FAMILY EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT





USE

Congratulations on deciding to plan a family empowerment experience in your school community! This document was created in an attempt to package the systems and structures from the district/charter collaboration project focused on family empowerment between Ashley Park PreK-8 and Movement Charter School in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Every attempt was made to build this document in a way that was actionable and easy to use for practitioners and key stakeholders in this work. Additional context from this project, including research and the "why" behind parent engagement, testimonies from families, and other context-related information can be found in the 2018-2019 project narrative document found at scherm.co/casestudies.

We encourage any school leader, teacher, or parent to utilize and adapt this document to the needs of their community. There have been a number of remarkable outcomes from this work and we hope you find at least one piece of information or structure that allows you to better engage and empower your families. We realize that planning an event at this scale requires a lot of moving parts and have crafted this document to aide school leaders and partners in the planning and execution process. Please see a high level timeline of actions below:

- 1. Establish Outcomes
- 2. Frame your community context and identify **Key Players**
- 3. Create Goals
 - a. Identify Pillars
 - b. Decide on data collection and evaluation methods
- 4. Establish a Budget and tracking systems
- 5. Schedule a **Timeline**
 - a. Build project planning tracking system to centralize actions
 - i. Build list of Macro Responsibilities
 - ii. Build a list of Micro Responsibilities
 - iii. Plan Internal and External Communications
- 6. <u>Delegate</u> all actions along with timelines
- 7. Execute family empowerment experience
- 8. Analyze collected data and reflect with all parties involved

The specifics of any event are driven by community context. However, we believe that all successful events will follow a similar planning structure and include all of the tools above at a minimum. If you have questions or would like to connect further, please visit our contact page and don't hesitate to reach out.

Onward,

The SchermCo Team







OUTCOMES



Outcomes¹

The outcomes of this project are provided at the very beginning of this document to grab your attention and keep everyone efficient. This work began with two school leaders asking:

"How can we better support family engagement and empowerment at our school?"

Each school faced a different set of challenges in regards to engagement and empowerment. General family events like open houses were lightly attended and communication and input from families were sparse.

These school leaders and their staff wanted to rethink and overhaul these efforts. They inherently believed in the importance of leveraging the insight and expertise of families but wanted to do more to build a system to make it happen. The following is a brief timeline and outcome summary from this effort.

2018 Pilot

- March-May 2018 Two focus groups and two family nights offered
- June 2018 900+ data points collected from both school communities
- June 2018 Each school grew in 8/9 surveyed areas focused on family engagement and family empowerment

2018-2019 Family Nights

- July 2018 March 2019
- 16 family nights offered
- Among Ashley Park and Movement School, 53% of families attended at least one family night
- 62% / 247 Movement families attended at least one family night
- An average attendance of 68 families and 213 people at Movement family nights
- 46% / 236 Ashley Park families attended at least one family night
- An average attendance of 59 families and 174 people at Ashley Park family nights
- 3,000+ meals served
- 30+ community partners supported family nights
- Parents and School Leaders have continually expressed the importance of family nights and an increased sense of community and trust as a result of this effort

¹ As of March 2019. Additional qualitative and student outcome data will be provided upon completion of the Urban Institute's analysis in October 2019.



CONTEXT



Context

In the winter of 2018, Ashley Park PreK-8 and Movement Charter School, located less than one mile from each other on the west side of Charlotte, joined forces to better support parent engagement and empowerment in their school communities. The pilot phase of this project was conducted from January 2018-July 2018 and after capturing positive data and insights, this project continued through the 2018-2019 school year.

The key players, goals, processes, and tools leveraged throughout the project are below.

Key Players

- Ashley Park PreK-8: Ashley Park is a PreK-8 school that serves approximately 514 scholars and part of the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district. In 2018-2019, Ashley Park was a federally designated Title I school.
- Movement Charter School: Movement is a K-3 charter school located on the west side of Charlotte, NC and serves approximately 398 scholars. Movement school open in 2017 to a founding class of approximately 300 K-2 scholars.
- Wells Fargo Social Responsibility Group: The Wells Fargo Social Responsibility Group in Charlotte, NC were the sole financial supporters of this innovative project.
- UNC Charlotte Urban Institute: A nonpartisan, applied research and community outreach institute at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte served as the evaluation partner.
- SchermCo: SchermCo is a social-impact implementation firm that offers project management and strategic planning services to innovative educational initiatives. Since launching in 2014, SchermCo has partnered with 30+ clients across 14 states. SchermCo served as the lead project manager for this initiative.



KEY TERMS



Key Terms

Family Engagement: a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development²

Family Empowerment: to give power and ownership, to make more confident, especially in advocating for one's child(ren)

Family Empowerment Committee: Committees that were created at each school comprised of school staff and families in order to guide the initiative

The Pillars: Three core tenets of the project.

- **Professional Development + Collaboration:** The use of tailored and consistent sessions with each school's Family Empowerment Committees (FEC) and school leaders
- Data: The use of a unique data tracking system as well as survey and family exit ticket at the end of each family night
- Community Partners: The use of 30+ community partners that aligned with the requests and needs of each school community to support the family nights

² 2010 National Family, Community and Engagement Working Group



GOALS



Goals

From the onset of this project, both schools were seeking to better engage and empower their families. Each school leader was careful not to set preconceived goals regarding engagement and empowerment for families, but rather seek feedback and co-create goals collectively.

The 2018 pilot's core goals were based on seeking answers regarding how each school could better support their families. These guiding questions included:

- How do we (school and families) define engagement?
- How do we define and measure levels of engagement?
- How can we make families feel more welcomed at our school?

Based on the information and data collected during the pilot - two distinct and measurable goals were set for 2018-2019:

- **Goal 1:** Charter and district schools can work together to test ideas, share resources, and plan events to support and empower their families.
- Goal 2: Increase family engagement and empowerment to build stronger relationships between the schools and families, and improve scholar outcomes.

The Urban Institute led the evaluation of these goals and utilized pre/post surveys, attendance data for family nights, stakeholder interviews, and scholar level data to measure impact for each goal.



PROCESS



Process

The following table is a macro checklist of activities that were followed throughout the project. It provides main actions throughout the school year but is not inclusive of family night events, standing monthly meetings with evaluation partners, and related logistics.

engagement and empowerment Review and analyze focus group feedback in advance of the upcoming school year Month 2 Outline family night dates and themes Seek and finalize FEC members for the upcoming school year Month 3 Confirm commitment and scopes of FEC members Build data tracker for family night attendance and exit ticket tracking Confirm and communicate family night dates to families and community partners Month 4 Conduct logic model meeting with schools, families, and evaluation partners Administer pre-survey to families Conduct joint FEC meeting Month 5 Analyze pre-survey data Conduct joint FEC meeting with schools, FECs, and funders Month 7-8 Conduct joint FEC meeting Month 9 Administer post-survey Conduct focus groups with families to discuss changes for the upcoming year Month 10 Analyze post-survey data	Month 1	☐ Hold family focus groups designed to gain insight and perspective from families on
Month 2 Outline family night dates and themes Seek and finalize FEC members for the upcoming school year Month 3 Confirm commitment and scopes of FEC members Build data tracker for family night attendance and exit ticket tracking Confirm and communicate family night dates to families and community partners Month 4 Conduct logic model meeting with schools, families, and evaluation partners Administer pre-survey to families Conduct joint FEC meeting Month 5 Analyze pre-survey data Conduct joint FEC meeting Month 6 Mid-point check-in meeting with schools, FECs, and funders Month 7-8 Conduct joint FEC meeting Month 9 Administer post-survey Conduct focus groups with families to discuss changes for the upcoming year		engagement and empowerment
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Conduct focus groups with families to discuss changes for the upcoming year	Month 7-8	☐ Conduct joint FEC meeting
	Month 9	☐ Administer post-survey
Month 10 ☐ Analyze post-survey data		☐ Conduct focus groups with families to discuss changes for the upcoming year
	Month 10	☐ Analyze post-survey data



Family Night Prep + Macro Actions – Sample Month View

The following table is provided to display the main action items for a sample month broken down by week in relation to family nights. While these actions below are monthly steps in relation to the collaboration project for Movement Charter School and Ashley Park Elementary, they are listed below in order to show the flow of two closely aligned family nights.

Week 1	 □ Analyze attendance and exit ticket data from AP family night (previous month) □ Meet with Movement's FEC to finalize planning for the upcoming family night □ Distribute first round of RSVP's to Movement families □ Weekly email sent to all stakeholders regarding actions and events for the upcoming week
Week 2	 Distribute first round of RSVP's to AP families Finalize community partners and resources for Movement's family night Distribute second round of RSVP's to Movement families Weekly email sent to all stakeholders regarding actions and events for the upcoming week
Week 3	 □ Conduct Movement family night □ Distribute second round of RSVP's to AP families □ Finalize community partners and resources for AP's family night □ Weekly email sent to all stakeholders regarding actions and events for the upcoming week
Week 4	 □ Joint meeting with both school leaders to share trends, data, and resources □ Conduct AP family night □ Analyze attendance and exit ticket data from the Movement family night □ Weekly email sent to all stakeholders regarding actions and events for the upcoming week



Family Night Prep + Micro Actions – Overview Sample

The following table provides a more specific glimpse into the required action steps for each family night. SchermCo owned each of these action steps. While the actions below are certainly not all encompassing, they are included to show the level of detail that a project plan should exhibit.

Timing	Action
20 Days Out	Reach out and confirm community partners (based on feedback from families)
12 Days Out	Place printing order for marketing materials, including RSVPs
11 Days Out	Print and drop-off Family Night RSVPs to school
10 Days Out	Create and distribute Lyft code/transportation details with families
8 Days Out	Finalize community partners, additional vendors, and food order
7 Days Out	Order any remaining materials and resources
6 Days Out	Finalize run of show and send to FEC members
5 Days Out	Place food order
4 Days Out	Print and drop-off second family night flyer
2 Days Out	Print all additional family night materials (agenda, exit tickets, save the dates, etc.)

Host Family Night

2 Days After	Send pictures and attendance data to school
3 Days After	Send family night materials and information to all families
5 Days After	Analyze family exit ticket data and send to school



Micro Actions – Single Responsibility Sample

While the table above showcases micro actions that span multiple responsibilities, the table below features a single responsibility and all of the micro actions taken to complete it in full. Our recommendation for ensuring that all tasks in a responsibility are thought out is to break each one down in the same format below. By doing this, it decreases gray areas in delegation and allows for complex responsibilities to be actionable.

Sample Responsibility: External Partner Communication

Timing	Action	
6 months out	Analyze feedback from families to determine the best community partners to	
	involve in a family night	
6 months out	Collect core themes from feedback and begin to research aligned organizations	
5 months out	Begin contacting organizations and tracking responses	
4 months out	Confirm selected organizational partners with school leadership	
4 months out	Confirm attendance with community partners and send calendar reminders to	
	involved staff	
3 months out	Secure any materials for partner requests (ie: display easels, table cloths,	
	table/chairs)	
1 month out	Contact all partner organizations and share the agenda for the evening. Collect	
	dinner RSVPs and any accommodation/accessibility information if needed (ie:	
	handicap parking).	
2 weeks out	Share any and all auxiliary, logistical information with partners (parking information,	
	school map, arrival times, etc.)	
1 week out	Designate volunteer(s) to greet community partners and circulate tables; provide	
	any necessary training	
Day of event	Welcome community partners to family night	
2 days after	Follow up and share thank you notes with each community partner; request any	
	desired feedback at this time	



Communication Schedule

A five-part communication formula was utilized to ensure families were made aware of each family night and had the appropriate time to plan to attend. Ashley Park and Movement both used a variety of communication methods and tools such as Remind, Possip, ConnectEd, and social media. Schools should feel comfortable using the methods that are best for their community. It is strongly recommended that more than two methods are leveraged in order to ensure communication to all families. A sample communication schedule can be found below³.

Timing	Action	
10 days out	A one-page, colored RSVPs are sent home to families	
7 days out	A message to families about returning the RSVPs and reminder about family night	
5 days out	A one-page, colored flyer is sent home to families	
3 days out	A message to families about family night	
2 days out	A final reminder about family night	
Family Night		
1 day after	Thank you communication to families	

School Staff Time Commitment

It is estimated that Family Empowerment Committee (FEC) members worked approximately 5-8 additional hours per month. A sample breakdown of these hours are below:

- FEC monthly meeting 1 hour
- Family night prep and planning 2 hours
- Family night 3 hours
- Family night follow-up 1 hour

³ Save the dates are also distributed at each family night for the upcoming family night



SchermCo/School Responsibilities

A strong partnership between the schools and any outside organization is critical to the success of any project. It's important to clearly outline the responsibilities of each party to ensure clarity and transparency.

Responsibilities				
SchermCo		School		
Leading monthly FEC professional development sessions		Finalizing logistics and facility planning for family nights		
Leading monthly school leader sessions		Communicating with families		
Holding monthly check-ins with evaluation partner		Creating school specific materials for family nights		
Monthly communication to funders and stakeholders		Leading stations and sessions at family nights, as needed		
Creating agenda, exit tickets, and save the dates for family nights		Supporting the staffing of family nights, 10- 15 school staff per night.		
Securing food and community partners for family nights		Conducting follow-up conversations with families		
Purchasing supplies for family nights				
Contacting and coordination of volunteers				
Staffing and supporting stations, as needed				
Documenting via pictures, video, and social media				
Arranging transportation and communication with families				
Collecting exit tickets and analyzing data				
Managing and paying vendors for family nights				



BUDGET



Budget

The budget for the 2018-2019 family empowerment project is below. These line items are directly related to the expense of each family night. Additionally, the Wells Fargo Social Responsibility Group provided a grant of \$175,000 for this project. Outside of these expenses, the remaining funds were designated for SchermCo personnel to staff and manage the work.

SchermCo provided four staff members to resource this project. A project lead, two project support staff that handled operations and logistics, and a social media staff member. It is estimated that SchermCo staff spent 50 hours a week or approximately 200 hours a month, a total of 2,000 hours leading this project.

Family Night Budget Item	Total	Average⁴
Food	\$20,000	\$1,000
Teacher Stipends	\$5,000	\$250
Program Expenses & Supplies	\$15,000	\$750
Transportation	\$10,000	\$500
Security	\$5,000	\$250
Incentives/Parent and Teacher	\$2,000	\$100
Volunteer Appreciation	\$1,000	\$50
Admin Support	\$5,200	\$260
Evaluation/Video Production	\$25,000	
TOTAL	88,200	

For inquiries about funding opportunities and options, please contact us at info@scherm.co.

⁴ Per family night, per school

LET'S CONNECT

Want to know more about our learnings and process from this project? Feel free to reach out or say hi on social media - we'd love to connect.

email: info@scherm.co







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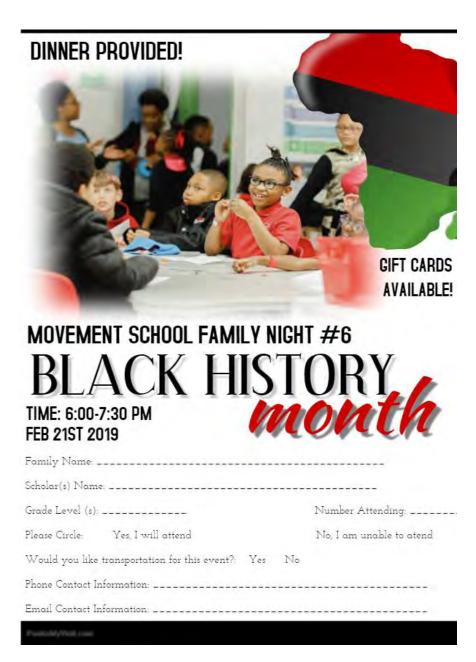
TOOLS

The following are templates and tools that were created to support this project. Stakeholders are encouraged to use and adapt these tools to best serve their communities.



RSVPs

• RSVPs were created and distributed to families at least 10 days in advance of each family night, based on the theme of each night. RSVPs were created at https://www.postermywall.com/





Pre-Event Survey Template

• Pre-event surveys were created by our evaluation partners and were distributed at the beginning of each school year. These also served as the framework for the post-surveys.

Family Night Survey

<SCHOOL NAME> is committed to creating an environment where you feel your opinion is heard and valued. Please complete the survey below to help us improve.

Last 4 digits of your phone number	Grade level of scholar(s)
(This will help us match your pre and post survey but will not be	
used to identify you)	

1. Please circle the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I feel welcomed at <school name=""></school>	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am proud that my scholar attends <school NAME></school 	1	2	3	4	5
c. I know who to contact if I have a concern about something happening at school	1	2	3	4	5
d. I know who to contact if I have an idea that could help my scholar or other scholars	1	2	3	4	5
e. I am comfortable reaching out for help so I can better support my scholar's learning	1	2	3	4	5
f. I know how to advocate for my child at <school name=""></school>	1	2	3	4	5
g. <school name=""> can connect my family to community services</school>	1	2	3	4	5
h. I feel informed about what my child is learning in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
 i. <school name=""> provides me the tools I need to help my scholar be successful</school> 	1	2	3	4	5
j. I believe my ideas are valued at <school name=""></school>	1	2	3	4	5
k. I believe my family and I can make a difference in the <school name=""> community</school>	1	2	3	4	5
I believe my ideas are valued in my larger community	1	2	3	4	5
m. I believe my family and I can make a difference in the larger community	1	2	3	4	5



2.	Did you attend a family night last year? Yes No
	a. If yes, how many did you attend?
3.	What do you believe is the best way to reach:
	a. <school name=""> Leadership</school>
	b. Your scholar's teacher
4.	How likely are you to recommend <school name=""> to a friend or family member?</school>
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not Recommend Highly Recommend
5.	Do you face any challenges in attending parent events that <school name=""> could help with?</school>
6.	What else could <school name=""> do to support your engagement at the school?</school>
	Please submit this survey to your school or give it to your scholar to return. Thank you!



Sample Family Night Planning + Run of Show Template

The following template was used for each school and family night to ensure all aspects and details were covered. SchermCo would take the lead in completing each version of the template then distribute to each FEC for feedback and edits.

Family Night Date & Time: January 24, 2019, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Family Night Topic: Book Character Costume + Literacy Night School: Ashley Park | Location: Ashley Park | Family Night #5 SchermCo Responsibilities School Responsibilities **Before Event Before Event** ☐ Create RSVP Form ☐ Minimum of 5 communications to families. Additional ■ Electronic communications are recommended, with enough time. ☐ Hard Copy Confirm 10-20 staff and parent volunteers. SchermCo ☐ English and Spanish can support reaching out to families, as needed Confirm volunteers, curriculum, and Setting up the sign-in tables, rooms, technology, and other needs to ensure they physical space is ready resources Assign staff to specific stations, roles, and ☐ Save the Date - 2/21 responsibilities ☐ Sign-In Sheets Confirm Commonwealth speakers, volunteers, and ■ Exit Tickets scholar curriculum □ Resources ☐ Food, Golf Pencils, Wristbands – Amazon, Table Cloths, etc. **During Event During Event** ☐ SchermCo Arrival Staff and family volunteers ☐ Supporting sign-ins and wristband Ensuring all staff are at proper stations and appropriate distribution Floating throughout the night to ensure all aspects are running smoothly ☐ Receiving and setting up the food ☐ Social Media Documentation: ☐ Stories: Team member 1 ☐ Photos: Team member 2 ☐ Monitor Food Arrival & Set up ☐ Distribute Exit Tickets (as families sign-in) ■ Exit Ticket Basket ☐ Help with clean up **After Event After Event** SchermCo Pick Up: Week after Thank You communication to families and reminder ■ Exit Tickets about the next event ☐ Any remaining Sign-in Sheets SchermCo Submits Data to schools



Run of Show Responsibilities Template

Fa School:	amily Night Date & Time: Family Night Topic: Location:	Family Night #
Partner / Committee Responsibilities		School Responsibilities
□ Before Event □	□ <u>Before Event</u>	
□ <u>During Event</u> □	□ <u>During Event</u>	
☐ After Event☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	□ <u>After Event</u>	



Family Night Run of Show Staffing/Volunteer Template

Executing a school wide event takes a village. The purpose of this template is to allow a planning committee to think through all of the points in which support staff/volunteers will be needed in order to allow families to experience the event with ease.

The timeline below includes, but is not limited to, the following structural assumptions:

- A 2.5 hour evening timeline
- Approximately 300 guests
- Programming in a session structure
- Keynote speaker
- Provided dinner

Note: Staff/volunteers will be needed for the following stations throughout the night: Sign-in tables, room support, transitions, food set-up/distribution, clean-up, etc. Please read below for additional information and volunteer slots for these important stations:

Run of Show + Responsibilities

- 5:00 pm All school and partner staff arrive
 - o To Do's
 - Ensure sign-in tables (2-3 tables) are set-up with tablecloths, sign-in sheets, agenda, and other needed materials (see page 1)
 - Signage to the auditorium is displayed
 - Ensure all rooms are labeled to and physical set-up is complete
 - Ensure tech (materials) and gym (space) are set-up and ready to receive families
 - o 5 volunteers⁵ to support table/resource set-up
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3:
 - Volunteer 4:
 - Volunteer 5:
- 5:30 pm Additional volunteers arrive and begin room set-up
- 5:45 pm Families begin to arrive

⁵ This includes volunteers and school staff



- 4 volunteers to support sign-ins and material distribution to ensure smooth check in process
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3:
 - Volunteer 4:
- O Families should sign-in, get a wristband, exit ticket, save the date, pencil and any other materials
- O School staff begin to point families to the auditorium, additional staff escort scholars to their designated rooms for first sessions.
 - We'll need 3 volunteers to escort scholars to rooms
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3:
- 6:10 pm School staff makes 5-minute warning over school announcement system.
- 6:15 pm Welcome Families (school staff) and Introduction to Speaker
 - O Additionally, the first sessions begin
 - We'll need 3 volunteers to float throughout the session rooms to in case volunteers need any support
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3
- 6:15 pm Food arrives at school site
 - O Volunteer/partner team connects with food vendors and helps with set-up
 - O We'll need 4 volunteers to support set-up and food distribution as families pick-up
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3:
 - Volunteer 4:
- 6:45 pm Evening speaker concludes, school staff announces next steps
 - O At this point, families should pick up scholars (school staff to announce room assignments, also included on family agenda) and connect with volunteers.



•	7.00	nm -	Food	ic	distribute	٨
•	7:00	DIII -	F000	15	aistribute	u

0	We'll need f	five volunteers	helping	distribute food	l and mark	wristband

- Volunteer 1:
- Volunteer 2:
- Volunteer 3:
- Volunteer 4:
- Volunteer 5:
- 7:15 pm Families have picked up scholars, food, and begin to exit. <u>Families to drop off exit tickets as they exit</u>
 - O 3 volunteers help with announcement/walk families towards the door
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3:
- 7:20 pm Clean up begins
 - O 5 volunteers and janitorial staff support clean-up. Tables, decorations, and any other materials that need to be broken down and put away
 - Volunteer 1:
 - Volunteer 2:
 - Volunteer 3:
 - Volunteer 4:
 - Volunteer 5:
- 7:30 pm School site is clean and empty



Sample Exit Ticket

The following is a sample exit ticket that was used and distributed at each family night. These exit tickets were collected as families left each family night and were analyzed in preparation for the upcoming events. The theme for this family night was "Are you Smarter than a Movement Maverick?"

Are You Smarter Than A Movement Maverick?

Exit Survey

Dear Families: Please submit this Exit Survey to a <SCHOOL NAME> staff member before leaving

Directions: Please take 2-3 minutes and provide feedback from today's session. Thank you for responding!

1.	On a scale of 1-10, what is the likelihood you would recommend this event to another family? Please circle
	an option below.

6

7

	Not Recommend	Highly Recommend
2.	On a scale of 1-10, how relevant was this event to you as a family?	

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not Relevant Very Relevant

- 3. Please check which component you most enjoyed tonight at Are You Smarter Than A Movement Maverick? (check all that apply)
 - O Face-to-face time with classroom teacher

2

3

- O End of Year Academic Resources received
- O Community Resources provided

1

- O Family Night Topic: Are You Smarter Than A Movement Maverick?
- o Dinner
- 4. What is one thing that could have improved tonight's session?

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