

**State Board of Education**  
**Parent and Family Involvement Policy**  
May 18, 2007 \*\*\* Approved July 10, 2007

The State Board of Education of Ohio recognizes parents and families as children's first and most important teachers. When parents enroll their children in school, from preschool through high school, the responsibility of education and care is shared with the school and the community. Partnerships among families, schools and communities that are child-centered and family-strengthening can engage, guide and motivate students to be productive citizens in a global society.

With the passage of Ohio Senate Bill 311, the Ohio Revised Code [ORC 3313.472 (B)] now states the State Board of Education is required to adopt recommendations for the development of parental involvement policies in consultation with the National Center for Parents at the University of Toledo.

The State Board of Education strongly encourages local school boards to incorporate into local policies the following recommendations included hereto, which will enhance existing parent involvement policy requirements stated in ORC Sections 3313.472 (A), 3324.04 and 3324.06; *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, Title I, Section 1118; *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004* Sections 650 and 664. These recommendations incorporate the State Board of Education's School Readiness Guiding Principles and School Climate Guidelines on family involvement. The State Board intends that these recommendations be used in the development of local practices, programs, data collection and evaluation.

The following are existing state requirements for parent involvement policies, as stated in ORC 3313.472 (A):

“Each school district board of education of each city, exempted village, local and joint vocational school district is required to adopt a policy on parental involvement in the schools of the district.

**1) The policy shall** be designed to build consistent and effective communication between parents and foster caregivers of students enrolled in the district and teachers and administrators assigned to the schools their children attend.

**2) The policy shall** provide the opportunity for parents and foster caregivers to be actively involved in their children's education and to be informed of the following:

(a) The importance of the involvement of parents and foster caregivers in directly affecting the success of their children's or foster children's educational efforts;

(b) How and when to assist their children or foster children in and support their children's or foster children's classroom learning activities;

(c) Techniques, strategies, and skills to use at home to improve their children's or foster children's academic success and to support their children's or foster children's academic efforts at school and their children's or foster children's development as future responsible adult members of society.”

In support of the parent and family involvement policy and recommendations, the State Board of Education has directed the Ohio Department of Education to build the capacity of local district and schools by providing effective family and community engagement models, products and professional development to support the local districts in systematically integrating parent and family involvement into Ohio's preschool through high-school education system.

The State Board of Education also directed the Ohio Department of Education to develop a bi-annual outcomes-driven plan, including a strategy to leverage existing resources and to develop a measure for family involvement. The measure will be approved by the State Board of Education.

## **Parent and Family Involvement Policy Recommendations [ORC 3313.472 (B)]**

Local school boards, district and schools shall adopt a policy on parent involvement. Districts and schools are encouraged to incorporate the following recommendations that support parent and family involvement in children's education and in school activities.

Although research and existing federal, state and local policies use the term *parents*, we prefer to include *families* so that it is inclusive of children's primary caregivers who are not their biological parents, such as foster caregivers, grandparents and other family members. In some cases, the term families might also represent professionals such as child service case managers and parole officers who act as caregivers when a parent(s) is unavailable or needs support.

### **Parent and Family Involvement in Education**

- Respect and value parents and families as children's first teachers and the primary decision-makers in children's education.\*◇
- Assist parents and families in acquiring techniques, strategies and skills, by offering trainings and materials they can use to support children's at-home learning and academic success in school. \*◇
- Provide parents and families with timely and meaningful information in understandable language on Ohio's academic standards; state and local assessments; and legal requirements so that they can make informed decisions about their children's academic future. These legal requirements include Title I, Section 1118; parent participation rights under IDEA; and gifted students under ORC 3324.04 and 3324.06. \*◇
- Collaborate with community-based programs, including health and human service providers, to ensure that the parents and families have the resources they need to be involved in their children's education, growth and development. ◇
- Coordinate and integrate parent and family involvement programs and activities into Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers Programs, public preschool, special education, gifted students' services, parent resource centers and other community activities. \*◇

◇ Indicates IDEA 2004 Sections 650 & 644 parent involvement requirements

\* Indicates Title I Section 1118 parent involvement requirements

- Help parents and families create supportive conditions at home that emphasize the importance of education and learning. ◇

### **Parent and Family Involvement in Schools**

- Respect, value and involve parents and families as partners and decision-makers in school continuous improvement planning.
- Develop policies regarding school involvement with parents and families and distribute the policy in language they can understand. \*◇
- Create parent and family engagement activities that respect the various cultures, languages, practices and customs; and build relationships among parents, families and schools through bridging economic and cultural barriers. ◇
- Promote consistent and effective two-way communication between all students' parents, family members and school personnel. \*
- Prepare parents and families to be involved in meaningful meetings and discussions with administrators, teachers and staff. \*◇
- Design a range of meaningful opportunities for parents and families to be involved in schools that reflect the specific needs and characteristics of parents and families in a particular school or district.
- Create welcoming and supportive school environments for parents and families that are child-centered and family-strengthening.
- Provide logistical support (e.g., transportation, child care) so parents and families can participate in school-sponsored family involvement events. \*
- Encourage businesses and industries to offer parent- and family-friendly policies that support parent and family involvement in children's school activities.

### **Guidance for Implementation**

The following are evidence-based practices and processes that districts and schools are encouraged to use to effectively implement their parent and family involvement policies:

- Collaborate with health and human services agencies to provide access; coordinate support services for students, parents and families. ◇
- Build strong partnerships and assist parents and families in connecting with entities such as community-based programs, higher-education institutions, libraries and business resources to enhance students' in-school and out-of-school learning opportunities, including field-based education, internships, mentoring programs, arts and sports programs, and community service activities.
- Offer ongoing and systematic professional development for administrators, teachers and pupil-services staff on the utility of building strong partnerships with families; the importance of reaching out to families through multiple communication pathways; designing meaningful parent conferences; and implementing and coordinating family involvement programs schoolwide. \*◇

◇ Indicates IDEA 2004 Sections 650 & 644 parent involvement requirements

\* Indicates Title I Section 1118 parent involvement requirements

- Develop a comprehensive parent, family and community engagement plan with parents, families and community members, based on parent, family, student and school needs, with defined outcomes, measurements, strategies and activities grounded in research and logically linked to academic achievement; and incorporate into continuous improvement and school improvement plans.
- Evaluate annually and modify a comprehensive parent, family and community engagement plan using outcome data and input from families, students, school staff and community members.
- Dedicate fiscal, personnel, facilities and other resources to support the ongoing implementation of effective family and community engagement strategies with attention given to schools with low-achieving students.
- Designate a district position to a parent and family coordinator, advocate or ombudsman to coordinate family and community engagement strategies. The designated person should be knowledgeable in school program planning, evaluation, group facilitation, community collaboration, cultural competence and family ecology.

◇ Indicates IDEA 2004 Sections 650 & 644 parent involvement requirements

\* Indicates Title I Section 1118 parent involvement requirements