

2010 DISTRICT-WIDE PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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PART I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA (SDP) agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- The School District will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents/caregivers in all of its schools, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title I, Part A programs. Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents/caregivers of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1118, the School District will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1118(b) of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1118(d) of the ESEA.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, the School District and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/caregivers with limited English proficiency, parents/caregivers with disabilities, and parents/caregivers of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents/caregivers understand.
- The School District will involve the parents/caregivers of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent engagement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools for parent-related activities or other school-related activity as agreed upon between the parents and the school administration.
- The School District will be governed by the following statutory definition of parent engagement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parent involvement means the participation of parents/caregivers in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—

- (A) *that parents/caregivers play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;*
- (B) *that parents/caregivers are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;*

(C) that parents/caregivers 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;

(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.

PART II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE DISTRICT WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED DISTRICT-WIDE PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

1. **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** will take the following actions to involve parents/caregivers in the joint development of its district-wide parent engagement plan under section 1112 of the ESEA:

- Involve the Title I District-wide Parent Advisory Committee in discussions of the School District parent engagement plan.
- Invite all District parents, through the School District's Parents 'R.' Equal Partners Program ("PREP") to participate in discussions of the School District parent engagement plan.

2. **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** will take the following actions to involve parents/caregivers in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:

- Send a directive to Regional Superintendents and Principals regarding this requirement by September 15th annually.
- Title I representatives will be available to work collaboratively with parent leaders and the Office of Parent and Family Engagement staff to provide District, regional, and school level trainings on various aspects of Title I.
- Schools will develop means to obtain parent input and signatures by non-school district personnel on the School Action (Improvement) Plan.
- Provide adequate advance notice to parents of meetings and cancellation of meetings through newsletters, through Home and School Associations, on bulletin boards (includes electronic), phone calls, and in notices sent home.
- Provide language access services for parents/caregivers whose first language is other than English, including summaries of major School Action (Improvement) Plan points in the 8 major languages of the District, to the extent feasible, with the assistance of site-based, bilingual personnel.

3. **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parental engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:

- In collaboration with the Regional NCLB Liaisons, Regional and School-based Parent Ombudsmen, School-Community Liaisons, Philadelphia Home and School Council (PHSC), Title I Parent Advisory Committee, The Philadelphia Right to Education Task Force, and other parent groups, provide workshops to schools on parent engagement.

- Provide professional development by parents/caregivers for new and existing principals and other administrators on how to involve parents/caregivers effectively.
- Train new and existing staff with parental engagement duties (e.g., Parent Ombudsmen, School-Community Liaisons, School Community Coordinators, and Bilingual Counselor Assistants) to assist school sites in implementing parental engagement.
- Make available the staff of the Office of Educational Equity, Office of Student Support Services, and Office of Parent, Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, and regional staff for technical assistance.
- The Title I Office will provide technical assistance to schools and parent organizations, such as the Title I Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), Home and School Associations, The Philadelphia Right to Education Task Force, and the Parent-Community Group.
- Provide coordination of professional development efforts through the Office of Instructional Development.
- Provide workshops to parents on supporting student achievement and parent engagement.
- Provide workshops to parent volunteers on school safety, cultural diversity, conflict resolution, customer service, and other topics, as requested.

4. **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** will coordinate and integrate parental engagement strategies in Title I, Part A with parental engagement strategies under the following other programs: Head Start, Reading First, Comprehensive Early Learning Centers, Bright Futures, Even Start, Parent Child Home, and Cradle to Classroom, by:

- Holding quarterly meetings between the Office of Early Childhood Education and the Office of Parent and Family Engagement, the office responsible for parental engagement district-wide, including involving parent representatives from different programs and organizations. Minutes from these meetings will be available upon request.
- Conduct joint trainings or presentations for parents; before the new school year begins; about transitioning their child from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten and successful interventions that can be used in the home.
- Involve parent groups from early childhood programs in presentations to families whose first language is other than English.

5. **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** will take the following actions to conduct, with the engagement of parents/caregivers, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent engagement policy in order to assess its impact on family engagement in Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents/caregivers in parental engagement activities (with particular attention to parents/caregivers who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The School District will use the findings of the evaluation about its parental engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental engagement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents/caregivers) its parental engagement policies.

The primary goal of the Parent Engagement Policy is to increase parental engagement within the School District of Philadelphia. Within this primary goal, three subgoals have been identified:

a) inviting parents' input into School District policies and procedures;

- b) making the schools and its educational and physical resources more accessible for parents and;
- c) providing opportunities for parents to gain as much information as possible about their children's academic achievement and how to access resources to support their children's education.

Depending upon available resources, the Office of Research and Program Evaluation or an external evaluator, functioning under the direction of the Office of Research and Program Evaluation, will employ the following methods to evaluate the status of the goal and subgoal attainment: surveys (including the District-wide Survey of administrators, teachers, parents, and students), parent focus groups, record analysis, as well as observation of meetings and training workshops.

6. **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents/caregivers and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents/caregivers, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

A. The School District will, with the assistance of its Title I, Part A schools and Offices of Teaching and Learning, Accountability, Title I, and/or Parent, Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, and the Office of Specialized Instructional Services, provide assistance to parents/caregivers of children served by the School District or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph,

- the State's academic content standards;
- the State's student academic achievement standards;
- the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments;
- the requirements of Title I, Part A;
- how to monitor their child's progress, and
- how to work with educators.

- The Title I Office will be available to collaborate and coordinate with various offices and parent groups to provide presentations and workshops about Title I under the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Encourage schools to invite parents/caregivers to schools on staff development days when above topics are discussed.
- Recommend that principals add a parent component to staff development days at school sites.
- Support parent attendance at conferences and workshops such as the PA State Parent Advisory Council, Regional Family Involvement Conferences, Annual Family Involvement Conference (PA Coalition for Parent Involvement), National Network of Partnership Schools, Good Schools Pennsylvania Conference, Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators' Parent Awareness Training Conference, PA Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and PA Governor's Institutes.
- Utilize parents/caregivers who attend conferences and workshops to do turn around training or write a report as a condition of sponsorship.
- Provide information to parents/caregivers in clear and simple language.

- To the extent practicable, provide workshops in the target language to families whose first language is not English.
- Disseminate materials from the Office of Teaching and Learning and other offices, including, to the extent feasible, translations to parents/caregivers that will be useful references at home.

B. The School District will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents/caregivers work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parent engagement in the regions by:

- Implementing Parent University in regions which will include a range of parent education offerings by School District personnel among other providers, including how to support one's child in school and computer literacy.
- Working with various agencies including, but not limited to: Office of Attendance and Truancy, PA Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) and PA State Parent Advisory Council (SPAC), to establish Parent Resource Centers/Corners/Rooms in schools.
- Providing computer literacy training and other training to help parents/caregivers understand FamilyNet as a tool to monitor their children's achievement.
- Encouraging schools to invite *at least* two parents, one representative and one alternate, to voluntarily participate in the School District's Title I Parents 'R' Equal Partners (PREP) Program. The School District will provide quarterly professional development opportunities about Title I related topics to all PREP representatives.
- Supporting the involvement of three parents from each region on the School District's Title I Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). PAC representatives will be required to hold monthly meetings in their region for their region's PREP representatives. PREP representatives will be expected to conduct turnaround trainings at their schools.
- Supporting schools in planning and implementing school based activities such as family literacy and family math nights and other workshops to help parents/caregivers understand how to support their child's academic achievement with the assistance of the Regional Offices, Office of Teaching and Learning, The Office of Specialized Instructional Services, and Office of Instructional Development.
- Making available District personnel to conduct trainings and presentations for organizations such as the Title I PAC, Philadelphia Home and School Council, Home and School Associations, Philadelphia Right to Education Task Force, and other parent or community organization meetings.
- Providing the above workshops and materials, where possible, in languages other than English.
- Providing the above workshops at community locations besides schools, such as libraries, community organizations, and faith-based organizations, where families may feel more comfortable.

C. The School District will, with the assistance of its schools and parents/caregivers, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to,

communicate with, and work with parents/caregivers as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents/caregivers, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents/caregivers and schools, by:

- Designing and implementing a series of professional development sessions around the above themes.
- Involving parents/caregivers as trainers in sessions with administrators, teachers, and other staff coordinated through the Office of Instructional Development and the Office of Parent, Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships.
- Planning regular meetings between the Office of Instructional Development, Office of Parent, Family, Community Engagement and Faith-based Partnerships, The Office of Specialized Instructional Services, and Title I Parent Advisory Committee parent representatives.

D. The School District will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental engagement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Comprehensive Early Learning Centers, Bright Futures, Even Start, Parent Child Home, and Cradle to Classroom and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents/caregivers in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Conducting inter-office meetings on a quarterly basis as mentioned in Item 4 above.
- Including the parents/caregivers and staff of the above programs in the activities of the Parent Advisory Council.
- Provide language assistance for English language learner (ELL) pre-school children and their families.

E. The School District will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent-programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents/caregivers of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents/caregivers can understand:

- To the extent practicable, provide communications in clear and simple language.
- Provide glossaries to explain acronyms or jargon.
- To the extent practicable, provide materials for people with vision disabilities, e.g., large print materials, upon request.
- Provide summaries and introductions to official documents.
- Provide audio or video tape versions of selected documents.
- Provide oral explanations of written documents when requested.
- Provide language access services to families whose first language is other than English through on-site or telephonic interpretation services, as appropriate.
- Post above mentioned communications on the District's website.
- Provide communications using the auto-dialer, parent link, and school websites.
- Develop a systematic way to gather announcements and relevant information.
- Ask community partners, including libraries, recreation centers, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations, to assist in disseminating information.

- To the extent feasible, air notices on the District cable TV station, PS-TV, on other public access channels and on radio.
- To the extent feasible, place notices in local press, including native language press, educational reform press, and neighborhood papers.

PART III. PARENT NOTICE AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL REFORMS FOR SCHOOLS IN CORRECTIVE ACTION OR RESTRUCTURING STATUS

A. *Purpose.* The School Reform Commission recognizes the extent of its responsibility to implement the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ("NCLB") in the schools of The School District of Philadelphia (the "School District") concerning parent participation in planning and implementation of reforms, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(7) and (8) for schools in corrective action and restructuring status under NCLB. This policy sets out procedures for ensuring notice to parents and opportunities for parents and teachers to participate in these key reform actions.

B. *Delegation of Responsibility.* Reserving to its senior management team and the School Reform Commission itself their decision making role as provided pursuant to the Pennsylvania Public School Code, including but not limited to 24 P.S. §§ 5-510, 6-693, and 6-696, the School Reform Commission directs that for:

1. Schools in Corrective Action

a. The School District shall publish and disseminate information regarding any corrective action the School District takes under subsection 6316(b)(7) of NCLB at a school

- (1) to the public and to the parents of each student enrolled in the school subject to corrective action;
- (2) in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parent can understand; and
- (3) through such means as the Internet, the media and public agencies, including the School District's Web pages.

2. Schools in Restructuring

a. The School District shall

- (1) if, after one (1) full school year of corrective action under 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(7), a school subject to such corrective action continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, then the School District shall prepare a plan and make necessary arrangements to carry out one or more of the alternative governance options set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(8)(B);
- (2) provide prompt notice to teachers and parents whenever a school becomes subject to restructuring under subsections 6316(b)(8)(A) and (B); and
- (3) provide the teachers and parents with an adequate opportunity to –

- (a) comment before taking any action under subsections 6316(b)(8)(A) and (B); and
- (b) participate in developing any plan under subsection 6316(b)(8)(A)(iii) (providing for alternative governance for a school).

3. Duties.

- a. The School District's Chief Executive Office working in conjunction with the Office of Communications and the Chief Academic Officer, shall give necessary notices to parents as required by NCLB and this Policy, and shall organize, sponsor and carry out the parent participation process required under NCLB and this Policy.
- b. Wherever possible, the School District shall integrate the notices, meetings and other requirements mandated by NCLB and this Policy into existing parent notice and participation procedures already implemented pursuant to NCLB, such as school improvement plans and policies.
- c. Communications with parents shall comply with 34 C.F.R. § 200.36, with the proviso that, as provided in 34 C.F.R. § 200.36(c)(1), due to local circumstances, School District officials and schools may elect to provide information, including notices, to schools for distribution to parents.

4. Reservations.

- a. Final decision making authority in connection with schools in corrective action or restructuring status lies with the School Reform Commission under NCLB and the Pennsylvania Public School Code, *see, e.g.*, 24 P.S. §§ 5-510, 6-693, 6-696. In order to carry out its reform mission under the law, the Commission reserves its discretion in regard to all such matters.
- b. Subject to the foregoing reservation, the School District shall seek and make available all reasonable opportunities for parents to participate as provided under NCLB in restructuring decisions concerning their child's schools. Parents may participate through their representatives, including community and advocacy groups. The School Reform Commission encourages participation by all stakeholders committed to the improvement of each school, and looks forward to working with parents and our many other stakeholders.
- c. Implementation of this policy shall not mandate any alterations to any existing collective bargaining agreement to which the School District is a party, nor the alteration of other agreements to which the School District is a party as of the Effective Date.

5. Definitions.

- a. "Corrective Action" has the meaning specified in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(7)(A) – (E) of NCLB.

- b. "Restructuring" has the meaning specified in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(8), and "alternative governance" has the meaning specified in 20 U.S.C. § 6316(b)(8)(B).

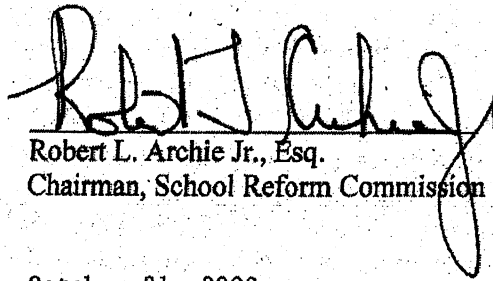
PART IV. DISCRETIONARY DISTRICT WIDE PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

- involving parents/caregivers in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training;
- providing necessary literacy training for parents/caregivers from Title I Even Start and Family Literacy funds;
- paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents/caregivers to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions, as budgets allow;
- training parents/caregivers to enhance the involvement of other parents/caregivers;
- arranging school meetings at a variety of times, or conducting in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents/caregivers who are unable to attend those conferences at school; in order to maximize parent engagement and participation in their children's education;
- researching, adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parent engagement;
- establishing a representative and inclusive district-wide parent advisory council to provide input on all matters related to parent engagement in Title I, Part A programs;
- developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parent engagement activities; and
- providing other reasonable support for parent engagement activities under section 1118 as parents/caregivers may request.

PART IV. ADOPTION

This District-wide Parent Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with parents/caregivers of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by meetings held on March 16, April 20, and May 18, 2009.

This policy was adopted by **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA** on October 21, 2009 and will be in effect for the period of one academic year. The School District will distribute this policy to all parents/caregivers of participating Title I, Part A children on or before **November 30, 2009**.



Robert L. Archie Jr., Esq.
Chairman, School Reform Commission

October 21, 2009

(Date)

References:

NCLB: 20 U.S.C. §§ 6316(b)(7), (8)
C.F.R. 34 C.F.R. § 200.36
State School Code: 24 P.S. § 1-101 *et seq.*, including 24 P.S. §§ 6-693, 6-696