

## PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

*Although parents and families are the subject of this policy, the primary audience is Rochester City School District employees, to ensure that employees understand parent and family engagement rights under this policy.*

The Board of Education believes and recognizes that education in the school environment represents only one aspect of a child's learning and development, and that collaboration with parents and families is critical in assisting children to realize their full potential. In addition, parent and family engagement is essential to student achievement, in school educational planning and operations. Examples of this include parent engagement that takes place in the classroom, during extracurricular activities, at home during reading time, during informal learning activities, and through creating homework partnerships between home and school. These examples encourage a collaborative partnership between school and home. The Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop reliable home- school communication programs across the district that encourage all forms of parent and family engagement to be user friendly for parents and accessible on all school and district web sites. Moreover, to be effective parent engagement must also involve a partnership of shared responsibility in which:

- School and District-level staff reach out to families to collaborate in their children's learning and development
- The District, schools, and families share an ongoing commitment to collaborate and adapt to children's changing needs as they mature
- Children's learning is reinforced in the variety of settings encountered in their daily lives: at home, Early Pre-K- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, school, expanded learning, after-school programs , faith-based organizations, and in the community .

This policy seeks to strengthen the partnership among parents, schools, the Superintendent, the Board, and the community by defining the principles of effective parent engagement, identifying ways in which parents can be involved in their child's education, providing guidelines for parent representation in school- and District-based organizations, and establishing standards for implementation and evaluation. This policy supplements the rights of parents guaranteed by the Board of Education and by state and federal law.

The federal definition of the term "parents" refers to a natural parent, legal guardian or other person standing in *loco parentis* (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).

The Rochester City School District is a Title I School District.

## **Title I Parent and Family Engagement –District Level Policy**

**Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which has been modified by the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, school boards receiving federal Title I funds must adopt a written parent and family engagement policy that is developed jointly and agreed on with, and distributed to parents and family members of participating children and is incorporates in to the district Title I plan. Under ESSA, this requirement has been modified but stands.**

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 ensure that The Office of Parent Engagement and district administrators 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 their child's education. The Board also will ensure that all of its schools receiving Title I, Part A funds develop and implement school level parent and family engagement procedures, as further required by federal law. Each school or program should have literature available in Spanish and English that is parent friendly to support ESSA.

\*See ESSA Attachments

A District-wide culture change is necessary to improve family and parent participation and engagement. This change must be embraced by the Superintendent and demonstrated in our schools by administrators, The Office of Parent Engagement, The Office of Professional Development and all family engagement district staff. This will be monitored by The Parent Advisory Council for RCSD. In addition to district tenet team 6 that will progress monitor district goals for family and community partnerships.

This policy in no way restricts an individual parent's right to make their feelings known at any level in the District on any topic of concern. A process for filing grievances is delineated in section 1900.9.

### **National Standards for Family-School Partnerships**

The National Parent-Teacher Association developed the following standards for family-school partnerships to provide a framework for enhancing student success:

1. Welcome all families to be active participants in the life of the school, so that they feel valued, connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning in class;
2. Communicate effectively by ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and District and school staff in a manner, language, and mode of technology that family members can understand and access;
3. Support student success by fostering continuous collaboration between family members and District and school staff to support student learning and healthy development at school and at home;

4. Speak up for every child and empower family members to be advocates for all students within the school;
5. Share power and assure that family members, District and school staff are equal partners in family engagement decision-making; and
6. Collaborate and partner with community organizations and groups to turn the school into a hub of community life.

The Board should direct the Superintendent to hold district administrators accountable for assessing The National Parent Teacher Association Family and Partnership Standards by using The National PTA Assessment Rubric for these standards.

\*See National PTA Attachment

For purposes of this policy, parental involvement 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 must ensure that parents and family members:

- Play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
- Are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; and
- Are full partners in their child's education and are included, as the legal guardian or advocate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

District and school level Title I parental involvement parent and family engagement programs, activities and procedures will provide full opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including those who have with limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children.

As further required by federal law, 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.

Parents and family members also will participate in the process for developing either a comprehensive or targeted "support and improvement plan" when the school their child attends is identified as a school in need of improvement by the State as needing this plan. The Board, along with its superintendent of schools and other appropriate district staff will undertake the following actions to ensure parent and family member involvement in the development of the district wide Title I plan:

- Town Hall Meetings
- Open House

- Robo Calls
- Parent Surveys
- Phone, mail ,or email correspondences

### **Development of school level parental involvement parent and family engagement approaches**

The superintendent of schools will ensure that all district schools receiving federal financial assistance under Title I, Part A are provided coordination, technical assistance and all other support necessary to assist them in planning and implementing effective parental involvement parent and family engagement programs and activities that improve student achievement and school performance. As appropriate to meet individual local needs, the superintendent will ensure that:

- Training for Title I PE will be provided 3 times a year
- District Parent Coordinator will notify The Parent Advisory Council and building administrators about their Title I PE funding
- The Parent Advisory Council, District Parent Coordinator, Senior Director, Title I Committee will review Title I PE Plans yearly for approval
- Building Principals will receive building consultations and support for Title I PE Planning with their parents and family engagement staff on an as needed basis.

\*See Family and Parent Engagement Policy (Title I PE)

### **1900.2 Varieties of Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement has been defined in a number of ways by scholars, school staff, and parents. Not all parents choose to become involved in the same manner. Parents and family members may be involved in the education of their children in the following ways:

#### **Parents as Teachers of Their Children**

Parents are their child’s first teacher. The Board supports the expansion of parent education programs at the school level in order to empower parents with the knowledge and skills with which to support their children’s development in the home.

#### **Parents as Volunteers**

Both schools and families benefit when parents assist on school programs as volunteers, (e.g., on special school committees such as school-based planning, National Network of Partnership Schools, PTA, PTO, PTSA and other school parent groups; in the classroom on special projects; or any other committee that the school principal establishes pertaining to the school program).

#### **Parents as Leaders in Their Schools**

Parent groups provide parents with an opportunity to assume leadership roles as officers, task force members, team leaders, and participants. School-based Planning Team membership is open to parents who are elected by the parent constituent group. Diverse representation is essential on School-Based Planning Teams in every school. Additional information regarding parent election

and participation can be found in conjunction with School-Based Planning Teams policy (2265). A representation of at least 3 to 5 parents is recommended for the School Base Planning Team.

### **Parents as Leaders at the District Level**

Parents play a vital role in developing and implementing decisions and/or policies which involve new curricula, programs or long-range plans. Several opportunities exist for this type of involvement such as district-wide parent groups and Board-sponsored task forces, committees and projects. The process by which parents can participate as leaders on a district-wide level shall be delineated in regulations to be developed by the Superintendent.

Parents are invited to participate in Tenet Teams to assist in collecting data and progress monitoring district goals for state reviews.

- Tenet 1 District Leadership and Capacity
- Tenet 2 School Leader Practices and Decisions
- Tenet 3 Curriculum Development and Support
- Tenet 4 Teacher Practices and Decisions
- Tenet 5 Student Social and Emotional Development Health
- Tenet 6 Family and Community Engagement

### **Parents as Partners in Policy-Making**

Parents shall be partners with the Board and the Superintendent on matters which relate to the development of policy. The process by which parents may be recommended for advisory membership on Board committees and other advisory bodies is outlined in the Board Advisory Bodies policy (2260) and shall be delineated in regulations to be developed by the Superintendent.

### **Building Capacity for 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, at a minimum:

1. Assist parents in understanding such topics as the state's academic content and student achievement challenging academic 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 will encourage parents to be involved in some of the following workshops:
  - Title I Events that are supported by parent workshops
  - National PTA Conference
  - National Title I Conference
  - Bring Your Dads to School Day
  - National Family Engagement Day
  - Effective Black Parenting Classes
  - Restorative Practices for Parents

- ESOL Night
  - Special Education Title I Conference
  - Bilingual Conference
  - Title I Committee
2. Provide materials and training to help parents work to improve their child’s academic achievement such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy). To achieve this objective, the district will provide workshops on:
- NWEA for Parents
  - Parent Connect
  - Parent Connect APP
  - Razkids Program
  - Lexia
  - DOJO PBS Plan for Parents
  - ELA and Social Studies Night
  - Math and Science Night
  - Code of Conduct
  - Bilingual Conference and Workshops
  - Parent University Workshops
  - RTI Plans
3. Educating teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in understanding the value and utility of a parent’s contributions and on 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 schools.
  - Understand and be culturally sensitive to the needs of each family dynamic

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

- The Parent Advisory Council will review all Parent University Workshops with The District Parent Coordinator and Senior Director for The Office of Parent Engagement by the end of August, for each school year.
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 and uniform format, including alternative formats, upon request, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

## **Coordination of Parental Involvement Strategies**

The district will coordinate and integrate strategies adopted to comply with Title I, Part A parental involvement requirements with parental involvement strategies adopted in connection with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs. It will do this by:

- The District Parent Coordinator will progress monitor all Title I events.
- Parent surveys will be given at each Title I PE event to identify and support parental needs.
- The Power of 2 OPE Initiative will be encouraged throughout every school community.
- Parents will be informed of their parental rights as it relates to ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).

## **Review of District Wide Parent and Family Engagement Policy**

The Board, along with its superintendent of schools and other appropriate staff will conduct, with meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of Title I schools, including the identification of barriers to greater participation by parents in activities under this policy, and the revision of parent and family engagement policies necessary for more effective involvement. To facilitate this review, the district will conduct an annual review of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. There is also an open audit report for The Office of Parent Engagement that is supported by The Parent Advisory Council.

### **1900.3 Parent Organizations in the District**

#### **District-wide Parent Council:**

A District-wide Parent Council shall be established to provide parents with opportunities to serve as leaders at the District level. The Parent Council shall consist of representatives of school-based parent organizations and other parent groups (e.g. PTAs, PTOs, School-Based Planning Teams, and Bilingual Council).

The Parent Council shall be composed of parents, legal guardians, and those with custody of students currently enrolled in the Rochester City School District, except that current RCSD employees shall not be eligible to serve on the Parent Council. The Parent Council will meet periodically with the Superintendent, their representative and/or members of the Board of Education to share and discuss issues of concern affecting students, education, and the school environment. The Superintendent and at least one Board member shall meet annually with the Parent Council to evaluate this policy, identify barriers to success, and recommend policy changes to eliminate or overcome barriers.

#### **School Level Parent Organizations:**

##### **a) PTA/PTO**

Each school will have a parent organization that centers work around the National Standards for Family – School Partnerships and relate to the work of the School-Based Planning Team.

Principals will work collaboratively with the staff in their school charged with developing and sustaining building-based parent organizations.

b) **School-Based Planning Teams** (further information contained in “School-Based Planning Teams policy” – 2265)

Parent representatives to School-Based Planning Teams shall be elected by the parents in each school, as per current guidelines for School-Based Management. Every school in the District is required to have a Planning Team. Parent representatives on the School-Based Planning Team shall be responsible for communicating with their constituencies and for representing parents’ perspective.

c) **Other Parent Organizations**

This policy does not supersede previous Board memorandum of agreements and policies regarding specific parent groups such as the Bilingual Education Council. The Board recognizes the existence and contribution of the Bilingual Education Council and supports its continued participation.

**1900.4 District Responsibilities regarding Parent Involvement**

The District is responsible for creating and maintaining programs, activities, and procedures for implementing effective parent involvement to improve school performance and student achievement. At a minimum, the District will:

Involve parents in the development of the District’s annual plan and policy as it relates to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) as modified by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

- a) Coordinate and integrate parent involvement strategies in research-based education programs.
- b) Involve parents in decisions about allocating funds to schools for parent involvement.
- c) Share decision-making with parents in planning, review and improvement of programs in conjunction with the School-Based Planning Teams.
- d) Provide parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum and the forms of assessment used to measure student progress.
- e) Inform parents of their option to change schools if their child is enrolled in a low performing school.
- f) Inform and notify parents of supplemental services offered to students who attend a school on a low-performing list for at least three (3) years.
- g) Inform parents of the options and process for school transfers for reasons of safety – criteria established by the State of New York.
- h) Inform parents of classroom teacher qualifications.



- i) Provide training and information sessions for parents regarding their rights under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) as modified by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.
- j) The Auditor General will meet with the Parent Council and additional parents during the annual risk assessment and audit plan development process in order to include the perspectives of families and parents in District audits.
- k) Provide full opportunities for participation of parents of: limited-English-proficient students, students with disabilities, migrant children, and homeless students.
- l) The caregiver for a child may be a parent, grandparent, extended family members, foster parent, guardian, or any other legally authorized individual with sole responsibility for raising the child.
- m) Incorporate the Power of 2, which encourages 2 parents from each classroom to participate in SBPT, PTO/PTA/ Parent Engagement Events, etc.

### **1900.5 Specific Areas of Cooperation**

The Board, administrative staff and School-Based Planning Teams shall retain their responsibilities for making decisions, and shall actively consult with parents in the following matters (i.e. areas of cooperation between parents and the District):

- a) School-Based Management
- b) Capital and Operating Budget
- c) Instruction
- d) Curriculum/Textbooks
- e) Student Support Services
- f) Attendance and Enrollment
- g) Academic Standards
- h) New Construction
- i) Special Education
- j) Special Services
- k) Bilingual/Bicultural Education
- l) Health and Wellness
- m) Social and Emotional

Parents will be informed of all meetings and topics of the Rochester Board of Education in a timely manner. Meetings will be listed on the District's annual calendar, which is provided to parents in the summer prior to the start of the school year.

Other meetings will be publicized through the media, Office of Parent Engagement, the District's web site, school bulletin boards, *Students First*, other mass communication devices, and directly to school-based parent groups. The Parent Council shall meet with the Board of Education and the Superintendent at mutually agreeable times as part of ongoing public engagement activities.

#### **1900.6 Parent Interests in Collective Bargaining Agreements**

The Board of Education shall consider the concerns and interests of parents in its deliberations regarding collective bargaining agreements. The District will seek information regarding the needs and interests of parents in advance of collective bargaining negotiations.

#### **1900.7 Parent-Staff Relations**

The District shall seek information from parents on a regular basis regarding their satisfaction with their children's teachers and other personnel to improve instruction and school/parent relations. This shall be in addition to the responsibilities given to participants on School-Based Planning Teams.

#### **1900.8 Communication to Parents**

The Chief Communications Officer is authorized to develop parent-friendly materials to communicate this policy's content, goals and District responsibilities to all District parents and to community members in order to promote and sustain parent involvement. This policy and the corresponding regulations will be translated into Spanish. Upon request, translation services will be provided at parent meetings. The Information and Technology Department will support parents through a newly created Parent Connect app.

#### **1900.9 Grievance Process**

In addition to other avenues available to parents for expressing concerns at the school and District level, the Superintendent shall develop regulations to establish a process for parents and family members to file grievances with the Office of Youth Development and Family Services. The process for tendering such grievances shall be disseminated to parents and made available to the general public. The Office of Youth Development and Family Services shall prepare and deliver to the Board an annual summary of oral and written grievances, and the actions taken to respond to them.

#### **1900.10 Policy Implementation and Evaluation**

The Superintendent will develop regulations for the implementation of this policy. The regulations will reflect the objectives in the Strategic Plan for parent involvement. The regulations will develop standards to evaluate the success of the District's and school's parental involvement practices. The District will provide resources for parents to participate in the activities described in this policy. Parent involvement will be supported through the implementation of educational training programs sponsored by the District through The Office of Parent Engagement, community

partners, and school building leaders based on data collection from the following group data: parent surveys, data collection from parent conversations, student needs, family engagement staff surveys, and building administrator surveys and input. The issue of adequate resources will be included in the annual review of this policy.

### **Guidelines**

The Superintendent will develop regulations for creating and sustaining a district-wide Parent Council. The regulations will establish protocols for addressing parent concerns and a process by which parents may be recommended for advisory membership on Board committees, advisory bodies and otherwise participate as partners in policy-making.

The Superintendent will establish regulations for developing and sustaining a Parent University to provide parent involvement training. These regulations will identify and integrate the roles of the District departments and programs (Parent Office), mandated committees (Advisory Council to Title I Committee, Special Education Training and Resource Center), Bilingual Education Council, and other parent organizations.

### **Accountability**

The Superintendent of Schools will develop and implement an accountability system with measurable goals for schools, staff and parents. Benchmarks will be established for staff and parent responsibility in the area of parent involvement.

The Board shall ensure that compliance with this Parent and Family Engagement Policy is explicitly addressed in the Superintendent's evaluation.

### **Evaluation**

To ensure that these practices are implemented with fidelity, annually in July, the Superintendent shall provide to the Board of Education a consolidated Building-level and District-level evaluation of the content, implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

School-based and District parent organizations must be active participants in the annual evaluation process. The Parent Council shall assist in establishing the specific evaluation format to be used at the building level to facilitate comparability across the District. The evaluation of parental involvement will also use the measurable goals established in the Superintendent's accountability system.

These evaluation reports will be considered by the Board of Education in determining necessity and parameters of revisions to this policy, consistent with the applicable provisions of the parental involvement section of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C 6319 (2002).

Parents will be notified when the annual evaluation report is available, as well as ways in which the report can be accessed. The Board will meet with the Parent Council to discuss the evaluation findings, identify barriers to parent involvement in the District, and to recommend policy changes to eliminate or overcome those barriers.

**Cross-references:** Community Involvement policy (1200)  
Advisory Body policy (2260)  
School-Based Planning Teams policy (2265)  
Administrative Councils, Cabinets, Committees policy (3220)  
Code of Conduct (1400)  
Equivalence in Instruction (4010)

**References:** New York State School Boards Association Sample Policy, Inc. copyright 2016

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, as modified by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015

Improving America's Schools Act, 20 USC 6319  
20 United States Code (USC) Sections 6318a; 7801 (38)

Every Student Succeeds Act 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

U.S. Department of Education. Parental Involvement, Title I, Part A , Non-Regulatory Guidance, April 23, 2004.

34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 74-86 and 97-99, and 200

Adopted May 2, 1991; Amended: August 20, 1998; August 21, 2000; October 17, 2002; December 15, 2011 pursuant to Resolution No. 2011-12: 411; July 24, 2014 pursuant to Resolution No. 2014-15: 81; November 17, 2016 pursuant to Resolution No. 2016-17: 368.

## Additional Documents for Building Principals and Program Directors

### Title I Parent and Family Engagement - School Level Approach

The **[insert name of school]** recognizes that parents and family members play an integral role in assisting their child's learning. We encourage parents and family members to be actively involved in their child's education at school and to become full partners in school educational planning and operations. Consistent with the parent involvement goals of Title I, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA):

1. The Building Principal and appropriate staff shall convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I programs, and to explain Title I requirements and the right of the parents to be involved. All parents of children participating in a Title I program will be invited to the meeting.
2. The school staff shall offer a flexible number of meetings to provide parents the opportunity to meet with school staff and otherwise participate in their child's education. These meetings shall be held at flexible times (e.g., morning or evening) and/or in highly accessible places such as public housing projects, etc.
3. The school will provide parents with timely information about Title I programs. School staff will also describe and explain the curriculum in use at the school, the types of academic assessment that will be used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels the students are expected to meet. Parents may also request regular meetings with school staff to make suggestions and to participate, as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their child. The school will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practical.
4. The school staff shall involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school's parent and family engagement policy.