

# Clay County School District

## Parent Involvement Policy

### **1. District will be committed to involving families in policy development.**

The Clay County School System is committed to working collaboratively with all parents/guardians to provide a quality-learning environment and engage families in the development of the district family engagement policy. The District recognizes each parent as their child's first teacher and acknowledges the powerful influence of parents on their child's life. The Clay County School District shall be committed to developing family-friendly schools, offices and programs that welcome and serve parents and families in positive and supportive environments.

The District recognizes that families are diverse in culture, economic, language and demographic issues. The goal is for our schools and teachers to meaningfully collaborate with all parents in meeting the needs of individual students and their families. Barriers to communication will be met by using appropriate language and methods, such as translators for direct meetings and translations of learning materials that are taken home by the students. Meeting times, dates and locations will be adjusted to accommodate other areas of diversity, which will encourage participation.

The development of a District Parent Involvement Advisory Committee inviting family representatives from all schools in Clay County, school staff to represent all areas of concern, and community representatives will be the District's first approach to developing family friendly and engaging schools. The door will not be closed to accepting other family members who wish to become a part of this committee. As the Committee deems it necessary they will split into focus groups to address issues that arise and form planning groups to carry the plan of work forward. All groups will be parent driven relying on the District Staff for direction when needed.

All of Clay County Schools' parents will be notified of the parent involvement policy and information related to school and parent policy, programs, meetings, and activities by use of the district website, newspaper articles, direct letters and/or newsletters from the schools.

### **2. District Policy includes technical assistance and planning support for effective engagement.**

Members of the District Office Staff and Individual School Faculty Members will be invited to attend a series of Family Friendly Schools Workshops to learn how to offer technical assistance and planning support for effective engagement. This team will provide assistance and planning support for the system wide Family Engagement Team. At the first meeting copies of expectations for the policy will be shared with all team members. A question and answer session will help provide assistance in the formation and planning stages of the team. At this time those present will be asked as to whether they will accept the challenge to become the District Family Engagement Team.

School review and improvement is a continuous process. The Clay County School District approved the current policy in 2005 and the Advisory Committee will review and make revisions to assure that the needs of those being represented are being met. Future plans are for the committee to meet at least bi-monthly to provide input from families as to the effectiveness of the program. In addition, the board policy calls for the policy to be reviewed annually in November of each school year.

The District and individual schools will use the information gleaned from the advisory council and Individual School Improvement Councils/Title I Planning Teams in the Title I schools to assist in their strategic planning process to design, revise, and implement appropriate activities. Parents in all schools have the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the programs and other suggestions for improvement through activities which include such efforts as surveys, an annual parent meeting, reading the local policy posted on the school website, personal contact with teachers, principals, and district staff.

### **3. District Policy supports clearly articulated goals for extent and type of family engagement.**

The district staff will work with the Family Engagement Team to encourage all individual schools to provide the following activities and family engagement opportunities to meet the goals of the Parent Involvement School Board

Policy.

- Parent/teacher conferences will be held at least twice annually. Other conference opportunities will be scheduled at the request of the parent or teacher. During these conferences or at any time during the year, parents can access all learning materials, the school curriculum and copies of the Clay County School Board Policy Manual.
- Schools shall provide parents access to school improvement plans.
- Schools will send home handbooks to each parent that explains individual school policies. These handbooks will include, but not be limited to, an explanation of school board approved attendance policies and code of conduct rules and regulations.
- Student progress reports will be sent at least once during each grading period.
- Individual communications with parents will be provided as needed.
- Schools shall ensure that information related to school programs is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
- Schools shall to the extent practicable, provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/families with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory or homeless children.
- Schools shall provide parents timely information about student performance on state mandated exams.
- Schools shall provide parents with timely information regarding the expectations regarding homework so that they may play an integral role in assisting student learning. These services will often be provided through oral communication with families.
- Schools shall provide information about the school's report card to parents.
- The district website will be used to post the parent involvement policy/plan and other various school events, to keep parents informed.

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**4. District Policy specifies the degree of evaluation necessary to promote continuous improvement of the engagement of all families.**

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The District shall conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of schools served through Title I. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited literacy, have limited English proficiency or are of any racial or ethnic minority background. This evaluation will be in the form of an annual survey, coupled with parental feedback received throughout the course of the school year. The findings of this evaluation will be used to design strategies for more effective involvement and to revise this parent involvement policy if necessary.

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**5. District Policy includes a requirement for family engagement at all school sites.**

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The District shall require each school receiving Title I funds to develop, with the participation of parents, a parent involvement policy and a plan on how each school allocation of parent involvement funds will be used to build capacity for strong parental involvement. The individual school goals will incorporate the District policy goals. Each individual school policy will be evaluated at least annually to assure that family engagement activities place an emphasis on improved student learning. This evaluation will use comparisons of numbers of family members who are engaged in school activities such as conferences, open houses, workshop sessions, volunteers and other school related activities to show growth in family engagement at the school level. All schools are expected to demonstrate consistent, measurable progress toward all family engagement goals. The yearly assessment will be reviewed by the board of education.

**6. District policy includes procedures for parents to access and understand \_\_\_\_\_ course of study or curricular materials as well as Federal, State, and local standards.**

The Clay County School District shall assist parents in accessing and understanding course of study or curricular materials as well as Federal, State and local standards by working closely with the individual schools to offer programs such as parent orientation meetings for each grade level prior to the beginning of the school year, by working with the individual school's guidance counselors to set up a parent area and have specified times for parent/family conferences to explain course of study and curricular materials by answering questions and providing information in an understandable and easy to read format, as well as providing web site information for families to

access information regarding federal and state standards for course work at each grade level.

**7. District Policy encourages the support of district involvement in parenting skills.**

The Clay County School District shall assist parents in learning how home environments can support the academic achievement of students. The school district provides a Family Resource Center available to all families who have children enrolled in the Clay County School District. The FRC will offer families the opportunity to attend workshops and parent classes that can assist parents in accessing and securing educational information, services and opportunities for their children. When needed special assistance will be provided to ensure that non-English speaking parents might also participate as full partners in the education of their children.

In addition to business leaders in the communities, other program areas such as Head Start, Daycare Programs for before and after school care, and the newly developed Pre-Kindergarten program will also be encouraged to participate in joint activities that promote parental involvement strategies. The local Head Start Program has and will continue to be invited to participate in programs provided by the district FRC and to take part in transition activities to help prepare children for entrance into public kindergarten.

In addition to offering parent-learning opportunities, the central office staff will work closely with the individual schools' staffs to develop appropriate procedures to create and sustain effective parenting practices. The district through the use of Title I Parent Involvement monies will provide for materials and supplies necessary for the development of parent involvement activities.

**8. District Policy incorporates family involvement in decision-making and governance.**

The District policy will include family representatives from all areas, staff members, and community representatives to help make decisions regarding governing family engagement activities and needs. The District team will be comprised of the above-mentioned representatives and will be accountable for system-wide parent involvement planning. The district shall require that each school receiving Title I funds to develop jointly with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the school staff and students will share responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

**9. District Policy supports professional development to build the capacity for family engagement.**

The District shall include professional development activities as an area of need in the local consolidated plan for school improvement. The Family Friendly Survey results will be used to document a need for this addition to the plan.

On-going and meaningful professional development activities will be provided to enhance the ability of all professional and support staff to effectively serve all students, parents, and families in the school system. Members of the Parent Involvement Teams will be invited to participate in the planning of these activities to ensure that the needs of the families involved are met.

**10. District Policy specifies budget and funding in family engagement.**

As a priority for the District, parent involvement activities will be supported through the allocation of District Federal resources.