PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Although parents and families are the subject of this Policy, it is intended to ensure that Rochester City School District employees understand parent and family engagement rights.

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, school educational planning and operations. Examples of parent and family involvement in educational planning and operations include: parent participation in the classroom and extracurricular activities; at home during reading time, and through 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 to encourage all forms of parent and family engagement. Communications must be user friendly for parents and accessible on all school and District websites. To be effective, parent engagement must 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; and
- Children’s learning is reinforced in the variety of settings encountered in their daily lives: at home, Early Pre-K- 12th 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.

Definitions

**Parent:** The federal definition refers to a natural parent, legal guardian or other person standing in *locus parentis* (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare).

**Parental Involvement:** refers to the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication regarding student academic learning and other school activities.
At a minimum, parent and family engagement programs, activities and procedures at the District and individual school level must ensure that parents and family members:

- Play an integral role in assisting their children’s learning;
- Are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s education at school; and
- 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 parents and family members, 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 reauthorized 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 Parent Advisory Council in conjunction with the Office of Parent Engagement and the District Tenet Team responsible for addressing these goals.

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. The process for filing grievances is described in the following section of this policy.
**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. The process for tendering such grievances shall be disseminated to parents and made available to the general public. The Superintendent (or designee) shall prepare and deliver to the Board an annual summary of oral and written grievances, and the actions taken to respond to them.

**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.

Parents and family members also will participate in the process of developing school plans required by the New York State Education Department 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:

- Town Hall Meetings
- Open House
- Robo Calls
- Parent Surveys
- Phone, mail, or email correspondence

Please refer to the section below, “Development of School level Parent and Family Engagement Approaches” and the attachment entitled, “Title I Parental Involvement – School Level Approach” (1900-E.1) for more detail.

**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 by District and school staff:

1. Welcoming all families to be active participants in the life of the school; conveying a sense of value and appreciation for parents’ and family members’ contributions; and promoting connections between families, school staff, and student learning;

2. Communicating effectively through regular two-way, meaningful communication with family members in a manner, language, and mode of technology that family members can understand and access;

3. Supporting student success by fostering continuous collaboration with family members to support student learning and healthy development at school and at home;

4. Speaking up for every child and empowering family members to be advocates for all students within the school;
5. Sharing power and assuring that parents and family members are equal partners in decision-making; and

6. Collaborating and partnering with community organizations and groups to turn the school into a hub of community life.

The Superintendent shall hold District administrators accountable for assessing progress toward meeting the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Family and Partnership Standards by using the National PTA Assessment Rubric.

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:

- Training for Title I parent engagement will be provided 3 times a year;
- The District Parent Coordinator will notify the Parent Advisory Council and building administrators about the Title I parent engagement funding for their school;
- The District Parent Coordinator, Executive Director, and Title I Committee will review each school’s Title I Parent Engagement Plan annually for approval;
- The Parent Advisory Council 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;
- Consultations and support will be provided to school principals regarding involvement of parents and staff in Title I parent engagement planning, as needed; and
- District parents will be surveyed at the beginning and end of each school year, at a minimum.

Please refer to the attachment entitled, “Title I Parental Involvement – School Level Approach” (1900-E.1) for more detail.

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 expanding parent education programs at the school level to empower parents with the knowledge and skills to support their child’s development at the home.
Parents as Volunteers
Schools and families benefit when parents volunteer in school programs (e.g., School-Based Planning Teams; National Network of Partnership Schools; PTA, PTO, PTSA and other school parent groups; special projects in the classroom; 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 the School-Based Planning Teams policy (2265). A representation of at least 3 to 5 parents is recommended for each School-Based Planning Team.

Parents as Leaders at the District Level
Parents play a vital role in developing and implementing decisions and policies pertaining to 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 developed by the Superintendent.

Parents are invited to participate in Tenet Teams to assist in collecting data and monitoring District progress toward specified 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 in developing policies. 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 developed by the Superintendent.

Building Capacity for Parent Involvement
To empower parents as advocates for improving their children’s academic achievement, the District and Title I, Part A schools will:

1. Assist parents in understanding topics such as the state’s academic content and standards; 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. To attain this objective, the District will encourage parents to be involved in the following workshops:
• Title I Events 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 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). To achieve this objective, the District will provide the following workshops:

• NWEA for Parents
• Parent Connect
• Smartphone mobile application
• Razkids Program
• Lexia
• DOJO PBS Plan for Parents
• ELA and Social Studies Night
• Math and Science Night
• Code of Conduct (1400) and corresponding regulation
• Bilingual Conference and Workshops
• Parent University Workshops
• Response To Intervention (RTI) Plans

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:

• Reach out, communicate, and collaborate with parents as equal partners;
• Implement and coordinate parent programs;
• Build ties between parents and the schools; and
• Understand and be culturally sensitive to the needs of each family.

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

4. Ensure that information related to school, parent-related programs, meetings, and other activities is provided to parents of children participating in Title I programs. 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).
5. Abide by the attached School-Parent Compact (1900-E.2).

**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:

- Monitoring parent and family attendance at all Title I events;
- Offering surveys to parents at each Title I event to identify and support parents’ needs;
- Promoting the Power of 2 Initiative of the Office of Parent Engagement in every school community to encourage at least two parents from each classroom to participate in School-Based Planning Teams, PTA/PTO, or parent engagement events; and
- Informing parents of their rights under the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

**1900.3 Parent Organizations in the District**

**District-wide Parent Advisory Council:**

A district-wide Parent Advisory Council shall be established to provide parents with opportunities to serve as leaders at the District level. The Parent Advisory 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 Advisory 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 Advisory Council.

All meetings of the District-wide Parent Advisory Council 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 the Parent Advisory Council. The schedule of Parent Advisory Council meetings shall be provided to all parents, legal guardians, and individuals with custody of a student currently enrolled in an RCSD school. The Parent Advisory Council 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 bylaws of the Parent Advisory Council must adhere to the requirements contained in this policy. Any changes in the bylaws of the Parent Advisory Council must be ratified by the Rochester Board of Education.

The Parent Advisory 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 Advisory 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.

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:

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

b) Coordinate and integrate parent involvement strategies in research-based education programs.

c) Involve parents in decisions about allocating funds to schools for parent involvement.

d) Share decision-making with parents in planning, review and improvement of programs in conjunction with the School-Based Planning Teams.

e) Provide parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum and the forms of assessment used to measure student progress.

f) Inform parents of their option to change schools if their child is enrolled in a low performing school.

g) 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.

h) Inform parents of the options and process for school transfers for reasons of safety – criteria
established by the State of New York.

i) Inform parents of classroom teacher qualifications.

j) 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.

k) 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.

l) Provide full opportunities for participation of parents of: limited-English-proficient students, students with disabilities, migrant children, and homeless students.

m) 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.

n) Incorporate the Power of 2, which encourages 2 parents from each classroom to participate in School-Based Planning Teams, PTO/PTA and other parent engagement events.

**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:

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 Well-Being
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.

**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 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.

**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 the Parent Connect and Smart Phone mobile applications. 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.

The District will provide resources for parents to participate in the activities described in this policy. Parent involvement will be supported through educational training programs provided to staff, community partners, and school building leaders. Training programs will be designed on the basis of the following data: parent surveys, data collection from parent conversations, student surveys to indicate 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 will develop and implement an accountability system with measurable goals for parent and family engagement for schools, staff, District leaders and parents who are in leadership positions (e.g. Bilingual Council, Parent Advisory Council). Benchmarks will be established for staff 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:

- Identifying barriers to parent participation;
- Actions to be taken to address these barriers; and
- 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 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 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 Advisory Council.

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:  

20 USC §§6318(a)(2); 7801(38), Every Student Succeeds Act (§1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act)


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 assessments 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 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.
STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

NOTE: In order to comply with the law, districts must create a school-parent compact that is jointly developed with the parents of all participating children. In general, the compact must outline how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state’s high standards.

School-Parent Compact

To help our children achieve, we agree to abide by the following conditions during the [insert school year] school year:

School Responsibilities

The school will:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment;
- Hold parent-teacher conferences during these conferences, this compact will be discussed as it relates to your child’s academic achievement;
- Provide parents with frequent reports on their child’s progress;
- Provide parents reasonable access to staff; and
- Provide parents with opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class and to observe classroom activities.

Parent Responsibilities

We, as parents, will support our children’s learning in the following ways:

- Monitor my child’s attendance;
- Make sure that homework is completed;
- Limit amount of television my child watches;
- Volunteer in my child’s school;
- Participate in decisions regarding my children’s education;
- Promote positive use of my child’s extracurricular time; and
- Stay informed about my child’s education and communicate with the school regularly.
**Student Responsibilities**

As a student, I will share the responsibility to improve my grades, and agree to:

* Do homework every day and ask for help when needed;
* Read at least 20 minutes a day outside of school; and
* Give to my parents all notices and information received by me from my school every day.

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