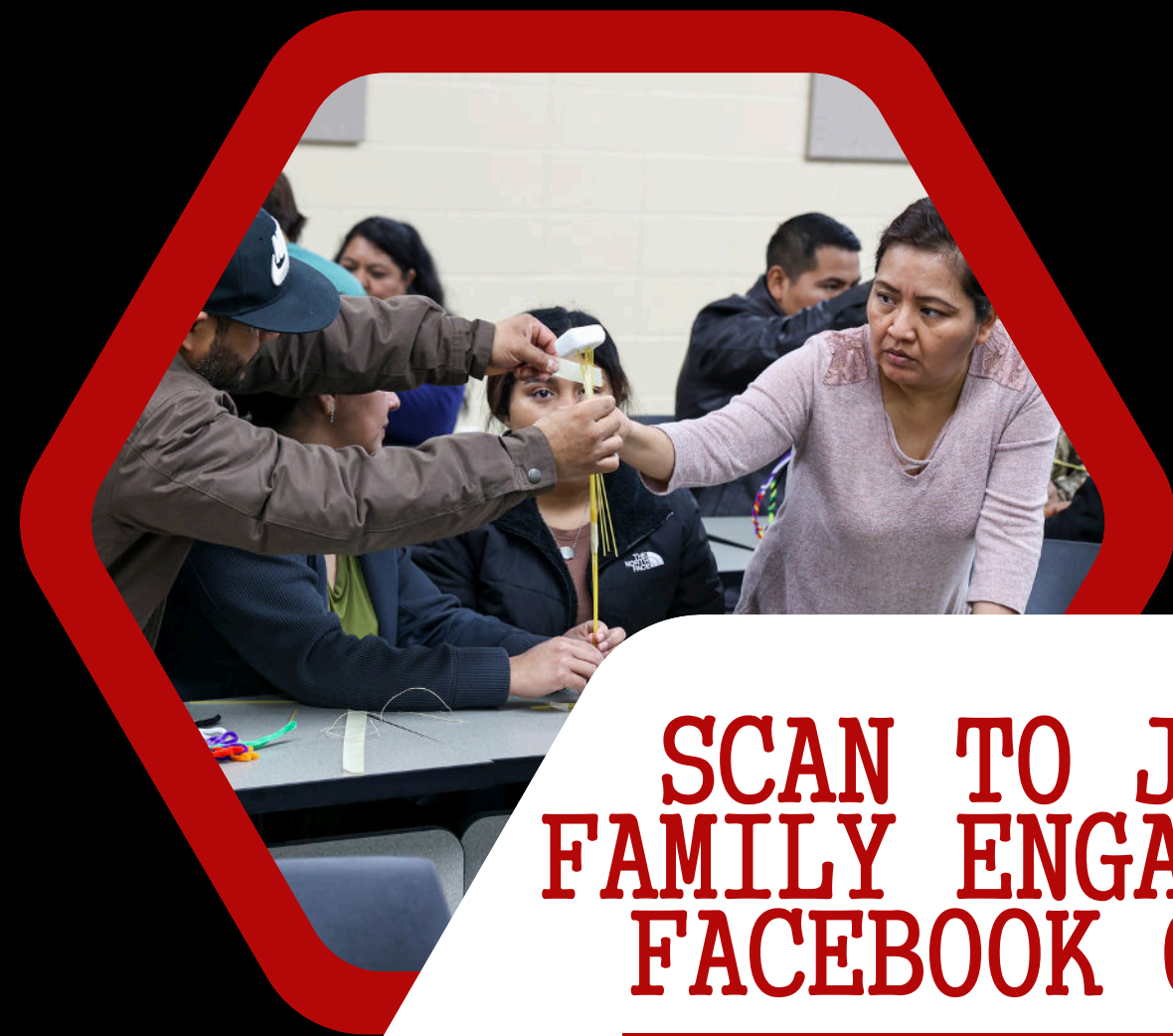


Innovative Schools Summit Nashville Pre-Conference

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION



SCAN TO JOIN
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
FACEBOOK GROUP



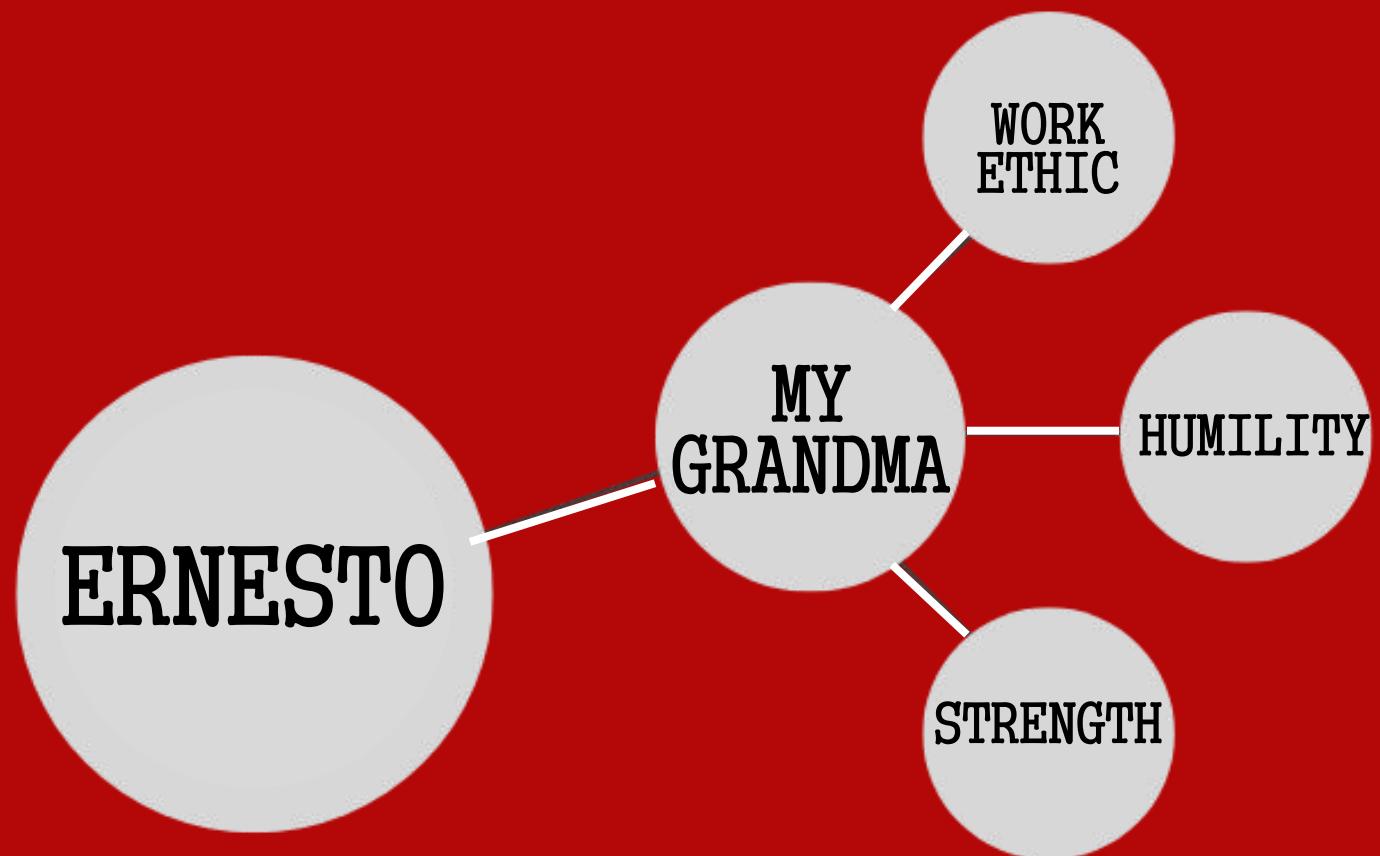
FACEBOOK LIVE
ARTICLES & BLOGS



ERNESTO MEJÍA

Learn something new? Hear something you like?
Post it on **Instagram** and tag **@ernmejia**

HONORING OUR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



@CoolSpeak
@ernmejia



Why does family engagement matter?



- **Get into teams of 4**
- **Each person shares 1 reason**
- **Team compiles their top 3 reasons**

Why is family engagement critical?



- **Increases student engagement and achievement**
- **Improve school attendance and participation**
- **Decrease disciplinary actions**
- **Increase family communication**
- **Increase involvement and participation**



READ MY
BLOG

The meeting is just one room - what you
build around it makes families want to
walk through the door

Roof:
Build Trust

Flags:
Better Marketing

Classroom:
Staff Buy In

Gym:
Bring
The Fun

Door: Purpose First



FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS FIRST

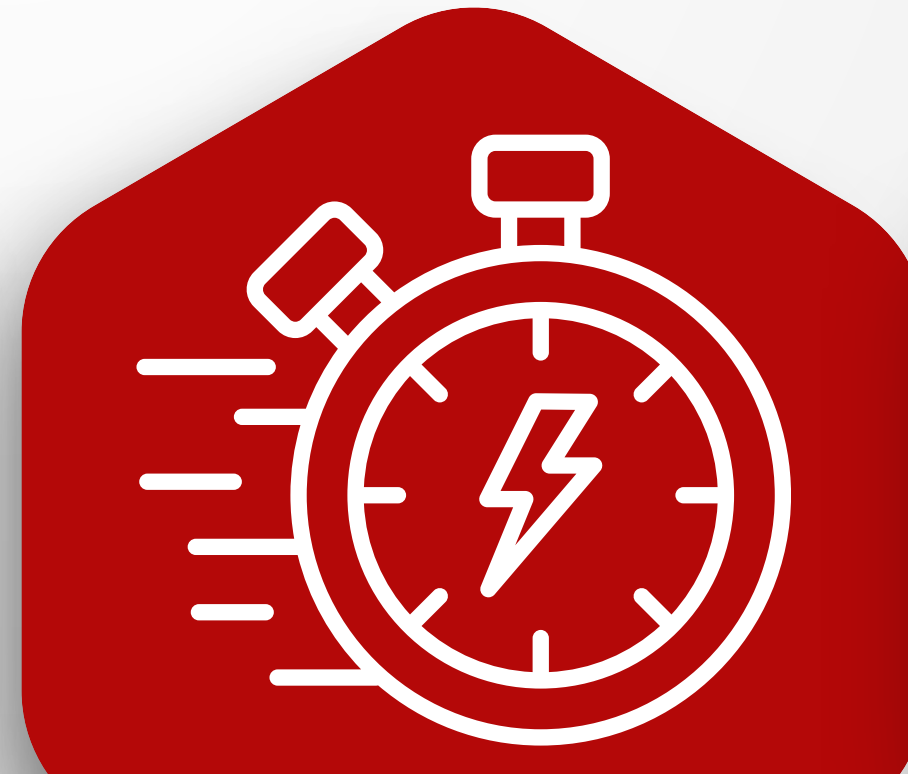
**Involve our
families more
often**



**Get to know
them first**



**Respond
promptly and
efficiently**



**Listen more
than we talk**





coolblog.

Your Next Read Is Here

Scan for extra insights and strategies we couldn't fit into today's session



Families First: How Leading With Positives Builds Stronger School Partnerships

For many families, communication from schools is associated with challenges. Schools leading with good news creates balance.



CoolSpeak Youth Engagement Company / Feb 4

MARKETING 202



**Upgrade
your
printed
materials**



**Involve
your
students**



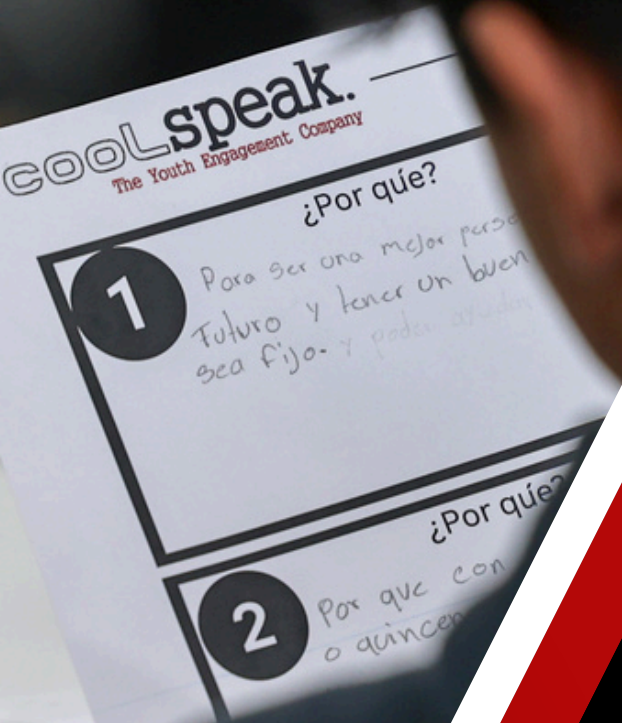
**Title your
events
properly**



**What will
participants
obtain?**

@CoolSpeak
@ernmeija





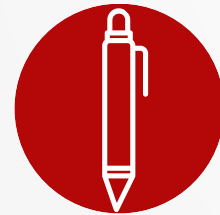
The NEW Activities



Commonalities



Me on Paper



Family Experience Tree



Guest Storytellers

Change Your Closing



**1-minute
paper**



**Video
testimonial**



Letter to...



**Thank you
notes**

New programming format



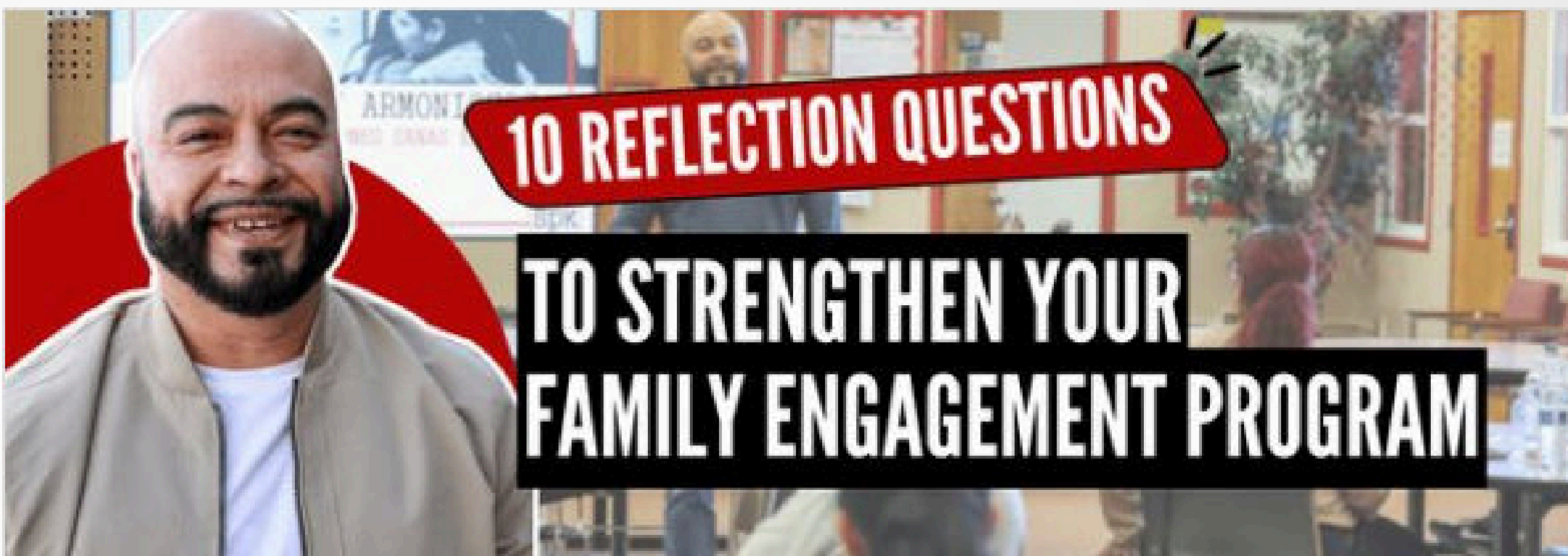
- **How will your marketing differ this time?**
- **Where will you meet?**
- **How will engagement happen?**
- **Close differently**
- **Why will parents want more?**



coolblog.

Your Next Read Is Here

Scan for extra insights and strategies we couldn't fit into today's session



10 Reflection Questions to Strengthen Your Family Engagement Program

Most of us finish the school year, jump into a million other things, and never stop to actually reflect on how our programming went, it's time to change that.



CoolSpeak Youth Engagement Company / Jun 20, 2025

Build-a-program

**New
Venue**

**New
Programming**

**New
Marketing**

**New
Activities**

**New
Closing**

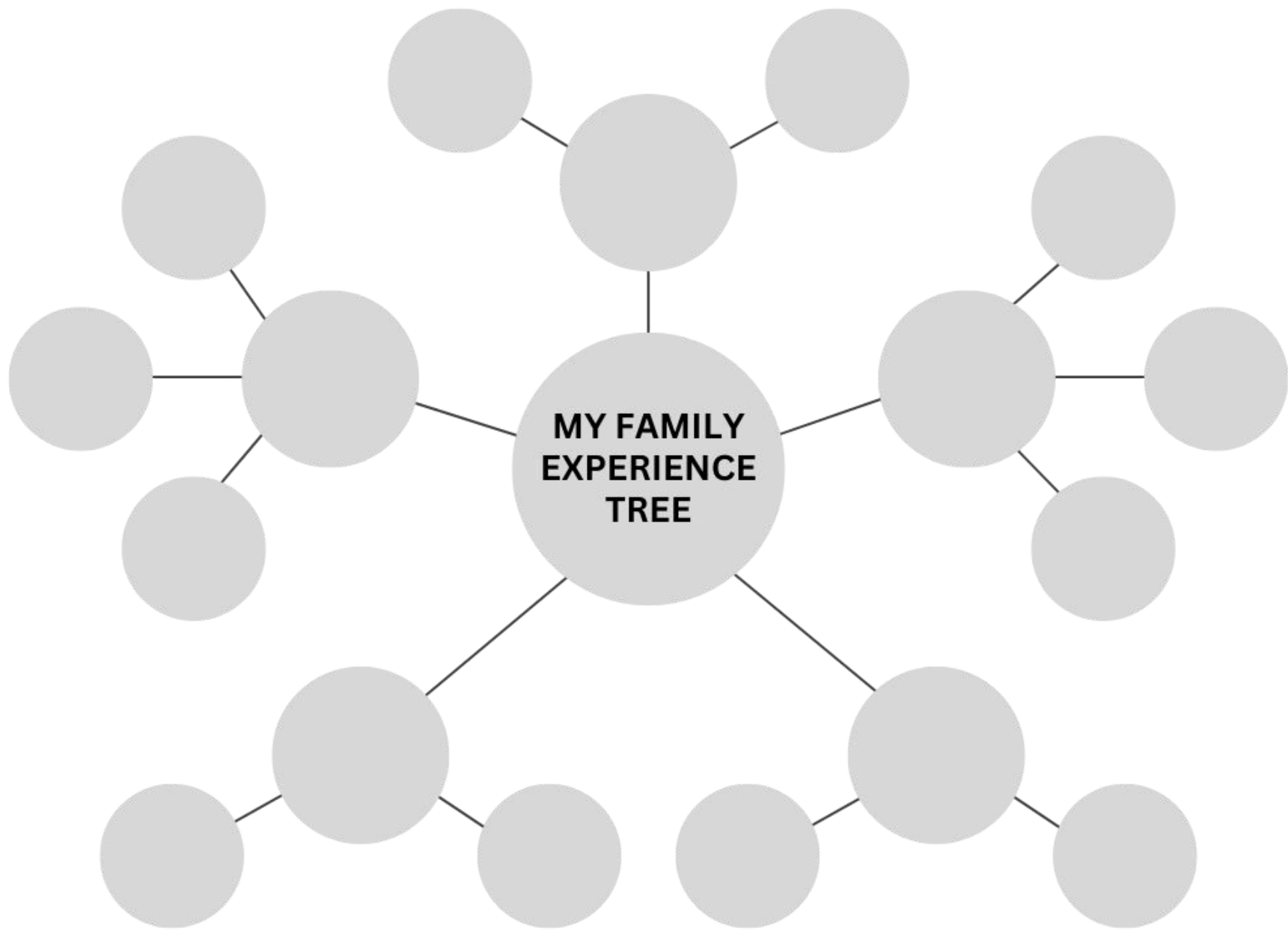
@CoolSpeak
@ernmejia



My Three Takeaways



@CoolSpeak
@ernmejia



ME ON PAPER

Ernesto Mejía

coolspeak.com
@ernestomejia | @coolSpeak



1.	2.
3.	4.

coolSpeak.
The Youth Engagement Company

coolspeak.com | @CoolSpeak | @ErnMejia
Created by CoolSpeak

COMMONALITIES

Ernesto Mejía

coolspeak.com
@ernestomejia | @coolSpeak



Round 1
Partner Name:

Round 2
Partner Name:

Round 3
Partner Name:

	Round 1 Partner Name:	Round 2 Partner Name:	Round 3 Partner Name:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

coolspeak.
The Youth Engagement Company

coolspeak.com | @CoolSpeak | @ErnMejia
Created by CoolSpeak

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT REIMAGINED TOOLKIT

Ernesto Mejía

coolspeak.com

@ernestomejia | @coolSpeak



START WITH THE END IN MIND

Before we plan logistics, let's clarify the purpose.

*What is the primary goal of this event?
(Choose 2 Words)*

- ☐ Build relationships
- ☐ Share information
- ☐ Celebrate students
- ☐ Strengthen trust
- ☐ Academic support
- ☐ Family learning
- ☐ Transition support
- ☐ Other

*What do we want families to FEEL after
this event? (Choose 3–5 Words)*

- ☐ Welcome
- ☐ Seen
- ☐ Respected
- ☐ Inspired
- ☐ Connected
- ☐ Appreciated
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Empowered

What do we want families to LEARN?

What do we want families to SAY afterward?

"We loved that..." / "I wish every event..."

What conversations do we hope happen at home after this event?

Could this have been delivered via:

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Text
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Newsletter

*If yes, what makes this worth
attending IN PERSON?*

REMOVE THE BARRIERS

Let's identify obstacles before families experience them.

Potential Barrier Is This Real for Our Families?

Transportation

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

Childcare

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

Language

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

Scheduling

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

Fear/Uncertainty

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

*Past Negative
Experiences*

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

Other:

☐ Yes ☐ No

How Will We Address It?

THE INVITE EXPERIENCE

Families decide whether to attend BEFORE the event starts.

The Flyer

What makes it feel welcoming instead of transactional?

- ☐ *Student voice included*
- ☐ *Family-centered language*
- ☐ *Clear reason to attend*
- ☐ *Multiple languages*
- ☐ *Photos of our real community*

Notes:

The Phone Script

How are we building trust through outreach?

What are we saying differently?

Social Media

Will we use:

- ☐ *Student invitation video*
- ☐ *Principal welcome video*
- ☐ *Parent testimonial*
- ☐ *Staff invitation video*

Notes:

EVENT OR EXPERIENCE?

We are not planning another meeting.
What makes this feel like an EXPERIENCE?

The Venue

Where will this happen?

Why is this space the right fit?

Format

How is this different from a typical school event?

- ☐ Round tables
- ☐ Conversation stations
- ☐ Student-led moments
- ☐ Family discussions
- ☐ Interactive activities
- ☐ Movement

Notes:

First Impressions Matter

How are we starting differently?

- ☐ Greeters
- ☐ Student ambassadors
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Slideshow/photos
- ☐ Food/snacks
- ☐ Icebreaker activity

What happens in the FIRST 10 MINUTES?

RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE INFORMATION

Who will intentionally build relationships?

Staff

Their Role:

How They Will Connect with Families:

Student Leaders / Students

Their Role:

How They Will Connect with Families:

Parent Leaders

Their Role:

How They Will Connect with Families:

Community Partners

Their Role:

How They Will Connect with Families:

Conversation Planning - What should staff talk about?

Focus on:

Student strengths, Hopes/goals, Family experiences, Relationship building

Avoid:

Logistics only, Problems only

Sample question we'll ask families:

DESIGN ENGAGEMENT ON PURPOSE

If families are only listening, we may be missing a connection.
What are our engagement moments?

First Activity

What is our opening interaction?

Movement

How will families move, talk, or interact?

Relationship Building

How will families connect with:

☐ *Other families?*

☐ *School staff?*

☐ *Students?*

EVERY FAMILY SHOULD FEEL SEEN

Belonging is planned.

How are we supporting language access?

- ☐ Translation headsets
- ☐ Interpreters
- ☐ Bilingual facilitators
- ☐ Multiple language handouts
- ☐ Multilingual signage

Would a caregiver who speaks little or no English feel confident participating in this event? Why or why not?

How are we celebrating culture?

- ☐ Food
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Student stories
- ☐ Family representation
- ☐ Cultural acknowledgements

Would families feel represented in this space?

What evidence supports your answer?

How will families be personally acknowledged?

- ☐ Welcomed by name
- ☐ Staff introductions
- ☐ Student greeters
- ☐ Family shout-outs/recognition
- ☐ Celebration of attendance
- ☐ One-on-one conversations with staff

How are we making families feel personally valued?

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Attendance matters, but connection matters more.

How will we know this worked?

We will ask families:

- ☐ *What did you take away today?*
- ☐ *What could we improve?*
- ☐ *Why did you attend this time?*
- ☐ *Did you feel welcomed?*
- ☐ *What should we offer next?*

Team Reflection (After the Event)

What worked?

What surprised us?

What should change next time?

Final Reflection

Did this event strengthen the relationship between school, families, and students? Why or why not?
