



# Educator Home Visits



Deepening  
Relationships & Trust  
One Family at a Time

CABE: February 2020

“There is an old adage that sums up how to reattach and reinvigorate relationships between families and schools:  
Before they will come to you, you must go to them.”

Energizer:



# Outcomes

Develop a deeper understanding of the various benefits of home visits.

Enhance your confidence and sense of preparedness by exploring all aspects of the home visit process.

Understand the link between home visits and family partnership best practices.

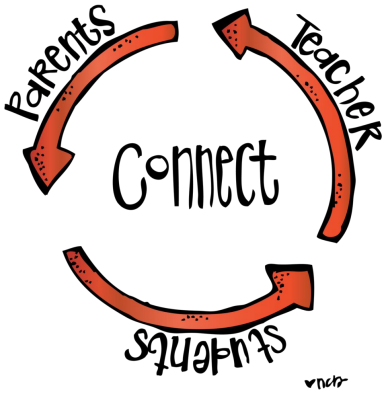
Strengthen your cultural awareness and responsiveness prior to engaging in home visits.

# Norms

- Be present
- Assume positive intentions
- Use time wisely
- Be open to being changed

# Origins of this cohort

“Families are the experts on their children. Teachers are the experts on the classroom. Parent Teacher Home Visits are voluntary appointments designed to build a relationship between equal partners, so that the most important adults in a child’s life, at home and at school, can work together to support the child’s learning and growth.”

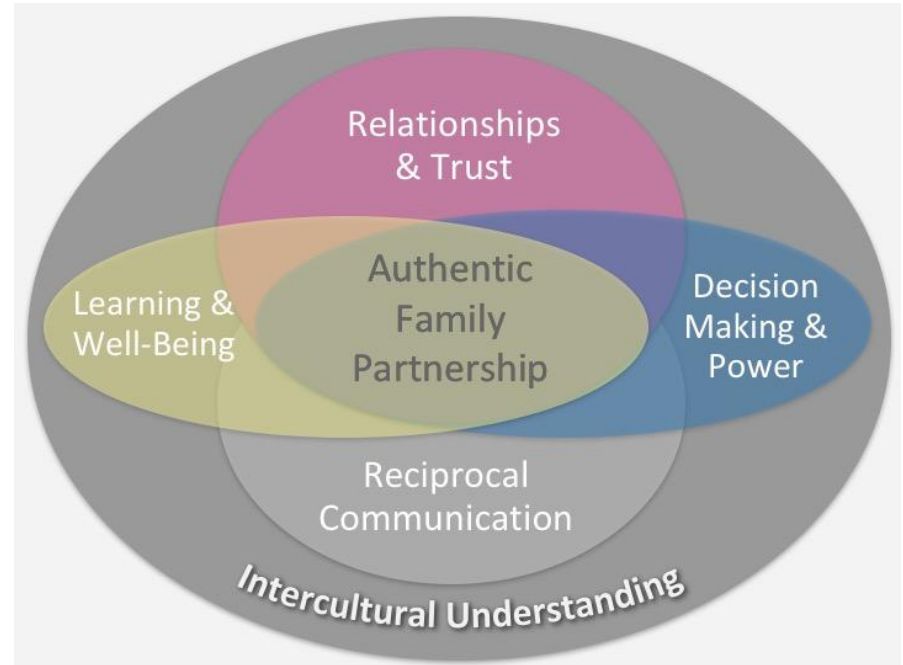


- ***Parent Teacher Home Visit Program, founded in Sacramento, CA***



# What are the four key pillars of Family Partnerships in BVSD?

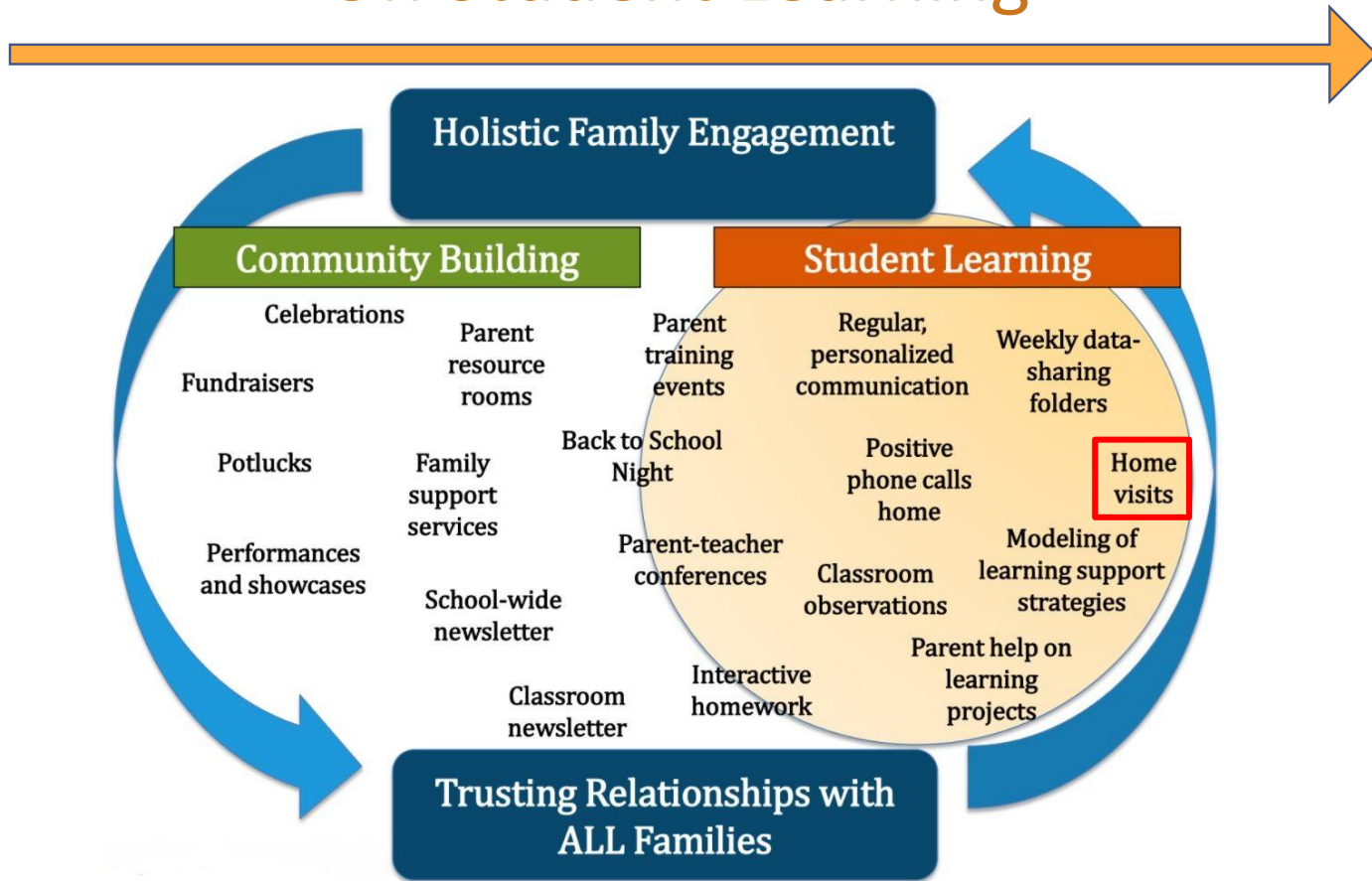
1. Cultivating relationships and trust
2. Engaging in two-way communication
3. Supporting learning and social & emotional well-being
4. Sharing decision making and power



# Impact of Family Engagement Strategies On Student Learning

Lower  
impact

Higher  
impact







# Huddles of 3

I'm here today because \_\_\_\_\_  
and my greatest hope for home visits  
is \_\_\_\_\_.

Home Visits work because...

*"People don't care about what  
you know until they know  
that you care"*



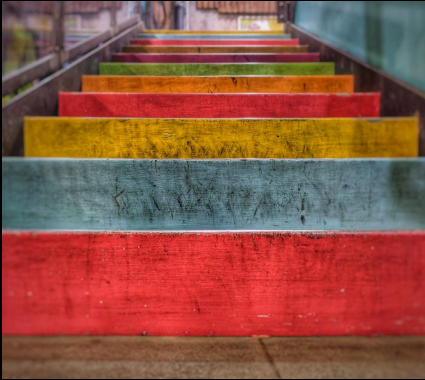
# 7 “MUSTS” for Home Visits

- 1) Participation is voluntary
- 2) **We do not target specific groups of students**
- 3) Phone call must precede the visit
- 4) **Educators make visits in pairs and reflect**
- 5) Educators are trained and compensated
- 6) **Students are present**
- 7) Families’ hopes and dreams are shared

**\*\*\*No pen and paper during first visit**



# Home Visits



1. Selection Process
2. The Call
3. The Visit
4. Questions to Ask
5. The Importance of Listening
6. Closure
7. Debrief

# Selection Process

**To determine which students you will visit,  
here are a few suggested criteria to consider:**

1. Do your first visit with a student/family that you already have a strong relationship with.
2. Decide based on your experiences with students/families in the first semester of school.
3. Select from the families that you have not connected with at conferences.
4. Visit students across the diversity of your classroom.

# Selection Process, continued...

5.) Thinking back on your class from last year, which five students' families would have represented your classrooms diversity?

**NOTE:** Explaining to students why you could not visit their home:

*“This is something I’m learning how to do and I had to practice. I’m sorry I didn’t get to come to your home this time. I would’ve liked to meet your family and see where you live.”*



# The Call

*Set the expectations for what the visit is and isn't*

- You can send the [home visit letter](#) prior to the call.
- Let them know your relationship to the child
- Explain why you are calling.
- Make sure to talk about how it will help their child
- Mention that you will bring a colleague with you (share their name & role.)



# The Call

*Set the expectations for what the visit is and isn't*

- Give parents options around day, time, and **location** (that both you and your HV partner are available).
- For your own time management, think about making **several calls at once**.
- If you're having trouble getting families on the phone, try **calling back at different times** of the day.



# Tips for effective communication

- Be warm and friendly
- Speak clear & slowly
- Avoid acronyms and educational jargon
- Summarize the day and time of the visit at the end of the call
- Convey your enthusiasm for the upcoming visit



# Families May Ask Questions

Family members may have many **possible questions**. Here are some that you may encounter:

- **Why are you doing this?**
- Is my child in trouble?
- **Why are you coming to my house?**
- Can't we just meet in the school?
- **You said your colleague was coming with you. Why? Who is that?**
- Do you get paid to do these visits?



# Write and Rehearse your Call Script

## Sample script:

“We have a program where we visit our students at their home. The purpose is to get to know you and your child, let you ask questions, and figure out how we can best support your child...”



# Engaging Families through Questions...

## Getting Started

*If you feel some anxiety about visits, have a few questions prepped...*

### **To the parent:**

- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?
- What do you like to do together as a family?
- What would be helpful for me to know about your child?
- What are their strengths? What is challenging for them?
- What has been your child's experience at your school?
- What can I help your child with at school?
- What questions do you have for us about school?
- What else would you like us to know?





“Listening is such a simple act. Just be present and practice. We don’t have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. If we can do that, we create moments in which real healing is available...

When we begin listening to each other, and when we talk about things that matter to us, the world begins to change. Everyone has the capacity to be able to figure out how to make a difference. Listening and talking to one another heals our divisions and makes us brave again.”

- Margaret Wheatley, *Turning to One Another*



# Ending the Visit: Closure

- Ask the family if you and your partner can take a photo with them.
- Follow up with a thank you note (on the back of the photo) or thank you call.

# Debriefing With Your Colleague



1. What is something new or valuable that I learned about the strengths of this student/family?
2. How will I use this information to better meet the needs of this student and family?
3. How might the insights from this visit impact my work with students and families?
4. What assumptions of mine about race, class, culture, or this particular family can I challenge or change as a result of this visit?
5. What, if anything, will I change or do better

## How Home Visits Impacted Educators in 4 Urban Districts

Most **educators** recognized that previous **deficit assumptions** about families and students were unfounded. Instead of assuming that many parents did not care about their children's education, they recognized that many families cared, but demonstrated their care differently from expected [from their lens]. Educators **reported newfound understanding and empathy**, which resulted in changes in their behaviors.

- Educators **incorporated students' interests and culture**, information obtained from the home visits, to **improve student engagement** and motivation.
- Educators' disciplinary actions reflected an **empathy** as opposed to a punitive approach.
- Educators' efforts to **communicate** with families increased after home visits.

# Logistics & Participating Staff

- Visits are approximately 30-40 minutes.
- **If you do not speak the family's primary language, you can bring the liaison or another member of the classified staff. An interpreter is a last resort; do not use family members to interpret. Make eye contact with the parent, not the interpreter.**
- If you go with an untrained colleague, you must share with them the key guidelines and tips prior to the visit.





# What Is YOUR Identity?



“Fostering educational excellence requires understanding equity, embracing diverse perspectives and countering bias that hinders inclusionary work...

It is difficult to promote identity-safe environments if you lack knowledge of your own identity.”

- Erica Buchanan-Rivera

# Implicit Bias



## How Do Home Visits Counteract Biases?

“When educators and families build mutually respectful and trusting relationships they become more aware of stereotypes and biases and work toward leaving them behind. . . With the help of relational home visits, their common interest -- the child’s success -- wins out over unconscious assumptions.”

-“Mindset Shifts and Parent Teacher Home Visits,” RTI International, October 2017, p.v

# How Does Implicit Bias Impact Us as Educators as well Our Students?

Confronting educator implicit bias is crucial, as our nation becomes more racially and ethnically diverse and our teaching force remains mostly white.

Educator implicit bias negatively influences student academic achievements and contributes to low academic expectations and exclusionary disciplinary practices for students of color and marginalized youth.

Implicit bias can also interfere with educators' quality of content delivery, hindering student learning.

- From "Applying an Equity Lens to Social, Emotional, and Academic Development," a report by The Penn State University, June 2018.



**So what?**

**Now that we know  
what implicit bias is,  
what do we do?**

Once we have identified our biases,  
how do we overcome them?

*Walk boldly toward them*



Stop the  
denial,  
be real



Move toward  
your bias



Have the  
courage to say  
something

# Dyad Activity



Why do you think home visits are considered one of the best pathways to reduce educators' implicit bias and strengthen their cultural competency?



# Cultural Competency & Home Visits



# EXPLORING & DISCOVERING CULTURE



# Bring Cultural Competency to Your Home Visits



- Commit to an ongoing exploration of your own cultural influences.
- See differences as strengths and avoid viewing differences as a deficit.
- Approach differences with curiosity, respect, and an openness to change.

# Bring Cultural Competency to Your Home Visits



- Do your best to observe and suspend your judgement and biases (e.g. food, dress, body language, eye contact, noise level, cleanliness, TV, neighborhood)
- Expect mistakes... potential discomfort = FOMU
- How does your power or privilege influence the visit?

# Whip Around



What ONE word captures how you are feeling right now about embarking on home visits?

Thank you and good luck!



# The Power of Home Visits



<https://youtu.be/ebYf-bOqaP0>



# Home Visits at the High School level

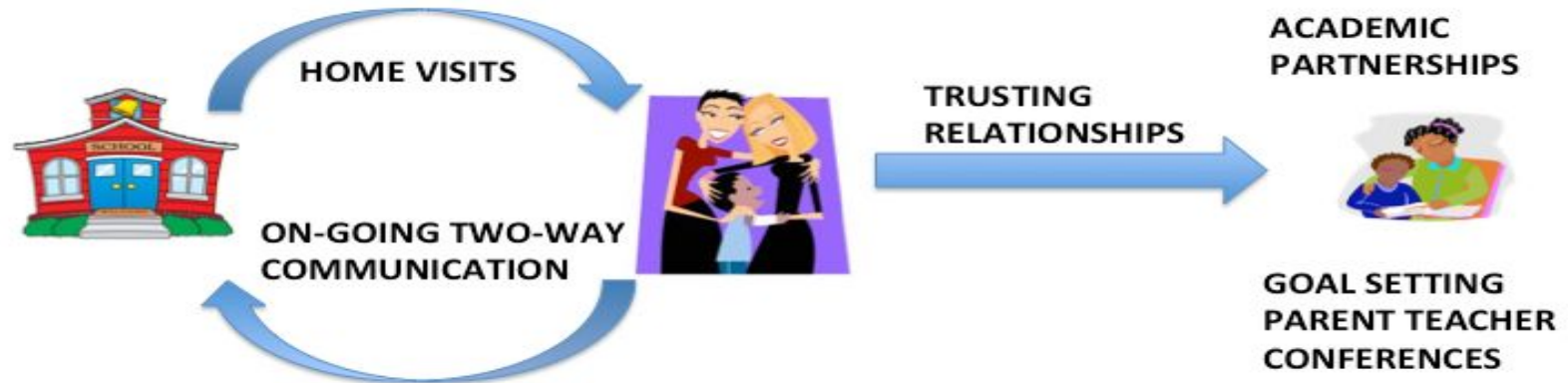


“Programs that provide time and funding for teachers to visit students and families on their own turf are a way for teachers to learn more about their students, get the families more involved in their children’s education, and bridge cultural gaps that may be in place between student and teacher. Teachers who participate in home visits report them having a lasting effect on the child, the family, and parent-teacher communication.”

**-Steve Constantino, *Engage Every Family***

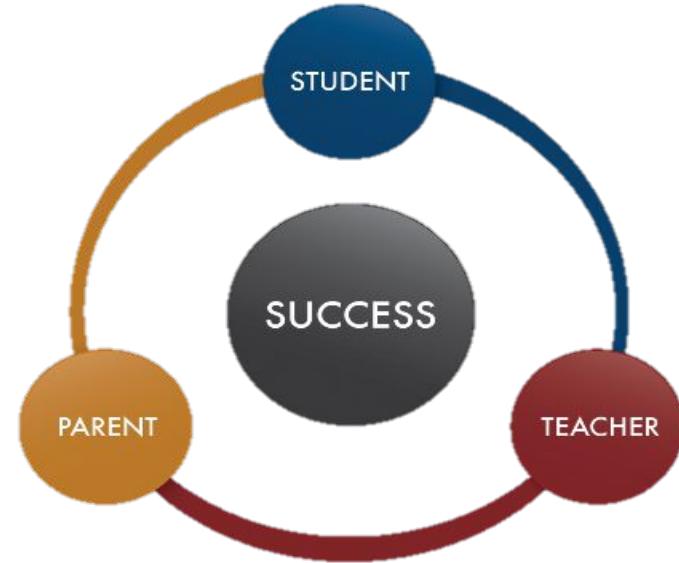
# BVSD Family-School Partnership Purpose Statement

- Creating a school culture that welcomes and supports all families.
- **Facilitating timely, two-way communication with families.**
- Building on families' skills to better support their children's academic and social-emotional development.
- **Engaging families in classroom learning and decision-making processes.**



# Benefits of Teacher Home Visits:

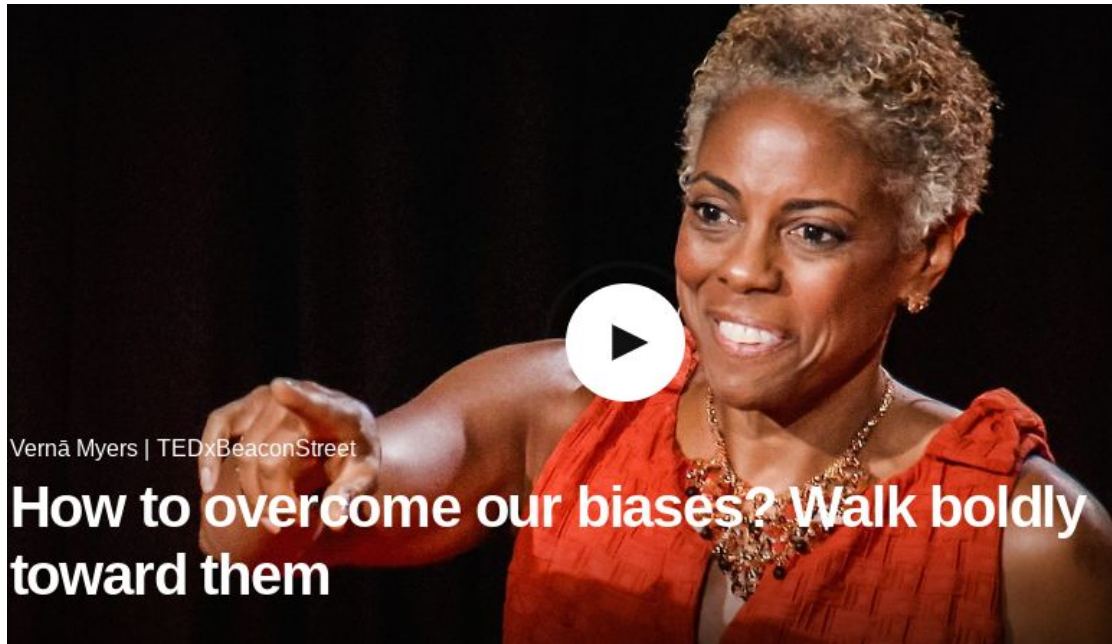
- Ensures that an early school-family interaction is a **positive** one and in families' comfort zone.
- Improves student **behavior**, **engagement**, and **academic success**.
- Deepens our understanding of students' **interests**, **strengths**, and **culture**.



- **We become more culturally responsive as educators.**
- Offers a proven pathway to deepening trust and fostering a reciprocal relationship with families.
- **“Families shifted their perceptions of educators as distant authority figures to people with whom they could relate... Home visits enabled family members to perceive equal footing with educators.”**
- Breaks the “cycle of blame.”
- Visits put a face to a name and turn finger pointing into teamwork and understanding.



# Verna Meyers TED Talk: How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them



Link: [Implicit Bias Tests from Harvard](#)

- Sparks greater communication with families about their child's social, emotional, and academic progress.



- **Empowers families as essential academic partners in their child's education.**
- *All the other benefits we heard earlier from our colleagues in the room.*



# Harvard X profile on the Power of Home Visits

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDzCSNLT8Hw>



# Mindful Minute



# 3 Levels of Culture

**Surface:** The observable and concrete elements. It has a low emotional impact on trust.

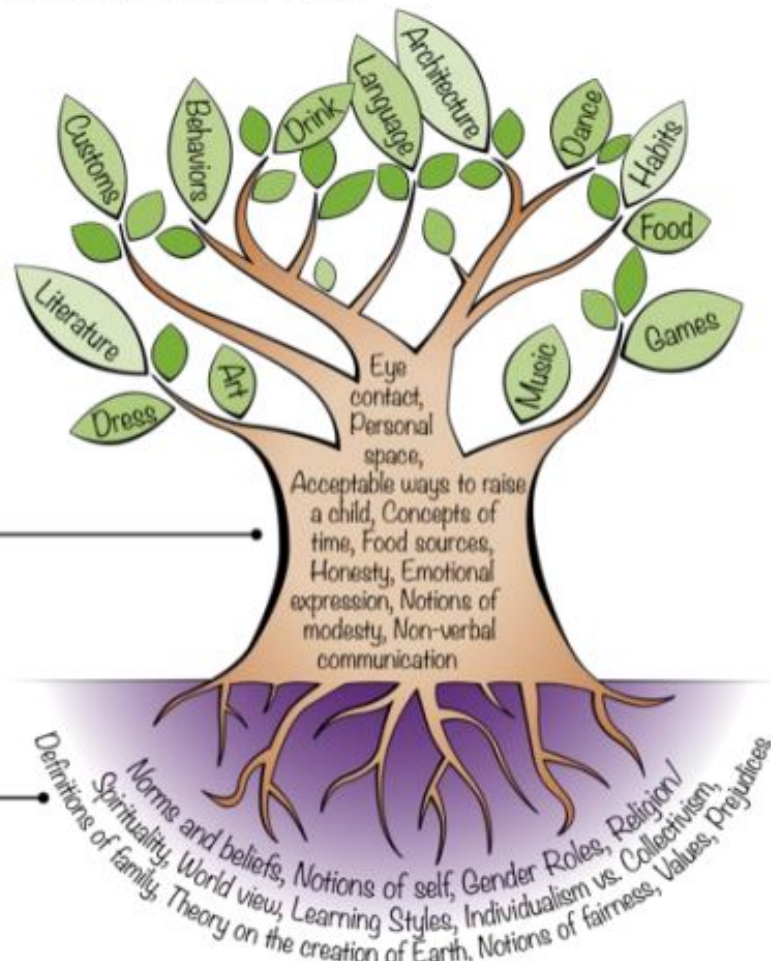
**Shallow:** The unspoken rules around everyday interactions and norms. This has a high impact on trust.

**Deep:** The tacit knowledge and unconscious assumptions that govern our world view. It has an intense emotional impact on trust.

**Surface Culture**  
Observable patterns  
Low emotional impact on trust

**Shallow Culture**  
Unspoken rules  
High emotional impact on trust

**Deep Culture**  
Collective Unconscious  
Intense emotional impact on trust



**BIAS**



Affinity bias

Confirmation bias

Halo effect

Perception bias

Bandwagon bias

# Get to Know Your Students So That You Can Be More Responsive to Their Needs

- What do you know about the students you serve?
- What are their lives like?
- How do they learn outside of school?
- What motivates and interests them?
- What are their strengths?
- What challenges do they and their parents face?
- What are their unmet needs and how might the school support them?



# What are the implications around bias for our home visits?



I can keep this in mind when \_\_\_\_\_.

This is important to me because \_\_\_\_\_.

I will think of this when I \_\_\_\_\_.