



Family Engagement Plan

2016-2017

WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Priscilla Canales, Superintendent of Schools

The Weslaco ISD has developed and implemented a Family Engagement Plan in accordance with TAC§102.1003(f) in order to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. The Family Engagement Plan includes the following components and strategies:

FACILITATE FAMILY-TO-FAMILY SUPPORT

In order for Weslaco ISD to provide several services designed to facilitate family-to-family support, the district will ensure the following:

- Create a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other as individuals and in groups;
- Encourage parents and families to reflect on parent experiences and practices in helping children;
- Ensure opportunities for continuous participation in family designed events, such as family leadership trainings;
- Keep parents informed of their children's performance and school activities (i.e. notes, telephone calls, newsletters, conferences, meetings, etc.);
- Accommodate parents' work schedules when creating parent involvement opportunities;
- Encourage parents and families to use positive parent practices, such as attachment and nurturing relationships that complement the stages of their children's development;
- Ask parent leaders what type of training or other supports they need (through surveys) in order to mentor fellow parents; and
- Ask a current parent leader to serve as a go-to person for other parents who are filling leadership roles within the school or district.

ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In order to establish a network of community resources, the district will ensure the following activities such as:

- Build strategic partnerships;

- Promote and sustain partnerships between the home, school, and community in order to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make positive lifelong personal, social, academic, and career choices (ex. South Texas Diabetes, HEB Read 3);
- Enhance educational opportunities through innovative use of finance, facilities, and support staff resources that promote a positive learning environment; (ex. Winter Texans trailer parks, churches, KRGV school supplies.
- Leverage community resources;
- Monitor and evaluate policies and practices to stimulate innovation and create learning pathways;
- Establish and maintain partnerships with businesses, faith-based organizations, and community agencies;
 - Involve community members by inviting them to serve on school and district committees;
- Develop partnerships with business, civic, and academic organization to provide opportunities for students to develop leadership and citizenship skills;
- Ensure that our community is supportive of the district's goals by informing the community of pertinent school activities and successes;
- Identify support from various agencies, including mental and physical health providers;
- Partner with local community-based organizations to create a family-friendly transition plan for students arriving from early childhood settings;
- Provide and facilitate referrals to family support or educational groups based on family interests and needs;
- Communicate short- and long-term program goals to all stakeholders; and
- Identify partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language.

INCREASE FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

In order to increase the family participation in decision-making, the district will ensure the following activities are conducted, such as;

- Convene an annual meeting for parents, which will be held at a convenient time, to explain the requirements of the **High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant** guidelines;
 - Offer a number of meetings at varying times, e.g. morning and evening;
 - Maintain documentation of meetings;

- Publicity and Invitation of events, ○ Agendas for meetings of programs, ○ Sign-in Sheets, ○
 - Minutes, and
 - Letters, newsletters, and any other printed information;
- Conduct evaluations;
 - Involve parents in the planning, review and improvement of the Parent Involvement Policy and plan. Let parents know the policy will be revised annually to meet the changing needs of students, parents and the school;
 - Provide parents timely information about parent involvement programs;
 - Provide parents with a description and explanation of the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress;
 - Provide parents with a description and explanation of the proficiency levels students are expected to meet; (ex. iStation and CLI Engage)
 - If requested by parents, provide a regular meeting for parents to offer suggestions and to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children;
 - If the District Plan for Title 1, Part A under section 1112 is not satisfactory to parents, the school district will submit any parent comments to the state department of education; and
The school district will involve the parents of the children served in Title 1, Part A schools in decisions about the 1 percent of Title 1 Part A funds reserved for parental involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95% of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to the schools.

EQUIP FAMILIES WITH TOOLS TO ENHANCE AND EXTEND LEARNING

In order to equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning, the district will ensure the following activities are conducted:

- Design or implement existing home educational resources to support learning at home while strengthening the family/school partnership;
- Provide families with information and/or training to create a home-learning environment connected to formal learning opportunities;

- Equip families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offer opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the prekindergarten school year;
- Provide complementary home learning activities for families to engage in at home with children through information presented in newsletters, online technology, social media, parent/family-teacher conferences, or other school- or center-related events;
- Provide families with information, best practices, and training related to age-appropriate developmental expectations;
- Emphasize benefits of positive family practices such as attachment and nurturing that complement the stages of children's development;
- Collaborate with families to appropriately respond to children's behavior in a non-punitive, positive, and supportive way;
- Develop and collaborate with parents on ways to support students' skill development at home;
- Allow children to see parents reading, studying, and pursuing formal or informal forms of continuing education;
- Encourage families to reflect on family experiences and practices in helping children; and
- Assist families to implement best practices that will help achieve the goals and objectives that identify to meet the needs of the child and family.

PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATORS ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

In order to develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks, the district will utilize strategies, such as;

- Provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, include training on communicating with families in crisis; Attend parent-teacher conferences, create letters of introduction, send postcards, and make positive phone calls to families;
- Receive personalized in-classroom coaching and attend professional development meetings that specifically targets the needs of new teachers;
- Promote and develop family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff;
- Develop staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies; and
- Talk together with families about children's signals to help family's interpretation and response to children's behavior.

EVALUATE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS AND USE EVALUATIONS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In order to evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement, the district will ensure the following strategies:

- Conduct some of the goal-oriented home visits to identify strengths, interests, and needs;
- Use data to ensure alignment between family engagement activities and district/school teaching and learning goals and to promote continuous family engagement;
- Ensure an evaluation plan is an initial component that guides action;
- Use a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment;
- Ensure teachers play a role in the family engagement evaluation process; and
- Provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families.