



COMMUNITY RELATIONS: Community Involvement

Parent and Family Engagement

I. Purpose

- A. Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) promotes meaningful partnerships among schools, parents, family caregivers and the community at large. Effective partnerships foster and enhance student achievement through parent, family, business and community engagement.
- B. To implement the Board of Education of Baltimore County's (Board) Parent and Family Engagement policy by establishing a strong, effective and equitable system of parent and family engagement in BCPS schools.

II. Definitions

- A. *Family* – Means a child's primary care-giving unit.
- B. *Parent* – For the purpose of this policy, parent means: the parent, legal guardian or custodian, foster parent or person acting in the absence of the parent or guardian.
- C. *Parental Engagement* – Means the participation of parents and families in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic progress and other school activities, to ensure:
 - 1. That parents/families play an integral role in assisting their children's learning;
 - 2. That parents/families are encouraged to be actively engaged in their children's education at home and at school; and
 - 3. That parents/families are full partners in their children's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children.
- D. *Partnership* – Means an association of two or more parties taking part in some activity in common with one another or others, working toward the same goals.
- E. *Title I, Part A Funds* – Federal funds allocated to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-

income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

III. Guidelines

- A. The Superintendent will designate appropriate staff to ensure, through available means, including, but not limited to, community surveys, stakeholder results and community focus groups that the following practices are implemented to support parent, family and community involvement:
 - 1. Communicating
 - a. Publicize the school’s commitment to parent, family and community engagement.
 - b. Promote two-way communication between school and home concerning school programs and student progress that is clear and written in a language parents, families and community members can understand.
 - c. Provide information to parents, families and community members on the processes for addressing concerns and disseminate this information using a variety of means; such as, but not limited to, newsletters, school-parent orientation programs, school system Web sites and the BCPS Parent University and social media.
 - 2. Parenting
Help parents and families reinforce the skills taught at school and foster conditions such as safe, healthy and nurturing environments that support student learning.
 - 3. Student Learning
Provide opportunities for parents, families and community members to develop and refine the knowledge and skills needed to support student academic achievement, including activities and resources that connect to what students are learning in the classroom.
 - 4. Volunteering
 - a. Recruit, train and recognize parents, families and community members as volunteers.
 - b. Promote effective use of volunteers.
 - 5. School Decision-Making and Advocacy
 - a. Make parent and family engagement an integral component of school progress development.

- b. Support parents and families as decision-makers and promote and include their leadership in advisory and advocacy roles by:
 - (1) Inviting and supporting parent and family participation in committees; such as, but not limited to, school improvement teams, citizens advisory committees, area education advisory committees, action teams and character education committees.
 - (2) Communicating regularly, including providing timely notice of meeting times, locations and agendas.
- 6. Collaborating with the Community
 - a. Provide assistance to students as well as to parents and families.
 - b. Develop partnerships with businesses and community organizations to promote student success.
- 7. Building Partnerships
 - a. Provide a safe and inviting environment where parent, family and community engagement is valued and respected.
 - b. Support effective parent, family and community involvement through available school and community resources.

IV. Compliance

- A. All school-based and central office staff shall comply with the *Parent and Family Engagement* Policy and this Rule by implementing the key actions regarding parent and family engagement in the educational process to meet the strategic initiatives outlined in the vision and mission of the school system.
- B. Schools shall involve all parents and family members, regardless of their educational attainment, race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, primary language, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity (including gender expression) disability, religion or age.
- C. The Office of Family and Community Engagement and the Office of Title I will annually convene a group of parents, family members and community stakeholders to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the school system's *Parent and Family Engagement* Policy and this Rule in improving the academic quality of all BCPS schools. This group shall include a representation of parents and families from Title I schools.

- D. The Office of Title I shall involve parents and family members from Title I schools in the development, implementation and annual review of the content and effectiveness of the Title I parent involvement plan in improving the academic quality of the schools served with Title I, Part A funds.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.*, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act OF 1965 (ESEA)*, as reauthorized by the *Every Student Succeeds Act*
20 U.S.C. § 6318, *Parent and Family Engagement*
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article § 4-112, *Advisory Committees*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 0100, *Equity*
Board of Education Policy 0200, *Precepts, Beliefs and Values of the Baltimore County Public Schools*
Board of Education Policy 1100, *Communication with the Public*
Board of Education Policy 1200, *Community Involvement*
Board of Education Policy 1210, *Relationship with Parent-Teacher (Student) Associations*
Board of Education Policy 1230, *Area Education Advisory Councils (AEAC)*
Board of Education Policy 1240, *Visitors to Schools and Offices*
Board of Education Policy 1260, *School Volunteers*

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