

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Parents and Families are the subject of this policy. This policy is intended to ensure that Rochester City School District employees and parents understand, and ensure parent and family engagement rights at every level of the District.

This policy strengthens the partnership among families, school communities, District staff, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education, by defining the principles of effective parent engagement, identifying ways in which parents can be involved in their child’s education, and providing guidelines for parent representation in school and District-based decision-making organizations. This policy establishes standards for implementation and evaluation of all parent engagement practices.

The Board of Education believes and recognizes:

1. that education in the school environment represents only one aspect of a child’s learning and development;
2. partnership with parents and families is critical in assisting children to realize their full potential;
3. parent and family engagement are essential to student achievement, school educational planning and operations; and
4. the need for a collaborative partnership between school and home.

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop equitable home-school communication practices and methods across the District.

Effective parent communication must involve a partnership of shared responsibility in which:

1. School and District-staff reach out to families to partner in their children’s learning and development;
2. School, District staff and families share an ongoing commitment to partner and adapt to children’s changing needs; and
3. School, District staff and families support children’s learning in the variety of settings encountered in their daily lives.

This policy supplements the rights of parents guaranteed by the Board of Education and by state and federal law.

Definitions

Parent: The definition of “parent” as utilized in this document is a natural parent or grandparent, an adoptive parent, a legal guardian, or an individual who place themselves in the position of a lawful parent, with all the obligations and responsibilities of such position with a student who is enrolled in the District.

Parental Engagement: As utilized in this document is parent participation in consistent two-way communication regarding academic, social-emotional learning, and school community activities.

Grievance: As utilized in this document is an official statement and process of registering a complaint or concern over something believed to be wrong or against District policies and regulations.

Parent and family engagement programs, activities and procedures at the District and individual school

level must ensure that parents and family members:

1. Play an integral role in assisting their children’s learning;
2. Are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s education at school; and
3. Are full partners in their children’s education and are included in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children to the extent permitted by law.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement –District Level Policy

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

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, as modified by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, school boards receiving federal Title I funds must adopt a written parent and family engagement policy. The policy must be developed in collaboration with parents and family members, and is subject to their agreement. The final adopted parent and family engagement policy must be distributed to District families, and incorporated into the District Title I Plan.

Consistent with the parent and family engagement goals of Title I, Part A of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) as authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the District will develop and implement programs, activities and procedures to 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. All schools receiving Title I, Part A funds will develop and implement school-level parent and family engagement procedures, as required by federal law. To the extent feasible, each school or program will have parent-friendly literature available in the language predominantly spoken by those in parental relation to the students enrolled in such schools or programs to support participation by all District parents.

All District and school Title I parent and family engagement programs, activities, and procedures will provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members, including those who have limited English proficiency; parents and family members with disabilities; and parents and family members of migratory children. The District must also provide opportunities for parents and family members with disabilities to request auxiliary aids and services to enable them to communicate and participate effectively in all aspects of their child’s education.

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 by staff in schools and the Central Office. Progress toward improving meaningful parent and family engagement in the District will be monitored by the District-wide parent organization (see section 1900.3) in conjunction with the Office of Parent Engagement and the Office of School Innovation responsible for addressing these goals.

Parent Participation in Developing the District’s Title I Plan and School Plans

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.

The New York State Education Department requires that parents and family members participate in the process of developing school plans for the school that their child attends. The Board, Superintendent, and other District staff will undertake the following actions to ensure parent and family member involvement in the development of the District-wide Title I plan:

1. Public Hearings and Forums
2. Town Hall Meetings
3. Open House
4. Robo Calls
5. Parent Surveys
6. Phone, mail, or email correspondence

Please refer to the section below, “School Level Parent and Family Engagement Approaches”, and the “Title I Parent and Family Engagement – School Level Approach” (1900-E1) exhibit for more details.

Grievance Process

The Superintendent shall develop regulations to establish a process for parents and family members to file grievances. The process for tendering such grievances shall be provided for parents and made available to the general public. The Superintendent (or designee) shall prepare and deliver to the Board of Education an annual summary of oral and written grievances, and the actions taken to respond to them. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this policy in no way restricts an individual parent’s right to make their feelings known at any level of the District on any topic of concern.

Core Beliefs of Parents of RCSD Students:

1. Students are our first priority and will drive each decision.
2. Each student has recognizable and untapped potential that we strive to discover and fulfill.
3. We embrace diversity and commit to the eradication of racism and all forms of discrimination and oppression.
4. We provide students, families and staff with equitable access to resources for learning.
5. We respect and honor the dignity of all individuals.
6. Educating the whole child requires high-quality learning that is safe, loving and rigorous.
7. Our work is centered in respect, trust, integrity and accountability.
8. Education is a partnership of families, school, and the community.
9. We make each fiscal and resource allocation decision equitably, transparently and in the best interest of our students.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

The National Parent-Teacher Association developed the “National Standards for Family-School Partnerships” (1900-E4) for family-school partnerships to provide a framework for enhancing student success by District and school staff.

School Level Parent and Family Engagement Approaches

The Superintendent will ensure that all District schools receiving federal financial assistance under Title I, Part A are provided with coordination, technical assistance and all other support necessary to assist in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement programs and activities that improve student achievement and school performance. In accordance with each school’s needs, the Superintendent will ensure that:

1. Training for Title I parent engagement will be provided at least once a year before the end of the first quarter of the school year, but no more than three per school calendar year as needed per Principal discretion;

2. The Office of Grants and Program Accountability will notify the Parent Leadership Advisory Council and building administrators about the Title I parent engagement funding for their school;
3. The Office of Parent Engagement and Title I Committee will review each school's Title I Parent Engagement Plan annually for approval;
4. The District-wide parent organization (see section 1900.3) will review each school's Title I Parent Engagement Plan as needed, and advise the Board of Education regarding approval of the District-wide Title I Parent Engagement Plan;
5. Consultations and support will be provided to school principals regarding involvement of parents and staff in Title I parent engagement planning, as needed; and
6. District parents will be surveyed at the beginning and end of each school year, at a minimum.

Please refer to the "Title I Parental Involvement – School Level Approach" exhibit (1900-E1) for more detail.

1900.2 Varieties of Parent Involvement

Each parent and family may define differently the best means of engagement for themselves, their scholars and families. No one can list all of the ways that families can be involved in school communities. Families are the primary teachers of children and they are welcomed in the learning experience within the school community. Some of the significant ways parents may be engaged, include but are not limited to:

1. Parents being expected and encouraged to actively participate in their school communities, and ensuring that parents have consistent, predictable access to schools to accomplish this.
2. Parents being volunteers in organized school groups and committees such as PTA, PTO PTSA and other parent groups.
3. Schools engaging in more active outreach to parents to inform and gauge availability and interest in school activities.
4. The District providing Professional Development (PD) and training to school administrators and teachers on how to encourage and facilitate family participation.
5. The role of the Parent Liaison and Home School Assistants being refined and refocused to better effectuate their mission of being strong partners to parents and families.
6. A Parent Involvement Fair or other parent engagement event in the last week of August or first month of school to get parents involved immediately at the beginning of the school year.
7. Parents being provided opportunities to be leaders in their schools and at the district level through planning teams and District-wide parent groups and Board-sponsored task forces, committees.

Parents are invited to participate in the development of the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) to assist in collecting data and monitoring District progress toward specific goals for state reviews (see 1900-E3).

Parents as Partners in Policy-Making

Parents shall be partners with the Board and the Superintendent in developing policies. The District’s policy development process is outlined in Board policy and further delineated in regulations developed by the Superintendent.

Building Capacity for Parent Involvement

The implementation of this policy is to empower parents as advocates for improving their children’s academic achievement, the District and Title I, Part A schools will:

1. The District will encourage parents to be involved in Parent University in order to assist parents in understanding topics such as the state’s academic content and standards; grade-level expectation; state and local academic assessments; Title I requirements; methods for monitoring their children’s progress and for working with educators to improve their children’s academic achievement.
2. Provide materials and training to help parents participate in improving their children’s academic achievement, such as literacy training and use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy and safety precautions in using the worldwide web).
3. Enlist parents to assist in educating teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, other school leaders, and other staff, in understanding the value and utility of parents’ contributions and ways to:
 - a. Reach out, communicate, and collaborate with parents as equal partners;
 - b. Implement and coordinate parent programs;
 - c. Build ties between parents and the schools; and
 - d. Understand and be culturally sensitive to the needs of each family.

To achieve this objective, the Parent Leadership Advisory Council will review all Parent University workshops planned for the upcoming school year with the Office of Parent Engagement by the end of August.

Parent University and Other Professionally-led Learning Offerings

1. Parent participation in/watching Professional development trainings.
2. Ensure that information related to school, parent-related programs, meetings, and other activities is provided to parents of children participating in Title I programs via the Parents’ Right to Know Letter and school-based presentations. The information shall be presented in an understandable and uniform format in a language the parents can understand (to the extent practicable), and in alternative formats (upon request).
3. Abide by the Student Academic Achievement School-Parent Compact exhibit (1900-E2) at the building level.

Coordination of Parental Involvement Strategies

The District will coordinate and integrate parent engagement strategies for compliance with Title I, Part A with those used to promote parent participation in other Federal, State, and local programs, including public

preschool programs. The District will coordinate parent involvement strategies by:

1. Monitoring parent and family attendance at all events, including Title I events;
2. Offering surveys to parents at all events, including Title I events, to identify and support parents' needs; (information will be publicly available through the Office of Parent Engagement i.e., survey data, workshop data, satisfaction surveys);
3. Promoting the Power of 2 Initiative of the Office of Parent Engagement in every school;
4. Encouraging in the community and District-wide at least two parents from each classroom to participate in one or more of the following: School-Based Planning Teams, PTA/PTO, or parent engagement events; and
5. Informing parents of their rights under the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

1900.3 Parent Organizations in the District

District-wide Parent Organization:

A District-wide parent organization, Parent Leadership Advisory Council (PLAC), shall be established to provide parents with opportunities to serve as leaders at the District level. Currently, parents have organized themselves at the District-wide level under the name Parent Leadership Advisory Council. PLAC shall consist of representatives of school-based parent organizations and other parent groups.

PLAC shall be composed of parents, legal guardians, and those with custody of students **currently** enrolled in the Rochester City School District (RCSD), except that current RCSD employees shall not be eligible to serve as officers on PLAC.

All meetings for PLAC shall be open to all District parents, legal guardians, and individuals with custody of a student currently enrolled in an RCSD school. No parent, legal guardian, individual with custody of a currently enrolled RCSD student, or District staff member shall be denied entry into meetings of PLAC. The schedule of PLAC meetings shall be provided to all parents, legal guardians, and individuals with custody of a student currently enrolled in an RCSD school. PLAC will regularly update District parents, legal guardians, and individuals with custody of a student currently enrolled in an RCSD school of changes to the Council's meeting schedule or location, major developments in the District, and opportunities to provide input into decision-making. The Office of Parent Engagement, Office of Communications, and PLAC will work collaboratively to provide parents with the information.

The bylaws of PLAC must adhere to the requirements contained in this policy. Any changes in the bylaws of PLAC must be ratified by the Rochester Board of Education.

PLAC 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.

District-Level Parent Organizations

School-level and District-level parent groups should work collaboratively to prioritize the needs of students.

1. Bilingual Education Council (BEC)
2. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
3. Parent Leadership Advisory Council (PLAC)

School Level Parent Organizations:**1. School-Level Parent Groups**

Each school will have a parent organization that centers work around the priorities of the Parent Engagement Plan and aligns with The National PTA Standards. Principals will work collaboratively with identified staff and parents in their school charged with developing and sustaining building-based and District level parent organizations. If there are barriers to developing parent organizations at the school level, Principals will reach out to the Office of Parent Engagement for support. Parent organizations shall support the election process for the School-Based Planning Team parent representatives (further information contained in the School-Based Planning policy – 1210). Schools should provide as much support as possible in disseminating information to and about parent organizations through mediums most likely to reach the school audience, such as school websites.

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 Superintendent’s Office will identify the responsible District staff, school, or department, and direct that they will:

1. Involve parents in the development of the District’s annual plan (DCIP - District Comprehensive Improvement Plan/ SCEPs - School Comprehensive Education Plan) and policy related to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and modified by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.
2. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement strategies in research-based education programs.
3. Educate and involve parents in decisions about allocation of Title I funds to schools for parent involvement.
4. Practice increased financial transparency by providing parents with relevant information about District finances.
5. Share decision-making with parents in planning, review, and improvement of programs.
6. Provide parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum and the forms of assessment used to measure student progress.
7. Inform parents of their option to change schools if their child is enrolled in a Priority School
8. Notify parents of supplemental services offered to students who attend a school on a low-performing list for at least three (3) years.
9. Inform parents of the options and process for school transfers for reasons of safety established by the State of New York.
10. Inform parents of classroom teacher qualifications to the extent permitted by law.
11. 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 through Parent University Training led by the Office of Parent Engagement.
12. The Auditor General will meet with the Parent Leadership Advisory 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.
13. Provide full opportunities for participation of parents of: limited-English-proficient students, students with disabilities.
14. Provide full opportunities for participation of parents of: migrant children, and homeless students.
15. Incorporate the Power of 2, which encourages 2 parents from each classroom to participate in School-Based Planning Teams, school parent group, and other parent engagement events.

Principals from each school will ensure that Parent Liaisons and/or Home School Assistants take responsibility for this initiative.

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 areas of cooperation between parents and the District:

1. School-Based Management
2. Capital and Operating Budget
3. Instruction
4. Curriculum/Textbooks
5. Student Support Services
6. Attendance and Enrollment
7. Academic Standards
8. New Construction/Remodeling/Modernization
9. Special Education
10. Special Services
11. Bilingual/Bicultural Education
12. Health and Wellness
13. Social and Emotional Well-Being

Responsibilities of the Board of Education

The Rochester Board of Education meetings will be made available on the District’s website and through communications to the parent advisory groups, student advisory group and media.

The Parent Leadership Advisory Council shall meet with the Board of Education and the Superintendent at mutually agreeable times as part of ongoing public engagement activities.

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.

Parent-Staff Relations

The District shall seek information from parents on a regular basis (at least once a marking period) regarding their satisfaction with their children’s teachers and other personnel to improve instruction and school/ parent relations. Survey data will be used to inform decision making for academic outcomes.

Communication to Parents

The Superintendent or designee will 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 the top five languages of the District at minimum. Upon request, translation services will be provided at parent meetings for parents who speak languages other than English and/or Spanish. The Information and Technology Department will support parents. Information will be communicated to parents via electronic and non-electronic means.

Policy Implementation and Regulations

The Superintendent will develop regulations for the implementation of this policy. The regulations will establish standards for evaluating the success of the District’s and school’s parental involvement practices, and the evaluation, analysis, and findings will be reported to the Board for each school year in September. These regulations and standards for evaluation will be reviewed publicly by Board mandated Parent groups and Parent Representatives on Board of Education Committees.

Parent engagement will be supported through educational training programs provided to staff, faculty, administration, community partners, District volunteers and school building Parent leaders. Training programs will be designed on the basis of, but not limited to, surveys, 1-on-1 communication, public forums and other public meetings. These processes and procedures will be developed at the school level by the School Based Planning Teams and then shared and monitored by the Superintendent and cabinet members.

The District will provide resources to encourage the maximum number of parents to participate in the activities described in this policy. The issue of adequate resources will be included in the annual review of this policy to support individual programs across the District for equity.

Guidelines

The Superintendent will support, sustain and provide transparency of District information, including data collected from surveys and forums, participation in the creation of processes and procedures to all District Wide Parent Groups which is to include a timeline moving forward for implementation and accountability based on the above collected data. The regulations will establish the process and procedure of protocols for addressing parent concerns approved by the District Level Parent Groups. Presentations will be given to Executive and school level School Based Planning Teams, at a minimum, on a yearly basis.

The regulations will also address a process by which parents may be recommended for advisory membership on Board committees, advisory bodies and otherwise participate as partners in policy-making from a diverse Parent Community representative of the demographics of the District with the aid of Parent Groups at all levels, both school and District-wide.

The Office of Parent Engagement along with District Level Parent Groups 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, programs, District Level Parent Groups, mandated committees, and other parent organizations with programming based on individual school and District-wide need.

Accountability

The Board of Education in collaboration with the Executive Teams of the District Wide Parent groups will develop an accountability system with measurable goals for parent and family engagement for schools, staff, District leaders and parents who are in leadership positions. Benchmarks will be established for staff, faculty, administration and parent leadership 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

An annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy will be conducted by the Superintendent (or designee) in collaboration with District parents and presented to the Board. The evaluation will address improvements needed in the academic quality of Title I schools, including:

1. Identifying barriers to parent participation;
2. Actions to be taken to address these barriers; and
3. Policy revisions needed to facilitate greater and/or more effective parent and family involvement.

School-based and District parent organizations must be active participants in the annual evaluation process. The Parent Leadership Advisory 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 use the measurable goals established in the Superintendent's accountability system.

To ensure that parent and family engagement practices are implemented with fidelity, the Superintendent (or designee) shall provide to the Board of Education a consolidated Building-level and District-level evaluation of the content, implementation and effectiveness of this policy in April of each year.

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 Leadership Advisory Council to discuss the evaluation findings, identify barriers to parent involvement in the District, and recommend policy changes to eliminate or overcome those barriers.

These evaluation reports will be considered by the Board of Education to determine the 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).

In addition to the annual evaluation, an open audit report regarding the Office of Parent Engagement is also available through the Office of the Auditor General, and has been supported by the Parent Leadership Advisory Council.

Cross-ref: Community Involvement policy (1200)
 School-Based Planning (1210)

Code of Conduct (1400)
Title I Parent and Family Engagement - School Level Approach (1900-E1)
Student Academic Achievement School-Parent Compact (1900-E2)
District and School Improvement Plans (1900-E3)
National Standards for Family-School Partnerships (1900-E4)
Parent Leadership Advisory Council By-Laws (1900-E5)
Bilingual Education Council Bylaws (1900-E6)
Parent and Family Engagement Regulation (1900-R)
Advisory Bodies (2260)
Policy Management (2410)
Administrative Councils, Cabinets, Committees (3220)
Equivalence in Instructional Staff and Materials (4010)

NYSSBA Ref: Parent and Family Engagement (1900) – Required Policy

Ref: 20 USC §§6318(a)(2); 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

Notes: 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; December 20, 2018; Amended October 20, 2022 pursuant to Resolution No. 2022-23: 206; Amended November 30, 2023 pursuant to Resolution No. 2023-24: 467; Amended June 20, 2024 pursuant to Resolution No. 2023-24: 964

ct