Board of Education

5 Minortown Road ~ Woodbury, CT 06798
www.ctreg14.org

Mission: The mission of Connecticut Region 14 Schools is to educate all students to their highest level of academic potential and to teach them the skills and knowledge to become capable, creative, collaborative lifelong learners and responsible members of the world community.

Board of Education Goals:
Academic Performance - The district will strive to improve academic performance for all students on multiple assessment indicators and the staff will be committed to continuous improvement.
Communication - Region 14 will develop partnerships with all stakeholders in the school community to highlight the exemplary programs the district offers
Safety - Region 14 will provide safe and secure facilities equipped with technology, enabling a 21st century learning environment that supports the values of the district
Budget - Region 14 will prepare a budget that meets the needs of every student and communicates the needs and priorities of Region 14 in a clear and concise manner.

A G E N D A

Special Meeting
Board of Education –Policy Committee
Monday, January 13, 2025; 5:00 p.m.
Mitchell Elementary School
Flanders Room

I. Call to Order

II. Policy (Action Anticipated)
   A. Policy 6148 FAFSA Completion Program
   B. Policy 6172.4 Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students

III. Adjournment

Instruction

FAFSA Completion Program

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes that college, for many students, continues to be an important pathway that helps to provide students with the necessary skills for work and for lifelong learning. In addition, research has indicated the students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are more likely to attend college with financial aid.

Beginning with classes graduating in 2027, graduating students must have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), completed and submitted to a public institution of higher education an application for institutional financial aid for students without legal immigration status, or completed a waiver, on a form prescribed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) signed by the student's parent/legal guardian or by the student if 18 years of age or older.

A principal, school counselor, teacher, or other certified educator may complete the waiver on behalf of any student if the certified educator affirms that they have made a good faith effort to contact the parent/legal guardian or student about the completion of the application.

Through this policy, the Board sets a goal of ensuring 100% compliance for the FAFSA completion rates among grade 12 students or students in District adult education programs. This goal aims to ensure District efforts to improve postsecondary enrollment and student outcomes and to make it easier for students to attend postsecondary education.

The Board directs the administration to develop plans to initiate new strategies for 100% yearly student FAFSA completion rates. To implement this policy the Board may accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations.

Strategies

The Board believes this goal of 100% FAFSA completion rates can be attained utilizing, but not limited to, the following strategies/considerations:

1. Design FAFSA completion initiatives according to target population's needs.
2. Establish and maintain strong partnerships with as many stakeholders as possible, with multiple organizations to assist.
3. Incorporate financial aid training into the existing curriculum.
4. Provide individualized meeting between students and staff.
5. Collect and monitor appropriate data to identify which students are not completing applications and target extra support to them.

Instruction

FAFSA Completion Program

Strategies (continued)

6. Build trusting relationships with parents and the community in order to ensure students and their families feel comfortable in filling out the forms.
7. Design systems, tools and events focusing on students who might otherwise not complete an application.
8. Provide a network of resources to support school counselors and teachers.
9. Raise awareness about FAFSA, prior to senior year.
10. Provide sufficient and easily accessible resources on district/school websites.
11. Offer school-day and evening support for students and their parents/guardians.
12. Create a FAFSA student/parent portal pertaining to FAFSA.
13. Provide assistance through existing programs and forums, such as advisor periods, college and career planning seminars, parent meetings etc.
14. Stress financial aid is for technical, two and four year schools.
15. Build a school- or campus-based FAFSA team to review data monthly and discuss and implement strategies to reach students.
16. Partner with local postsecondary institutions.

As required, the Board will publish and make available on the District website the annual FAFSA student completion rate for the graduating class of each high school within the District.

(cf. 6146 – Graduation Requirements)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

Public Act 21-199 An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development, Sect. 6, 7, 8.

Public Act 23-204 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor, And Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget §319-320

Public Act 24-45 An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief, School Discipline and Disconnected Youth §9

Policy adopted:

Instruction

Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students

The Board of Education (Board) endorses the parent involvement goals of Title I and encourages the regular participation by parents and family members of Title I eligible children in all aspects of the program. The education of children is viewed as a cooperative effort among the parents, school and community. In this policy, the word "parent" also includes guardians and other family members involved in supervising the child's schooling. Therefore, complying with Section 1010 of The Every Student Succeeds Act, P.L. 114-95, the Board will provide parents and family members of students participating in District Title I programs meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children within these programs.

Pursuant to federal law, the District will develop jointly with, agree on with and distribute to parents and family members of children participating in the Title I program a written parent and family engagement policy. This policy shall be distributed in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. In addition, this policy shall be made available to the public and updated periodically, as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the parent and family engagement portion of ESSA (Section 1010).

At the required annual meeting of Title I parents, parents will have opportunities to participate in the design, development, operation and evaluation of the program for the next school year. Proposed activities shall be presented to fulfill the requirements necessary to address the requirements of parental and family engagement.

In addition to the required annual meeting, at least three additional meetings shall be held, at various times of the day and/or evenings, for parents of children participating in the Title I program. These meetings shall be used to provide parents with: (note: The ESSA speaks to offering a flexible number of meetings)

1. The ability to be involved in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review and improvement of Title I programs;
2. The opportunity to be involved in an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving in those schools receiving Title I funds the academic quality; (Evidence-based strategies shall be used by the Board, based on this evaluation, by design more effective parental involvement)
3. Information about programs provided under Title I;
4. A description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;
5. Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children; and

Instruction

Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students (continued)

6. The opportunity to bring parent comments, if they are dissatisfied with the school's Title I program, to the district level.

Title I funding, if sufficient, may be used to facilitate parent attendance at meetings through payment of transportation and childcare costs.

The parents of children identified to participate in Title I programs shall receive from the school Principal and Title I staff an explanation of the reasons supporting each child's selection for the program, a set of objectives to be addressed, and a description of the services to be provided. Opportunities will be provided for the parents to meet with the classroom and Title I teachers to discuss their child's progress. Parents will also receive guidance as to how they can assist in the education of their children at home.

The required annual evaluation of the District's Title I program shall include identifying:

1. Barriers to greater participation by parents in program activities, with particular attention given to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
2. The needs of parent and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
3. Strategies which can support successful school and family interaction.

Each school in the District receiving Title I funds and involved in Title I programs shall jointly develop with parents of children served in the program a "School-Parent Compact" outlining the manner in which parents, school staff and students share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement in meeting State standards.

The "School-Parent Compact" shall:

1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment enabling children in the Title I program to meet the State's challenging academic achievement standards;
2. Indicate the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, monitoring television watching, volunteering in the classroom, and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related to their child's education and positive use of extra-curricular time; and
3. Address the importance of parent-teacher communication on an on-going basis, with at a minimum, parent-teacher conferences, frequent reports to parents, and reasonable access to staff.

Instruction

Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Students (continued)

4. Ensure regular, two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and to the extent practicable, in a language understandable to family members.

Information about parental involvement and actions taken to improve parental involvement shall be included, as required, in the strategic school profile submitted annually by the Superintendent to the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education. Such actions to improve parental involvement may include methods used to engage parents in the planning and improvement of school programs and to increase support to parent's efforts at home to assist their children on learning activities.

This policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed upon by, parents and family members of children participating in District Title I programs.

(cf. 1110.1 – Parent Involvement)
(cf. 6161.3 – Comparability of Services)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-220(c) Duties of boards of education

Improving America's Schools Act, P.L. No. 103-382, Sec. 1112 Local Education Agency Plans.

20 U.S.C. §6318, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act, P.L. 114-95 §1010 (2015)

20 U.S.C. §7801 - Definitions

Policy adopted: