

# Policies

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### PART I. DISTRICT EXPECTATIONS

Westerly Public Schools understands that engaging parents and families in the educational process is essential to improved academic outcomes for students. We further recognize that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and the family.

Westerly Public Schools agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- A. The school district will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents and families in all of its schools, with Title I, Part A programs. Those programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents and families of participating children.
- B. The school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family policies meet the requirements, and include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1118(d) of the ESSA.
- C. The school district will incorporate this parent and family engagement policy into its district strategic plan.
- D. In carrying out the Title I parent and family engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, the district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy or are of any racial or ethnic minority background.
- E. If the district plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESSA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the district will submit any parent comments with the plan when submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Education.
- F. The district will involve the parents and family members of children receiving services in Title I schools on a volunteer basis in decisions about how the one percent of Title I funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools.
- G. The school district will be governed by the following statutory definition of parent and family engagement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition: *Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring –*
  1. Parents and family members play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
  2. Parents and family members are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;

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3. Parents and family members are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;
4. the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.

## **PART II. DISTRICT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY REQUIRED COMPONENTS**

- A. Westerly Public Schools will take the following actions to involve parent in the joint development of its district parental involvement plan:
  1. Home/School Compact – Yearly in September
  2. Title I Parent and Family Information Meeting – Yearly in Fall
  3. Parent and Family Advisory Committee –Quarterly
  4. School Improvement Teams –Monthly
  5. Westerly Parent Academy Community Workgroup – Quarterly
  
- B. Westerly Public Schools will provide coordination, technical assistance and other support through Principals, District Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator, Parent and Family Advisory Committee, Early Childhood Coordinator and Parent Academy Coordinator to assist Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student achievement and school performance.
  
- C. Westerly Public Schools will build the schools' parents' and families' capacity for strong parent and family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and families to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, families and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph –
  1. The school district will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district or school, as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph –
    - a. the challenging State academic standards,
    - b. the state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments,
    - c. the requirements of Title I,
    - d. how to monitor their child's progress, and
    - e. how to work with educators
  
  2. Strategies:
    - a. Provide information to participating parents and families in such areas as national, state and local educational goals, including parent' rights as defined in Title I, Part A.
    - b. Assist in the development of parent engagement groups at each school.
    - c. Encourage the formation of partnerships between schools and local businesses.
    - d. Provide resources for parents and families to learn about child development, parenting practices, and academic strategies that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their child.
    - e. Involve parents and families through an annual survey to improve school effectiveness.

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- f. Approve reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent and family engagement activities.
        - g. Provide any reasonable support for parent and family engagement at the request of participating Title I, Part A families.
  3. The school district shall provide materials and training to help families work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training and using technology including education about the harms of copyright piracy, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by offering:
    - a. Workshops based on district-wide parent surveys (in person or virtual)
    - b. Parent Academy courses based on district and community surveys (in person or virtual)
  4. The school district shall educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders and staff, with the assistance of parents in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, by:
    - a. Providing staff with technical assistance on communicating and working with parents.
    - b. Encouraging teachers, parents and community members to jointly coordinate, enhance and implement parent programs.
  5. The school district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, support, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with other Federal, State and local programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.
  6. The school district will take the following actions to ensure that Title I information related to the school and parent-programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format in a timely manner, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. All barriers will be identified through surveys and questionnaires. Data will be compiled and the PAC will make any recommendations for change or implementation such as the following:
    - a. Notices will be in English, Spanish, Chinese and other languages as needed
    - b. Telephone message system will be used
    - c. E-mail and school newsletters
    - d. Social Media
    - e. Local media
- D. Westerly Public Schools will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I with parental involvement strategies under the following other programs: Head Start, Even Start, and Parents as Teachers, by:
1. Recruiting the most vulnerable families for family literacy programs

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2. Providing resources to allow families to overcome obstacles to success
  3. Working closely with schools and teachers to provide additional support
  4. Ensuring that all communications are translated for non-English speakers
- E. Westerly Public Schools will take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the quality of its Title I schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents and family members in school involvement activities (with particular attention to families who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its policy and activities to design strategies for more effective involvement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents and families) family engagement policies.
1. Each program/workshop will be evaluated at completion.
  2. Documentation of evidence is the same as the above evaluations (Part II, E.1.).
  3. Parent and Family Committee will meet quarterly to look at documentation and evaluation results to appraise the progress of each school.
  4. District Title I Family Engagement Coordinator and Director of Family and Community Engagement will lead the Committee and report to the Assistant Superintendent/Title 1 Coordinator.
- F. Westerly Public Schools will take the following actions to involve parents and family members in the process of school review and improvement:
1. Parent and Family Engagement Committee will review Title I School Improvement Plans and how each school executes their plan in reference to family engagement.
  2. The Committee will review each school's Family Engagement Calendar and sign in sheets.
  3. The Committee will compile data and make recommendations for change and monitor progress.
  4. The Assistant Superintendent, Title I District Coordinator, will then review all recommendations for final approval.

Adopted: December 3, 2015

Updated: October 28, 2020

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District Parent and Family Engagement Policy  
Attachment A

Westerly Public Schools will plan and implement effective family engagement activities to improve effective engagement activities to improve student achievement and school performance by:

- a. Employing a parent liaison at each Title I School
- b. Fully engaging parents and families through:
  - Welcome New Families
  - Family Engagement Committees
  - District-wide Parent Academy
  - First Day Celebrations
  - Open Doors Night – Fall
  - Title I Information Night - Fall
  - Volunteering in School Workshops – Fall
  - Parent/Teacher Conferences
  - Curriculum Nights, Literacy, Math and Science – As scheduled by school
  - Understanding Your Child’s Report Card

The school district will coordinate and integrate family engagement activities with Head Start, district and community preschools and other programs that encourage and support families by:

- Presenting parent education workshops at Head Start, district and community preschools
- Inviting Head Start and community preschool parents to Parent Academy workshops and courses
- Attending Head Start and community preschool family events when appropriate
- Coordinating recruitment efforts for Head Start, family literacy, Child Outreach and Parents as Teachers
- Offering weekly early childhood family literacy groups for Title 1, Head Start, English Learners and Parents as Teachers families.
- Providing childcare for parent and family engagement education workshops and district adult education classes
- Conducting developmental screenings for community children ages birth through kindergarten entry and sharing screening results and strategies with parents as appropriate
- Providing monthly family literacy home visits to participating families (prenatal – k entry)