

Bench Elementary Elementary Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Plan and Procedures 2025-26

Bench Elementary is committed to the goal of providing quality education for every child in this district. To this end, we want to establish partnerships with parents and with the community. Everyone gains if Bench Elementary and home work together to promote high achievement by our children. Neither home nor Bench Elementary can do the job alone. Parents play an extremely important role as children's first teachers. Support for their children and for the school is critical to children's success at every step along the way.

Bench recognizes that some students may need the extra assistance available through the Title I program to reach the state's high academic standards. Bench intends to include parents in all aspects of the school's Title I program. The goal is a school-home partnership that will help all students to succeed.

PART I-SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY/PLAN REQUIRED COMPONENTS

- A. Bench Elementary will jointly develop/revise with parents the school Parent and Family Engagement policy/procedures and distribute it to parents of participating children and make available the Parent and Family Engagement policy/procedures to the local community.

Form a Planning Committee

- Include school leadership, teachers, paraprofessionals, Title I staff, parents (especially those representing at-risk students), and community stakeholders.

Collect Family Input

- Use surveys, focus groups, and PTA meetings.
- Share assessment data (FastBridge, ECRI, Seeing Stars, Phonics for Reading) to guide priorities.

Draft the Policy

- Create a School-Parent Compact outlining shared responsibilities.
- Include strategies for family involvement in academics, enrichment, and social-emotional learning.
- Specify communication methods and parent access to student progress.

Review and Revise with Families

- Present the draft to families and stakeholders for feedback.
- Revise policy to address feedback and meet ESSA requirements.

Distribute to Parents

- Provide copies in registration packets, handbooks, and Title I materials.
- Translate into Spanish, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, and other formats as needed.

Make Available to the Community

- Post on the school and district websites.
- Share in school offices and local community centers.

- Announce availability through newsletters, emails, and meetings.

Annual Review and Update

- Review policy with families and stakeholders each spring.
- Update engagement strategies and School-Parent Compact based on feedback and student outcomes.

B. 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.

Before the **Annual Open House**, a **slide show presentation** was delivered specifically for Bench families. The presentation included:

- Explained Title I, Part A participation in clear, parent-friendly language.
- Shared the **Bench Elementary Parent and Family Engagement Policy** in a format accessible to all families.
- Highlighted ways parents can engage in their child's learning, support school initiatives, and participate in decision-making.
- Share information about how title funding is used to improve reading and math achievement, how progress is measured, FastBridge data and curricular resources

C. Offer flexible meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services related to Parent and Family Engagement. Bench recognizes that families have diverse schedules and needs, so the school offers **flexible meeting options** to ensure all parents can participate in Title I, Part A activities and decision-making.

How flexibility is provided:

- Meeting Times: Events and meetings, including Parent Advisory Council sessions, family workshops, and progress conferences, are offered both in the morning and in the evening to accommodate working parents and guardians.
- Transportation: When needed, Title I funds are used to provide transportation support so parents can attend meetings and school events.
Child Care: On-site child care is available during meetings to allow parents to focus on engagement activities.
- Home Visits: Home visits are conducted for families who cannot attend school-based meetings, ensuring every parent has the opportunity to be informed and involved.
- Communication: Meeting schedules and resources are communicated via newsletters, emails, phone calls, and the school website, with translations available as needed.

These flexible options ensure that all parents, including those of at-risk students, can participate meaningfully in their child's education and the development of school initiatives.

D. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school plan under Section 1112, schoolwide under Section 1114, and the process of the school review and improvement under Section 1116.

Parent Involvement in School Planning and Improvement – Bench Elementary

At Bench Elementary, parents are actively involved in an **organized, ongoing, and timely way** in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's programs, including:

- Title I, Section 1112 School Plans: Parents provide input on goals, strategies, and resource allocation to support all students, particularly those at risk of not meeting challenging state standards.
- Schoolwide Programs, Section 1114: Parents collaborate with staff to help develop, monitor, and revise the Title I Schoolwide Plan, including strategies for instruction, interventions, and extended learning opportunities.
- School Review and Improvement, Section 1116: Parents participate in annual reviews and feedback sessions to evaluate the effectiveness of family engagement strategies and school initiatives, ensuring continuous improvement.
- How parents are involved:
 - Participation in the PTA and focus groups.
 - Review of assessment and school performance data during meetings and workshops.
 - Opportunities to provide feedback through surveys, emails, and informal meetings.
 - Collaboration with school staff to refine strategies that enhance student learning and engagement.

Through these structured, ongoing opportunities, Ponderosa ensures that parent voices are integral to decision-making, helping improve school programs and student outcomes.

E. Provide parents of participating children—

1. Timely information about programs under this part.
2. A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
3. 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.

1. Provide Timely Information About Programs

- Send monthly newsletters describing Title I, Part A programs and schoolwide initiatives. Post updates on the school website and BPS Title I webpage.
- Use ParentSquare, social media, email, and phone calls to inform parents about upcoming programs, workshops, and events.

2. Explain Curriculum, Assessments, and Proficiency Levels

- Share information about the curriculum used in reading (ECRI, Read Naturally Live, Seeing Stars, Sound Partners, Phonics for Reading) and math (Eureka Math², ST Math).
- Explain assessment tools and purposes:
 - FastBridge (universal screener for K–5)
- Seeing Stars, ECRI 3, Phonics for Reading placement tests (secondary/diagnostic assessments)
- Classroom formative assessments and benchmark tests
- Provide clear proficiency expectations and how they align with Montana's challenging state standards.
- Present this information through slide shows, parent workshops, and the Annual Open House.

3. Provide Opportunities for Parent Input and Response

- Offer regular meetings for parents to give suggestions and participate in decisions:
- PTA meetings
- Title I workshops and family nights
- Individual conferences with teachers or instructional staff
- Respond to parent suggestions promptly, through phone, email, or meetings, and incorporate feedback into school improvement and Title I plans when feasible.
- Conduct annual surveys to gather feedback on programs, curriculum, and engagement strategies.

4. Additional Supports to Facilitate Participation

- Provide flexible meeting times (morning and evening).
- Offer transportation, child care, or home visits (w/ assistance of AWARE) for parents who need extra support.
- Translate all communications into Spanish, Crow, and Northern Cheyenne as needed.

F. If schoolwide program plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the district.

Actions:

1. Invite Parent Feedback

- During the Annual Open House, PTA, meetings, and family workshops, share the draft Title I Schoolwide Plan.
Encourage parents to review and provide written or verbal feedback on the plan.

2. Document Parent Comments

- Record all comments, questions, or concerns from parents regarding the plan.
- Maintain a central log for transparency and accountability.

3. Respond to Parent Concerns

- Review each comment with school leadership and instructional staff.
- Provide timely responses to parents explaining how their feedback was considered or addressed.

4. Submit Comments to the District

- Include any unsatisfied parent comments when the finalized schoolwide plan is submitted to the Billings Public Schools (BPS) district office.
- Ensure all feedback is clearly labeled and attached to the official plan submission.

5. Continuous Improvement

- Use parent feedback to inform future revisions of the plan.
- Share updates with parents about changes or adjustments made based on their comments.

PART II-REQUIRED 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.

-Conduct a parent/teacher conference in elementary schools, annually (at a minimum), during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement.

-Provide frequent reports to parents on their child's progress.

-Provide parents with reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class and observation of classroom activities.

- Ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

(List actions)

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR PARENTS AND STAFF – REQUIREMENTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, **each school and district must:**

- 1) Assist parents in understanding the challenging State academic standards, how to monitor a child's progress, and work with educators.

Actions:

1. Provide **workshops and family nights** explaining state academic standards and grade-level expectations.
2. Share **assessment results** (FastBridge, ECRI, Seeing Stars, Phonics for Reading) and explain what they mean.
3. Offer **conferences and meetings** to show parents how to monitor progress and support learning at home.
4. Communicate **strategies and resources** for parents to collaborate with teachers in supporting their child's education.

- 2) Provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy).

Actions:

1. Offer **literacy workshops** and take-home activities for parents to support reading and writing at home.
2. Provide **technology training** to help parents use educational programs like FastBridge, ST Math, and Read Naturally Live.
3. Share guidance on **responsible technology use**, including understanding copyright and avoiding piracy.
4. Distribute **printed and digital resources** in multiple languages for home support.

3) Provide professional development to teachers, specialized instructional personnel, and other staff on the value of parent and their communities to increase academic achievement.

Actions:

1. Conduct **training sessions** for teachers and staff on effective family engagement strategies.
2. Share research and practices showing the **impact of parent/community involvement on student achievement**.
3. Provide **ongoing coaching and PLC support** to help staff implement engagement strategies.
4. Include **specialized instructional personnel** in workshops to support at-risk students and diverse families.

4) Coordinate and integrate parent engagement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parent engagement.

Actions:

1. Align Title I parent engagement activities with **other Federal, State, and local programs**, including public preschool initiatives.
2. Host **parent resource events** and workshops to support family involvement.
3. Collaborate with **community agencies** and organizations to provide additional engagement opportunities.
4. Share **information and resources** from all programs in a unified, accessible way for parents.

5) Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. (List actions)

Send **newsletters, emails, and reminders** about programs, meetings, and activities.

Post information on the **school and district websites**.

Provide **translations** in Spanish, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, and other languages as needed.

Use **accessible formats** (printed, digital, and verbal) to reach all families.

The following are allowable activities:

6) May involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training.

Actions:

1. Invite parents to **provide input** on professional development topics for teachers and staff.
2. Conduct **focus groups or surveys** to gather parent suggestions for training content.
3. Incorporate parent feedback into **PD sessions** to improve effectiveness.
4. Recognize parents as **partners in shaping staff skills** to better support student learning.

7) May provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training.

Bench Elementary may use Title I funds for literacy training only after all other available funding sources have been exhausted. Actions include identifying training needs, selecting appropriate programs, and allocating funds to support teacher participation.

8) May pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local Parent and Family Engagement activities, including transportation and childcare costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.

Bench Elementary may use funds to cover reasonable expenses—like transportation and childcare—to support parent participation in school meetings and training. Actions include identifying needs, budgeting, and providing support.

9) May train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.

Bench Elementary may train parents to help engage other parents. Actions include selecting parent leaders, providing training, and supporting outreach.

10) May 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, in order to maximize Parent and Family Engagement and participation.

Bench may hold meetings at flexible times or offer in-home conferences to maximize parent engagement. Actions include scheduling options, coordinating staff, and communicating with families.

11) May adopt and implement model approaches to improving Parent and Family Engagement.

Bench Elementary may adopt proven strategies to improve parent engagement. Actions include selecting models, training staff, and monitoring effectiveness.

12) May establish a district parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to Parent and Family Engagement in programs supported under this section.

Bench Elementary may create a parent advisory council. Actions include recruiting members, holding meetings, and using input to guide engagement programs.

13) May develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in Parent and Family Engagement activities.

Bench Elementary may involve community organizations and businesses in parent engagement. Actions include identifying partners, defining roles, and coordinating activities.

PART III-ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements of this part, local educational agencies and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children), including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

Bench Elementary will ensure all parents can participate, including those with limited English, disabilities, or migratory backgrounds. Actions include providing translated materials, accessible formats, and clear communication of school information and reports.

PART IV-ADOPTION – This Bench Elementary Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Procedures have been developed/revised jointly with, and agreed upon with, parents of children participating in Title I program, as evidenced by meeting minutes.

The Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Procedures were developed/revised by Bench Elementary on 9/2/2025 and will be in effect for the period of 2025-26. The school will distribute these Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Procedures to all parents of participating Title I children and make it available to the community on or before 10/25/2025.

Signature of Title I Authorized Representative Date

Name and Signature of Parents, Students, and Staff Involved in the PFE Policy Process:	
Name	Signature

