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Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) Leading Partnership with California Department of Education on Statewide Family Engagement Center

The Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) is thrilled to announce its award of a U.S. Department of Education (ED) grant, in partnership with the California Department of Education (CDE), to establish the first statewide family engagement center in California.

This momentous award reflects PIQE's dedication to empowering low-income and immigrant families and communities, as well as educators and administrators to forge strong family-school partnerships needed to improve student achievement. The grant will provide \$5 million over five years to establish the center, providing the state with needed support to further its commitment toward building the capacity of educators and families in establishing strong family-school partnerships to improve student outcomes. In addition, as a part of the award, the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) will provide capacity building and technical assistance for local educational agencies (LEAs) and Dr. Frances Contreras, Dean of the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine, will lend her expertise to conduct an external evaluation of the center's work.

PIQE and CDE will undertake robust family engagement efforts throughout the state in direct partnership with schools and LEAs, focusing on family engagement for English learner (EL) and migrant families, social-emotional learning (SEL), and culturally responsive family engagement.

“The statewide family engagement center will play an essential role in uplifting families and building the capacity of educators to connect with families in support of their student’s education” said Gloria Corral, President and CEO of PIQE. “We know that all students cannot succeed without strong family-school partnerships, and we are honored to be establishing this center in service of that mission.”

The statewide family engagement center will enhance and support California's ongoing efforts to empower families. In 2020, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond created the first ever family engagement office within CDE, from which the center will draw inspiration and leverage resources, including the state's family engagement toolkit, community engagement initiative, and community schools partnership program.

“Authentic family engagement stands at the core of our commitment to advancing educational equity and improving outcomes throughout California” said Superintendent Thurmond. “We’re excited to build on our current efforts with the establishment of this statewide family engagement center and look

forward to empowering thousands more educators and families to fully partner in their student's educational journey."

In addition to providing technical assistance to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and county offices of education, the center will actively seek to build partnerships with other statewide family engagement centers and community-based organizations. Guiding the center's work will be a statewide advisory committee a statewide advisory committee comprised of families, educators, administrators, and other key stakeholders.

"We firmly believe that high-impact family and community engagement, rooted in collaboration and cultural competency, is a cornerstone of student success," said Vito Borrello, Executive Director of NAFSCE. "We take immense pride in contributing to this initiative that will enhance the capacity of schools and LEAs to implement high-impact engagement strategies."

"Throughout my career, I have been focused on addressing issues of equity and access for underrepresented students in the education pipeline" said Dr. Contreras. "Family engagement in schools is a foundational part of closing equity gaps. I am committed to helping the state adopt effective strategies in partnering with families."

"We are committed to supporting initiatives like this one that advance equitable access to quality education, particularly for children from low-income families and communities of color, allowing them to reach their full potential," said Liz Simons, Board Chair of the Heising-Simons Foundation. "PIQE's work aligns with our vision for a more inclusive education landscape where all children can thrive and where families are embraced as partners in their children's education."

About: PIQE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing families with the knowledge and skills to partner with schools and communities to ensure their children achieve their full potential.

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