The ILTexas Pre-K Program believes that the education of all students should be a partnership between the school and the parent community. Using Frog Street, founded by Texas educators and with 30 years of experience serving Texas early childhood programs, this partner understands the needs of ITexas teachers and administrators. ILTexas has partnered with Frog Street for our Pre-K needs to provide a comprehensive continuum of research-based curriculum both in English and Spanish. Our curriculum is joyful, well-organized and intentional, empowering educators to meet the diverse needs of our youngest Eagles!

ILTexas Family Engagement for Pre-K Families

1. Facilitate family to family support

The ILTexas Pre-K Program will create safe and respectful environments where families can learn from each other as individuals and in groups, invite former participants (including families and community volunteers) to share education and career experiences with current families, and ensure opportunities for continuous participation in events designed for families by families such as training on family leadership.

Strategies Include:

- Expanding our Pre-K Program
- Parent engagement activities / Campus Family Nights

2. Establish a network of community resources

The ILTexas Pre-K Program will build strategic partnerships, utilize community resources, monitor and evaluate policies and practices to stimulate innovation and create learning pathways; establish and maintain partnerships with businesses, faith-based organizations, and community agencies; identify support from various agencies, including mental and physical health providers; partner with local community-based organizations to create a family-friendly transition plan for students arriving from early childhood settings; provide and facilitate referrals to family support or educational groups based on family interests and needs; communicate short- and long-term program goals to all stakeholders; and identify partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language to our multilingual families.

Strategies Include:

- PTO
- Community partnerships

3. Increase family participation in decision making using strategies

The ILTexas Pre-K program, in collaboration with early childhood families, will develop and support, via our district improvement plan committee, develop, adopt, and implement identified goals within the annual campus/school improvement plan targeting family engagement; develop and support leadership skills for family members and providing opportunities for families to advocate for their children/families; collaborate with families to develop strategies to solve problems and serve as problem solvers; engage families in shaping program activities and cultivating the expectation that information must flow in both directions to reflect two-way communication; develop, in collaboration with families, clearly defined goals, outcomes, timelines, and strategies for assessing progress; provide each family with an opportunity to review and provide input on program practices, policies, communications, and events in order to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of families; and use appropriate tools such as surveys or focus groups to gather family feedback on the family engagement plan.

Strategies Include:

- Establish a Parent Advisory Council for feedback (as part of DIP)
- Provide feedback opportunity through a surveys at least annually
- Engage our families in Coffee w/ Principal
- Opportunities for families to serve as advocates and leaders on various campus and district committees and groups to further learning

4. Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning

ILTexas Pre-K Program will provide family engagement opportunities that support parenting skills and activities that support ongoing achievement through educational resources to support learning at home while strengthening the family/school partnership; provide families with information and/or training on creating a home learning environment connected to formal learning opportunities; equip families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offering opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the prekindergarten school year; provide complementary home learning activities for families to engage in at home with children through information presented in newsletters, online technology, social media, parent/family-teacher conferences, or other school- or center-related events; provide families with information, best practices, and training related to age-appropriate developmental expectations; emphasize benefits of positive family practices such as attachment and nurturing that complement the stages of children's development; collaborate with families to appropriately respond to children's behavior in a non-punitive, positive, and supportive way; encourage families to reflect on family experiences and practices in helping children; and assist families to implement best practices that will help achieve the goals and objectives identified to meet the needs of the child and family

Strategies Include:

- Approach parents as equal partners in their child's education while emphasizing parents as the child's first teacher
- Parent Teacher Conferences

5. Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks

The ILTexas Pre-K Program will provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, including training on communicating with families in crisis; promote and develop family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff; and develop staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies.

Strategies Include:

- Ongoing professional development for all early childhood staff in the area(s) of cultural responsiveness and how to connect with families
- Gain an understanding of early intervention services to support family inquiries and needs

6. Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement

The ILTexas Pre-K program will continuously gather academic and developmental inputs to to identify strengths, interests, and needs; develop data collection systems to monitor family engagement and focusing on engagement of families from specific populations to narrow the achievement gap; use data to ensure alignment between family engagement activities and district/school teaching and learning goals and to promote continuous family engagement; ensure an evaluation plan is an initial component that guides action; use a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment; and ensure teachers play a role in the family engagement evaluation process

Strategies Include:

- Early Childhood Parent Engagement Specialist will conduct goal-oriented home visits open to all Prekindergarten families
- Data collected through parental engagement opportunities
- Participation data will be collected at family engagement events
- Quarterly updates will provide parents an opportunity to provide feedback in a cyclical process
- Ensure that parents' voices are heard and acknowledged during the improvement cycle