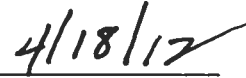


Superintendent's Regulations 1900-R
PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT





Initialed by Superintendent

Date

POLICY MISSION

As a reform strategy, family engagement should be *systemic, integrated, and sustained*. *Systemic* family engagement is purposefully designed as a core component of educational goals such as school readiness, student achievement, and school turnaround. *Integrated* family engagement is embedded into structures and processes designed to meet these goals, including training and professional development, teaching and learning, community collaboration, and the use of data for continuous improvement and accountability. *Sustainable* family engagement operates with adequate resources, including public-private partnerships, to ensure meaningful and effective strategies that have the power to impact student learning and achievement.¹

“Parent” or “Family” – These terms are used interchangeably and include caregivers who are responsible for a child in the District.

“District” – Refers to the Rochester City School District.

Introduction

The District recognizes that an expanded definition of family engagement reflects national research showing that families play significant roles in supporting their children’s learning, guiding their children successfully through a complex school system, and advocating strongly for their children and effective public schools.

Reflecting a systemic approach to education from birth to young adulthood, this definition consists of the following principles:

- First, family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development.
- Second, family engagement is continuous across a child's life and entails enduring commitment with changing parental roles as children mature into young adulthood.
- Third, effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn— at home, pre-kindergarten programs, school, after-school programs, faith-based institutions, and in the community.

The District is committed to aggressively building strong partnerships among home, school, and community. As a Local Education Agency (LEA) receiving funding under Title I, we must create and maintain programs, activities, and procedures for implementing meaningful family engagement that serves to improve student achievement and school performance as required by NCLB Section 1118.

The District has adopted the National Standards for Family-School partnerships as the foundation for Family Engagement regulations and practices.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

The District's 2008-2013 Strategic Plan goals and objectives for family engagement are aligned with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships which were created in 1997, and revised in 2007. These standards provide a framework for what our

District, schools, parents, and communities can do to build family-school partnerships for student success:

Standard 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;

Standard 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;

Standard 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;

Standard 4-Speak up for every child and empower family members to be advocates for all students within the school;

Standard 5-Share power and assure that family members, District, and school staff are equal partners in family engagement decision-making; and

Standard 6-Collaborate with community and partner with community organizations and groups to turn the school into a hub of community life.

District Level

1) **The District** is committed to fostering and promoting parent engagement as required in Title I, Part A, Section 1118. To accomplish this goal, our schools will involve parents in the development of the Family Engagement plans and the process of school review and improvement through the following types of involvement activities:

a) All District School Based Planning Teams are required to:

- i. Meet the parent engagement compliance requirement of two primary parent representatives and one alternate parent representative for each school.
 - ii. Provide evidence of parent-friendly strategies to support and encourage parent participation in governance process.
 - iii. Complete the SED CR Section 100.11 Shared Decision Making Biennial Review as a team.
 - iv. Post meeting minutes, agendas, team roster and related documents in the School's main office and on the school website. Schools with 15 percent or more students (families) who speak a native language other than English should make efforts to have minutes and agenda translated.
- b) All District schools are expected to implement and maintain the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships as their foundation for family engagement.
 - c) The District has implemented a biannual school climate survey to gauge the level of parental satisfaction with curriculum, student achievement, school operations, school culture, and other district services. The results of the survey will be published by school on the District's website.
 - d) District protocol requires the Office of Communications and the Department English Language Learners to work collaboratively in identifying translators to assist with improving communications to non-English speaking families. The District strongly discourages the use of students to provide translation or interpretation services except in the event of an emergency.
 - e) Parents shall be asked for their input on relevant issues pertaining to the Strategic Plan through the District website, meetings with parent advocacy

groups, and through participation of parent representatives serving on the Strategic Plan Review Committee.

- f) The District will meet and communicate regularly with community-based organizations, businesses, and faith-based organizations to coordinate workshops, trainings, and working partnerships that promote parent and community engagement.
- g) The Parent Council will meet periodically with the Superintendent, his/her representative and/or members of the Board of Education in order for all parties to share and discuss issues of concern affecting students, education and the school environment.

The Parent Council shall consist of representatives of school base parent organizations and other parent organizations (e.g. PTAs, PTOs, School Base Planning Teams, and Bilingual Education Council) recommended by their school community.

The Parent Council shall be composed of parents, legal guardians, and those with custody of students currently enrolled in the District, except that current employees of the District shall not be eligible to serve on the Parent Council. Council members may serve up to a two-year term based on the academic calendar.

This body will meet periodically with the Superintendent, his/her representative and/or members of the Board of Education to bring common constituency issues to the attention of the Superintendent and the Board of Education. The Parent Council shall have direct advisory input to the Superintendent and Board of Education, according to a process and criteria established by the Superintendent, regarding priorities reflected in the District's budget and major proposed amendments to the District's budget

and on the degree of parent and community support for those priorities. The Superintendent shall retain responsibility and authority for determining that which is to be included in the budget submitted to the Board.

Building Capacity for Family Engagement

- 2) **Office of Parent (Family) Engagement** is charged with providing technical support and for monitoring schools to ensure the following family engagement activities are performed on an annual basis.
 - a) A staff member dedicated to fostering family engagement and creating a family-school partnership is available at the school.
 - b) Development and submission of the Title I School Parent Engagement Plan and Budget in consultation with parents and the District's Title I Office.
 - c) Support of the yearly election of at least one of the two parent representatives to serve on the School Based Planning Teams.
 - d) Ensure flexible meeting times to support and encourage parent engagement in school meetings are offered.
 - e) Provide information to parents about the school's program, including parent information guides, new family orientation packets. The communication shall utilize uniform language and formats intended to be accessible and available to all parents.
 - f) Develop and use a School-Parent Compact.
 - g) Provide training for parents in working with their child to improve academic achievement, including training on web-based ParentCONNECT system to monitor academic progress.
 - h) Encourage parents to become engaged through innovative scheduling of activities through strategies such as holding meetings at a variety of times and

using technology in order to maximize the opportunities for parents to participate in school-related activities.

- i) Provide a staff member dedicated to fostering family engagement and creating a family-school partnership.

3) **The Parent University**, a component of the Office of Parent Engagement shall:

- a) Provide a catalog of workshops and activities at school and community sites that provide parents with information on how to help their child achieve academic success from pre-K to college/career.
- b) Offer families courses and other supports such as peer workgroups to build parent capacity to effectively manage student transitions (from pre-K to elementary, elementary to high school, and high school to college or career). Parent University courses will include resources for parents of students with an IEP (Individual Educational Plan).
- c) Provide reasonable supports and resources associated with parent involvement activities as requested by parents and offer ad hoc workshops, trainings and other supports as needs are identified by parents. The District will provide child care, transportation and other supports as much as feasible to help parents attend Parent University workshops and other events.
- d) Coordinate parent involvement strategies with other programs, such as Head Start and the NYS PTA that involve parents participating in the education of their children and will support schools in developing partnerships with community-based organizations that promote parent family engagement.
- e) Provide a comprehensive and coordinated program of training, peer-to-peer sessions, technical assistance and other supports to build the capacity of parents as leaders, community partners and school staff in planning and implementing

effective parent involvement activities to improve student and school performance.

4) Parent (Family) Feedback and Complaints Procedure:

The District advocates parent/family interest, knowledge and support as vital to the District educational process. Questions, suggestions, and complaints from parents should be handled promptly, courteously, and objectively, with as little inconvenience to parents as possible. Parents are recommended to follow the process below for inquiries and complaints.

Initial inquiries or complaints by parents should be directed to the school principal, and should be resolved at that level if possible. If a complaint is not resolved at school level within 15 days, the initiator of the complaint may contact the Parent Support Services of the Office of Parent (Family) Engagement for assistance with mediation, counsel and resolution of the complaint. If the complaint is not resolved within 15 days after contacting the Parent Support Services of the Office of Parent (Family) Engagement, the parent may submit an appeal in writing to the Superintendent or the Chief of Youth Development and Family Services for further investigation and resolution. Parents who have difficulty with reading and writing the appeal may obtain assistance from Parent Support Services staff in the Office of Parent (Family Engagement). In those cases where administrative resolution is not possible, the matter may be appealed to the Board of Education.

5) Family Engagement Professional Development:

Where teachers are able to communicate with parents and develop trusting relationships, they are more likely to remain teaching in their schools.²

- a) The Professional Learning Department and OPE Adult Education Specialist will work collaboratively to provides training and coaching for teachers and principals, support staff on family engagement practices and techniques.

- b) The Professional Learning Department and OPE will also assist teachers with incorporating family engagement into instructional strategies that meet the National Standards.
- c) Parent leaders and/or OPE Staff will serve on interview committees to ensure that new school leaders have a core knowledge of family engagement.

School Level:

Characteristics of Successful Family-School Partnerships

The District recognizes that family-school partnerships must focus on activities that are linked to children’s learning. They also must reflect the many ways in which families, community organizations, and school staff engage with and support one another, from promoting family literacy, to improving schools and advocating for greater educational quality and opportunity. Successful partnerships are varied as their local communities, yet they share certain characteristics. Effective partnerships are:

1. Respectful. All partners develop relationships that recognize, respect and build on the diverse strengths, talents, needs, and interests of families and students.
2. Inclusive. Staff reaches out to all families, especially those who are culturally diverse or have low levels of income. They examine their assumptions and come to know and learn from families as individuals. All families are honored and valued as partners in their children’s education.
3. Flexible. Partnerships are tailored to all stages of a student’s educational career, and offer a variety of times, locations and opportunities for participation.
4. Democratic. Families and young people are equal partners with staff, together constructing programs, policies and information. Leadership is open to families, students and other partners.

5. Systematic. Partnerships focus on student achievement and help families and community members understand what students are learning and what the District's standards for successful performance mean for different ages and grade levels.³
- 6) **Schools are expected to implement the Family-School National Standards** with a goal of achieving the highest rating of "Excelling" in the assessment indicators. (See National Standards for Family-School Partnership Assessment Guide).
 - a) Effective implementation of Family-School National Standards is tied to principal and teachers performance review.
 - b) Schools will provide Family Engagement (Parent Liaison/Home School Assistants) staff dedicated to nurturing the Family-School partnerships, particularly those families in need of translation services, home visits, District information and/or literacy assistance as they develop the skills necessary to help their children become successful in school.

Parents who are newly arrived in the United States need family engagement programs more than anyone⁴

- c) Schools with 15 percent or more of their students (families) speaking a native language other than English should make every effort to have notices translated before they are sent home. The same applies when the school sends automated phone messages to these homes.
- d) Newcomer Programs are expected to work collaboratively with Department of ELL, OPE to offer classes at the school for parents to understand the curriculum, report cards and academic expectations.

7) Superintendent's Annual Evaluation and Report:

The annual evaluation will report on the outcomes of following Parent and Family Engagement policy components and conclude with recommendations for the following academic year. The report will be presented to the Board of Education in July of each year for review, comments and approval and contain the following elements:

- a) Quality of Implementation of National Standards for Family-School Partnerships by school;

- b) Qualitative and quantitative family engagement professional development data;
- c) Qualitative and quantitative Parent University and family outreach data;
- d) Other specific measurable of parent and family engagement in the prior school-year [based on feedback from School Based Planning and other parent sources]; and
- e) Feedback and Complaint summary.

¹Weiss, H, Lopez, M. & Rosenberg H, (2010). Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform. Rosenberg. National Policy Forum for Family, School, & Community Engagement

² Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). The Schools Teachers Leave: Teaching Mobility in Chicago Public schools. Chicago, IL: Consortium On Chicago School Research At the University Of Chicago Urban Education Institute.

³ Epstein, J. (2011). School, Family and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools

⁴ Finkel, E. (2011). New ELL Parents Need More, A hope to train new immigrants to better meet their children's needs.