



BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY 10000
PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT

Effective: January 23, 2007

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County believes that the education of children is a responsibility shared by parents, families, the school system and the community.

The Board recognizes the parent as the child's first and lifelong teacher and that it is essential to involve parents in educational decisions as caring advocates for their children. The Board of Education is committed to promoting the involvement of all parents of students in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), regardless of culture, religion, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, primary language, parent/family education, geographical location or any other factor that may limit involvement.

The Board encourages collaboration with parents and the community as participants in school governance and as active partners in forwarding the school system's goals and philosophy.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the school system and individual schools to establish programs and practices that cultivate a respectful climate, promote open communication, and provide opportunities for effective parent and community involvement and engagement.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the school system and individual schools that endorse and encourage meaningful partnerships between and among schools, parents, families and the community to support the social, emotional and academic growth of students. This policy fulfills federal and state mandates.

III. Definitions

- A. Advocate – A person who pleads another's cause; a person who speaks or writes in support of something.
- B. Community – The society at large which includes, but is not limited to, families, businesses, faith communities, government agencies, non-profit service organizations, other organizations, and individuals.

- C. Family – A child's primary care-giving unit.
- D. Governance – For purposes of this policy, a collaborative team approach to setting mutual goals and making shared policy, procedure, and program decisions.
- E. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
 - 1. Biological parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 - 2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 - 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
 - 4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
 - 5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian.
 - 6. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement as provided by section 5-507 of the Family Law Article.
- F. Partnership – An association of two or more parties taking part in some activity in common with one another or others; two or more parties engaged in working toward the same outcomes.

IV. Standards

- A. All schools and offices will develop appropriate programs and practices to promote the involvement of all parents and the community.
- B. Employees will demonstrate a commitment to parent, family, and community involvement in the education process and take appropriate steps to meet the mandates of this policy.
- C. Parents and families are expected to be involved in their child's education and assume a vital role in ensuring success in school for their children.
- D. Formal and informal processes will be provided for addressing concerns of family and community members and for providing input on school system policies and procedures.

- E. The HCPSS shall comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act 2001 related to parent and family involvement, including:
 - 1. Meaningful consultation with parents of children participating in Title I programs to plan and operate programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents consistent with Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
 - 2. An annual review of this policy in their schools.
- F. The HCPSS will provide professional development and resources to enable staff to meet the expectations of this policy.

V. Compliance

- A. The Superintendent's designee will ensure that staff are provided professional development and resources to implement this policy and will monitor implementation of this policy and procedures.
- B. Principals of Title I schools are responsible for compliance with Standard E in their schools.
- C. The Superintendent's designee is responsible for determining annually whether to recommend revision to this policy and procedures based on staff and stakeholder input. If it is determined, under the provisions of Policy 2020, that a committee should be convened for such a revision, the designee is responsible for ensuring that the revision committee includes Title I parent representation in accordance with NCLB mandates.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
 - No Child Left Behind Act 2001 (Sections 1112, 1116, and 1118)
 - COMAR 13A.01.04.06
- B. Other Board Policies
 - Policy 1000 Civility
 - Policy 2030 Ombudsman
 - Policy 2040 Public Participation in Meetings of the Board
 - Policy 2050 Advisory Committees to Staff and Schools
 - Policy 2060 Advisory Committees to the Board of Education

ADOPTED: November 22, 1994
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I. In support of this policy, local school personnel will:

Foundations

- A. Expand parent, family, and community involvement by identifying and reducing or eliminating barriers to involvement, including but not limited to culture, religion, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, primary language, parent/family education, and geographical location.
- B. Provide professional development to school staff, in conjunction with parents, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs.

Parenting

- C Address needs that may impact achievement through workshops, forums, and other parent education opportunities.

Communicating

- D. Communicate with parents, families and the community about school system policies, regulations, and other general information using various methods, media, resources, times, and languages.
- E. Establish and maintain systematic, two-way communication with parents, families and the community that include but are not limited to regular school newsletters, orientation programs, access to school staff, parent teacher conferences, student progress reports, telephone calls, and electronic communication.

Volunteering

- F. Assure parents and families access to schools, their child's classroom, and/or school-sponsored activities subject to school system policy and negotiated agreements.
- G. Coordinate and integrate parent and community involvement activities within the school.
- H. Encourage parents and the community to volunteer in the classroom and in other areas of the school, providing appropriate training, supervision, and support for all volunteers.

- I. Provide space for a parent/volunteer room in the school when feasible.

Learning at Home

- J. Provide training and resources at the school level to parents and families which enable them to support the curriculum in a positive home learning environment.

Decision Making

- K. Respect the right of parents, families, and the community to serve as advocates for children; support and encourage this advocacy by assisting them in accessing public information and appropriate processes.
- L. Encourage parent groups to reflect the diversity of the school's community to the extent possible consistent with the purposes of the groups, and support their efforts to do so.
- M. Recognize and support parents and the community as participants in appropriate decision making processes and facilitate their leadership in governance, advisory and advocacy roles.
- N. Establish school improvement teams that include parent and community members who participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the school improvement plan. Membership on the team will reflect the school/community diversity to the greatest extent possible including the participation of parents of Title I participating students in Title I schools.
- O. Develop and implement systems for collecting and analyzing feedback from parents on involvement opportunities to ensure continuous improvement.
- P. Involve Title I parents in Title I schools in
 - 1. An annual review of this policy
 - 2. Development, implementation, and annual review of the Title I schoolwide parent involvement plan and Title I school-parent compact. The Title I school-parent compact is a written agreement between a school and the parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs that identifies the activities that the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will undertake to share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement.
 - 3. Joint development of Title I program activities under NCLB Section 1112 and the process of school review and improvement under NCLB Section 1116.

Collaborating with the Community

- Q. Develop partnerships at the school level with interested community members and community groups in order to achieve school goals. In support of these partnerships, provide training to promote effective involvement.

II. In support of this policy, the Department of Education will:

Foundations

- A. Expand parent, family, and community involvement by identifying and reducing or eliminating barriers to involvement, including but not limited to culture, religion, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, primary language, parent/family education, and geographical location.
- B. Identify, develop, share, and support successful parent, family, and community involvement programs, plans, and activities for use by local schools to improve student academic achievement and school performance. Educate school system staff, with advisement from parents, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools.

Parenting

- C. Address needs that may impact achievement through workshops, forums, and other parent education opportunities.

Communicating

- D. Inform parents, families, and community members about the function and organization of the school system, including appropriate directory information.
- E. Communicate with parents, families, and the community about school system policies, regulations, and other appropriate information.
- F. Communicate methods by which parents, families, and the community can contribute suggestions for the continued improvement of the school system, including means by which they may communicate directly with the Board of Education, such as public hearings.
- G. Assist parents, families, and community members with school-related issues, resolving problems, and identifying resources. Develop and implement appropriate system-wide problem solving processes.

Learning at Home

- H. Provide training and resources at the school system level to parents and families which enable them to support the curriculum in a positive home learning environment.

Decision Making

- I. Recognize and support parents and the community as participants in appropriate decision-making processes and facilitate their leadership in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles.
- J. Include active parent and community representation on standing and ad hoc advisory committees of the Department of Education and its various offices and programs when appropriate. Committee membership should reflect the diversity of the community to the greatest extent possible.
- K. Assist local schools and school system offices in the development of mechanisms to use in assessing the effectiveness of their parent, family, and community involvement efforts.
- L. Establish staff liaisons to the PTA Council of Howard County, the Citizens' Advisory Committee to the Board of Education, and other organizations as appropriate.
- M. Include representation by parents of Title I participating students on any committee charged with revising this policy and/or implementation procedures.

Collaborating with the Community

- N. Develop partnerships at the school and system level with parents, interested businesses, organizations, and community members in order to achieve school system goals. In support of these partnerships, provide training to promote effective involvement.
- O. Work with businesses, organizations, and other government agencies to gain support and assistance for parent, family, and community involvement efforts.
- P. Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with the county, including state and federally funded programs.

III. In accordance with this policy, parents and families are encouraged to:

Foundations

- A. Take advantage of opportunities, including training, provided by local schools and the school system for the involvement of parents in support of their children's education.
- B. Adhere to and support school and school system policies and procedures as appropriate when acting as parent, volunteer, advocate for children, member of committee or governance group, or other role.

Parenting

- C. Support the goal of the Student Code of Conduct to provide a safe and nurturing environment and the individual efforts of employees to implement the code.
- D. Ensure their child's attendance in school and make every effort to avoid extended absences and chronic tardiness.
- E. Make sure their child comes to school each day ready to learn with adequate sleep, good nutrition, and the appropriate supplies and materials.
- F. Prepare their child for formal schooling by exposing the child to basic behaviors and skills essential to success.
- G. Display confidence in their child's ability to succeed.

Communicating

- H. Seek appropriate assistance, information, and services from schools, the school system, and the community to help their children to be successful.
- I. Communicate with the school about their child and factors which will help the school staff work successfully with their child.
- J. Attend parent conferences.
- K. Visit their child's school; report to the office first when visiting the school and make arrangements in advance with the teacher when visiting an individual classroom.

Volunteering

- L. Support educators in their efforts to provide a quality education for all children.
- M. Support school activities.
- N. Respect the confidentiality of student records.

Learning at Home

- O. Spend time engaging their child in learning activities.
- P. Monitor academic progress by checking their child's homework each night, reviewing performance tests and assessments, and discussing the school activities of the day.

Decision Making

- Q. Participate in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles within the school system.

Collaborating with the Community

- R. Participate in activities that promote the health and welfare of children.

IV. In support of this policy, the community is encouraged to:

Foundations

- A. Share information, services, and resources that support schools and school system goals.
- B. Take advantage of opportunities, including training, provided by local schools and the school system in support of children's education.
- C. Adhere to and support school and school system policies and procedures as appropriate when acting as parent, volunteer, advocate for children, member of committee or governance group, or other role.

Parenting

- D. Share information, services, and resources that strengthen families.

Communicating

- E. Engage in two-way communication with schools and the school system in support of student learning.

Volunteering

- F. Respect the confidentiality of student records.
- G. Support the goal of the Student Code of Conduct to provide a safe and nurturing environment and the individual efforts of employees to implement the code.
- H. Participate in and support school volunteer and mentor programs.

Learning at Home

- I. Engage in partnerships with schools and the school system in support of student learning and school system goals.

Decision Making

J. Participate in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles within the school system.

Collaborating with the Community

K. Provide opportunities for students to participate in community service.

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