

# *Together* **FORWARD**



**REGION D**  
PARENT TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE CENTER

**GATHERING JUNE 16-18, 2026**  
**BOISE, IDAHO**

# **WHERE PATHWAYS MEET**

*And Opportunities Rise!*

# Together FORWARD



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BOISE, IDAHO

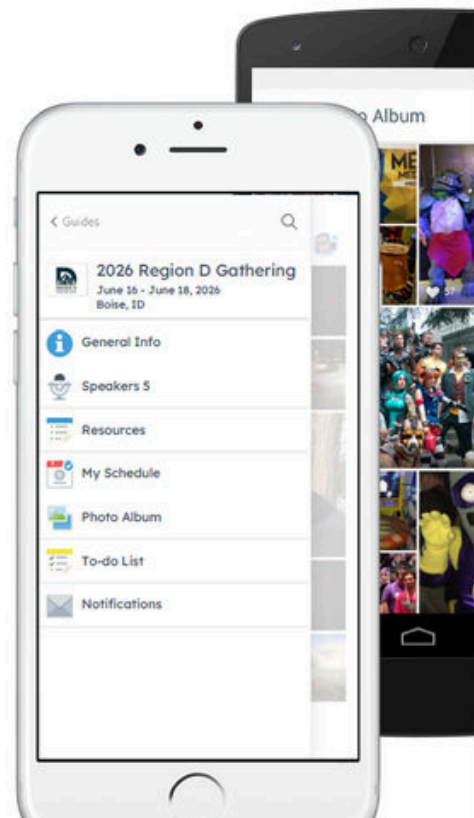
## Get the Guidebook App Here:

<https://builder.guidebook.com/g/2026regiondgatheringboiseid/>

Tap "Download the app" to access the guide on your iOS or Android device.

To access the guide, use the passphrase: **tac2026**

Prefer the web version? Some content and networking tools may be available to you online.





# REGION D GATHERING - BOISE, ID JUNE 16-18, 2026 AGENDA - TAMARACK ROOM



***Together Forward Where Pathways Meet and Possibilities Rise***

## **Day 1 – Tuesday, June 16**

- 7:00-8:30am: Breakfast
- 8:30am: Welcome & Agenda Review
- 9:00am-10:30am: Steve Pemberton - Together Forward: Becoming the Lighthouse Where Pathways Meet and Possibilities Rise (G1, G3)
- **10:30-11:00am: Break & Book Signing**
- 11:00am-12:30pm: Christopher Tiffany - The Evolving Role of PTIs and CPRCs in a School Choice Landscape (G1, G2)
- **12:30-2:00pm: Lunch & Networking**
- 2:00-3:30pm: Michael McSheehan - Part 1: Translating Content Into Experience-Centered Practice (G2)
- **3:30-3:45pm: Break**
- 3:45-4:45pm: Michelle Bass- The Cost of Caring: Who's Caring for You? (G1, G3)
- 4:45- 5:00pm: Q&A, Wrap Up

## **Day 2 – Wednesday, June 17**

- 7:00-8:30am: Breakfast
- 9:00-10:30am: Michael McSheehan - Part 2: Protecting What's Important (G2)
- **10:30-10:45am: Break**
- 10:45am-12:00pm: Melanie Hicks - Same Office, Different Operating Systems; Navigating the Modern Workplace (G3)
- **12:00-1:30pm: Lunch**
- 1:30-3:00pm: Joe La Belle - Part 1 - From Data to Decisions: Helping Parent Centers Use Information for Strategic Impact (G1, G3)
- **3:00pm-3:15pm: Break**
- 3:30-4:30pm: Joe La Belle & Bill Nuttycombe - Part 2: - AI for Parent Centers: Working Smarter, Not Harder (G1, G2, G3)



# REGION D GATHERING - BOISE, ID JUNE 16-18, 2026 AGENDA - TAMARACK ROOM



***Together Forward: Where Pathways Meet and Possibilities Rise***

## **Day 3 – June 18**

- 7:00-8:30am Breakfast
- 8:30-9:15 am Michele Tyler and Ellie Santiago - Using CPIR Products to Support Parent Centers: An Onboarding Workshop (G1, G2, G3)
- 9:30-10:45am JJ Jarrell - What's Actually Happening in Nonprofit Organizations Right Now — Workforce Trends, HR Vulnerabilities, and What Leaders Can Do About Them (G3)
- **10:45-11:10 am: Break**
- 11:10 am-12:25 pm: Joanna Lindstrom - Illuminating the Way: Position Your Center for Funding Success (G3)
- **12:25-1:00: Lunch (Prepare for Table Topic Discussions)**
- 1:00 -2:00 pm: Facilitated Table Topic Discussions - Strategy Lab - Three Things to Implement, and Three Strengths to Share

Rotation 1: 1:00-1:20

Rotation 2: 1:20-1:45

Debrief 1:45-2:00 Table Topics facilitated by Jacque Hyatt

- **2:00-2:15pm: Break**
- 2:15-4:00pm: Daniel Fernandes - Forward, No Matter What: The Leader You Already Are (G3)
- 4:00 pm - Q & A, Gathering Farewell

Topics: Parent Center Burnout, Funds Development & Sustainability, HR Policies, Leadership - Parent Center Culture, School Choice, IDEA - Content & Staff Development, Technology and AI for Data Collection and Equitable Outreach (G1, G2, G3)



# PRESENTERS



**Steve Pemberton** Steve Pemberton is an award-winning author and globally recognized executive leader whose work champions human connection and purpose-driven leadership. The bestselling author of *A Chance in the World*—which inspired a feature film—and *The Lighthouse Effect*, Steve brings a powerful message of resilience and hope to audiences around the world. His life's work has earned him more than ten honorary degrees and recognition on *The Today Show*, *CBS Evening News*, and

other major national media. Across his career at *Monster.com*, *Walgreens*, and *Workhuman®*, and now as Managing Director at *Seramount*, Steve has guided organizations in building workplaces rooted in belonging and performance.

A passionate advocate for opportunity for all, Steve's impact has been honored with the Trumpet Award and the Horizon Award from the U.S. Congress.



**Christopher Tiffany**, Executive Director, Encircle Families, has served as the Executive Director of Encircle Families (formerly Raising Special Kids), Arizona's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), since 2010. He brings experience from his background in the public education system, where he worked as a special education teacher. As a parent of a child with Autism and Intellectual Disability, Tiffany is deeply committed to improving outcomes for children, youth, and young adults with disabilities.

In addition to overseeing Arizona's Parent Training and Information Center, Encircle Families also serves as Arizona's Family to Family Health Information Center, the state's chapter of Parent-to-Parent USA, and a Family Voices Affiliate Organization. Tiffany also serves on the Arizona State Advisory Panel for Special Education (AZ SEAP). His dedication is rooted in strengthening families and systems of care for individuals with a full range of disabilities, ensuring that the entire family can thrive.



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**Michael McSheehan's** life work has been at the intersection of disability and K-12 education. He is a systems-thinker and a leader in the fields of inclusive education, students with complex communication and extensive support needs, and multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). While at the University of New Hampshire, Michael co-led the Center on Inclusive Education, the SWIFT Education Center, and numerous state and national projects to advance quality education for students with disabilities.

Michael enjoys collaborating with a variety of parent centers around the country. He founded a consulting company, Evolve & Effect, to assist those who are seeking significant change in education.



**Michelle Bass** is the founder of Bass Consultation and Services LLC, an organization she created to provide trauma-healing-informed programming to families and communities. Her mission is to make trauma-informed care accessible, effective, and community-centered while fostering resilience, connection, and hope

Michelle is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) who earned her social work degree from Boise State University and her master's in social work from Northwest Nazarene University. In 2018, she became a certified Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) Practitioner and has since expanded her work by incorporating multiple trauma-healing-informed approaches into her practice.

With a passion for prevention work, Michelle brings years of clinical experience working with youth, teens, and families into every space she serves. She has extensive experience providing



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training and public speaking for a wide range of communities and audiences. Throughout her career, she has remained deeply committed to helping families, communities, and organizations build resilience, strengthen connection, and navigate healing. Michelle also co-hosts The Resilient Parenting Podcast with her husband, Ken Bass, sponsored by the Idaho Children's Trust Fund. The podcast addresses real-life challenges facing anyone in a parenting role, offering practical tools, encouragement, and trauma-informed insights to support stronger family connections.



**Dr. Melanie Sue Hicks** is a workforce and nonprofit expert, author, TEDx speaker, and corporate trainer. In addition to her full-time role as Vice President of Programs for the Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation, she leads a workplace think tank InPursuit Research Institute focused on workplace culture, burnout and multigenerational communication and collaboration. She is also the founder of a nonprofit independent publishing imprint, InkedElephant Publishing House, focused on social impact nonfiction and poetry from first time and emerging authors.

Beyond her professional work, Dr. Hicks is a global philanthropist traveling more than 120,000 miles, to more than 47 countries to lead or participate in 2,500+ hours of community-based work. These experiences have deeply shaped her perspective on resilience, adaptability, and human connection. She is the author of *Incongruent: Travel, Trauma, Transformation*, a travel memoir about rebuilding after life wreckage and curator of *Shaking Off the Ashes*, a resilience focused poetry collection.

Dr. Hicks holds a Doctorate from the Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University, a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Miami, and a Bachelor's in Organizational Communication from the University of Central Florida. In addition to her academic credentials, she holds a Business Analytics certificate from Harvard Business School



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and is a Senior Certified Professional with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM-SCP) and a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) with CFRE International. She also holds multiple professional certifications, including Inclusive and Ethical Leadership, and Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt from the University of South Florida.



**Joe La Belle** is a pioneering figure at the intersection of AI and education, serving as the Director of Programs Impact at Family Network on Disabilities. In Florida, he oversees four key programs and lends his expertise to OSEP-funded Technical Assistance centers, enhancing support for students with disabilities through technology. Notably, Joe has played a crucial role in advocating for AI's role in education, engaging with the Secretary of Education, presenting to the US Department of Education staff, and sharing insights nationwide. His efforts focus on how AI can personalize learning and increase accessibility, making him a respected voice in the field..



**Bill Nuttycombe** has worked in technical support and IT for nearly three decades, beginning his career in 1995 at Micron PC. His professional path has included roles at ComputerLand, Healthwise, and DirecTV, giving him broad experience across hardware, support operations, and large-scale systems.

For the past ten years, Bill has served as the sole IT administrator at Idaho Parents Unlimited, where he oversees the organization's complete technology environment. His responsibilities span database administration, network and infrastructure management, telecommunications, and end-user support ensuring that the systems the organization depends on remain reliable and secure.



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# PRESENTERS

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**Michele Tyler** is the Co-Director of the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR). For more than 25 years, she has led efforts to strengthen family engagement and foster meaningful partnerships among families, youth and professionals at the local, regional, and national levels.

At the CPIR, Michele leads the development of services and resources—including eLearning Hub modules, webpages, toolkits and other technical

assistance materials—that enhance Parent Centers' knowledge and build the capacity of the Parent Center network.

As the mother of a son with autism, Michele is guided by both professional expertise and lived experience in her commitment to empowering families and building strong, collaborative relationships that support positive outcomes for children and families.



**Ellie Santiago** is a Resource Specialist with SPAN Parent Advocacy Network's CPIR Project. In her role, she creates video content, digital materials, presentations, and other communication resources that support Parent Centers and the families they serve. Ellie enjoys finding creative ways to make information more engaging, accessible, and easy to understand through design, storytelling, and digital media. She is passionate about creating accessible, engaging resources that strengthen family

engagement and improve outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

# PRESENTERS

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**Jonathan "JJ" Jarrel** is a Senior Consultant at THE KRIZNER GROUP, a full-service employment law firm based in Tallahassee, Florida. Where he specializes in providing strategic HR and employment guidance to clients across various industries throughout the state.

Before joining THE KRIZNER GROUP, JJ held pivotal C-Suite leadership roles in Human Resources and successfully led organizations spanning 240 to 1800 people in nine states.

In these high-profile roles, JJ led change initiatives relating to people, compliance, and leadership improvements across all aspects of business.

As a certified speaker and leadership coach with the John Maxwell Company JJ often speaks on the topic of leadership and cultural transformation for professional organizations, industry conferences, and business events.

Drawing from his previous roles as chapter president for two local HR chapters and a former District Director for the State of Florida HR Association - JJ is often called upon by his peers for counsel on all things relating to people and HR.

Due to his humanistic approach to leadership and passion for workplace culture, JJ's people initiatives earned his past employer the distinguished designation of Best Places to Work for six years in a row. Because of this work in 2022 - JJ was a nominee for HR Professional of the Year from HR Florida, a professional association representing thousands of businesses throughout the State of Florida.



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# PRESENTERS

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**Joanna Lindstrom** is the CEO/Founder of L Professional Writing (L Pro). Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, L Pro was founded to meet the distinct grant writing and development needs of nonprofit organizations.

Joanna brings over two decades of experience working in the nonprofit and public sectors. Her passion for writing began while earning her BA in Technical Journalism from Colorado State University. Shortly after graduation, she volunteered with the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso, a pivotal experience that positively transformed her worldview and introduced her to the critical role of grants in mission-driven work. Her career prior to founding L Pro included roles within school districts and nonprofits, such as Head Start and Goodwill. Today, Joanna focuses on strategic oversight, business development, and managing a select few client relationships, all while ensuring every L Pro client receives customized, high-impact consulting.

In her spare time, Joanna prioritizes spending time with her family and friends, and also loves reading, creative writing, walking her dog, and enjoying the beauty of Colorado. She continues to volunteer, primarily mentoring and supporting youth and young people.

# PRESENTERS

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**Jacquie Hyatt** serves as the State Director of Special Education at the Idaho Department of Education. Throughout her career as an educator, statewide transition leader, technical assistance provider, and state director, she has remained committed to supporting families and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Her work focuses on creating systems that value meaningful family engagement, cross-agency collaboration, youth leadership, and equitable access to learning opportunities in both school and community settings. Jacquie believes families are essential partners in education and is dedicated to ensuring parents have the information, resources, and support needed to help their children reach their goals and build their desired futures.



**Daniel Fernandes** is a leadership and executive coach who believes leadership isn't a title or a rank. Instead, it's a role and a responsibility we live up to — and a muscle we can grow deliberately. He spent 15 years in international leadership roles at General Motors — leading large-scale change, technology integration, and cultural transformation across complex organizations — before dedicating the past decade to transforming leaders and their organizations from the inside out.

Daniel works at the intersection of leadership, communication, and execution, with a practical lens on how thoughtful technology, including AI, can amplify the way humans in organizations operate and grow. He brings a hard-won, personal understanding of what it actually takes to lead, because the way forward demands creativity instead of relying on how it's always been done. People tend to leave his sessions with fresh eyes — and a new sense of the leader they already are and the difference they can make, especially when the stakes are high and the future is uncertain.





**REGION D**  
PARENT TECHNICAL  
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# REGION D PARENT CENTERS



Leadership  
in Disabilities &  
Achievement of  
Hawai'i



Helping Families Helping Children



Bringing Hope  
Opening Doors  
Elevating Inclusion



# *Inside the Riverside*

- RIVERSIDE GRILL - 6:00 AM-11:00 PM DAILY
- BAR 365 4:00 PM-CLOSE - OPEN 7-DAYS-A-WEEK/365-DAYS-A-YEAR, BAR365 OFFERS UP HOUSE SPECIALTY COCKTAILS, A TASTY BAR MENU, AND LIVE MUSIC ALMOST EVERY EVENING.
- SANDBAR PATIO BAR & GRILL - 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM - OFFERING LOCALLY SOURCED AND INSPIRED PUB MENU - LIVE MUSIC EVERY EVENING AND RIVER VIEWS PROVIDING POOLSIDE MENU SERVICE
- ROOM SERVICE - AVAILABLE 6AM-10PM, DAILY

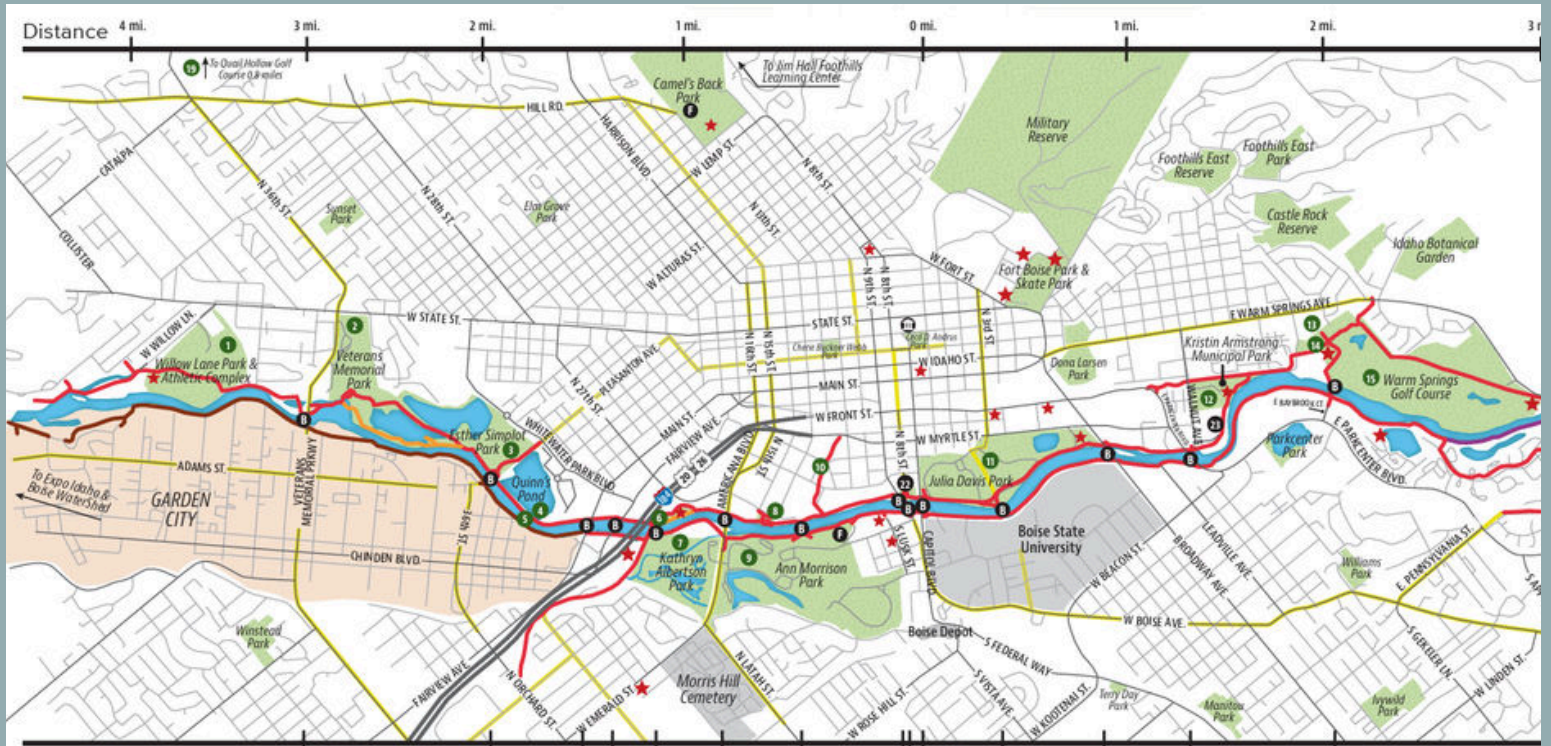


# Nearby the Riverside

- LING AND LOUIES - (RESTAURANT) NEXT DOOR - EAST
- BAVARIAN BREWING - (BEER + FOOD TRUCK) NEXT DOOR - WEST
- PUSH AND POUR - (COFFEE, TEA, ESPRESSO) 34TH STREET - A FEW HUNDRED FEET WEST VIA GREENBELT
- ROSA GARDEN CITY - FAST MEXICAN GRILL 34TH STREET
- TELAYA WINE - (WINE - SOME SMALL BITES) - NEXT DOOR - WEST- EVENING EVENTS MAY REQUIRE TICKETS
- THE STAGECOACH (RESTAURANT) CLASSIC OLD RESTAURANT, HUGE MENU. ONE BLOCK WEST
- YARDARM (BEER AND WINE) END OF 35TH STREET - WEST
- CAFFE LUCIANOS - (RESTAURANT) 35TH AND PROSPECT - WEST
- PROLETARIAT WINERY (WINE AND CHARCUTERIE) 36TH STREET - WEST
- GREENBELT MARKET - (SNACKS) GRAB AND GO SANDWICHES, SALADS, OR SIT WITH IT ALONG WITH BEER, WINE, ETC, ON THE GREENBELT NEXT TO CAFFE LUCIANOS

MANY MORE - IF YOU DECIDE TO CROSS CHINDEN, PLEASE GO TO THE LIGHT AT ORCHARD AND CHINDEN (36TH STREET) TO CROSS SAFELY. THERE ARE MORE OPTIONS INCLUDING BREWPUBS, MEXICAN, AND A BAKERY.





<https://www.cityofboise.org/media/6659/2025-greenbelt-map.pdf>

<https://downtownboise.org/dine/dining>

<https://www.boardwalkontheriver.com/restaurants-on-the-plaza>



# EVALUATION

WE ARE SO GLAD YOU COULD JOIN US. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN EVALUATING THE 2026 REGION D GATHERING.

THE PAGES PAST THE DAILY EVALUATIONS CONTAIN THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE REGION D PTAC. PLEASE REFER TO THESE AS WELL AS THE CODES ON THE AGENDA FOR DETERMINING YOUR EVALUATION OF EACH PRESENTATION. THANK YOU!

EACH DAY HAS ITS OWN LINK/QR CODE. PLEASE COMPLETE EACH ONE THAT YOU ATTENDED.

## DAY 1

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDGathering\\_Day1](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDGathering_Day1)

**Day 1  
(Tuesday)**



# EVALUATION

## DAY 2

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDGathering\\_Day2](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDGathering_Day2)

**Day 2  
(Wednesday)**



# EVALUATION

## DAY 3

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDGathering\\_Day3](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RDGathering_Day3)

**Day 3  
(Thursday)**





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# Region D PTAC Goals and Objectives

## Goal 1:

**Increase Parent Centers' capacity to inform and effectively train parents and youth both virtually and in-person:**

- 1.1 Best practices in engaging virtual and live training methods.**
- 1.2 Principles of Adult Learning.**
- 1.3 Increasing their content knowledge and effectively train on Early Intervention and EBPs.**
- 1.4 Increasing their capacity to effectively train on rights and responsibilities under all applicable laws and policies that impact children with disabilities and their families.**
- 1.5 Increasing their capacity to assist families and youth to access programs, benefits, and resources that are supportive to them.**
- 1.6 Resources and tools that track staffs' change in knowledge and behaviors after these training opportunities.**



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## **Goal 2:**

**Increase Parent Centers' capacity to reach more parents and youth to equitably and effectively provide services that improve outcomes for students and self-advocacy skills for youth**

- 2.1 Increasing their knowledge of and how to implement equitable practices and services to underserved populations in their region/state/community.**
- 2.2 Increasing their knowledge of and how to assist families and youth to improve outcomes for children.**
- 2.3 Increasing their knowledge of and strategies to assist youth in developing self-advocacy skills.**
- 2.4 Increasing their capacity to provide effective and equitable outreach.**
- 2.5 Tools and strategies to help Parent Centers track changes to determine effectiveness of outreach.**



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### **Goal 3:**

**Increase Parent Centers' capacity to sustainably manage their nonprofit organizations and projects effectively and equitably**

**3.1 Increasing their capacity to effectively manage their nonprofit organizations and projects.**

**3.2 Support to newly hired Executive Directors, Project Directors of newly funded and existing projects.**

**3.3 Support for their Board of Directors to increase their knowledge and implementation of best practices in non-profit management, board governance and roles and responsibilities.**

**3.4 Increasing their capacity to develop and implement sustainable practices.**

**3.5 Increasing their capacity to hire and retain highly trained, multilingual/multicultural staff.**

**3.6 Increasing their capacity in effective hiring practices with emphasis on recruiting and retaining multilingual staff.**

**3.7 Increasing their capacity to onboard new staff, developing staff development plans and providing high-quality training to staff including multilingual staff.**