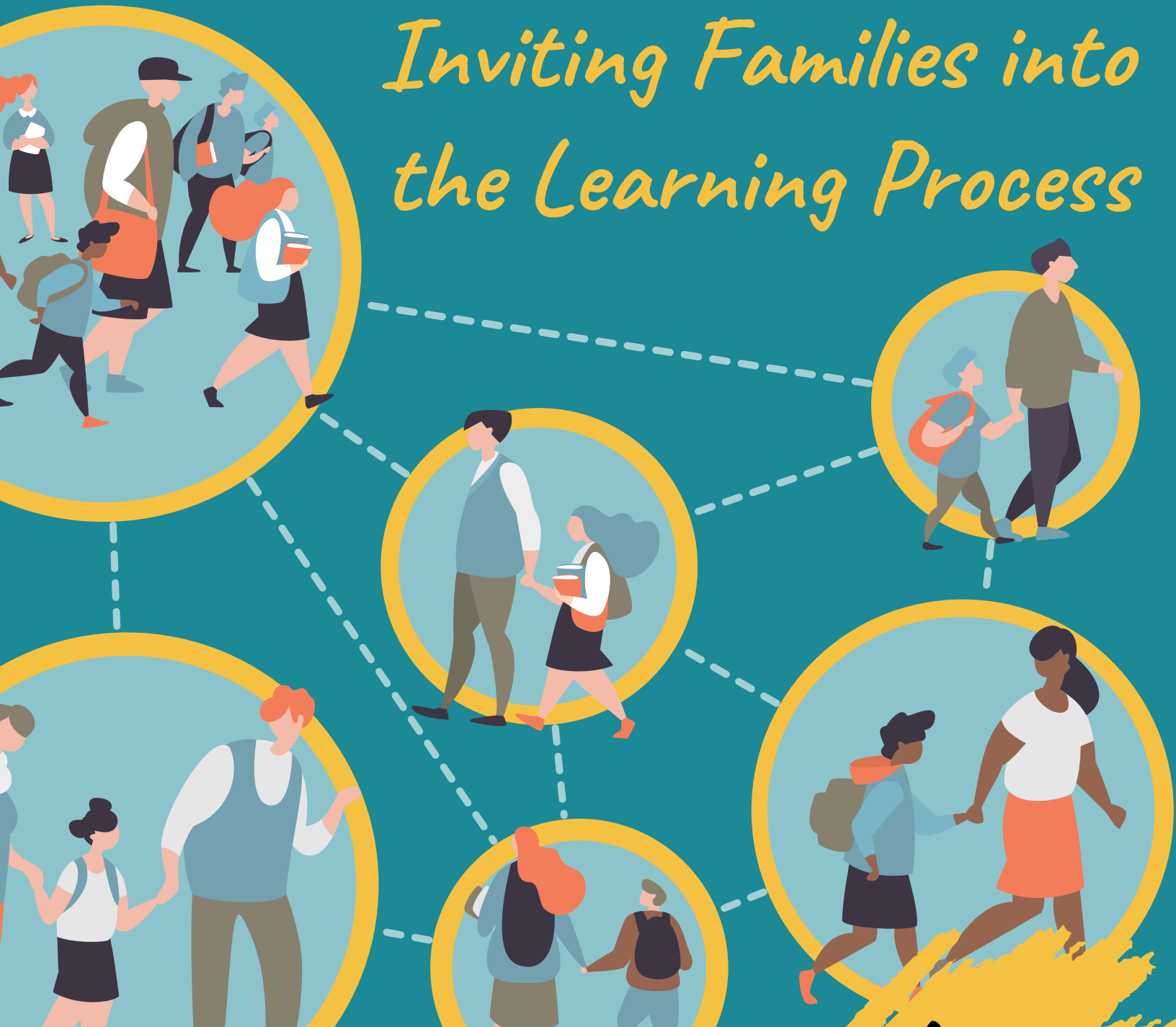


# CRSE IN THE HOME

*Inviting Families into  
the Learning Process*



**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-  
SUSTAINING EDUCATION**

*Across  
Learning  
Environments*

# PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

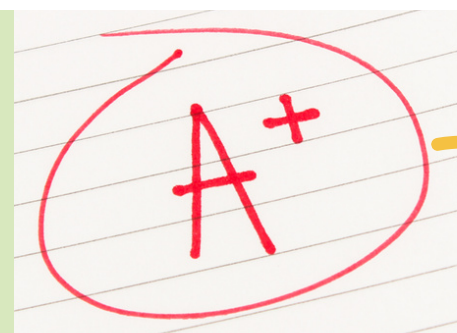
## *to Support Students*



As we conclude Module 2, it is fitting that we end at the true beginning of our schools: our students' families. Parents and other caregivers are our scholars' first teachers. When educators partner with families to support student learning, accelerated student achievement has a greater chance to follow. According to Anna Sudderth's article, "The Relationship Between Parental and Family Involvement and Student Success," engaging parents and families in their students' education can result in the following:

### **Higher grades in individual subjects, as well as higher GPAs**

Although teachers' high expectations are a major factor for student success, families' expectations can have the biggest effect on student achievement.



### **Improved Graduation Rates**

Greater family involvement correlates with higher student attendance and lower dropout rates, which also greatly contribute to higher graduation rates, as graduating from high school requires consistency and perseverance.

### **Increased College Enrollment**

Providing families with information on the benefits of postsecondary education and the logistical support for navigating the college application process increase the likelihood of student acceptance at higher ed institutions.



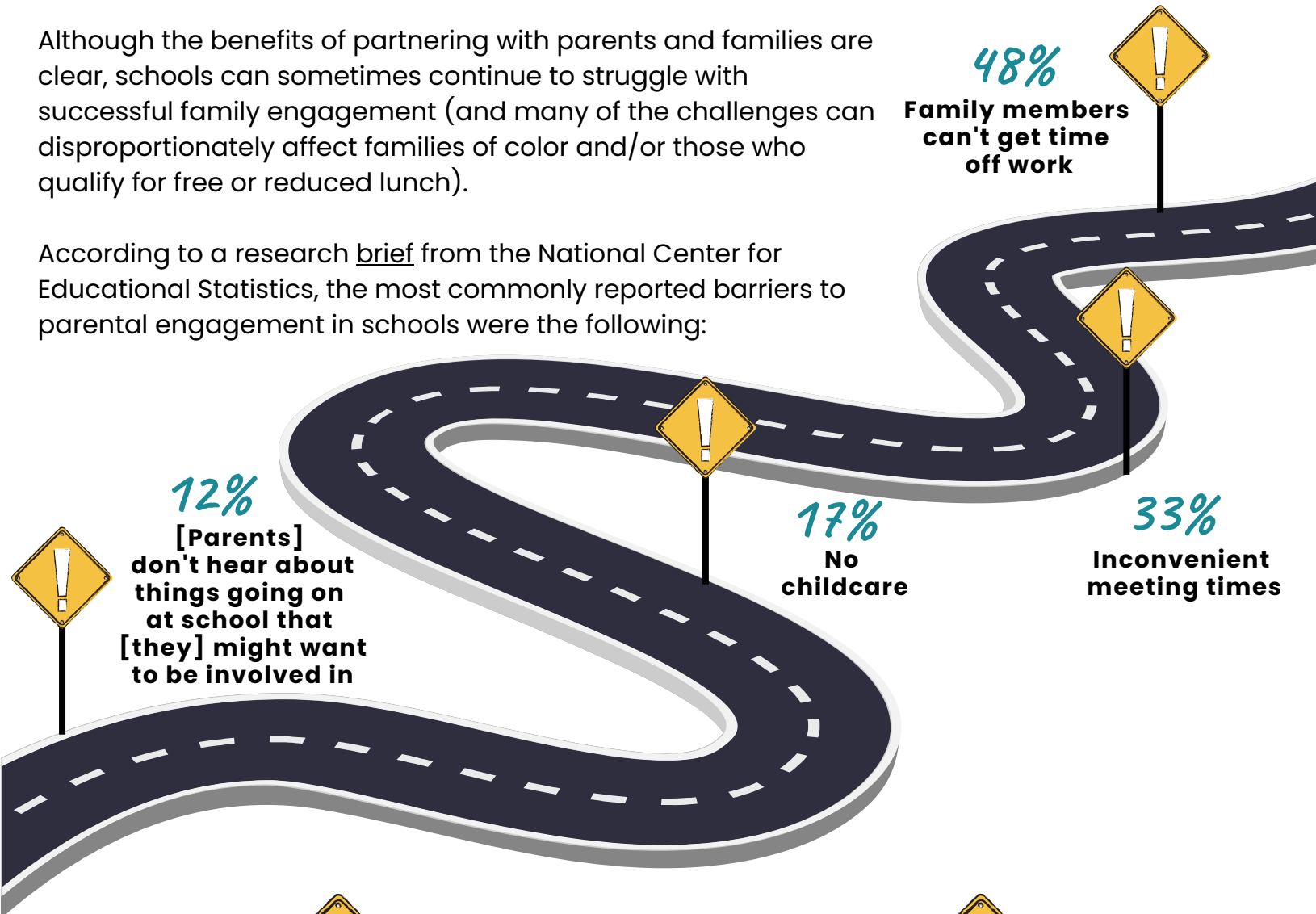
### **Enhanced Support of Students by Teachers**

When teachers can leverage the "insider info" that families have about their children, teachers are able to better connect with, understand, and address student needs.

# OBSTACLES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Although the benefits of partnering with parents and families are clear, schools can sometimes continue to struggle with successful family engagement (and many of the challenges can disproportionately affect families of color and/or those who qualify for free or reduced lunch).

According to a research [brief](#) from the National Center for Educational Statistics, the most commonly reported barriers to parental engagement in schools were the following:



In the [study](#) of second-grade parent involvement, 59% of parents who reported low participation cited an inability to get time off as the primary barrier. This percentage was higher when a two-parent home had two individuals employed full-time (68%) and was even higher when a single-parent household was employed full-time (73%).

In that same study, 46% of parents identified inconvenient meeting times as a secondary barrier. When disaggregated by race, these percentages indicated a disparity between Black and White students, with 25% more Black families (62%) citing this as a problem than White families (37%).

# OBSTACLES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Additional obstacles to family engagement (that, again, often disproportionately affect families of color and families that are socioeconomically disadvantaged) can include the following:




*Cultural or socioeconomic differences  
between staff and families*

*Language barriers between  
staff and families*

*Staff beliefs about and attitudes  
toward parents and families*



*Parents and families' beliefs about  
and attitudes toward the school*



*Limited capacity of families to  
assist with schoolwork due to their  
own limited formal education*

*Lack of transportation to and from the school  
(including cost or accessibility)*

*Lack of childcare for other  
(often younger) siblings*



*Safety concerns with the school's  
surrounding area beyond  
traditional school hours*



# CRSE-ALIGNED PRACTICES

## for Family Engagement



While these obstacles pose real hurdles for schools in regards to parental and family involvement, the good news is that culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) can help us overcome these barriers. This is particularly important since the research indicates that students of color and those from single-parent homes tend to have significant disparities in family engagement. The [NYSED CRSE Framework](#) not only includes ideas on how schools can improve family engagement, but it also provides explicit ways that families and community members can improve their children's educational experience and outcomes. In addition to leveraging this resource for your own practice, consider ways you can share this resource with families, as well.

*There is no “magic bullet” for family engagement but rather a series of combined efforts that can better position us to make families feel valued, supported, and included in their child’s education. Below are some ideas you can begin to incorporate into your own practice:*

Proactively communicate academic expectations for all parties, such as describing the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, the students, and families (e.g., in a family handbook or in a classroom syllabus).

Provide advance notice of important dates, events, and activities so that families can plan accordingly (e.g., school calendar, monthly newsletter, weekly email blasts, etc.).

Offer families resources on how to leverage internal school supports (e.g., homework help), as well as external community partner supports (e.g., local food pantry).

Invite families to plan and participate in various academic & extracurricular activities (e.g., students interviewing family members for an assignment, families co-creating a history unit, families cooking for a multicultural event or presenting at a professional development event).

Periodically share student academic performance and progress, as well as solicit insights and inputs from family (e.g., progress reports one-third and two-thirds of the way through the quarter, beginning-of-year survey, and monthly check-in calls with families).

Establish two-way feedback channels between families and the school to provide an ongoing communication loop so that families have opportunities to receive **and** share information (e.g., a bi-weekly check-in email from the teacher or a family tab on the school website with a link for sharing concerns or recommendations).



# ADDRESSING ENGAGEMENT BARRIERS

In order to address potential family engagement barriers, below are some CRSE-aligned approaches and application examples across learning environments.

## Potential Barrier

Family members can't get time off from work, inconvenient meeting times, and lack of childcare for other (often younger) siblings

## CRSE-Aligned Approach

Assist families in building or strengthening partnerships between each other in order to develop broader support systems so they can still receive key information; provide minutes of meetings and recordings of events or workshops.

## Across Learning Environments

Provide flexible and remote options when possible (e.g., morning or weekend time slots for traditional parent-teacher conference nights that can be conducted via video conference), as well as the use of parent communication apps and online systems for continuous dialogue (e.g., [School Voice](#), [Remind](#), [ClassTag](#), [ClassDojo](#) and [Seesaw](#)).

## Potential Barrier

Cultural or socioeconomic differences and language barriers between staff and families

## CRSE-Aligned Approach

Become familiar with the cultures, intersectional identities, and strengths of families. Be sure to know the primary language of each family and have translated versions of materials, as well as having translators present for conferences, community events, during enrollment, etc.

## Across Learning Environments

Develop and distribute surveys (paper and digital) that capture families' cultural backgrounds, strengths, and needs to better leverage and support families. Become a fluent user of translation apps such as [iTranslate](#).

# ADDRESSING ENGAGEMENT BARRIERS

## Potential Barrier

Staff beliefs about and attitudes toward parents and families, as well as parents and families' beliefs about and attitudes toward the school

## CRSE-Aligned Approach

Participate in professional development that helps to identify and mitigate implicit bias, as well as research family feelings about the school specifically and the education system generally.

## Across Learning Environments

Conduct focus groups and/or one-on-one meetings to hear from families (with translation services provided, as needed) and create "welcome" videos that have multi-language closed captioning or recorded in various home languages.



## Potential Barrier

Limited capacity of families to assist with schoolwork due to their own limited formal education

## CRSE-Aligned Approach

Offer family enrichment programming that can provide training on how to help students and continuing education programming for families, in addition to soliciting support from various culturally based community partners to improve participation through access/outreach.

## Across Learning Environments

Provide in-person and virtual tutoring that extends beyond just the teacher and includes peer and community partners.



## Potential Barrier

Lack of transportation to and from the school, and safety concerns with the school's surrounding area beyond traditional school hours

## CRSE-Aligned Approach

Explore partnerships with local service providers and law enforcement for any additional support in these areas.

## Across Learning Environments

Consider alternative hybrid or remote options for events, such as live streaming.



# CRSE-ALIGNED

## Family Engagement



### Brooklyn LAB School

One New York School that serves as a great example of CRSE-aligned family engagement efforts across learning environments is the [Brooklyn LAB Charter School](#). During the pandemic, they proactively sought feedback from families through town halls, focus groups, and one-on-one sessions in order to develop community-informed decisions. Their goal was to meet the actual needs of students, going straight to the source to inform their programming and planning. The school not only developed a hybrid model for students that allowed them to continue to learn with minimal disruptions, but they also created a “Family Emergency Fund” that resulted in families receiving food and supplies to which they otherwise may not have had access. It should be noted that much of the Brooklyn LAB School’s success in these endeavors can be attributed to the preexisting strong relationships and trust built with parents and families due to consistent efforts from its inception. This reaffirms the importance of embedding family engagement into the fabric of our school success efforts.

### Questions for Consideration

In the [eTeachNY](#) resource [CRSE Family Engagement Strategies](#), teachers are encouraged to consider the following:

- In what ways do you currently communicate with families?
- In remote and hybrid learning environments, what do you see as the greatest opportunity for family engagement?
- In remote and hybrid learning environments, what do you see as the greatest challenge to family engagement?

Moreover, when planning for family gatherings to build relationships with families or discuss a student’s learning, it is beneficial to determine the following:

- What languages are spoken?
- If needed, who can translate for families?
- Who are some family and community members with topical expertise and knowledge (and who can thus be included)?
- What methods of communication will be used? Who will be responsible for each?





# CONSIDERING THE *Digital Divide*



One final set of considerations for CRSE-aligned practices for family engagement is the “digital divide” that can sometimes exist between school and home. The digital divide often refers explicitly to scholars’ access to both technology and the internet. Most schools are equipped to ensure students can access both in school, and many schools have also been able to provide devices for each student to use both outside of the building. Ensuring internet service is a bigger challenge; however, public places providing free WiFi have helped to address this. If students and their families do not have access to the internet in their homes, provide them with a list of places within the community, such as libraries and coffee shops, that students can utilize.

Another challenge is families’ lack of digital literacy. Just as families who have limited education find it difficult to assist their children with academic tasks, family members who are technology novices may be limited in their ability to support their students when they encounter issues. Schools can address this by providing direct programming to families in this area or connecting them to resources in the community.

## *TALE Academy Connections*

The most important element of family engagement is to ensure that your efforts invite a two-way dialogue and equal partnership as opposed to a hierarchical one.

Families are not to be simply “informed” of what is happening but rather should be a part of the learning experience. The goal should be to make families co-creators who feel valued, respected, supported, and empowered.

## *Now It's Your Turn!*

In your next workbook activity, you have the opportunity to draft a letter to families that shares the ways that they can participate in their child’s learning **and** how you will communicate with families.

This is a great chance to explore and include multimodal communication methods!

# Works Cited

Brooklyn Laboratory Charter Schools. (n.d.). *About us*. <https://www.brooklynlaboratoryschool.org/mission-values-1>

Capital Region BOCES Communications Service. (n.d.). *CR-SE family strategies (A family gathering)*. eTeachNY. <https://www.eteachny.org/culturally-responsive-education/cr-se-family-engagement-strategies-a-family-gathering/>

iTranslate. (n.d.). *iTranslate*. <https://www.itranslate.com/>

New York State Education Department (n.d.). *Culturally responsive-sustaining education framework*. <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>

Redford, J., Huo, H., & McQuiggan, M. (2019, January). *Barriers to parent-school involvement for early elementary schools*. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017165/index.asp>

Sudderth, A. (2022, April 12). *The relationship between parental and family involvement and student success*. XQ Super School. <https://xqsuperschool.org/rethinktogether/relationship-between-parental-and-family-involvement-and-academic-achievement/>

# About Us

## **The TALE Academy**

The TALE Academy is a series of virtual learning experiences available to all New York State educators and offers a rich array of resources on topics related to teaching across learning environments (TALE). The TALE Academy is built upon the work New York State educators carried out during emergency remote teaching (ERT) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and extends it toward the future. TALE invites educators to think beyond online learning to consider a broader perspective on teaching and learning that encompasses teaching across multiple environments (in-person, remote, and hybrid).

## **The Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) Project**

The TALE Academy is part of a broader New York State Education Department (NYSED) initiative known as Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE). In July 2020, NYSED was awarded funding through the United States Department of Education's Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant to implement TRLE – a three-year project to build the capacity of teachers and educational leaders to effectively implement remote/hybrid learning for all students. Launched in the depths of the pandemic, the first phase of the TRLE project focused on getting resources to the field through partnerships with Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and school districts across the state. The second phase, which began in February 2022, focused on aggregating lessons learned and emerging teaching and learning strategies to address a broader field of practice: teaching across learning environments.

**The content of the TALE Academy was produced in whole or in part with funds from Contract C014452 and does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the New York State Education Department (NYSED), nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by NYSED.**

**In addition, NYSED, its employees, officers, and agencies make no representations as to the accuracy, completeness, currency, or suitability of the content herein and disclaim any express or implied warranty as to the same.**



New York State  
**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity