

Jamestown Public Schools

Family and Community Engagement Plan

General Overview

Jamestown Public Schools considers family engagement to be a high priority component of school, District and community work, and aims to progress beyond random, and/or compliance-driven parent involvement opportunities to student-centered family engagement, which trains our collective, common focus on students' learning and performance needs, and the implications for improvement in student achievement over the long term. Jamestown Public Schools embraces a shared responsibility, in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to communicate, collaborate and engage families in meaningful ways, and in which families and the community are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development. The Jamestown Public Schools Family and Community Engagement Plan prioritizes ways in which stakeholders will work together to advance student achievement, and has been developed in collaboration with dedicated parents and community members. This Plan reflects those collective priorities we enfold locally, as a community, and which were identified, drafted and adopted collaboratively to form the Jamestown Public Schools Strategic Plan. It has also been developed with consideration for updates within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provided by The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement, and with appreciation and consideration for the U.S. Department of Education publication, Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships.

Mission and Vision

The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan is constructed around four overarching goals: Academic Excellence, Whole Child Development, Family and Community Engagement, and Support & Metrics. Our Mission and Vision asserts, *"We are committed to provide our students high-quality, 21st Century learning experiences within and beyond our classrooms so that our graduates are prepared to excel in college, career, and life. We see every child learning every day!"*

GOALS

1. Jamestown Public Schools will involve parents and community members in the joint development of its District wide Family and Community Engagement Plan in these ways:

~ Members of the original Family and Community Engagement Strategic Plan Committee have continued to serve during this next project phase, meeting regularly to craft the District's Family and Community Engagement Plan.

~ Jamestown Public Schools families were invited to respond to Harvard University Graduate School of Education parent surveys, and parents' and community members' comments were solicited in the District Communications survey, administered during spring, 2015, and winter, 2016, respectively. Their responses were taken into careful consideration by the committee, and have been reflected in the Plan.

2. Jamestown Public Schools will meaningfully involve parents and community in the process of school review and improvement in these ways:

~ Particular attention will be focused on populating each school's Shared Decision Making (SDM) Team with no fewer than three parent representatives, and schools will be encouraged to invite community stakeholders' participation on their Shared Decision Making Teams. According to the policy set by the Jamestown Public School District's Board of Education, Shared Decision Making Teams must focus on improving student performance and meeting the targets set in the School Improvement/Comprehensive Education Plan in accordance with the District's performance benchmarks.

~ The District has engaged the services of educational consultant, Greg Speranza, of MindStream Consulting, Inc to provide professional development in growing capacity among building-level, and District-level Shared Decision Making Teams.

3. Jamestown Public Schools will provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance and other, varied resources to assist schools in planning and implementing family and community engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance in these ways:

~ The Director of Schools, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and the Director of Pupil Services share the responsibilities for the coordination and dedication of financial and other, varied resources to support family and community engagement planning and implementation throughout the District. Additional Central Administration support staff shall include the Communications Coordinator, the Coordinator of Information Services, and the Coordinator of Extended Learning & Family and Community Engagement.

~ Building administrators, guided by Tenet 6 of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness, and, accordingly, by each building's School Comprehensive Education Plan, will, through a variety of actions, intensify their efforts to "create a culture of partnership where families, community members and school staff work

together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social emotional well-being.”

~ The District will provide professional development for administrators, staff, families and community members to understand and address strategies for increased family engagement.

~ The District will provide professional development for Shared Decision Making Teams and PTAs to increase parent representation and involvement in school improvement efforts.

~ Schools will sponsor regular Parent Information/Family Engagement opportunities for purposeful, strategic, and authentic dialogue and data sharing about school achievement, development and improvement, in order to collectively understand and support academic progress.

~ The District will use a common survey instrument to assess participation and impact of school family engagement events.

~ The District and school staff will regularly communicate with and solicit feedback from families and community stakeholders regarding student achievement needs, issues and concerns, using multiple, interactive communication paths, such as, Face Book, Twitter, Blackboard Connect, District web sites/Classroom web pages, Parent Portal, and a District mobile application, in pertinent languages so that student achievement is increased.

4. Jamestown Public Schools will coordinate and integrate family and community engagement strategies between the District and its community partnering organizations, and among District and community programs including, but not limited to: Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Parents As Teachers, Partners for Children, Jamestown After School, the Jamestown High School Academies, Chautauqua Striders Tutoring, Mentoring and Outreach, School Linkages, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and After School Amigos in these ways:

~ Jamestown Public Schools will convene (and/or be represented at) regular Community Partner meetings between and among schools, the District, and partnering organizations to share best practices, to intentionally collaborate and coordinate family and community engagement strategies and opportunities for collective impact, to provide materials, resources and supportive services in pertinent languages, to create vehicles to support and sustain families as equal partners in the education of our students, and to build shared capacity to support student learning.

~ Parents and community members have been, and will continue to be, included in relevant, appropriate District staff professional development, such as PBIS, Trauma-Informed Schools, Understanding the Culture of Poverty, Bridges Out of Poverty, Reggie Dabbs’, “The Power of Positive Choices,” and the upcoming (June, 2016) Karen Mapp (Harvard Graduate School of Education) training, entitled, “Redesigning Family

Engagement,” as well as a fall, 2016 Family and Community Engagement training to be conducted by Byron Garrett, Chairman of the National Family Engagement Alliance.

~ Jamestown Public Schools will maintain ongoing communication, collaboration, and efficient, effective cross referral systems with community partnering organizations and community-based Universal Pre-Kindergarten providers, and will ensure professional development opportunities for same.

~ Jamestown Public Schools and its community partners will pursue opportunities with the New York State Family Resource Center Network to establish a local Family Resource Center that is easily accessible, strength-based, family-focused, flexible, culturally sensitive, and supportive of the Jamestown Community.

5. Jamestown Public Schools will conduct, with the involvement of parents and community members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of its Family and Community Engagement Plan. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation in family and community engagement activities, strategies for more effective family and community engagement, and any revisions, if necessary, to the Plan, in these ways:

~ Each spring, an annual review of the Family and Community Engagement Plan will be conducted by the Family and Community Engagement Committee, which will also serve as the District Family and Community Engagement Advisory Board, representing stakeholders in developing and evaluating the policy. The committee shall consist of no fewer than 7 members, and shall be represented by Jamestown Public Schools administration, school staff, parents, and community partners.

~ Family and community feedback will be solicited via PTA meetings, face-to-face interviews, surveys (available in pertinent languages and made accessible, both electronically and in hard copy) and, if indicated and appropriate, during regularly occurring community partner organization home visits and/or by enlisting the help of community partner outreach specialists.

6. Jamestown Public Schools will build capacity for effective family and community engagement to support partnerships among schools, parents and community members to improve student academic achievement in these ways:

~ The District will use multiple points of access to ensure a wide range of learning opportunities for families and community members to elevate their understanding of student and school data, and to link and engage families with schools and the community to support learning.

~ In addition to the traditional, annual Open House and Back-to-School Nights, all schools will increase the quantity and quality of Family Information/Family Engagement experiences, such as Family Math, STEM, or Literacy Nights; Common Core Standards, Modules, and Resources for Parents; Using Data to Understand NWEA Assessments Measures of Academic Progress (MAP); How to Monitor Your Child’s Progress; How to

Understand and Interpret Student Report Cards; How to Support Student Learning at Home; How to Prevent Summer Learning Loss.

~ Jamestown City Council PTA meetings will be forums for giving, receiving, and discussing information on high-interest topics such as The Common Core Learning Standards, Math and ELA Assessments, and other areas as identified by the group, both at building level and District level.

~ Parent/Teacher Conference times have been made more flexible to accommodate families' schedules, however, the planning Committee cites current research indicating the exponential benefit of moving beyond the traditional parent-teacher conference, and therefore recommends that the District explore and pilot the evidence-based Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APPT) model, developed by Maria Paredes. WestEd reports, *"To be truly engaged in their child's education, parents have to know what's happening in the classroom and know exactly what they can do at home to support learning. Building on over four decades of research indicating that family engagement is one of the strongest predictors of students' academic success, APPT takes a more focused and academically oriented approach than most traditional school-family participation events. Over the course of the school year, the APPT model features three 75-minute team conferences that include the teacher and the parents of all the students in the class, along with one 30-minute individual session between the teacher and each student and their parents. APPT gives families concrete information on their children's academic progress and provides them with skills, strategies, and resources to use at home with their children to reinforce targeted grade-level learning goals."*

~ The Jamestown Community Learning Council, in partnership with the District, provides the research-based Parents As Teachers Child Development and Family Support Program, as well as the Project EASE (Educational Advocacy and Scholastic Enrichment) Program at all District elementary schools, which incorporate child development knowledge with family learning packets (that complement classroom learning and are aligned to The Common Core) during monthly home visits conducted by trained Family Educators, and which also invite parents into schools to observe classroom learning and engage in group discussion.

7. Jamestown Public Schools will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster family and community engagement, in these ways:

~ The District, in partnership with community outreach specialists, will make materials, training, and support services available and accessible by translating resource materials, District, school, classroom and Family Information/Engagement event information into pertinent languages.

~ Interactive take-home activities and resource materials (such as New York City Department of Education Parent Roadmaps and National PTA Kindergarten – Grade 12 Parent Guides to The Common Core) will be provided during Family Information/Engagement events, as well as creating awareness for and facilitating use of

online curriculum resources, such as module tip sheets and homework helpers, found on EngageNY and Eureka Math websites.

~ The District, in partnership with community-based organizations, will, when practicable and feasible, provide childcare for younger siblings during grade-level Family Information sessions.

~ The District will collaborate with community partners who provide home visits, acculturation, outreach, tutoring, mentoring, mental/emotional/physical health, life skills, family education and support services, to maximize the access to, and effectiveness of, the cross referral systems and supports available throughout the community.

~ The District, in partnership with trusted community organizations, will pilot (with the intention of broad community expansion) a research-based Scholastic summer reading intervention program during the summer of 2016, which will incorporate family engagement opportunities, designed to galvanize parents as equal partners in preventing summer learning loss and narrowing achievement gaps.

8. Jamestown Public Schools will educate its teachers, principals and other staff (including its front office personnel, who are the gatekeepers to a welcoming school environment) 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 family and community engagement programs and build ties between parents and schools, and will uphold the ideology of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships, which states, “ *Educators must be trained to integrate family engagement into their instructional practice, and must think of families as true partners in the enterprise of teaching and learning – co-producers and co-creators of effective school systems that serve all children.*”

~ Jamestown Public Schools will provide professional development for all school staff on how to create and ensure a welcoming school environment, how to actively seek and cultivate trusting and respectful relationships with diverse families and community stakeholders, and how to actively strive for and sustain healthy partnerships with families and community organizations that are linked to student needs.

~ Jamestown Public Schools will collaborate with community partners to participate in Lunch and Learn-type book studies that inform our collective work with families and promote shared understanding and meaningful school-family partnerships. During the 2015-2016 school year, members of the District Leadership Team investigated the imperative within Eric Jensen’s book, Engaging Students With Poverty in Mind, which propelled book studies in several schools, using Jensen’s research to understand that engagement is the key factor in the academic success of economically disadvantaged students.

~ Jamestown Public Schools and its partnering organizations will strive to increase the number of bilingual staff, and the District will maintain, and/or increase the number of bilingual staff in the recently-established Office of Central Registration.

~ Jamestown Public Schools will seek out and engage renown practitioners to deliver family and community engagement training, such as Harvard Graduate School of Education Karen Mapp's "Redesigning Family Engagement" training, which will be provided to staff, community partners, and parents during the summer of 2016. A subsequent Family Engagement training, conducted by Byron Garrett, Chairman of the National Family Engagement Alliance, is slated for fall, 2016.