BEYOND A SEAT AT THE TABLE

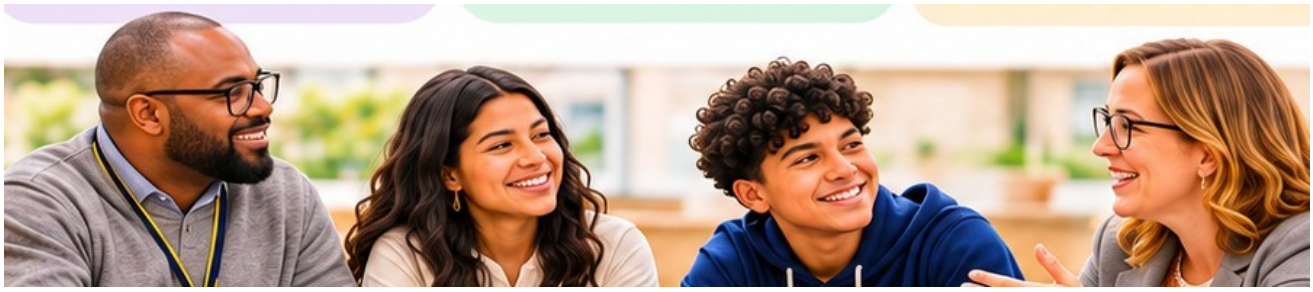
The Power of Your Voice

My Family Leadership Workbook

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK • WRITE-IN EDITION

LEARNING THROUGH ACTION

A practical place to learn, practice, map a decision, co-design a recommendation, and track what happens after families speak. You may write, draw, dictate, or work with a partner.



VALUE • CONFIDENCE • CAPACITY • INFLUENCE • IMPACT

Pilot-design edition | November 2026

Welcome: what this academy is for

Families have knowledge about student needs, opportunities and obstacles. This course teaches us to use that knowledge in school and district decision-making. It is not a judgment of parenting styles. We will ask good questions, test assumptions, build recommendations, and request accountable follow-through.

The five stages

Stage	I will learn to…
1 — VALUE	Name what my lived experience helps me see.
2 — CONFIDENCE	Communicate a concern with a clear request.
3 — CAPACITY	Find who decides and what information matters.
4 — INFLUENCE	Help design feasible, equitable recommendations.
5 — IMPACT	Request an institutional decision and report-back and monitor progress.

My learning agreement

- I may speak, write, draw, dictate or listen; passing on a personal story is acceptable.
- I will not share another child's identifiable details or private education records in the group.
- I will distinguish a concern or hypothesis from an established fact.
- I will respect people while asking for clear institutional responsibility.
- I understand this course does not guarantee a school/district decision or a partner-funded solution.

Before we begin: my readiness self-check

Circle 1 (not yet), 2 (somewhat), 3 (mostly) or 4 (confidently). This is a reflection, not a grade.

I can explain what family experience adds to decision-making. 1 2 3 4

I can ask a clear question about a school or district decision. 1 2 3 4

I can identify who has authority and what I need to verify. 1 2 3 4

I can compare evidence without making unfair assumptions. 1 2 3 4

I can request a written response and plan a follow-up. 1 2 3 4

One student opportunity or system issue I care about:

_____

_____

Module 1 • VALUE — My experience is evidence

LEARNING TARGET

Turn a lived observation into an inquiry that institutions can investigate.

Activity 1A — Experience and strengths inventory

Circle areas you know from experience, then add what your perspective can reveal.

Setting	What I notice that data alone may miss
School-home communication	
Getting to school and activities	
Learning quality and student interests	
Services and accessibility	
Belonging and school climate	

Activity 1B — Observation versus conclusion

WORKED EXAMPLE

Observation: My child could not join an after-school engineering club because pickup was not available. Possible explanation: transportation may be limiting access. Inquiry: How many interested students are unable to participate for that reason?

What happened? Describe only what I can directly observe.

_____

_____

What might it mean? (Hypothesis — not yet verified.)

_____

_____

What question would help confirm or challenge that hypothesis?

_____

_____

Activity 1C — Who else should be heard?

Name at least two viewpoints needed before drawing a systemwide conclusion.

Other family or student perspectives:

_____

Educator, program or staff perspectives:

_____

Data or records to request (public/aggregate when possible):

_____

Module 1 checkpoint

Complete this sentence: “Families may be noticing _____. We would like to learn _____ before recommending an action.”

Module 2 • CONFIDENCE — Communicate and keep agency

LEARNING TARGET

Deliver a concise statement and request a decision-relevant next step, with or without speaking aloud.

My 60-second statement

Use four parts; a good statement is specific without attacking a person or assuming a conclusion.

Part	Model sentence	My draft
1. Observation	"Families have reported…"	
2. Student impact	"This can affect…"	
3. Inquiry/recommendation	"Could we examine or consider…?"	
4. Requested next step	"Who can respond, and when will we hear back?"	

A respectful question ladder

- What decision is actually being made?
- Who is authorized to approve or decline it?
- What information would be useful to that decision?
- When and how can families expect a substantive response?

Practice responding without losing the concern

What I hear	A response I could practice
"We already discussed that."	"What was decided, and where can families see the rationale?"
"There isn't a budget."	"What options are still within existing resources, and who can assess them?"
"That is handled elsewhere."	"Who is the responsible contact, and can we document a referral?"
No response after a meeting.	"Could you confirm receipt and the expected date for a substantive response?"

Observer's practice notes

One strength I demonstrated:

_____

One revision that made my request clearer:

_____

My two strongest decision questions:

_____

Module 3 • CAPACITY — Understand the decision and evidence

LEARNING TARGET

Identify a likely authority route, verify a policy claim, and interpret basic opportunity data fairly.

Decision-route map

Different people have different roles. Do not assume an advisory group has approval power.

Step	My best current understanding	Verified? / Source
Issue and desired decision		
School contact or program owner		
District function / department		
Policy/budget authority if needed		
Who reports back to families?		

HB 257 in plain language

Kentucky HB 257 (2026) allows locally developed indicators of school quality. Its statutory concept of vibrant learning includes (a) student agency and application of standards-aligned skills, (b) partnership with families, community and workforce, and (c) produced work or experiences reflecting student interests. It does not guarantee adoption of any family proposal. Verify current guidance and your district's process.

Try it: compare with the denominator

Fictional data, not FCPS results: Harbor School has 96 of 160 eligible students complete a qualifying experience; Ridge School has 45 of 150. For this exercise, the same provisional qualifying definition is assumed, but grade/program differences are unverified.

Question	My answer
Harbor completion percentage?	
Ridge completion percentage?	
Difference in percentage points?	
Two facts we need before comparing fairly?	
A useful question to ask the district?	

Evidence and equity check

- Are students in the same grade bands and eligible for comparable opportunities?
- Is an "experience" defined the same way at each school, including quality criteria?
- Are transportation, disability access, language and schedule barriers considered?

- Are any records confidential or too small to report safely?
- Are we measuring completed participation, not merely advertised opportunities?

The most important unknown is:

_____

Module 4 • INFLUENCE — Co-design a better option

LEARNING TARGET

Identify possible causes, compare two solutions, and draft a recommendation ready for a real decision.

Symptoms, hypotheses and evidence

Observed condition	Possible cause (not yet proven)	Evidence needed
One school has lower completion in the fictional sample.		
Some families report after-school transport barriers.		
Partners may be more active at some schools.		

Compare two solutions before recommending one

Test	Option A	Option B
What exactly would change?		
Whose access would improve?		
Who has authority?		
What might it cost or displace?		
What support is needed?		
How would we measure it?		

Decision-ready recommendation card

Documented need (evidence and who was heard):

_____

Decision requested (one specific action):

_____

Authorized decision-maker — verified or still uncertain:

_____

Possible resources and REO partner role (proposed vs confirmed):

_____

Equity considerations and unintended effects:

_____

Requested response format and decision date:

_____

Peer-review check

Can someone outside our group answer: What is being requested? Who can decide? What is known vs assumed? Who may be excluded? When will the decision be communicated?

Module 5 • IMPACT — Track the decision and progress

LEARNING TARGET

Apply the five-commitment gate, request a substantive response and present a credible measurement plan.

The five commitments before implementation

Required commitment	Verified details / what is missing
1. Documented need	
2. Decision-maker with authority	
3. Implementation lead	
4. Confirmed resources / partner terms	
5. Date and method of report-back	

What counts as a response?

Acknowledged receipt ≠ substantive institutional response ≠ authorized action ≠ evidence of an outcome. A recommendation may be accepted, modified, declined with a rationale, or still under review. Each status requires a documented explanation or next date.

Recommendation ID / date	Decision status and rationale	Owner and next update

Measure what actually changes

Measure	Baseline (with denominator)	Follow-up / date
Eligible students completing qualifying learning		
Quality of the experience by shared rubric		
Institutional recommendations responded to on time		
Verified REO partner contributions tied to a gap		

My 30-day next step

A practical step that is within my control:

_____

A question or commitment the institution must answer:

_____

Who will I follow up with, and when?

_____

Capstone • My family-to-action brief

You may speak, dictate, draw and explain, or submit a written/recorded version. Use a hypothetical case if you prefer. This is assessed for clarity, feasibility, evidence and accountability — not for public-speaking polish.

1. The concern or opportunity gap and who is affected:

_____

_____

2. What we know — and what we still need to verify:

_____

_____

3. Our recommendation and one alternative considered:

_____

_____

4. Who can decide and what they should respond to:

_____

_____

5. What resources REO could coordinate, if applicable:

_____

_____

6. How and when progress would be checked:

_____

_____

What is my strongest request?

_____

_____

After the course: my self-check

Repeat the same 1–4 scale (not yet → confidently). Do not confuse increased confidence with an institutional decision.

I can explain what family experience adds to decision-making. 1 2 3 4

I can ask a clear question about a school or district decision. 1 2 3 4

I can identify who has authority and what I need to verify. 1 2 3 4

I can compare evidence without making unfair assumptions. 1 2 3 4

I can request a written response and plan a follow-up. 1 2 3 4

The Family-to-Action Cycle

LISTEN → UNDERSTAND → ANALYZE → CO-DESIGN → PRIORITIZE → ACT → MEASURE → REPORT BACK

Where REO belongs

REO = Relationships • Equity • Opportunities. It supports implementation by connecting verified student needs with families, institutions, community partners and resources. REO does not replace an institution's responsibility to make decisions and respond.

Ready-to-use follow-up request

SAMPLE MESSAGE

Thank you for considering the family recommendation regarding [issue]. We understand [decision status, if known]. Could you confirm who is responsible for the decision, whether additional information is needed, and when families can expect a substantive response? We would also appreciate how the decision and next steps will be documented and shared.

Who will receive this request?

_____

What decision am I asking about?

_____

What is the date of my request?

_____

If there is no response, what appropriate follow-up channel will I use?

_____

Five small commitments I can carry forward

- Ask who can actually authorize a change.
- Request the evidence behind a public claim.
- Include perspectives not represented in the meeting.
- Document the next step and the responsible person.
- Return to families with what happened, including when a recommendation was declined.

Vocabulary to keep handy

Term	Plain-language meaning
Family voice	Experiences, knowledge, priorities and ideas families offer.
Decision right	Authority to approve, decline or authorize a particular action.
Institutional response	Documented explanation of how a recommendation was considered and what happens next.
Vibrant learning	A Kentucky statutory concept involving agency, standards-aligned application, partnership and meaningful student-produced work.
Qualifying experience	An experience satisfying clearly established and consistently applied local criteria; the course rubric is illustrative.
Equity gap	A difference that warrants investigation and may signal unmet needs or barriers; causes must be tested.
REO	The Relationships, Equity, Opportunities coordination layer for approved or verified needs.

Source notes and policy status

Prepared using public materials checked November 2026. Kentucky statutes and regulations may change; facilitators should verify current rules, local procedures, and decision authority immediately before teaching. This curriculum is not a KDE-approved standard or legal interpretation.

Kentucky 2026 HB 257, Acts Chapter 138. https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/acts/26RS/documents/0138.pdf

Kentucky Department of Education, Local Indicators of Quality. https://www.education.ky.gov/school/innov/Pages/Local-Indicators-of-Quality.aspx

Fayette County Public Schools, Local Accountability. https://www.fcps.net/community/local-accountability

Mapp & Bergman, Dual Capacity-Building Framework (2019). https://www.dualcapacity.org/

National PTA, National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/family-school-partnerships

CAST, Universal Design for Learning Guidelines v3.0 (2024). https://udlguidelines.cast.org/