

# Reading School District Parent and Family Engagement Policy

## **Purpose**

The Board recognizes the vital role parents/families play in the education, welfare and values of their children. The district is committed to the belief that all students can learn and acknowledges that schools and families share a commitment to the educational success of students. The purpose of this policy is to support and secure an effective partnership among the Reading School (District) schools, parents/families, and the community.

## **Definition**

**Parental and family engagement** shall be defined as an ongoing process that assists parents/families to participate in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including assurance of the following:

1. That parents/families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
2. That parents/families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
3. That parents/families 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.
4. The carrying out of other required activities, such as those described in section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

## **Guidelines**

The Reading School District agrees to implement the following:

1. The school district will implement programs, activities and procedures for the engagement of parents/families in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1116 of the ESSA. Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents/families of participating children.
2. The school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school level parent/family engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1116 of the ESSA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1116 of the ESSA.

3. The school district will incorporate this policy into its LEA comprehensive plan developed under section 1112 of the ESSA.

4. In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent/family engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/families with limited English proficiency, parents/families with disabilities, and parents/families with migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents/families understand.

5. If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESSA is not satisfactory to the parents/families of participating children, the school district will submit any parent/family comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the State Department of Education.

6. The school district will involve the parents/families of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the one percent (1%) of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent/family involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than ninety (90%) of the one percent (1%) reserved goes directly to the schools.

### **Implementation of District-Wide Parent/Family Engagement Policy**

The district will take the following actions to involve parents/families in the joint development of its district-wide Parent/Family Engagement Policy and Title I Plan under section 1116 of the ESSA.

1. Work cooperatively with the district-wide Parent Advisory Council to develop/revise the district-wide Parent/Family Engagement Policy.
2. Distribute the revised district-wide Parent/Family engagement Policy to parents/families for comments and suggestions.
3. Contents of the plan and its components will be incorporated into the yearly Title I Plan submitted to the State.

The district will take the following actions to involve parents/families in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESSA.

1. Require schools to involve parents/families in the development and review of School Improvement/School Level plans by requiring schools to submit

names of parents/families that participated in the development of such plans.

2. Send a directive to principals regarding this requirement annually.

The district will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parent/family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:

1. Provide Title I schools with a full-time Parent Outreach Assistant, funded through Title I Funds, to help schools implement effective parent/family engagement activities at least six (6) times a year.
2. Meet at least eight (8) times annually with Parent Outreach Assistants to provide guidance, training and support in developing and sustaining effective parent/family engagement strategies.
3. Coordinate staff development opportunities for school and district personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, specific to their needs.
4. Disseminate information to schools and district personnel on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially practices for increasing engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
5. Present parents/families with information on the Reading School District community/school organizations that provide assistance to families.
6. Provide adequate advance notice to parents/families of meetings and cancellation of meetings through: newsletters, school associations, bulletin boards (includes electronic web sites), phone calls, notices sent home, TV, social media, apps, and the automated home calling system.
7. Provide translators, translation devices, and/or other translation services to parent/families whose first language is other than English.
8. Provide technical assistance to schools and parent organizations and school associations.
10. Train new staff involved with parental/family engagement in Title I requirements (e.g. principals and administrative staff).

The district will coordinate and integrate parent/family engagement strategies in Part A with parent/family engagement strategies under the following programs:

1. Including parents/families from the Migrant Education programs in the district-wide parent/family engagement activities.
2. Involving non-English speaking parent/family groups, in presentations.
3. Providing transitional support for pre-school students entering the Reading School District.

The district will take the following actions to conduct, with the engagement of parents/families, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent/family involvement policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents/families in parent/family involvement activities (with particular attention to parents/families 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/family engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parent/family engagement , and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents/families) its parent/family engagement policies.

1. The district will distribute an annual survey to Title I parents/families to provide feedback and suggestions for improving its parent/family engagement policy and activities.
2. The district will work cooperatively with its Parent Advisory Council to revise, if necessary, its parent/family engagement policy and plan and will use the survey information to plan more effective parent/family engagement activities.

The district will build the school/parent/family capacity for strong parent/family engagement, in order to ensure effective engagement of parents/families and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents/families, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

1. The school district will, with the assistance of its Title I, Part A schools, provide assistance to parents/families of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:

- a. State academic standards.
- b. State and other academic assessments
- c. The requirements of Title I Part A.
- d. How to monitor their child's progress and how to communicate with school staff.

2. Such assistance may include providing school and district-wide workshops, providing appropriate materials, and supporting the attendance of parents/families and/or parent outreach assistants at state parent/family involvement conferences.

- a. Encourage schools to invite families to school's staff development days when above topics are mentioned.
- b. Recommend that principals add a parent/family component to staff development days at school sites.
- c. Utilize families who attend conferences and workshops to do turn-around training or require attendees to write a report as a condition of sponsorship.
- d. Provide information to parents/families in clear and simple language.

3. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents/families work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental engagement, by:

- a. Providing school and district-wide training workshops, held at a variety of times, for parents/families in order to maximize parent/family engagement and participation in their children's education.
- b. Supporting school/family resource centers.
- c. Fostering smooth transitions and positive social interactions for families.
- d. Facilitating social support.
- e. Providing families with easy access to information that will enable them to function effectively in school culture.
- f. Encouraging parent/family engagement in decision making at both the school and District level through involvement in parent advisory boards, and other decision-making meetings when feasible and appropriate.
- g. Engaging stakeholders in the Reading School District vision, mission and values.
- h. Preparing the district's families for the 21st Century.

4. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools and parents/families, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with

parents/families as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents/families, and in how to implement and coordinate parent/family programs and build ties between parents and schools.

5. The school district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent/family engagement programs and activities with Migrant programs, public preschool, and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent/family resource centers, that encourage and support parents/families in more fully participating in the education of their children.

6. The school district will ensure that information related to the school and parent/family programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents/families 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.