

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

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The board recognizes that parents and other family members are a student's earliest and most influential teachers and that informed, meaningful, and continuous two-way communication and engagement must be pursued and supported at both the district and school levels through collaborative efforts by schools/colleges/universities, communities, businesses, faith congregations, philanthropic organizations, government entities, and families.

The board believes it can impact student achievement by improving the quality and quantity of parent and family engagement in education of students.

Therefore, the board commits to the following:

- Ensuring that each school establishes a comprehensive parent and family engagement program in consultation with the families being served that includes parent education programs and activities that will assist parents and families in supporting classroom learning
- Providing support and coordination for staff and parents and families to make family engagement in education a priority
- Establishing effective, two-way communication between all parents and families and schools that respects the diversity and differing needs of families and encourages the development of mutual support between home and school
- Seeing that each school develops effective school planning/management teams that involve a broad spectrum of families, staff, and community representatives in school governance and decision making at the local and statewide level
- Recognizing that improved student achievement must be an equally shared responsibility and ultimate goal of parents and families, teachers, the school system as a whole, and the community at large

Parent Involvement in Their Children's Education Act of 2000

Responsibilities of board

In order to heighten awareness of the importance of parent and family engagement in the education of students throughout their schooling; encourage the establishment and maintenance of family-friendly school settings; and emphasize parent/family/school partnerships to assure a student's academic success, the board will do the following:

- Consider joining national organizations that promote and provide technical assistance on various proven parent and family engagement frameworks and models
- Incorporate, where possible, proven parent and family engagement practices into existing policies and efforts
- Provide parent and family engagement orientation and training through staff development
- Provide incentives and formal recognition for schools that significantly increase parent and family engagement as defined by the State Board of Education

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- Require an annual report on school and district parent and family engagement programs including evaluations of the success of the programs
- Include parent and family engagement expectations as part of the superintendent's evaluation

Responsibilities of superintendent

The superintendent will do the following:

- Include parent and family engagement expectations as part of each principal's evaluation.
- Include information about parent and family engagement opportunities and participation in the district's annual report.
- Disseminate parental and family expectations as defined by law to all families in the district.

The superintendent may also designate staff to serve as parent and family liaisons for the district; require each school to designate a faculty contact for parent and family engagement efforts; require each principal to designate a materials and resource space within the school specifically for families; and encourage principals to adjust class and school schedules to accommodate parent/family/teacher conferences.

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

The board also recognizes the special importance of parent and family engagement to the success of its Title I, Migrant (MEP), and English learner (EL) programs. Pursuant to federal law, the district and parents and families will jointly develop and agree upon a written parent and family engagement policy that will be distributed to families participating in any of these programs.

In keeping with these beliefs, it is the intention of the district to cultivate and support active parent and family engagement and to set and realize goals for parent- and family-supported student learning. The district will do the following:

- Provide activities that will educate parents and families on the intellectual and developmental needs of their student at all age levels. This will include promoting cooperation between the district and other agencies or school/community groups (such as parent-teacher groups, Head Start, First Steps, etc.) to furnish learning opportunities and disseminate information regarding parenting skills and child/adolescent development
- Engage in outreach efforts to all parents and families to increase involvement in the educational process, including the following:
 - keeping families informed of opportunities for engagement and encouraging participation in various programs
 - providing access to educational resources for parents/families to use together with their children
 - keeping families informed of the objectives of district educational programs as well as of their student's participation and progress within these programs
- Enable families to participate in the education of their students through a variety of roles. For example, family members should be given opportunities to do the following:

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- provide input into district policies volunteer time within the classrooms and school programs when deemed appropriate by administration.
- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers and staff to enhance their understanding of effective parent and family engagement strategies
- Perform regular evaluations of parent and family engagement at each school and at the district level
- Provide access, upon request, to any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum
- If practicable, provide information in a language understandable to parents

Title I parent and family engagement

The board recognizes that parent and family engagement is vital to achieve maximum educational growth for students participating in the district's Title I program. Therefore, in compliance with federal law and South Carolina Department of Education guidelines, the district will meet with parents and family members to provide information regarding their school's participation in the Title I program and its requirements.

The superintendent will ensure equivalence among schools in teachers, administration, and other staff and in the provisions of curriculum materials and instructional supplies.

The board directs the superintendent to ensure that each of the district schools participating in the Title I program meet annually. Parents and family members of participating students will be informed of their right to be involved in the development of the district's parent and family engagement policy, overall Title I plan, and school-parent compact.

The district will, to the extent practicable, provide full opportunities for the participation of parents and family members with limited English proficiency, with disabilities, with those experiencing homelessness, and parents and families of migratory students. In cooperation with parents and families, the district's policy, plan, and compact will be reviewed annually and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents, families, and the school and distributed to parents and families of participating students in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents and families can understand.

The superintendent will develop administrative regulations, as necessary, to implement this policy and meet the requirements of law.

Migrant Education Program (MEP) parent and family engagement

Parents and families of students in the MEP will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation, and evaluation of the program.

Parents and families of MEP students will receive instruction regarding their role in improving the academic achievement of their students.

English learner (EL) parent and family engagement

Pursuant to federal law, parents and families of EL students will be provided notification regarding their student's placement in and information about the district's EL program.

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Parents and families will be notified of their rights regarding program content and participation.

South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA)

Parent and family engagement is an integral component of the clusters of study system mandated by the EEDA.

Beginning with students in the sixth grade and continuing through high school, each school will schedule annual parent counseling conferences to assist parents/legal guardians or individuals appointed by the parents/legal guardians and their students in making career choices and creating individual graduation plans. These conferences must include, but not be limited to, the following:

- assisting the student in identifying career interests and goals
- selecting a cluster of study and an academic focus
- developing an individual graduation plan

A mediation process that includes parent advocates must be developed, explained, and made available for conferences upon the request of the parent/legal guardian or the student.

The district may provide school counseling sessions during hours that are not typically part of the workday, such as in the evenings or on Saturday.

Cf. IG, IGCA, IHAK, IHAQ, IHBC, IHCA, IKF, JLD, KBB

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Legal References:

- A. United States Code of Laws, as amended:
 1. Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No 114-95.
- B. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:
 1. Section 59-28-100, *et seq.*- Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act.
 2. Section 59-59-160 - South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act; parental participation, annual parent counseling conferences.
 3. Section 59-139-90 - Strategic plans to include stated goals and objectives for parent involvement.
- C. S.C. State Board of Education Regulations:
 1. R43-205 - Administrative and professional personnel qualifications, duties, and workloads.
 2. R43-234 - Defined program, grades 9-12.
- D. South Carolina State Department of Education:
 1. South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act Guidelines (2006).