

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

This policy was developed jointly with, and agreed upon and distributed to, parents and family members of District students. All parents of District students shall be notified of this policy in an understandable and uniform format, and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. This policy shall be provided to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the District.

The Board of Education desires for meaningful parent and family involvement in the educational process for District students. To achieve that objective, the Board will:

1. Involve parents and family members in jointly developing the District’s “local educational agency plan” under 20 U.S.C. §6312, and the development of support and improvement plans under 20 U.S.C. §6311(d)(1) and (2). The Board will do this by: meeting with parents and other stakeholders at the beginning of each school year. During this meeting, parents will receive information about the school’s Parent and Family Engagement Plan and will be informed of their parental right to be involved in the planning and development of the plan through meetings, surveys and questionnaires. If the program plan is not satisfactory to parents, they may submit comments on the plan to the Director of Special Programs. The plan will be sent home with students at the beginning of each school year and posted to the school’s website.
2. Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all of the District’s schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education. The Board will do this by: employing a Director of Special Programs who will provide guidance and support to administrators and teachers through emails, telephone calls, meetings, etc. Teacher-based teams will sponsor activities to nurture a supportive spirit among schools, parents, and the community. The district will review the school parent and family engagement policy/plan to ensure compliance, including documentation from parent meetings showing it was developed jointly with parent input.
3. Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs. The Board will do this by: collaborating with external early education programs to develop an effective program that prepares young learners for grade school and parents for school transition. The district will coordinate with early educational programs to invite families and preschool children into the schools to take a tour and participate in planned activities. The Director of Special Programs and/or preschool coordinator will actively

- participant in meetings with early intervention program staff and the preschool staffs of neighboring school districts.
4. Conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving the academic quality of all District schools, including identifying: (i) barriers to greater participation by parents in authorized activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background); (ii) the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and (iii) strategies to support successful school and family interactions. The Board will do this by: gathering feedback from focus groups, conducting surveys (take-home, mailed, electronic), offering a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in their children’s education, publicizing school activities in multiple ways to ensure families are informed (website, automated phone messages, flyers, social media etc.); and providing assistance to schools throughout year as needed.
 5. Use the findings of such evaluation in paragraph (4), above, to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies described in this section. The Board will do this by: continuously researching best practices to engage parents and families. Survey results will be used to design and/or revise more effective parent and family engagement strategies and activities. The district will seek guidance and support from the education service center, state support team, and other educational consultants.
 6. Involve parents in the activities of the schools of the District, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the local educational agency to adequately represent the needs of the population served by such agency for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the parent and family engagement policy. The Board will do this by: informing parents of their right to be involved in the planning and development of the plan through meetings, surveys and questionnaires; advertising school activities using a variety of communication tools; and having school activities at various times to accommodate parents’ schedules.

Policy Involvement

To facilitate the involvement of parents and families under this policy, the District shall:

1. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of District students shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of the District’s obligations under 20 U.S.C. §6318, and to explain the requirements of that statute and the right of the

- parents to be involved. The District will do this by: scheduling the annual meeting before the start of the school year to be held during student orientations at each school. Parents will be invited to the annual meeting through an automated phone message, a notice on the school website, a posting on social media, and through the district newsletter. Parents will be asked to sign in as documentation of their attendance.
2. Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement. The District will do this by: offering parent meetings after-school hours in conjunction with designated parent-teacher conference nights, college planning night, financial aid night, and other evening school events. The district will provide time for parent meetings before the school day and during the school day through each teacher's daily planning/conference period.
 3. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this policy, including the planning, review, and improvement of this policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under 20 U.S.C. §6314(b). The District will do this by: having the teacher-based teams at each school gather parent input and plan events to increase parent engagement. The district will notify parents of their rights to have input on the policy through newsletters, student handbooks, and the district website.
 4. Provide parents of participating children: (a) timely information about programs under this policy; (b) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and (c) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible. The District will do this by: hosting annual meetings before school starts to provide parents with information regarding Title I and how it supports additional assistance for their students. Parents will learn about the schoolwide program and about opportunities to participate in decisions related to the education of their child. During classroom visits, teachers will provide information relating to their classroom and subject matter. Informational packets for parents who were unable to attend the annual meeting will be available in the school office. Parent conferences will be used to share specific strategies with parents on how to assist students at home. Additionally, throughout the year, parents will receive information through a variety of media such as the district newsletter; school and district websites; teacher communication; automated phone messages, distribution of report cards, progress reports, reports of other assessment data; and through parent conferences.

5. If the schoolwide program plan under 20 U.S.C. §6314(b) is not satisfactory to the parents of students, the school will submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the Board. The District will do this by: encouraging parents to submit any plan comments or concerns directly to the Director of Special Programs through email, phone, fax, or mail. During the school year, parent(s) are encouraged to bring any concerns about Title I services first to the attention of the Title I staff. If a concern still exists the parent(s) may then bring the concern to the Principal/ Superintendent. If the concern still exists, parent(s) may then bring concern to the local Board of Education.

School-Parent Compact

The Board desires for parents, the entire school staff, and students to share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. The means by which the District and parents will build and develop a partnership to help students achieve the State's high standards are as follows:

1. Describe the District's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables its students to meet the challenging State academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time: All staff will be highly qualified. Para-professionals will be under the direct supervision of highly qualified teachers. Ongoing professional development opportunities will be available for all staff. The Ohio Learning Standards will be the foundation of the instruction provided in all grade levels and subject areas. Student progress will be monitored using common quarterly assessments. This assessment data will be used to guide instruction. A safe and caring learning environment will be provided through the implementation of a positive behavior intervention and support system allowing students to be engaged and active learners. The school will administer a comprehensive program review process that continually monitors effectiveness.
2. Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum: (a) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement; (b) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; (c) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and (d) ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand: Maintaining open lines of communication between home and school is essential to the academic success of students. The Toronto City School District is committed to giving parents a variety of options for communicating with the school. Conferences will be held during the first and second semester. The conferences will be scheduled at various times to accommodate parents'

schedules. Telephone conferences will be used if preferred by the parent. Parents will be given unlimited access to their students' grades through Progress Book, an online teacher grade book. Parents will be given a username and password to view the active classroom grade book for their child(ren). Interim progress reports will be sent home after the fourth week of each grading period for students in grades K-12. Report cards will be sent home after each grading period. In addition to designated parent teacher conference dates, staff will be available for consultation with parents each day during their plan/conference period, before school (7:15-7:45 AM at the middle/high school and 8:00-8:30AM at the elementary school), and after school (2:35-3:00 PM at the middle/high school and 3:00-3:30PM at the elementary school). Teachers will also communicate with parents through email and through Progress Book. Parents will be invited and encouraged to volunteer and participate in their children's classes or to observe in the classroom. The invitation will be extended at orientation which is held in the fall and during Parent-Teacher Conferences. Parent volunteers will be asked to work within the community to garner support for events such as Family Nights, Literacy Nights, PTO meetings, parent conferences, and various other parent activities. Surveys will be sent out to parents to gather input regarding topics of need and to identify barriers to parent participation. Parent workshops will be held as needed (assistance will be provided for non-English speaking parents and/or parents with disabilities) to encourage parental involvement in academics. Family and community members will be made aware of the training sessions through resources such as newsletters, use of the school sign, media, and the school web site.

Building Capacity for Involvement

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the District, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, the District:

1. Shall provide assistance to parents of District students, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the challenging State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of 20 U.S.C. §6318, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children. The District will do this by: hosting parent meeting that will be held at different times during the day to accommodate family needs, using Title I funds to pay reasonable and necessary expenses, associated with parent involvement activities, including transportation, childcare, or home visit expenses to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions, using multiple sources to keep parents informed, and providing take-home learning materials that provide tips and ideas for helping children in core subject areas.
2. Shall provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement. The District will do this by: providing a parent resource library on each school website which contains books and pamphlets with simple activities and useful tips

for helping parents to improve academic skills and to develop positive habits which contribute to school success. These parent resources are available in English and Spanish. Materials are given to parents to assist with their children's achievement and success in reaching state standards. For example, flash cards, worksheets, and reading material are sent home for parent(s) to use with their children. The district hosts a variety of parent events where teachers model appropriate strategies for reinforcing students' learning.

3. Shall educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school. The District will do this by: conducting regular staff meetings where the administration encourages and provides information on the importance and value of parental involvement in and out of the school. The training will assist staff in working with parents as equal partners in the educational process and in increasing effective communication between the home/school. During teacher-based team meetings, teachers will share best practices for working effectively with parents and ideas for increasing parental involvement. At staff meetings and through email updates, principals will share the value of parental involvement and ways to increase cooperation between home and school.
4. Shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children. The District will do this by: having the Director of Special Programs and/or the preschool coordinator participate in regular meetings for early childhood coordinators in the area, partnering with the Educational Service Center in professional development opportunities for all early childhood leaders, sharing information about various early childhood programs on our district website, and partnering with the Family Children First Council to offer educational opportunities for family members.
5. Shall ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. The District will do this by: making provisions for those who are in need of alternate formats. For example, parent materials are offered in languages other than English and the information posted on the district website is ADA compliant.
6. Shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this policy as parents may request. The District will do this by: maintaining open lines of communication with parents and gathering parent feedback to identify needs.

Accessibility

In carrying out the requirements of this policy and 20 U.S.C. §6318, the District, to the extent practicable, shall provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children), including providing information and school reports required under 20 U.S.C. §6311, in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents will understand.