

Sylvan Heights Science Charter School

Policy Number: 918
Policy Title: Parent and Family Engagement
Adopted: May, 28, 2003
Revised: November 25, 2019

Purpose

Sylvan Heights Science Charter School (the School) is committed to the belief that all children can learn and acknowledges that parents share in this commitment to the educational success of their children. The Board recognizes that parent and family engagement contributes to the achievement of academic standards by students participating in the Title I program. Further, the Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the School, parents/guardians, and community.

The Board defines parent and family engagement as an on-going process that assists parents and families in meeting their basic obligation as their child's first educator. It relies on clear, two-way communication between home and school, and supports parents as leaders and decision-makers at all levels concerning the education of their children.

Definition

Parent, guardian and family members - These terms are used interchangeably and shall include caregivers, a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis such as a 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. The word "parent" is used throughout this Parent and Family Engagement policy (policy) but references all entities described in this paragraph.

Authority

In compliance with federal law, the School and parents of students participating in Title I program shall jointly develop and agree upon a written parent engagement policy for the School. When developing and implementing this policy, the School shall ensure the policy describes how the School will:

1. Involve parents/guardians in the joint development of the School's overall Title I plan and the process of school review and improvement.
 2. Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist in planning and implementing effective parent engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.
 3. Develop activities that promote the School's and parents' capacity for strong parent engagement.
 4. Coordinate and integrate parent engagement strategies with appropriate programs, as provided by law.
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5. Involve parents/guardians in an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving the academic quality of the School.
6. Identify barriers to participation by parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority.
7. Use findings of annual evaluations to design strategies for more effective parent engagement.
8. Involve parents in the activities of the School.

The Board shall adopt and publish this policy on the School website, which shall be incorporated into the School's Title I Plan and shall be evaluated annually, with parent involvement.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Principal/CAO or designee shall ensure that the School's Title I parent engagement policy, plan, and program comply with the requirements of federal law.

The Principal/CAO or designee shall ensure that the School provides opportunities for the informed participation of parents by providing resources, information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format, or, upon request, in another format. Such efforts may include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing communications in clear and simple language.
2. Posting information for parents on the School's website.
3. Including a telephone number for parents to call with questions.
4. Partnering with community agencies to assist in sharing information.
5. Providing language access services to parents with limited English proficiency through on-site or telephonic translation and interpretation services, as appropriate.

The Principal/CAO or designee and the Title I staff shall provide to parents of students participating in Title I program:

1. An explanation of the reasons supporting their child's selection for the Title I program.
 2. A set of objectives to be addressed.
 3. A description of the services to be provided.
 4. A copy of this policy and the School-Parent and Family Compact.
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Parents shall actively carry out their responsibilities in accordance with this policy and the School-Parent and Family Compact. At a minimum, parents shall be expected to:

1. Volunteer either in their child's classroom or in other ways that support the School.
2. Support their child's learning.
3. Participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and positive use of extracurricular time.

The Principal/CAO or designee shall ensure that information and reports provided to parents are in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Guidelines

An annual meeting of parents of participating Title I students shall be held to explain the goals and purposes of the Title I program. Parents shall be given the opportunity to participate in the design, development, operation, and evaluation of the program. Parents shall be encouraged to participate in planning activities, to offer suggestions, and to ask questions regarding policies and programs.

In addition to the required annual meeting, additional parent meetings shall be held at various times of the day and evening. At these meetings, parents shall be provided:

1. Timely information about programs provided under Title I.
2. A description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
3. Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.
4. Opportunities to submit comments about the programs provided under Title I.

If sufficient and warranted, Title I funding may be used at the School's sole discretion to facilitate parent/guardian attendance at meetings through payment of transportation, child care costs, or home visits. Opportunities shall be provided for parents to meet with the classroom and Title I teachers to discuss their child's progress. Parents may be given guidance as to how they can assist at home in the education of their child.

School-Parent Learning Compact

The School shall jointly develop, with parents of students served in the Title I program, a School-Parent and Family Compact (Compact) outlining the manner in which parents, School staff and students share responsibility for improved student achievement in meeting academic standards.

The Compact shall:

1. Describe the School's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment, enabling students in the Title I program to meet the School's academic standards.
2. Indicate the ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in the classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related to their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time.
3. Address the importance of parent-teacher communication on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum, parent-teacher conferences, frequent reports to parents, reasonable access to staff, and – upon appropriate approval from the Principal/CAO, both opportunities to volunteer and participate in the classroom, and observation of classroom activities.

Title I Funds

Unless exempt by law, the School shall reserve at least one percent (1%) of its Title I funds to assist in conducting parent engagement activities. Parents shall be involved in the decisions regarding how the Title I reserved funds are used for parent engagement activities.

Documentation of Parent Engagement Practices

Documentation to track the implementation of this policy is an essential part of compliance and may include, but not be limited to, sign-in sheets at workshops, meetings and conferences, schedules, training and informational material, communications and brochures, and meeting notes.

References:

20 U.S.C. 6318

22 PA Code 403.1

Board Policies – 102, 138, 907, 916

Presented, reviewed, and updated by the Family Advisory Committee at their meeting on November 18, 2019.
