

4.502 Family Engagement

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to partner with families in a coordinated effort to provide Memphis City Schools students with a home/school/community environment that encourages academic achievement and enables students to meet Federal, state and city academic performance standards.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all families that have children in Memphis City Schools and to administrators, principals, teachers and other support personnel in Memphis City Schools.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Families have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. They provide the foundation for academic success. Memphis City Schools respects the roles and responsibilities of families in assuring that their children are adequately educated, and is committed to developing a strong, ongoing partnership with families to create or strengthen stimulating home and school learning environments. Administrators, principals, teachers and support staff at each school must create a climate of respect for and cooperation with families that will be evident in all teacher and staff interactions. This climate of respect and cooperation will be based on the following goals:

1. To provide meaningful two-way communications between families and teachers and among families, schools, the district and the community;
2. To provide opportunities for meaningful and varied participation by families in district and school leadership organizations and other school activities and in programs and activities in the community that support student achievement;
3. To eliminate or reduce barriers to greater family participation and effective parent/child relations. Barriers include, but are not limited to, socioeconomic, language/cultural/racial/ethnic, special needs or limited literacy; and
4. To provide training opportunities and informational seminars for families to enable them to understand student academic content and achievement standards and curricular materials and to improve their parenting skills.

The school district, in conjunction with parents/guardians, shall develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan based on the goals outlined in this policy. Activities and strategies included in the plan shall be incorporated in the Tennessee Comprehensive Systemwide Planning Process. All Title I and non-Title I schools, in conjunction with parents/guardians, also shall develop a family and community engagement plan based on the district's parent involvement goals and other goals a school deems appropriate. Parents at Title I schools shall also fully participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the School Instructional Improvement Plan and the school review process for assessing



progress. The family and community engagement plan and a summary of the plan's outcomes shall be included in the school's School Instructional Improvement Plan, if applicable.

Parent Assembly

The Superintendent of Schools shall organize a districtwide Parent Assembly to assist the school system in providing children with a quality education. The purposes of the Parent Assembly are:

- a. To support the school system at the national, state and local level in advocating for sound educational programs and policies;
- b. To advise the Superintendent on issues of concern to parents; and
- c. To support the development of strong parent organizations at all schools.

The Parent Assembly shall include parent representatives from all schools in the district.

Family and Community Advisory Council

The Superintendent of Schools shall organize a Family and Community Advisory Council to assist the school system in providing children with a quality education. The Council shall be comprised of members of the Parent Assembly, representing Title I and non-Title I schools; district personnel; a Board member; and community representatives. The Council shall reflect the school district's socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. The purpose of the Council shall be to:

- a. Participate in developing, implementing and evaluating a districtwide family engagement policy;
- b. Participate in developing, implementing and evaluating the districtwide Family and Community Engagement Plan and in coordinating parent involvement strategies among various programs;
- c. Participate in developing the districtwide School Consolidated Plan;
- d. Participate in planning and developing districtwide policies and programs addressing such issues as homework, attendance and student behavior; and
- e. Participate in deciding how Title I funds for family involvement activities are allotted.

Each local school shall also have a local parent/school/community council that will assist in planning family involvement activities and promoting student achievement at the school. The council, which can be an existing or new organization, must reflect the diverse student population at the school. The purpose of the council shall be to:

- a. Participate in developing, implementing and evaluating the schoolwide Family and Community Engagement Plan;
- b. Participate in developing the School Instructional Improvement Plan;
- c. Participate in planning and developing school-based rules and programs addressing such issues as homework, attendance and student behavior; and
- d. Participate in deciding how Title I funds for family involvement activities are allotted.

Payment of a membership fee to a schoolwide parent organization shall not be a precondition to becoming a parent representative on the council.



Memphis City Schools shall offer district level administrators, local school administrators and teachers formal training to increase knowledge and skills in working with families. Memphis City Schools also shall support the development of teaching curricula and training programs on parental involvement within the district and in the university community. The district shall initiate contact with all local colleges to discuss parental involvement curricula at their institutions. Such discussions shall include, but not be limited to, opportunities for field experience in parental involvement for pre-service teachers and specific courses on parental involvement at each institution for schools, parents and community members.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Department of Student Support Services is responsible for implementing this policy.
- B. The Department of NCLB, with support from the Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, is responsible for evaluating the school district's Family Engagement Plan.
- C. Principals are responsible for ensuring that school-based family and community engagement plans are developed, implemented and evaluated.
- D. Parents/guardians are responsible for pursuing opportunities in the school, home environment and community that support their children's education and ensure that their children meet academic standards.

Legal References:

1. TCA 49-2-305
2. TCA 49-6-7001-7003
3. Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 1118

Cross Reference:

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I. District Administration

- A. The Office of the Chief Academic Officer shall organize a Parent Assembly composed of one parent elected from each school in the district. The parent representative shall be selected by a parent group at the school that represents the interests of all parents, such as the PTA or PTO or the Title One Advisory Council.

The Parent Assembly will be governed by a 13-person executive board. The Board members will be Parent Assembly representatives and will be elected by the members of the Assembly. The executive board will reflect geographic, grade level and special needs representation. A minimum of nine members of the Board shall represent schools that receive Title I funds.

Members of the Parent Assembly and the Executive Board shall serve two-year terms.

- B. The Family and Community Advisory Council shall have a membership of 19. Seven representatives must be from the executive board of the Parent Assembly, representing elementary, middle and high schools, and special needs populations. They shall be appointed by the chair of the executive board. At least four of the seven Parent Assembly representatives must be from schools that receive Title I funding. Eight representatives shall be school district personnel. They shall be appointed by the Superintendent. Three representatives shall be from the Memphis community. They shall be appointed by the parent and district representatives to the Advisory Council. One representative shall be a school board member, who shall be appointed by the president of the Board. All district and community members of the Advisory Council shall serve two-year terms. All parent members of the Council shall serve two-year terms beginning from the date of their service on the Parent Assembly. The Board member representative shall serve a one-year term.
- C. The Family and Community Advisory Council shall develop a Family and Community Engagement Plan based on the goals outlined in the policy. The plan shall include measurable objectives for reaching the parent involvement goals, a timeline for achieving the goals and a method for evaluating the outcomes. The plan shall become a part of the school district's Title I Consolidated Plan.
- D. The Division of Parent Involvement will coordinate all activities related to family engagement, including activities related to training for parents. Training opportunities and informational seminars for families will be available at convenient hours, including after hours and on weekends, if necessary.
- E. The Division of Parent Involvement will develop a centralized method of maintaining and disseminating information to parents, and receiving information from parents. In addition to Memphis City Schools resources, the district will use local television, radio, and print media to inform parents of their federal rights and responsibilities.

II. Local Schools

- A.** Each school shall facilitate the establishment of at least one schoolwide parent organization that represents the diversity of the student population.
- B.** Parent representatives, the school and the community shall develop a Family Engagement Plan based on the goals outlined in the policy. The plan shall include measurable objectives for reaching the parent involvement goals, a timeline for achieving the goals and a method for evaluating the outcomes. The plan shall become a part of the school's School Instructional Improvement Plan at Title 1 schools.
- C.** Principals shall demonstrate that every parent is informed of and afforded the opportunity to participate in the parent organization and that all parents are informed of the decisions and activities of the parent organization.
- D.** Parents at Title I schools shall fully participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the School Instructional Improvement Plan. The principal shall document how parents and school-based decision making groups were involved and allow parents to sign off on the plan as proof of their involvement in the preparation/revision of the School Instructional Improvement Plan. A school may include staff members who are also involved parents at the school on a School Instructional Improvement planning team, but the staff members shall not be the parent representatives from that school for reporting purposes. The parent representative must be a non-employee of the school.