

St. Charles Parish Public Schools

Title I Parent/Family Involvement Policy

General Policy:

The St. Charles Parish Public School Board recognizes that a child's education is a life long process and the responsibility is shared by the school, family, and community during the entire life of each and every member of our community. To support the district's goals, the schools, parents, and the community must work as knowledgeable and collaborative partners.

Although parents and many community members are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they share the district's commitment to the educational success of all its members. This school district and the schools within its boundaries, in collaboration with parents and the community, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent and community involvement and reflect the specific needs of students, their families, and the community at large.

To this end, the Board supports the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of parent/community involvement in each school, which will involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The family involvement programs will be comprehensive and coordinated in nature. They will include, but not be limited to, the following components of successful family involvement programs:

- ✓ Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
- ✓ Responsible parenting is promoted and supported.
- ✓ Parents and community play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- ✓ Parents and community are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.
- ✓ Parents and community are partners in decisions that affect families and children.
- ✓ Community resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

The Board supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective family involvement strategies. The Board also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation.

Development and Review:

Engaging parents and the community is essential to improve student achievement. This school district shall foster and support active family and community involvement. Parents, Title I teachers, classroom teachers and administrative personnel at each school will meet to evaluate the current program and develop school plans. Parents will serve on School Improvement Committees at all schools to review improvement plans and provide input for future activities. The System Based Team for Parental Involvement will be composed of parents, community members, school level personnel and district level personnel who will jointly participate in the development of the district's family involvement plan which will be evaluated annually by parents, school level personnel and district level personnel.

Coordination, Technical Assistance and Support:

The district will provide coordination and technical assistance to schools through the Family and Community Involvement System Based Team. This team serves as a resource for all Title I schools. Team members will assist schools in planning and implementing effective family involvement activities. The school district consistently recommends that all schools maintain membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools. The district will also encourage family involvement staff members to attend the National Conference for Family Literacy to improve services to families.

Building Capacity:

The district will provide information to parents on academic content standards, accountability systems, assessments, and student progress in various forms. Parents will be given curricular information during home visits, meetings, conferences, workshops, handbooks, newsletters, and school web sites. Information is also available at the district level through the district's web site, calendar, and programs on the local educational access channel. The district will assist schools and parents through long term professional development to build parents' capacity for involvement. Parents, school staff, and district staff will engage in professional development to address how to value, communicate and work with families effectively. District staff and school faculty members will participate in book study to address the working effectively with all families. Capacity will be built by the school and community working together with area businesses. Adopt-a-School partners will build capacity for involvement through various activities such as providing supplies and meeting facilities.

Home visits from Title I staff will help build parents' capacity for involvement by providing them with access to both educational and social services.

Coordination and Integration of Parental Involvement Strategies with Other Parental Involvement Strategies across Federal Programs:

Through the Family and Community Involvement System Based Team, the Title I program works closely with Head Start, Early Head Start, and all preschool programs to coordinate activities and to act as a resource for these programs. The Family Involvement Team is composed of parents, district level personnel, Title I personnel in the schools, Head Start personnel, and IDEA staff members. Using input from families and research based practices, this team will meet periodically for professional development, to build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong family involvement and to consolidate activities avoiding duplication of services. Team members will assist Title I schools in planning activities for families, consulting with parents, and providing opportunities for families to become more involved in their children's education.

Annual Evaluation Including Parent Involvement in Evaluation:

Parents will serve on the System Based Team and participate in the annual evaluation of the Title I program at their child's school. Both of these activities will provide opportunities for an evaluation of the family involvement policy. At this time barriers to greater participation by parents will be identified and discussed. Possible solutions to strengthen family involvement will be considered. In conjunction with the annual evaluation, a database of family involvement activities will be maintained so that the effectiveness of planned activities can be periodically evaluated. Members of the Family Involvement Team will interact with parents daily, providing frequent feedback regarding the effectiveness of family involvement activities. The district plan will be evaluated annually by parents, community members, school level personnel, and district level personnel. Revisions in this plan and school level plans will be made as needed to make the plan more responsive to the needs of parents and the community.

Evaluation Method for Determining Barriers to Greater Participation:

Members of the Family Involvement Team will interact with parents daily, providing pertinent feedback regarding possible barriers to greater participation of parents. District and school staff will communicate with parents and the community on a regular basis to ensure a partnership between all stakeholders. Parents who do not participate in planned activities will be surveyed to find out what barriers might have kept them from attending. Surveys will be evaluated to provide possible solutions and rethink the process by which parental involvement activities are conducted.

Information about School and Parent Programs:

Information about the Title I program's educational services, and family involvement procedures will be communicated to parents and the community by school and teacher web pages, parent-teacher conferences, fliers, Connect Ed, the newspaper and advertisement on local cable television. Written information given to parents will, as much as possible, be composed in a format that parents can understand.

Each school convenes an annual meeting at the beginning of every school year. Parents of all participating children will be invited and encouraged to attend this meeting. The annual meeting informs parents of their school's participation in the program, the requirements of Title I, and their right to be involved in planning, review and improvement of the Title I program.

A parent handbook, developed at the district level with input from parents, will disseminate information about the Title I program to parents of students selected for Title I assistance. Some information in this handbook will be presented in both English and in Spanish. Schools may elect to include this handbook in their school's handbook, or distribute it separately. Additional communication with parents will occur as needed throughout the school year through individual correspondence and home visits.

Parents will be informed of students' progress at parent-teacher conferences held at least twice during the school year. Parents who cannot attend these conferences will be contacted by telephone or visited at home to discuss their child's progress. Written follow-up will be sent to parents unable to participate in conferences.

Each targeted assistance school has developed a Child/School/Parent Compact describing the mutual responsibilities of the parent, the child and the school. The compact will promote understanding of the way all involved parties work together to help students achieve the state's standards. Parent-teacher conferences will provide an opportunity to discuss the

compact and to inform parents of the purpose and meaning of the content standards, the student performance standards and the instruction that the school provides to help students attain those standards.

Parent Training:

The Family Centers at Title I schools will be available to all parents of Title I students. The centers will promote parent literacy and integrate family involvement activities with community agencies. The Family Centers will provide numerous resources for parents. These resources will include a sewing machine, copying machines, laminators, books for children, books for parents, educational games, educational software, and other materials designed to assist academic achievement.

Parent workshops on various topics will be held at least monthly at the Family Centers, and also periodically at community locations, to help parents become full partners in the education of their children. Workshop topics will include PACT time to help parents assist work with their children in reading and other academic areas. Parents will also be encouraged to become involved in their child's education through support groups, parent newsletters, and parent volunteer activities.

Parents of preschool children will be encouraged to participate in playgroups and other activities for young children. Playgroups will be held at Title I schools and at sites in the community. Family Involvement staff will conduct activities for local childcare centers. Early literacy and language skills will be developed in an atmosphere that is comfortable for both children and adults.

Because not all parents can come to the school, the Family Center staff will also conduct activities at local businesses and community events during the week, at night and on weekends. Team members will distribute information and answer questions parents have about their children's education.

Parent Information and Resource Center

Parents in Louisiana may contact this Parent Information and Resource Center for resources and information about how to help their children succeed:

Families Helping Families of Jefferson, Inc.
201 Evans Road
Building 1, Suite 100
Harahan, LA 70123
504-888-9111
800-766-7736 (Toll Free)
504-888-0246 (Fax)