

PROPOSED PARENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Cohoes Board of Education believes that positive parent and family engagement is essential to student achievement, and encourages such involvement in school educational planning and operations. Parent and family engagement may take place in the classroom, on committees, or during extra-curricular activities. The Board also encourages parent and family engagement at home (e.g. planned home reading time, informal learning activities, and/or homework “contracts” between parents, family members and children). The Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop a home-school communication program in an effort to encourage all forms of parent and family engagement.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement - District Level Policy

Consistent with the parent and family engagement goals of Title I, Part A of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and its reauthorization in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Board of Education will develop and implement programs, activities and procedures that encourage and support the participation of parents and family members of students eligible for Title I services in all aspects of their child’s education. The Board also will ensure that all of its schools receiving Title I, Part A funds develop and implement school level parent and family engagement procedures, as further required by federal law.

For purposes of this policy, parent involvement refers to participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication, involving student academic learning and other school activities.

At a minimum, parent and family engagement programs, activities and procedures at both the district and individual school level must ensure that parents and family members:

- Play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning;
- Are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education; and
- 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.

The federal definition of the term “parents” refers to a natural parent, legal guardian or other person standing in *loco parentis* (such as a grandparent, or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare).

District and school level Title I parent and family engagement programs, activities and procedures will provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members including those who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members with migratory children.

As further required by federal law, parents and family members of students eligible for Title I services will be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of the district’s Title I plan, and to submit comments regarding any aspect of the plan that is not satisfactory to them. Their comments will be forwarded with the plan to the State Education Department.

Parents and family members will also participate in the process for developing either a comprehensive or targeted “support and improvement plan” when the school their child attends is identified by the State as needing this plan.

Parent and family member participation in the development of a districtwide Title I plan

The Board, along with the superintendent of schools and other appropriate district staff will undertake the following actions to ensure parent and family member involvement in the development of the district wide Title I plan: meetings will be held at flexible times and in accessible places. Parents will be surveyed through the District parental notification system or through email. Parent members will also be invited to serve on district level committees and as members of the Building Leadership Team.

Development of school level parent and family engagement approaches

The superintendent of schools will ensure that all district schools, including those receiving Title I, Part A funds are provided coordination, technical assistance and all other support necessary to assist them in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement programs and activities that improve student achievement and school performance. As appropriate to meet individual local needs, the superintendent will:

- along with the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services assist with the development of school level education plans.
- build the capacity of Building Leadership teams to address parent and family engagement. Parent representatives on each team will assist in this area and will communicate with other parents to receive input.
- prepare stakeholders (Parent Teacher Organizations and other parent groups) to develop and sustain parent involvement.

Building capacity for parental involvement

To build parent capacity for strong parental involvement, the district and its Title I, Part A schools will

1. Assist parents in understanding such topics as the state's academic content, challenging academic standards, state and local academic assessments, Title I requirements, how to monitor a their child's progress and how to work with educators to improve the achievement of their children. To achieve this objective, the district and its Title I schools will:

- promote and provide ongoing opportunities for parents to request parent/teacher/principal conferences throughout the school year. Parent conferences at the elementary level will be held at least once per year.
- Utilize existing school events as an opportunity to share academic content, standards, assessment, and Social Emotional Learning information with families.
- Provide district or building level workshops to support a range of academic support topics which may include math and reading strategies and the use of instructional technology.

2. Provide materials and training to help parents work their child's academic and using technology,(including education about the harms of copyright piracy). To achieve this objective, the district and its Title I schools will:

- Provide frequent electronic reports to parents on their child's progress.
- Provide district or building level workshops to support a range of academic support topics which may include math and reading strategies and the use of instructional technology.
- Provide information to parents regarding their child;s overall academic program.

3. Educate its teachers, -specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other school leaders, and other staff with the assistance of parents, in ~~the~~ understanding the value and utility of a parent's contributions and on how to:

- ~~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 the schools ~~and~~

To achieve this objective, the district and its Title I schools will:

- Provide professional development to all district staff on family and community engagement and increasing home-school connections, including working in partnership with families from diverse backgrounds.
4. Ensure that information related to school and parent-related programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents of children participating in Title I programs in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats, upon request, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Coordination of parental involvement strategies

The district will coordinate and integrate strategies adopted to comply with Title I, Part A parental involvement requirements with parental involvement strategies adopted in connection with other Federal, State, and local programs, including Head Start and Universal Preschool programs. The Title I Coordinator will work with the District UPK Coordinator and ENL Director to coordinate programs and strategies.

Review of district wide parent and family engagement policy

The Board, along with the superintendent of schools and other appropriate staff will conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of Title I schools, including the identification of barriers to greater participation by parents in activities under this policy, and the revision of parent and family engagement policies necessary for more effective involvement. To facilitate this review, the district will conduct the following activities:

- The superintendent's designee will conduct a meeting to identify possible barriers to greater participation by parents and brainstorm corresponding revisions to this policy for more effective involvement. The designee will seek diverse representation for this meeting and will obtain translation services to assist ELL parents with their participation in the review of this policy.

Cross-ref: 4010, Equivalence in Instruction

Ref: 20 USC §§6318(a)(2), Every Student Succeeds Act (§ 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act)

U.S. Department of Education, *Parental Involvement, Title I, Part A, Non-Regulatory Guidance*, April 23, 2004

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