

Introductory Notes

Representatives of parent associations, education policy organizations, regional education support agencies and the Ohio Department of Education prepared this sample Family Engagement policy as a tool for school districts to refer to as they form their own district policies. The sample policy is based on principles of effective practice for engaging families in their child's learning and school. It also meets and exceeds the expectations expressed the State Board Parent and Family Involvement policy, and in state and federal law.

Sample Parent and Family Involvement Policy

This Board of Education recognizes that each parent and family member serves as their child's first teacher and decision-maker in education. The Board believes that student learning is more likely to occur when there is an effective partnership between the school and the student's parents and family. Such partnerships encourage greater involvement of parents in their children's education, which generally results in higher academic achievement, improved student behavior and reduced absenteeism.

In accordance with statute and the State Board of Education of Ohio's Parent and Family Involvement Policy, this policy uses the term "families" in order to include children's primary caregivers who are not their biological parents, such as foster caregivers, grandparents and other family members.

To encourage partnerships with families and communities, this Board of Education is committed to the following actions:

Welcome all Families into the School Community:

1. Promote welcoming, supportive and student-centered schools;
2. Provide professional development for school staff that helps build partnerships between families and schools;
3. Offer family activities that relate to various cultures, languages, practices and customs, and bridge economic and cultural barriers;
4. Give coordination, technical and other reasonable support to assist families and schools in planning and implementing activities.

Offer Parents Support:

1. Establish a shared approach to child guidance and discipline;
2. Provide information to families to support the proper health, safety and well-being of their children;
3. Provide information and opportunities for families to be involved in monitoring student progress.

Communicate Effectively:

1. Provide information to families about school policies, procedures, programs and activities;
2. Promote regular and open communication between schools and families;
3. Communicate with families in a format and language that is understandable, to the extent practicable;
4. Provide families with timely and meaningful information regarding Ohio's academic standards, state and local assessments, and pertinent legal provisions;
5. Prepare families to be involved in meaningful discussions and meetings with school staff.

Offer Volunteer Opportunities:

1. Provide volunteer opportunities for families to support their students;
2. Support other needs, such as transportation and child care, to enable families to participate in school-sponsored family involvement events.

Encourage Learning at Home

1. Offer training and resources in areas such as literacy and technology to help families learn strategies and skills that support at-home learning and success in school;
2. Work with families to establish learning goals for their children and to help them accomplish these goals;
3. Help families provide school and home environments that encourage learning and extend learning at home.

Involve Families in Decision Making Activities:

1. Engage families in the process of school review and improvement planning;
2. Engage families in the development of the district-wide parent involvement policy and in the dissemination of this information to families and the community.

Collaborate with the Community:

1. Build partnerships and connect families with community-based programs and other resources;
2. Coordinate and integrate family involvement programs and activities with district initiatives and community-based programs that encourage and support families' participation in their children's education, growth and development.

****Implementation**

The district superintendent will work together with families of district students on a comprehensive plan for engaging families in partnerships supporting their student's academic achievement and the school's review and improvement process. The district, together with family representatives, will annually review the content and effectiveness of the plan, identify any barriers to family participation and continuously improve the parent and family involvement plan with evaluation findings.

**Districts receiving Title I funds may consider using this document to further detail their plan implementation. See the U.S. Department of Education, Appendix D: District Wide Parental Involvement Policy at:
<https://ccip.ode.state.oh.us/DocumentLibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=1045>

Acknowledgements

The Office of Family and Community Engagement at the Ohio Department of Education thanks the following individuals and organizations for their support and guidance in the development of this sample policy and for their continued commitment to improving family and community engagement in education.

Sue Bitsko, Hamilton County Educational Service Center
Ann Bohman, Office of Federal Programs, Ohio Department of Education
Barb Bungard, Title I Committee of Practitioners
Pat Corbett, NEOLA Inc.
Greta Gardner, Ohio School Boards Association
Rasha Hetata, Office of Federal Programs, Ohio Department of Education
Lakshmi Nandula, Office of Federal Programs, Ohio Department of Education
Brian Neal, Ohio Parent Information and Resource Center
Sandy Nekoloff, Ohio Parent Teacher Association
Sue Owen, Ohio Parent Teacher Association
Diane Schneider-Farmer, Office of Federal Programs, Ohio Department of Education
Rolonda Smith, Parents for Public Schools of Greater Cincinnati
Jessica Spears, Ohio School Boards Association
Karen Stine, Hamilton County Educational Service Center