

EASTPORT SCHOOLS & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP POLICY

The Eastport School Committee encourages the regular participation by parents/guardians in all aspects of the school system's programs.

A. POLICY VALUES

The Eastport School Committee directs school and district representatives to use the following policy values as guides in their work and to engage families in ways that:

1. Value and encourage face-to-face relationships.
2. Encourage families and schools to work together to improve student success.
3. Enable a range of voices to be heard by decision-makers.
4. Devote sufficient resources to parent engagement and community outreach.

In order to promote school and family partnerships, the School Committee will:

5. Use the values above to inform other Committee policies and work.
6. Ensure that financial and personnel resources are devoted to these efforts.

In order to promote school and family partnerships, the District will:

7. Communicate to families the learning expectations at all grade levels.
8. Establish a Family Partnership Advisory Committee that is representative of the community to provide input on key district initiatives.
9. Increase family engagement with measurable indicators of progress.

In order to promote school and family partnerships, Schools will:

10. Establish a regular forum for parents to discuss school success plans and their experiences with the school through candid, two-way communication.
11. Include in the school's annual success plan a measurable school and family partnership goal aligned with at least one of the enumerated policy values.
12. Inform families of the learning expectations for all grade levels.

B. COORDINATION WITH TITLE 1 PROGRAM

This district-level policy has been developed jointly with (or: in cooperation with)¹ the parents/guardians of students participating in the school unit's Title I programs. It provides an understanding of the shared responsibility of the school system and parents/guardians in improving students' academic achievement and school performance. The Superintendent/designee will be responsible for distributing this policy to parents/guardians of students participating in Title I programs.

Because parent involvement is so important to a student's success in school, the Board encourages regular participation by parents/guardians in all aspects of the school unit's Title I programs.

C. MECHANISMS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT ALIGNED WITH TITLE 1

Eastport Elementary School and Shead High School provides opportunities for parent/guardian involvement that are aligned with the requirements of Title I programs set forth in law as follows.

1. The school unit involves parents/guardians in the joint development of the school system's plan to help disadvantaged students meet challenging achievement and academic standards and in the process of school review and improvement by:
 - i. Establishing a district-level Parent Advisory Committee with parent/guardian representatives from each building
 - ii. Establishing effective and ongoing two-way communications between the school unit, staff, and parents/guardians;
 - iii. Developing a district-wide newsletter to communicate with parents/guardians about the school unit's Title I plan and to seek their input and participation; and
 - iv. Training staff to work more effectively with families with diverse cultural backgrounds and/or barriers such as illiteracy or limited English proficiency.
2. The school unit provides the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent/guardian involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance by:
 - i. Providing information to parents/guardians about the system and various instruments that will be developed or used to monitor student progress;
 - ii. Providing district-level workshops to assist individual schools in planning and implementing improvement activities;

¹ 20 U.S.C. 6318(a)(2) requires local education agencies (LEAs) that receive Title I funds to "develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy." The policy is to be incorporated into the LEA's Title I plan. The mandated components of the policy are reflected in this document. The means by which these expectations will be met are to be arrived at through a process that features active parental participation. The numbered items suggest some of the ways the school unit can promote parent involvement. Others ways may be arrived at through the participatory process.

- iii. Holding training sessions for Parent Advisory Committee members so that there may be more effective liaisons between parents and schools; and
 - iv. Seeking input from parents/guardians in developing workshops that will help them become more effective partners with the schools in encouraging academic achievement.
3. The school unit builds the capacity of schools and parents/guardians for strong parental involvement by:
 - i. Developing and disseminating a master calendar of district-wide meetings to discuss Title I issues, including evaluation of and suggestions for the district-level Title I policy;
 - ii. Engaging school Parent-Teacher Organizations to seek out and involve parents/guardians through their communications and meetings;
 - iii. Promoting cooperation between the school unit and other agencies or school/community groups to furnish learning opportunities, increase awareness of support services, and disseminate information regarding parenting skills and child/adolescent development; and
 - iv. Provide ongoing communication about opportunities to serve on the Parental Advisory Committee, volunteer in the schools, and work more effectively with their children to reinforce learning and foster achievement.
4. The school unit coordinates and integrates parent/guardian involvement strategies for Title I programs with those of other programs by:
 - i. Involving school system and building representatives from other programs to assist in identifying specific population needs; and
 - ii. Sharing data between programs to assist in developing new initiatives to improve student academic achievement and school improvement.
5. The school unit conducts, with the involvement of parents/guardians, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under Title I, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents/guardians in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents/guardians who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), using the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parent/guardian involvement, and revising, if necessary, the parent/guardian involvement policies described in this section by:
 - i. Evaluating the content and effectiveness of the parent/guardian involvement policy through a variety of means such as surveys,

- workshops, focus groups, and informal meetings involving district and school administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians;
 - ii. Identifying and overcoming barriers to effective evaluation and input, e.g., language support for parents/guardians who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency, scheduling multiple meetings at various times of day or night, meeting in places accessible by public transportation, or providing a means of transportation; and
 - iii. Identifying potential policy changes and program improvements.
6. The school unit involves parents/guardians in the activities of the schools served under Title I by:
- i. Keeping parents/guardians informed of the objectives of the school unit's Title I programs;
 - ii. Providing communication and calendar information to alert parents/guardians of meetings or events and encouraging their participation;
 - iii. Providing central coordination for district, school, and PTO meetings and other events to create a master calendar to facilitate parent/guardian participation; and
 - iv. Promoting opportunities for parents as volunteers in the classroom and in school programs.

D. PARENT INVOLVEMENT DURING ADVISORY MEETINGS

The school shall convene an annual meeting at a convenient time to which all parents/guardians of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend to inform them of the school's participation under Title I, explain the right of parents to be involved, and to encourage their involvement in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I programs and parent involvement policy.

The school will offer at least two to four other meetings during the school year, held at various times in the morning or evening for parents/guardians of students participating in Title I programs.

The building principal/designee will:

1. Invite parents/guardians of participating children to the annual meeting and to other meetings held during the school year;
2. Provide an overview of Title I and the programs the school provides under it;
3. Explain the rights of parents/guardians to be involved in developing and reviewing the school's parent involvement policy, including the School-Parent Compact;
4. Provide 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;

5. Give parents/guardians an opportunity to ask questions and engage in informal discussion about student achievement and school performance;
6. Respond to requests from parents for opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate (as appropriate) in decisions relating to the education of their children;
7. Invite parents/guardians to serve on the Parent Advisory Committee and/or other school or district-level Title I committees;
8. Invite parents/guardians to participate in the planning, review, and improvement of school programs and the school-parent involvement policy;
9. With the input of parents/guardians, establish a process by which an adequate representation of parents/guardians can be assured;
10. Describe the process by which parents/guardians may express concerns and complaints;
11. Engage school-based parent organizations in outreach to parents/guardians; and
12. Arrange for child care so that parents/guardians who would otherwise be unable to attend may do so.

E. SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

This School-Parent Compact describes how parents, school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's academic achievement standards.

The school is responsible for providing a high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables students served under Title I to meet the State's academic achievement standards.

1. Parents/guardians will be responsible for supporting their children's learning by:
 - i. Monitoring their children's attendance;
 - ii. Providing assistance & encouraging their children to complete homework;
 - iii. Encouraging their children to ask for help from teachers or aides;
 - iv. Reading to or with their children;
 - v. Monitoring and limiting their children's screen time;
 - vi. Volunteering in the classroom and for school-related activities;
 - vii. Participating in decisions related to the education of their children; and
 - viii. Enrolling their children in extracurricular and age-appropriate, community-based, after-school activities.

2. The school will address the importance of communication between parents and teachers on an ongoing basis by:
 - i. Scheduling one or more parent-teacher meetings annually for parents/guardians of elementary school level students during which the Compact shall be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement;
 - ii. Providing frequent progress reports to parents/guardians;
 - iii. Providing parents/guardians with reasonable access to staff to discuss issues related to their children's learning;
 - iv. Giving parents the opportunity to observe classroom activities or volunteers in the classroom; and
 - v. Providing supervision and feedback for parents/guardians who volunteer.

F. TERMS & DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, "parents/guardians" includes other family members involved in supervising the child's schooling.

The "School-Parent Compact" shall:

1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment enabling children to meet the State's academic achievement standards;
2. Address the importance of parent-teacher communication on an ongoing basis, with, at a minimum, parent-teacher conferences, frequent reports to parents, and reasonable access to staff.

G. DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Superintendent has overall responsibility for implementing this policy and accompanying regulations, with support from the Family Partnership Advisory Committee and designee, if assigned. This policy does not affect or alter the authority of the Board, the Superintendent and administration to act in accordance with law and other applicable policies.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. § 6318

Eastport School Committee

First Reading :

Adopted: