

Parental Engagement Policies and Guidelines

The policy of the Columbus Municipal School District (CMSD) is to develop jointly with parents a policy that outlines the minimum requirements for parental engagement to be used at sites across the district. This policy shall be distributed to parents via the student/parent handbook that is distributed to all students at the beginning of each year. This policy will be distributed to and discussed with staff at the beginning of each school year. Further, this policy will be amended as needed according to the requirements of current federal law.

1. District Responsibilities

- A. Involve parents in the joint development of the Title I plan.
- B. Provide the support necessary to assist schools in implementing effective family engagement activities to improve academic achievement.
- C. Conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy in improving the academic achievement of Title I schools, which includes identifying barriers to greater participation by families.
- D. Use the findings of the annual evaluation to develop evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement.
- E. Involve families in school activities, which may include establishing an advisory board to develop, revise and review the parent and family engagement policy.

2. School Responsibilities

- A. Convene an annual meeting at a time convenient to parents to explain the Title I program and inform them of their rights to be involved in the program.
- B. Conduct regular meetings at times convenient to parents throughout the school year to discuss the program's operation and site needs.
- C. Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs.
- D. Provide timely information to parents about the Title I program.
- E. Provide parents an opportunity to submit feedback regarding differences in opinion about the school wide plan.
- F. Develop a school-parent compact jointly with parents.

3. School Written Contracts

- A. Develop jointly with parents a school-parent compact that identifies the activities that parents, the entire school staff, and students will share to improve academic achievement. The schoolparent compact must emphasize the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and parents, such as parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, staff access, and volunteer and participation opportunities.
- B. Send a letter home to the parent(s) of each Title I eligible child. This letter will describe the program offered at the site, provide details about the curriculum in use at the school, provide information regarding the types of assessment used to measure student progress, and levels of proficiency students are expected to meet.
- C. Make additional written contacts with parents at least once each semester. These contacts may be made through the distribution of a school newsletter, pamphlets, fliers, personal letters, postcards, etc.

4. Use of Funds

- A. Each school site will reserve, and utilize yearly, at least one percent (1%) of its total allocation for parent and family engagement activities. These funds must be used for at least one of these activities:
- Supporting schools in training school staff regarding engagement strategies.
 - Supporting programs that reach families at home, in the community or at school.
 - Providing information on best practices focused on engagement, especially for increasing engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
 - Supporting schools to collaborate with community-based organization or businesses that have a track record of improving family engagement; or
 - Engaging in any other activities that the district believes are appropriate in increasing engagement.
- B. Funds will be used to meet, in order of priority, the identified needs of the school sites.

5. Parental Comments

- A. Non-satisfactory written parental comments from parents of participating children shall be submitted to the LEAs district level office from each site to be forwarded to the state educational agency (SEA).
- B. Responses to written unsatisfactory parental comments will occur within one week of the written comment's receipt. These responses will originate from the site administrator (with a copy to the LEA office) or from the LEA office, if appropriate.

6. Accessibility

Columbus Municipal School District, to the extent possible, will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency or with disabilities, including providing information and school profiles in a language and form such parents understand.