



Marion P. Thomas Charter School Policy Manual
Newark, New Jersey

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Other Reasons

Policy

Marion P. Thomas Charter School Title I District-School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Part I. District Expectations

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Marion P. Thomas Charter School (“the District”) provides for the proper execution and implementation of programming and procedures of the Title I, Part A, (“Title I”) federal aid grant. Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESEA”), provides financial assistance to local educational agencies for children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Such programs, activities, and procedures are to be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children (“parents”).

Each district must establish the district’s expectations for parent and family engagement. *[Section 1116(a)(2), ESEA]*

Marion P. Thomas Charter School (MPTCS) agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- MPTCS will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in all its schools with Title I, Part A programs.
- These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

Marion P. Thomas Charter School (MPTCS) will work with its schools (High School, PAC Academy, and STEAM Academy) to ensure the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the Title I, Part A requirements, and include, as a component, a school-parent compact.

Marion P. Thomas Charter School will incorporate this district wide parent and family engagement policy into its district plan.

- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, MPTCS and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents of children with limited English proficiency, parents of children with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and,

including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.

- If MPTCS's plan for Title I, Part A funds is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, MPTCS will submit any parent comments with the plan upon request by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).
- MPTCS will involve the parents of children served in Title I schools in decisions about how the one percent of Title I, Part A 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. (Only applicable for districts with Title I, Part A allocations greater than \$500,000.)
- MPTCS 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:
 - Parent and family engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—

(A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;

(B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;

(C) that parents 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; and

(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1116 of the ESEA.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Title I Coordinator.

The Title I Coordinator ("the Coordinator") is the MPTCS' Title I designee, and is to be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Coordinator is to execute all programs and activities as outlined in this policy and as required by Title I. The Coordinator is to monitor and administer the operation of the Title I programs according to federal and state guidelines. The Coordinator is to put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents at each school. These programs, activities, and procedures will be jointly planned and operated with meaningful consultation from parents. The Coordinator oversees the development of Title I programs and activities and monitors the budgets in accordance with established federal and state policies.

The Coordinator reviews each school's plan, timeline, documentation, and budget, and responds to inquiries about the Title I program and related programs that support the activities prescribed by ESEA. The Coordinator oversees and directs the Title I grant application and approval process for funds, the allocation of Title I funds to each school, works with school administration, teachers, parents and the community to design, implement, and evaluate Title I programs and plans. The Coordinator monitors the effectiveness of the Title I program, ensuring adherence to federal and state policies. The Coordinator is to manage and coordinate the Title I committee meetings at each school.

Chief School Administrator

The Chief School Administrator ("the CSA") serves as the chief administrator of Title I and to ensure additional policies as it relates to the execution of Title I are created and promulgated throughout the MPTCS District. In the absence of a Coordinator, the CSA is to assume the duties and responsibilities of Title I Coordinator as outlined herein. The CSA is to audit all activities carried out under Title I and ensure compliance with federal and state guidelines and this policy.

School Business Administrator

The School Business Administrator (“the SBA”) is to assist the Coordinator and/or the CSA in fulfilling the fiduciary obligations of Title I and ensuring financial compliance. All purchases using Title I funding must be approved by the Coordinator and the SBA. The SBA is to audit Title I financial records to ensure compliance with federal and state guidelines. Any and all discrepancies must be reported to the CSA and Coordinator immediately upon discovery

Part II. District/School Parent and Family Engagement Policy Required Components

1. **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of its district/school parent and family engagement plan;
 - Hold monthly school-based parent meetings (both in-person and virtual)
 - Hold monthly Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) Meetings (both in-person and virtual)
 - Hold quarterly Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) meetings (both in-person and virtual)
 - Title I Parent Meetings (both in-person and virtual)

2. **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part, and to explain the requirements of this part and the right of the parents to be involved;
 - Parents will be informed of this annual meeting through a multitude of avenues including email and via a flyer which will be distributed via our RealTime System, ClassDojo, and a Robocall will also be leveraged to inform parents of the meeting. The meetings will be held virtually via Zoom, as this has garnered the most parent participation and will be hosted typically the first week in October.
 - a. *For the 2025-2026 school year, the Annual Title I Parent Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 14th at 7:00 p.m.*

3. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parent and family engagement;
 - b. *Parent meetings are held in the mornings, afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays. We also hold meetings both in-person and virtually. A Parent University catalog is shared with families prior to the start of each month so parents are able to plan ahead and decide which events they are able and interested in attending.*

4. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;

5. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will build the schools' and parents' capacity for

strong parent and family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

- A. MPTCS will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:
 - a. The challenging, State academic standards;
 - b. The state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments; c. The requirements of Title I, Part A;
 - d. How to monitor their child's progress, and
 - e. How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.

Marion P. Thomas Charter School offers a variety of parent and family events, workshops, conferences, and classes. We survey families several times a year to determine the interest and need. Families receive a monthly catalog which details the offerings available each month. There is an incentive program in order to increase parent engagement. Families can earn rewards based on the number of events they participate in.

- Parent University Catalogs

Additionally, the schools' and district's monthly calendars are posted on the district website.

6. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will provide parents of participating children, if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practically possible.
 - a. MPTCS will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parent and family engagement.
 - b. MPTCS will, with the assistance of its Title I schools and parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, other school leaders, and other staff, 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 reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools.
 - c. MPTCS will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with Head Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other 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.
 - d. MPTCS 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, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

7. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies under Title I with parent and family engagement strategies.
8. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents, 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 in parent and family engagement activities (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). The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parent and family engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parent and family engagement, and to revise if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parent and family engagement policies.
 - Families are provided with surveys in order to provide their feedback on Title I offerings, as well as their overall experiences with MPTCS.
9. The **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** will take the several actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement;
10. If the Annual School Plan (schoolwide program plan) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the parents may submit any parent comments on the Annual School Plan (ASP) when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

Part III. Shared Responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement

As a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy, each school shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement.

Part IV. Discretionary District/School Parent and Family Engagement Policy Components

Marion P. Thomas Charter School's Parent and Family Engagement Policy may include additional paragraphs listing and describing other discretionary activities that the school district, in consultation with its parents, chooses to undertake to build parents' capacity for involvement in the school and school system to support their children's academic achievement, such as the following discretionary activities:

- Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training.
- Provide necessary literacy training for parents from Title I, Part A funds received, if the school district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training.
- Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent and family engagement activities, including transportation and childcare costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.
- Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.
- In order to maximize parent and family engagement and participation in their children's education, arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school.
- Adopt and implement model approaches to improve parent and family engagement;

- Establish a districtwide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parent and family engagement in Title I, Part A programs.
- Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities.
- Provide other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities under this section as parents may request.

Part V. Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements of this part, districts and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents of children with limited English proficiency, parents of children with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents can understand.

Part VI. Adoption

This District/School Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by meeting minutes.

This policy was adopted by the **Marion P. Thomas Charter School district** on February 28, 2024 and will be in effect for the period of **2025-2026**. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I children on or before March 13, 2024.

Signature of District Authorized Representative

Date