

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Board of Education believes that positive parent and family engagement is essential to student achievement and thus encourages such involvement in school educational planning and operations. Parent and family engagement may take place either in the classroom or during extra-curricular activities. However, the Board also encourages such involvement at home (e.g., planned home reading time, informal learning activities, and/or homework "contracts" between parents and children). The Board directs the Superintendent to develop a home-school communications program in an effort to encourage all forms of parent and family engagement.

Parent and family engagement refers to the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. At a minimum, parent and family engagement programs, activities, and procedures at both the District and individual school level will encourage that parents and family members:

1. play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
2. are actively involved in their child's education at school; and
3. are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees.

For purposes of this policy, the term parent shall refer to a natural parent, legal guardian, or any other person in parental relation (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).

Parents and family members are encouraged to provide feedback throughout the year regarding the effectiveness of the parent and family engagement programs and activities and ways in which the District or particular schools can improve parent and family engagement. All feedback should be provided in writing to the District's Division of Teaching and Learning.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement – District Level Policy

Consistent with the parent and family engagement goals of Title I, Part A of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and its reauthorization in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Board of Education will develop and implement programs, activities, and procedures that encourage and support the participation of parents and family members of students eligible for Title I services in all aspects of the child's education. Further, as required by federal law, the Board will ensure that all of its schools receiving Title I, Part A funds develop and implement school level involvement procedures.

District and school level Title I parental involvement programs, activities and procedures will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents and family members with limited English proficiency, with disabilities, and of migratory children.

Parents and family members of students eligible for Title I services will be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of the District's Title I plan, and to submit comments regarding any aspect of the plan that is not satisfactory to them. Their comments will

be forwarded with the plan to the State Education Department. Additionally, parents and family members of students that attend a school that fails to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years and is identified as a school in need of improvement will be provided the opportunity to participate in the process of developing a school improvement plan.

Parent and family participation in development of District-wide Title I plan

The Board, along with its Superintendent and other appropriate District staff will undertake the following actions to ensure parent and family involvement in the development of the District-wide Title I plan:

1. Meetings and parent workshops will be held during flexible times and at accessible locations within the District in an effort to provide greater access.
2. The District will communicate with its families and/or stakeholders via phone, written notices, mail, e-mail and/or by posting on the District's website and/or social media periodically throughout the year.
3. Parents and family members will be offered opportunities to participate in various committees at the schools and District-wide.
4. The District shall work in partnership with the Yonkers Council of Parent Teacher Associations.
5. Title I Parent Advisory Council Meetings shall be held at least quarterly.
6. Families will be surveyed at least yearly to determine the level of satisfaction with parent and family engagement activities.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement – Development of school level parental and family engagement approaches

The Superintendent will ensure that all District schools receiving federal financial assistance under Title I, Part A are provided technical assistance and all other support necessary to assist them in planning and implementing effective parental involvement programs and activities that improve student achievement and school performance. Individual schools are encouraged to develop and maintain programs and activities to meet the needs of their particular parents and families.

Building capacity for Title I parental involvement

To build parent capacity for strong parental involvement to improve their child's academic achievement, the District and its Title I, Part A schools will:

1. Assist parents in understanding such topics as the state's academic content and student achievement standards, state and local academic assessments, Title I requirements, how to monitor their child's progress and how to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child. To achieve this objective, the District and its Title I schools will:
 - a. offer parent workshops at both the school level and District-wide;

- b. provide parents with a bi-annual progress report from their child's Title I support teacher;
 - c. when requested and/or if necessary, offer parent-teacher phone conferences in addition to regular parent-teacher conferences; and/or
 - d. provide informational materials and/or resources to assist parents in playing a role in their child's learning.
2. Provide materials and training to help parents work to improve their child's academic achievement. To achieve this objective, the District and/or its Title I schools will:
- a. offer parent workshops at both the school level and District-wide;
 - b. assist parents in supporting the instructional practices used in the schools at home, particularly in the areas of math and literacy;
 - c. forge community partnerships that will help support the school-home connection;
 - d. encourage parents and families to participate in library programs and to access books, articles, and other media in an effort to extend and enrich the District's core curriculum in literacy as well as the other content areas including math, social studies, and science; and/or
 - e. post resources on the District website and/or social media as well as disseminate resources to parents, school principals, and the Yonkers Council of Parent Teacher Associations/Parent Teacher Student Associations.
3. Educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff in understanding the value and utility of a parents' contributions and on how to:
- a. reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners;
 - b. implement and coordinate parent programs;
 - c. build relationships between parents and the schools; and/or
 - d. encourage parents and families to utilize the public library system.

To achieve this objective, the District and its Title I schools will:

- a. disseminate materials and resources to schools;
 - b. hold professional development with Title 1 staff;
 - c. encourage regular parent communication and outreach; and/or
 - d. encourage regular communication and outreach with the public library.
4. Ensure that information related to school and parent-related programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of children participating in Title I programs in an understandable format, including alternative formats upon request, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. Such communications include, but are not limited to, the Title I Parent Compact, student progress reports, and information posted on the District's website.

Coordination of early childhood parent and family involvement strategies

The District will coordinate and integrate strategies adopted to comply with Title I, Part A parental involvement requirements in connection with early childhood program(s) currently within the District. Such programs may include: Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First,

Even Start, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and/or State-operated preschool programs. The District will do this by:

- a. offering parent workshops at the school level and District-wide on topics such as literacy and math based on community needs;
- b. offering family engagement workshops on child development, mental health care, and stress management; and/or
- c. building and strengthening relationships among early childhood program(s) within the District, parents, and the public library system.

The District's Division of Teaching and Learning will be responsible for coordinating programs and strategies, monitoring success, identifying issues, establishing follow up procedures, and implementing any necessary changes in order to ensure the successful coordination of these parental involvement strategies.

Review of District-wide Title I parent and family engagement policy

The Board, along with its Superintendent and other appropriate staff will conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all Title I schools. This review shall include identifying any barriers to greater participation by parents in activities under this policy, assessing the needs of parents and family members to assist in their child's learning, and determining strategies that will support successful school and family interactions.

To facilitate this review, the District will conduct an annual survey which shall collect information regarding the effectiveness of the District's Title I parent and family engagement policy. The survey shall be coordinated by the District's Division of Teaching and Learning and will be conducted via a written survey which is included in the Title I Parent Compact and provided to each parent of a student receiving Title I services at the beginning and end of the academic year. The findings of the survey shall be reviewed and evaluated by the District's Division of Teaching and Learning and will be used to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement. Following the review, and if necessary, the policy shall be revised in an effort to improve parent and family engagement.

Cross-ref: 4010, Equivalence in Instruction
5300, Code of Conduct

Ref: 20 USC §6318 (§1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act – Parent and family engagement)
8 NYCRR §§100.3(b)(3); 100.4(f); 100.5(d)(4); 149.3(16)
U.S. Department of Education, Parental Involvement, Title I, Part A, Non-Regulatory Guidance, April 23, 2004

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