

Shelby County Board of Education

7009

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

I. PURPOSE

To promote positive partnerships between parents and the District to support high standards and improve student academic achievement.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to parents with students enrolled in Shelby County Schools, parent organizations, and District employees.

III. DEFINITIONS

Family - parents, extended family, guardians, other persons with whom the student lives, and/or persons who are positively involved in the educational well-being of the student.

Parental/Family Involvement - participation of parents/family in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.¹

Parent includes in addition to a natural parent, a 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).

For the purpose of this policy "family" and "parental" are interchangeable.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

Recognizing that parents are the key stakeholders in the education of their children, the District seeks to establish effective family-school partnerships that build the capacity of parents to improve student achievement and promote academic success. Such activities, in accordance with the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requirements, shall at a minimum provide an environment where parents (1) play an integral role in assisting with their child's

learning; (2) are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (3) 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(ren); and (4) are involved in other activities as deemed appropriate.

A. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Schools

Administrators, principals, teachers and support staff at each school site are expected to create a climate of respect for and cooperation with parents. To promote a climate of respect and cooperation, the following standards based on the PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and as recognized by Tennessee School Board Association shall be adopted by each school:

- Standard 1 - Welcome all families into the school community.
- Standard 2 - Communicate effectively with all families.
- Standard 3 - Support student success by collaborating with families to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school.
- Standard 4 - Encourage families to be advocates for their own children and other children in order to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
- Standard 5 - Share power by ensuring that families and schools are given opportunities to share in decisions that affect children.
- Standard 6 - Ensure that families and schools collaborate with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civil participation.

At a minimum, to ensure that the aforementioned Standards are met, schools shall:

- a. Provide opportunities for the participation of all parents, including parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children. Strategies may include, but are not limited to ensuring to the extent possible that information related to school, parent meetings, and other programs and activities are translated; and ensuring ADA access to buildings.

- b. Provide information and school reports in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand. Strategies may include, but are not limited to regular communication through Open Houses, web page updates, emails, flyers, other forms of print and electronic media, etc.
- c. Develop personal relationships with and create a respectful atmosphere for parents and families. Strategies may include, but are not limited to workshops for parents and school employees, family support programs, and professional development opportunities.
- d. Ensure access to school administration and maintain effective two-way communications between the schools and home using multiple communication paths. Strategies may include, but are not limited to, regular parent meetings (e.g., parent organization meetings) to discuss strategies to improve student achievement and engagement and providing families with access to student learning materials in order for families to assist students in meeting their educational goals.
- e. Provide various volunteer opportunities to support the school and students. Strategies may include, but are not limited to serving as classroom assistants, field trip chaperones, tutors and mentors.
- f. Promote out of school time learning and encourage parents to be involved and support learning at home with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions. Strategies may include, but are not limited to training on state content standards and assessments.
- g. Involve parents in decisions regarding how funds for parental involvement activities are spent and in the planning, review, and improvement of parental involvement programs in the school. Strategies may include, but are not limited to involving parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training; paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions; training parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.
- h. Seek out and coordinate resources and services from the community for families and students. Strategies may include, but are not limited to

partnering with community groups to conduct outreach to parents, hosting community fairs and referring families to community agencies as appropriate.

- i. Provide a means by which parents have an opportunity to express concerns at the school level and to afford the school an opportunity to review and respond to concerns. The rights of a parent to express concerns as provided under applicable statutes and/or District policies shall not be diminished by this provision.

2. School District

At a minimum, to ensure that established Standards are met, the District shall:

- a. Provide workshops for parents and school/district employees, family support programs, and professional development opportunities.
- b. Hold annual training for leaders of parent organizations to promote leadership development and discuss policies and district initiatives and in accordance with the law.
- c. Consult with parents of children participating in Title I programs to develop and carry out the parental involvement programs and to the extent practicable, work with parents in jointly developing and distributing to parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy.
- d. Translate and distribute/post certain district documents; provide a set of commonly translated document templates and translation tools for schools to use to translate custom documents.
- e. Coordinate and integrate activities under this policy with parental involvement strategies under other programs;
- f. Communicate regularly with parents through various means including but not limited to community forums, email blasts, web page updates, flyers, and other forms of print and electronic media.
- g. Provide a means by which parents have an opportunity to express concerns at the district-level and to afford the District an opportunity to review and respond to concerns. The rights of a parent to express concerns as provided under applicable statutes and/or District policies shall not be diminished by this provision.

3. Parents

Parents are expected to share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and to be responsible for supporting the learning experience of their child(ren). This may include but is not limited to creating a home environment conducive to learning, monitoring attendance, reviewing homework, volunteering and supporting positive student behavior.

B. Parent Organizations

While parents may be involved in the educational well-being of their children at various levels, the District considers family-school partnerships to be essential to the life of the school. The District, therefore, recognizes and supports school and district-wide parent organizations (see policy [7007 – School Support Organizations](#)). The work of parent organizations must be aligned with the established goals and priorities of the District.

1. School-Level

Each school shall be required to have a parent organization that may include, but is not limited to a Parent Teacher Association (PTA); Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA); Parents (Partners) in Education (PIE); and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Parent organizations shall be governed in accordance with their bylaws/charter except when otherwise provided by applicable law and/or Board policies and rules and regulations (see 7007 – School Support Organizations). Principals at each school shall partner with the parent organizations at his/her school to establish methods to implement the goals and priorities of the District. Additionally, the Superintendent shall establish criteria for determining if an organization will be sanctioned (recognized) by the District as a viable parent organization.

2. District-Level

A Family Engagement Advisory Committee shall be established by the Superintendent. The responsibilities of the Family Engagement Advisory Committee shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. advising the Superintendent and senior staff;
- b. participating in evaluating the district's Family Engagement Policy; and

- c. providing input into student-related policies, planning and budget processes as appropriate.

At the discretion of the Superintendent ad hoc parent committees and other parent-focused committees may be established as deemed appropriate.

C. Evaluation

The content and effectiveness of the policy shall be evaluated annually by the Superintendent or designee with the involvement of parents. The findings of the evaluation will be used to design strategies for more effective family involvement, and if necessary to revise this policy and procedure.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Parents/guardians are responsible for pursuing opportunities in the school, home environment and community that support their children’s education and ensure that their children meet academic standards.
- B. Principals are responsible for ensuring that parents and family partnership opportunities are available at his/her school.
- C. The office responsible for family and community engagement is responsible for assisting schools in ensuring that the operations of school support groups are conducted in a manner that follows acceptable practices.
- D. The office responsible for academic operations, in collaboration with the office of responsible for family and community engagement, is responsible for implementing this policy.
- E. The Superintendent or designee, in collaboration with parents, is responsible for conducting an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy.
- F. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

Legal References:

- 1. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 1118
- 2. TCA 49-2-305
- 3. TCA 49-6-7001-7003
- 4. Tennessee State Board of Education,
- 5. Tennessee State Board of Education Policy No. 4.207 (Standards for Family-School Partnerships)

Cross References:

- 1. [7007 School Support Organizations](#)
- 2. [5010 Title I Parental Involvement](#)

Administrative Rules and Regulations
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

A. Implementing PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

The PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide may be used at each school site as a tool to achieving high standards for involvement to build family-school partnerships for student success. The Guide outlines six (6) steps that schools should take for successful implementation of the PTA standards and provides a rubric for each standard with specific goals, indicators and examples of good practices. (http://www.pta.org/files/National_Standards_Implementation_Guide_2009.pdf)

B. Family Engagement Advisory Committee

The Superintendent shall establish a district-wide Family Engagement Advisory Committee.

1. Scheduled Meetings

Family Engagement Advisory Committee meetings shall be held a minimum of four (4) times a year, with at least two (2) of the scheduled meetings being held with the Superintendent.

2. Committee Responsibilities

The Family Engagement Advisory Committee shall be established to support family engagement at the District level to improve student achievement and promote academic success. Responsibilities of the Family Engagement Advisory Committee shall include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Serving in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent and senior staff by providing feedback and input on identified issues
- Participating in assessing the effectiveness of the District's Family Engagement Plan and developing recommendations for possible revisions

- Providing input as appropriate into
 - policies
 - planning
 - budget processes
- Reviewing district-level data and trends
- Providing input on ways to improve student/parent/school/District relations and communication

3. Committee Composition

The Family Engagement Advisory Committee shall be comprised of non-district employees who are parents/family members of current students of Shelby County Schools. Members of the Family Engagement Advisory Committee shall at a minimum include:

- Six (6) parents/family members representing each region (2 from elementary, middle, and high), including representation of Title I schools
- Two (2) parent/family member representative from the Exceptional Children Advisory Council
- Two (2) parent/family member representative from English as a Second Language
- One (1) current board member

The office responsible for family and community engagement may serve in a support capacity to the Family Engagement Advisory Committee as appropriate and liaise with the Parent-Focused Staff Council for continuity.

4. Appointment to Membership and Terms

The Superintendent shall appoint individuals to serve as members of the Family Engagement Advisory Committee. The appointment shall be for a year, from July 1 through June 30, and may be extended by the Superintendent up to a maximum of three (3) consecutive years.

5. Sanctions for Inappropriate Conduct

Individuals appointed to the Family Engagement Advisory Committee are expected to refrain from actions that violate applicable statutes and/or Board policies or may compromise the standards, reputation, and/or safety of District students and employees; and may be suspended or dismissed from the

Committee by the Superintendent for just cause. Additionally, unless there are extenuating circumstances as approved by the Superintendent, a Committee member may be suspended or dismissed for excessive absences from scheduled committee meetings.

6. **Accountability/Annual Reports**

On an annual basis the Superintendent shall submit to the Board the information discussed and/or activities conducted by the Family Engagement Advisory Committee, including recommendations provided by the committee and the actions taken in response to such recommendations.

C. Ad Hoc Committees

The Superintendent or his/her designee may appoint ad hoc committees in response to a particular issue or concern to consider and make recommendations regarding the operations of the District and assist in special projects. Each committee shall be appointed for a specific purpose and time and may be dissolved at the sole discretion of the Superintendent or designee. Ad hoc committees shall be representative of the community in relation to the delegated tasks and may be comprised of parents, family and community members.

D. Parent-Focused Staff Council

A district-wide Parent-Focused Staff Council shall be established by the Superintendent or designee and shall serve in an advisory role for the District.

1. **Scheduled Meetings**

The Staff Council shall meet on a quarterly basis or as deemed necessary by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

2. **Committee Responsibilities**

The Staff Council shall be established to improve district-wide delivery of services to parents/families of District students. Responsibilities of the Parent-Focused Staff Council shall include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Discussing and reviewing academic and district-operational issues that directly impact parents/families
- Fostering collaboration and communication between the departments of the District to further the parental engagement objectives of the District

- Advising on multiple communication paths to parents/families concerning academic and district-operational issues that directly affect parents/families
- Reviewing identified trends of issues reported by parents/families to the Superintendent or Board and making recommendations to improve academic and district-operational efficiency regarding such trends

3. Committee Composition

The Parent-Focused Staff Council shall consist of full and part-time employees appointed by the Superintendent. The Council shall represent a cross-functional team and at a minimum include representation from the following:

- Communications
- Curriculum
- PreK
- English as Second Language (ESL)
- Exceptional Children
- Coordinated School Health
- Parent and Community Engagement
- Optional Schools
- Federal Programs
- Student Support
- Regional Staff
- Policy