

## PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

It is the policy of Western Dubuque Community Schools that parents and family members of participating children shall have the opportunity to be involved jointly in the development of the district plan and in the district's review process for the purpose of school improvement. Recognizing that parental involvement is the key to academic achievement, we seek to involve parents in an effective home-school partnership that will provide the best possible education for our students. The district provides coordination, technical assistance and other supports necessary to aid in the planning and implementation of parent involvement activities. The district encourages parent involvement and supports this partnership through providing information about standards and assessments; providing training and materials for parents to help their children; educating school personnel about involving parents and the value of parent contributions; and developing roles for community organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools.

This jointly developed and agreed upon written policy is distributed to parents and family members of participating Title I children through the Parent Handbook which is distributed to every family at the time of registration. In schoolwide buildings, this will include all parents. (ESSA Section 1116(a)(2))

- 1) The district will provide technical assistance and support to schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance through professional development regarding parent and family engagement. The district will partner with community groups as a means to engage families more creatively and successfully. (ESSA Section 1116(a)(2)(B))
- 2) The district will work to find ways to work cooperatively with other Federal, state, and local programs. The Title I program will work with local public preschool programs, Headstart programs, local library programs, and special education programs (IDEA). Our homeless education program coordinates with the local backpack program to offer support to students that are food insecure, especially over the weekends. (ESSA Section 1116(a)(2)(C))
- 3) The district conducts an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness for the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. The evaluation includes parents in a meaningful manner. In addition to surveys, the district uses focus groups and open discussion groups for this evaluation. Parents and families have a voice. The evaluation tools and methods identify the type and frequency of school-home interactions and the needs of parents and families have to better support and assist their children in learning. The evaluations will target at least three key areas: barriers, ability to assist learning, and successful interactions. (ESSA Section 1116 (a)(2)(D)(i-iii))
- 4) The district uses the findings for the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement. The evaluation results will help uncover best practices that are working and adapt those ideas to the district and individual school needs. (ESSA Section 1116(a)(2)(E))
- 5) The district involves parents and family members in activities of the school. The district has established a parent advisory committee comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members to adequately represent the needs to the population, revised and reviewed the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. (ESSA Section 1116(a)(2)(F))

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- 6) At least one annual meeting will be held to inform parents and family members of the school's participation in the Title I program and to explain the requirements of the program and their right to be involved. The meeting shall be for parents of both public and private school. All public elementary buildings will hold an annual meeting in the fall. Notification will be sent in the district and building newsletter. (ESSA Section 1116(c)(1))
- 7) Parent and family meetings, including parent conferences, will be held at different times during the day and Title I funds may be used to pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent and family engagement activities, including transportation, childcare, or home visit expenses to enable parent to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions. (ESSA Section 1116 (c)(2))
- 8) The district will involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I program through participation in stakeholder groups and in-person meetings where parents give input and feedback. (ESSA Section 1116(c)(3))
- 9) In a schoolwide program plan, parents are asked to be involved in the joint development of the building's schoolwide plan through in-person meetings, surveys and electric feedback as appropriate. *Applies only to Title I schools operating a Schoolwide Program.* (ESSA Sections 1116(c)(3) and 1114))
- 10) Parents and family members of participating children are given assistance in understanding the Title I program, with timely information about the Title I program. Through annual meetings and parent-teacher conferences, the school will provide parents and family members of participating children with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Parents and family members receive an explanation of the school's performance profile, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the expected proficiency levels in the annual progress report distributed to all stockholders in the spring of the year, through individual reports given to parents at conference time, and through report cards. (ESSA Section 1116(c)(4)(A) & (B))
- 11) If requested by parents, the school will provide opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible. (ESSA Section 1116(c)(4)(C))
- 12) If the schoolwide plan under Section 1114(b) is not satisfactory, parents of participating students may comment. Comments may be made in writing to the school principal. (ESSA Section 1116(c)(5))
- 13) A jointly developed school/parent compact outlines how parents and family members, the entire school staff, and students all share responsibility for improved student achievement. The compact also describes the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve our local high standards. It is distributed in the parent handbook and is reviewed at the annual meetings. (ESSA Section 1116(d))
- 14) Parents will be notified of this policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. The policy will be provided in English and Spanish and will be free of educational jargon. (ESSA Section 1116(b)(1))

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- 15) In order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school and local educational agency shall:
- a. Provide assistance to parents in understanding challenging State academic standards. State and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
  - b. Provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement;
  - c. Educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in 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 school;
  - d. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children;
  - e. Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand; and
  - f. Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request. (ESSA Section 1116(e)(1-14))
- 16) The school, to the extent practicable, will provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children) by providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 in a format and language the parties can understand. (ESSA Section 1116(f))

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. §6318

Cross References:

903.2 Community Resource Persons and Volunteers

Approved: June 14, 2004

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