Book	Policy Manual
Section	1000 Community
Title	Parent and Family Engagement
Code	1012
Status	Active
Adopted	September 27, 1989
Last Revised	December 2026
Last Reviewed	
Prior Revised Dates	3/26/25, 07/26/2023, 06/26/2024

Policy 1012: Parent and Family Engagement

The Board recognizes that parents, families, and caregivers are a child's first and most influential teachers and that meaningful family engagement is essential to student academic achievement, school success, and overall well-being. The purpose of this Family Engagement Policy is to establish a framework for collaboration among the District, schools, families, and the community to support high-quality educational opportunities for all students.

Consistent with the requirements of Title I, this policy demonstrates the District's commitment to developing and sustaining partnerships with families that are based on mutual respect, shared responsibility, open communication, and active participation in the educational process. The District believes that when schools and families work together, students demonstrate improved academic performance, stronger attendance, enhanced social-emotional development, and greater readiness for future success.

Family engagement is a shared responsibility. The District will provide families with meaningful opportunities to participate in planning, reviewing, and improving Title I programs and activities; to receive timely information regarding curriculum, assessments, and student progress; and to engage in regular, two-way communication with school staff. Families, in turn, are encouraged to take an active role in supporting learning at home, communicating with educators, and participating in school activities and decision-making processes.

Through this policy, the District affirms its commitment to fostering welcoming, inclusive, and accessible school environments in which all families are valued partners in advancing student learning and achievement.

I. Purpose, Core Beliefs, and Definition

This policy is to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") as reauthorized and amended. Federal law states that the District and parents of District students, including those students participating in Title I programs shall jointly develop and agree upon a written Parent and Family Engagement Policy ("PFE Policy"). The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the school, parents and family members, and community.

- **Academic Achievement:** The Board recognizes that parent and family engagement is essential for all students to achieve academic standards.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Education is a cooperative effort among the school, parents/guardians, and the community.
- **Inclusive Environment:** The District welcomes all individuals responsible for a child's development, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and community members.
- **Equity:** This policy prioritizes educational equity and will be implemented in accordance with District Policy 102.5.

- **Capacity Building:** The District will create welcoming conditions by examining internal structures, staff alignment, staff development, communication, programs, and resources to sustain effective parent and family engagement.

Any employee with parent engagement responsibilities (i.e., each school's Family and Community Engagement Coordinator) or anyone who serves as a parent liaison shall support and assist the District in its mission to build opportunities and work to eliminate barriers for parent and family engagement.[1][4]

Parent and Family (Family Member): these terms are used interchangeably and shall include caregivers, a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis such as grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, or a legally appointed Education Decision Maker of a child participating in a Title I program.

II. Authority and Framework for Engagement

The Board directs the District and each of its schools with a Title I program to:

1. Conduct outreach to all parents and family members.
2. Include parents and family members in development of the District's overall Title I Plan and process for school review and improvement.
3. Include parents and family members in the development of the Title I PFE Policy. Following adoption of the policy by the Board, the Policy shall be:
    a. Distributed in writing to all parents and family members.
    b. Incorporated into the District's Title I Plan.
    c. Posted to the District's publicly-accessible website.
4. Provide opportunities and conduct meaningful collaborations with parents and family members in the planning and implementation of Title I programs, activities and procedures.

All efforts in the District shall be guided by extensive research that consistently links parental and family engagement with student success. Grounded in research and practical experience and around which programs will be implemented are six (6) components framed as the national **PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships**:

1. Welcoming all families into the school.
2. Communicating effectively.
3. Supporting student success.
4. Speaking up for every child.
5. Sharing power.
6. Collaborating with community.

These national standards have been endorsed by the National School Boards Association and are endorsed by the Pittsburgh Board of Education with the adoption of this policy.

Parents/guardians and family members are welcome and encouraged to attend all public sessions of the Pittsburgh Board of Education and may speak on issues related to agenda items at the monthly public hearing. Information on dates, times, and the process for being placed on the agenda can be provided through the Office of the Superintendent or the Board Office. Individual Board members may be contacted through the Board Office.[4]

III. Organization of Policy, General Provisions and Expectations

ESSA, as reauthorized and amended, clearly states its purpose as ensuring all children the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and acknowledges that one of the primary ways to accomplish this is by "affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children."

- This policy is broken down into two sections: district level requirements and school level requirements. This policy, together with the Administrative Regulation (AR), constitutes the totality of the PFE Policy.
- This policy shall establish the role of the District in involving parents/guardians and families and clarifies the relationship between the school's role in parent/guardian and family participation and the role of the parent/guardian and family.
- This policy will prioritize the principle of educational equity and be implemented in accordance with District Policy 102.5 Equity and Excellence in Education.
- While the District's PFE Policy largely define mandated legal parental engagement provisions as stipulated by federal law, the District also realizes that many other adults play an important role in a child's life.
- The School District welcomes into its buildings and into virtual public meetings all individuals who carry responsibility for a child's development, education, safety and well-being, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and community members.
- It shall not only reflect the School District's mission of promoting the achievement of every child but shall establish a framework for recognizing the value of parents and families and for promoting meaningful parent and family participation.
- The School District recognizes that the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequities in education and that it is critical for the District to develop and maintain authentic, equitable, and inclusive family engagement policies and practices.
- The Board of Education recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To support this goal, the school, parents and families must work as knowledgeable partners.

All employees of the District and at each school must create a climate of respect for and cooperation with parents and families that will be evident in all parents, family, teacher, and staff interactions.

This policy will be distributed annually to parents and families in an understandable format and, to the extent practicable, the policy shall be provided in a language that parents/guardians and family members can understand.

After the policy has been revised, it will be reviewed at a Board Policy meeting before going to the full Board to be voted on.

Once approved, the policy will be made available to the local community via posting on the District's website and upon request, at your local school or through the Office of the Superintendent. Community agencies or programs that have direct access to parents/guardians and family members may voluntarily distribute the policy at their sites.[1] Track the implementation of the PFE (including through sign-up sheets at workshops).

IV. Policy Development and Evaluation

- **Joint Development:** This policy is developed and agreed upon jointly with parents/guardians and family members.
- **Accessibility:** Full opportunities for participation will be provided for those with limited English proficiency, disabilities, or migratory status, including information in understandable formats and languages.
- **Annual Evaluation:** The District will conduct an annual evaluation with parents/guardians to identify barriers to participation and use these findings to design more effective strategies.

V. Accountability and Responsibility

Implementation of the PFE Policy is the shared responsibility of the District, its schools, and parents and families. Within the administration of the School District of Pittsburgh, there are several offices that have primary responsibility and accountability for implementing and monitoring provisions and initiatives of the District's PFE Policy:

- **Superintendent's Office:**

    - The Office of the Superintendent, in collaboration with the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development and the Office of School Performance, bears the primary responsibility for fostering programs, activities, and procedures for the Parent and Family Engagement Policy at the District level.
    - It is the responsibility of the Office of the Superintendent to develop, facilitate, and coordinate large-scale events and provide key support and resources for parent engagement.
    - The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District and its schools with Title I programs provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members by providing resources, information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format or, upon request, in another format.
- **Title Programs Office:**
    - Responsible for ensuring compliance across all District schools, regardless of Title I status.
- **Principals:**
    - Bear primary responsibility for fostering ongoing parent and family engagement at the school level.
    - The building principal will work with classroom teachers to assure that they offer meaningful opportunities for parents and families to be full partners in their children's education and safety, health and welfare while at school.
    - Principals will be held accountable for fostering parent and family engagement in their schools.
- **Staff Accountability:**
    - Parent and family engagement will be maintained as an essential part of school climate review under the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
    - At least one (1) parent per grade level shall be invited to participate in the SIP development process, and principals are encouraged to extend an invitation to the entire parent community and include parents who have not been involved in this process before.
    - The SIP shall be made available on each school's individual school website during the current school year.
- **Parents and family members:**
    - Shall actively carry out their responsibilities in accordance with this policy and the School-Parent Family Compact. This includes: 1) volunteering in their child's classroom; 2) supporting their child's learning; and 3) participate, as appropriate in the decisions relating to the education of their child and positive use of extracurricular time.

VI. District Commitment to Families

- The PFE Policy shall ensure compliance with federal statutory provisions that specifically recognize parent and family engagement as a research-based educational practice that yields effective results.
- The District's PFE Policy shall cover the engagement of all parents/guardians and families across any federal, state, or local programs being implemented in the District, with recognition and respect for the wide variety of ways in which parents/guardians and families can be involved in the education of District students.
- This policy will serve as written documentation of the Pittsburgh School District's commitment to ensure parents/guardians and families are welcomed, engaged, and valued as stakeholders, in the education of their children and the safety, health and welfare of their children while at school.
- The District will incorporate this PFE Policy into its Local Education Agency (LEA) plan which is the required plan submitted to the state in its application to obtain Title I and other federal funding.

VII. District Level Requirements

ESSA requires Districts receiving Title I funds to develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents/guardians of participating children, a written PFE policy. Distribution must be in a format and language that parents/guardians can understand. Below is the list of requirements. Reference the AR for a description of how the following requirements will be fulfilled:

1. Involve parents/guardians and family members in the joint development of the District's overall Title I plan (Title I Application).
2. Involve parents/guardians and family members in the process of school review and improvement.
3. Provides technical assistance and support to schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student achievement and school performance.
4. Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with other Federal, State, and local laws and programs.
5. Meaningfully involve parents/guardians and family members in an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the policy in improving the academic quality of schools, including identifying:
    - barriers to greater participation by parents/guardians and family members, with particular attention to parents/guardians who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic background;
    - the needs of parents/guardians and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
    - strategies to support successful school and family interactions.
6. Use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement, and revise, if necessary, the PFE Policy.
7. Involve parents/guardians and family members in the activities of the school, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents/guardians and family members; revising; and reviewing the PFE Policy.

Reservation of Funds

Under ESSA, the District is required to reserve at least one percent (1%) of its financial allocation to assist in parental and family engagement. The District will involve the parents/guardians of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions on how the one percent (1%) of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent. These funds shall be used to carry out activities and strategies including not less than one of the following:[1]

i. Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for local educational agency and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents/guardians and family members.
ii. Supporting programs that reach parents/guardians and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
iii. Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents/guardians and family members.
iv. Collaborating or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate, with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
v. Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the local educational agency determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's parent and family engagement policy.

VIII. Opportunities for District-Wide Engagement

District-wide Parent Advisory Council

The District-wide Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of up to three (3), and at least one (1) parent/guardian or family representatives from each of the District's schools. These representatives are committed to working directly with the Superintendent and the Superintendent's designee(s) as a sounding board for ideas, suggestions, issues, concerns, and discussions. They serve on District-wide committees such as focus groups, Charter School Review

Teams, Book Selections, Discipline Policy Reviews, Parent and Family Policy Reviews, Gifted Education Task Force, etc.

A commitment of two (2) years is requested. Representatives are also asked to commit to attending at least six (6) PAC meetings a year, presenting a monthly PAC report at their school's PSCC meeting, and collecting feedback from the PSCC to communicate to the Family and Community Engagement Office.

Volunteers will be accepted to fill a maximum of three (3), and at least a minimum of one (1) parent/guardian or family representatives by September of each school year to attend the monthly PAC meetings. If no eligible volunteers step forward, the PSCC shall collectively appoint the representatives. When a parent/guardian or family representative is unavailable, the FACE Coordinator of the school may participate in the PAC meeting(s).
The PAC will convene seven (7) meetings throughout the school year, including a 'FACE Forward with Parents' segment during three sessions. This interactive feature spotlights exemplary school-based initiatives to strengthen collaboration through peer learning, idea-sharing, and the elevation of parent leadership.

This addition strengthens collaboration across schools by: showcasing impactful practices and creative strategies; encouraging peer learning and idea-sharing; celebrating school successes and elevating parent leadership; and offering practical models that schools can replicate or adapt.

Early Childhood Education Programs

The District operates Early Childhood Education Programs that are funded by both federal and state Head Start/Early Head Start and other state pre-kindergarten grants. All programs follow the Head Start Performance Standards which include a high level of family connection to school and community, as well as family engagement in the transition to new learning environments. This will occur through the inclusion and participation of Early Childhood families in school-based parent and family engagement and engagement activities.

Pittsburgh Local Task Force on the Right to Education

The Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF) is a state-mandated group that meets monthly to improve and monitor the delivery of special education services. Parents/guardians of students receiving special education services are encouraged to attend and become participating members. Information regarding meeting dates, locations, and the District's special education helpline is available on the District website.

The LTF members include parents/guardians, public agencies, members of the community, and school officials. School District Administrators from the Program for Students with Exceptionalities also attend each meeting.

Each meeting includes time for discussion of parent/guardian concerns. Information on where and when meetings are held is available from the District's Program for Students with Exceptionalities and is posted on the District calendar, which can be found on the District's Internet site.

The LTF is part of the State Local Task Force System comprised of twenty-nine (29) parent-led task forces, one in each Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania.

For more information, call the Parent-to-Parent Special Education Helpline at 412-529-2300 or check out the website: https://www.pghschools.org/academics/pse-special-education/pse-special-education/pittsburgh-local-task-force-on-the-right-to-education

School Volunteers

The District realizes that many other adults play an important role in a child's life. As such, the District welcomes all stakeholders, including parents/guardians, relatives, and community members, to assist in the academic achievement

of students and the school improvement process as volunteers. Refer to the Administrative Regulation (AR) for specific background check and clearance requirements.

Engaging the District

- **Parent Hotline**. The District has established a Parent Hotline that can be accessed for feedback, concerns, complaints, positive reports, questions, and information. The number for the Hotline is 412-529-HELP (4357). Parents/guardians can also submit a Let's Talk ticket on the District's website (www.pghschools.org) or via email at parenthotline@pghschools.org.

- **Parent Survey**. The District will distribute at least one Parent Survey every school year to solicit feedback from parents/guardians. This survey will be available electronically and translated in the top languages identified by the English as a Second Language Department. Each school will share their survey results during PSCC meetings. A hard copy of the electronic survey will be available to parents/guardians upon request.

Parents' Right-to-Know

At the beginning of each school year, the School District is required to notify the parents/guardians of each student that the parents/guardians may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. The School District will provide the parent/guardians—on request and in a timely manner—at a minimum, the following information:[9]

1. Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.

2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.

3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

4. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

IX. School Level Requirements

School Level PFE Policy

The Title I Parent and Family Engagement section of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 1116(b) requires each Title I school to develop a written PFE policy that describes the following means for carrying out the requirements of Section 1116. Below are the requirements that should be included in all Title I schools parent and family engagement policies.

1. A description of how parents/guardians and family members will be involved in the planning, review and improvement of the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
2. Information about an annual meeting that shall be held to inform parents of each District school's participation in the Title 1 program. At these meetings, parents and family members must be provided:
    - Timely information about programs provided under title I.
    - Description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the academic standards.

- Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

3. A statement that parent meetings, including parent conferences, will be held at different times during the day.
4. A description of how parents/guardians and family members will be involved in the planning, review and improvement of Title I program, including the parent and family engagement program.
5. A description of how schools will provide parents of participating children with timely information about the Title I program.
6. A description of how schools will provide parents of participating children with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessments used to measure progress, and the achievement levels of the State academic standards.
7. A statement that District schools will provide, if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.
8. A description of how schools involve parents/guardians and family members in the joint development of the Schoolwide Program Plan.
9. A statement that a school-parent compact will be jointly developed with parents/guardians and family members.
10. A description of how schools will provide assistance to parents/guardians and family members in understanding the State's academic content standards, State and local academic assessments, and how to monitor a child's progress.
11. A description of how schools provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their child's achievement.
12. A description of how schools will educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in how to work with parents/guardians and family members as equal partners.
13. A description of how the schools will integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State and local programs.
14. A description of how schools will ensure that information related to school and parent programs are sent to parents/guardians and family members in a format and language the parents/guardians and family members can understand.
15. A description of how school's will provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents/guardians and family members who have limited English proficiency and who may have disabilities.

School-Parent and Family Compact

Another requirement of ESSA is for each Title I participating school to develop a written school-parent compact jointly with parents/guardians that detail the shared responsibility for high student academic achievement. This document may also be referred to as a home-school compact.

The compact shall address how the school will:

1. Describe how the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment, enabling all students to meet the District's academic standards.
2. Describe the ways in which parents and family members will be responsible for supporting their child's learning; volunteering in the classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in the decisions related to their child' education and positive use of extracurricular time.
3. Address the importance of regular, two-way, meaningful communication between parents/family members and teachers, through at minimum:
    a. Annual parent-teacher conferences.
    b. Frequent reports on their children's progress.
    c. Provide reasonable access to staff.

d. Provide parents/guardians opportunities to volunteer and observe classroom activities.
e. Ensure communication is provided in a language parents and family members can understand.

Parent School Community Councils (PSCC)

Parent School Community Councils will create a climate where participation of all stakeholders results in increased understanding, commitment, responsibility, and satisfaction for the total school community. The purpose of PSCCs is to provide direction and support to the school in the development and revision of its school level improvement plan and to serve as an advisory body to the principal regarding issues such as student achievement, increasing parent and community support for the educational program, school safety, and dress codes.

PSCC meetings are open to Pittsburgh Public School parents/guardians and community members, as defined in this policy. Interested individuals should contact their schools to become involved.

- The District will maintain the core parent engagement initiative of Parent School Community Councils (PSCC).
- All schools shall have an established PSCC and will convene monthly meetings to discuss educational issues through the school level improvement plan relevant to each school.
- Parents/guardians and family members will be a part of the review and revision of the school level improvement plan and will be required to be part of the approval process on individual school level improvement plans as the guiding principle in schools.
- Each school level improvement plan will include parental and family engagement provisions linked to school improvement.
- A PSCC Handbook, including more detailed information and guidelines for District PSCCs, will be published by the District and may be obtained by contacting the Office of the Superintendent.
- Each PSCC is expected to abide by the terms of the PSCC Handbook consistent with this policy.
- The PSCC Handbook shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Parents or family members interested in participating in a PSCC should contact their school principal who will facilitate the process.
- Roles and responsibilities are outlined in detail in the District's Parent School Community Council Handbook which can be obtained here: https://www.pghschools.org/community/get-involved/parent-school-community-councils-pscc