

Willingboro School District

Parent/Community Involvement Policy

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The involvement of parents and community members is an essential component of nurturing students. Every effort to invite and consider parent and community input must be made to ensure the success of our students. Willingboro School District believes that a child's parents are not only the child's first teachers, but they also are the most important teachers that the child will have. Clearly, schools must work closely with parents if we are to effectively address the needs of our children. A team of parents, teachers, and administrators developed the following district parent/community involvement plan in an effort to responsibly nurture and enhance each child's intellectual abilities and developmental skills.

The Willingboro Parental Involvement Policy has been organized through the research-based Six Types of Parent Involvement frameworks of Joyce Epstein from the National Network of Partnership Schools and the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. The six types of parental involvement have been adopted by the National PTA and used in establishing National Standards. The organization of the Willingboro Parental Involvement Program through the six National Standards / Framework is as follows:

- **Type I – Parenting:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level.
- **Type II – Communicating:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
- **Type III – Volunteering:** Improve recruitment, training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.
- **Type IV – Learning at Home:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.
- **Type V – Decision-Making:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.
- **Type VI – Collaborating with the Community:** Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.

PART I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS [Federal Language]

The Willingboro Public School District agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- The school district will put into operation programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1118, the school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parental involvement policies meet the requirements of section 1118(b) of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact.
- The school district will incorporate this district wide parental involvement policy into its district plan to help low-achieving children meet challenging achievement standards as developed under section 1112 of the ESEA.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental involvement requirements, to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the State Department of Education.
- The school district will involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parental involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools.
- The school district will be governed by the following statutory definition of parental involvement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—

(A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;

(B) *that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;*

(C) *that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;*

(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.

PART II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW DISTRICT WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED DISTRICT WIDE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

1. **[Federal Language]**The Willingboro Public School District will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of its district wide parental involvement plan under section 1112 of the ESEA that outlines provisions to help low-achieving children meet challenging achievement academic standards:

A district-wide Parental Involvement Committee was established. The Committee includes the Interim Superintendent, NCLB Grant Administrator, the District Parent Involvement Coordinator, teachers, parents, Board members. Through a series of formal and informal meetings, ideas were discussed and plans were outlined. Federal requirements were reviewed to assure compliance. Once the plans were developed into a draft format, the entire committee met again to review the document and make recommendations for additions and/or deletions. Based on the committee's recommendations, the final plan was developed.

District parent/community involvement plan is distributed to parents and students in the *Student/Parent Handbook*, which is distributed annually at the beginning of the school year. Teachers review the handbook and policies with the students at the beginning of the academic year. Parents are asked to read and discuss the handbook with their students and sign and return an acknowledgement form. In addition, information about school policies and involvement opportunities are communicated through parent contact by the following staff:

- School Principal / Assistant Principal(s)
- Guidance Counselors

The policy will be posted on the district web suite

2. The Willingboro Public School District will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:
 - A PTO/PTA exists at each school with varying degrees of participation. Among other activities, these organizations serve as a resource for the school, providing funds for classroom/school educational needs positively impacting their children's success.
 - Send written parent surveys to randomly selected homes

- Principals conduct an open forum for parents and community members (ongoing)
 - Parents/community members are asked to serve on committees as needed (ongoing)
3. The Willingboro Public School District will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:
- The district's Web site *Parent Information* section will provide information on staff and classroom projects.
 - Parent Resource Centers are needed in every building.
 - Workshops during the school day and evenings: As the yearly calendar is developed, workshops will be included. Meetings will be held at schools with parents from all elementary and secondary, public and nonpublic, schools invited to attend.
 - Parent/Child trips/presentations: a series of trips/presentations for parents and children are scheduled, through the PTA/PTO's, throughout the year encouraging parents to attend a variety of events.
 - Parent members of PTA/PTO in each school plan and implement activities to address their individual needs. Composed of all stakeholders, the PTA/PTO includes staff representatives, student representatives, parents and community members.
4. The Willingboro Public School District will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies in Part A with parental involvement strategies under the following other programs, which include, but are not limited to, 21st Century Grant, Early Childhood Grant, Before and After School Program.
5. The Willingboro Public School District will take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parental involvement policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parental involvement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parental involvement policies.
- The Parental Involvement Committee meets monthly, and which includes parents, will meet at least once a year, to review the content and effectiveness of the Parental Involvement Policy in improving the quality of all Title I, Part A schools.

- The district Parent Involvement Coordinator and NCLB Grant Administrator will be responsible for planning and conducting the meeting.
 - All activities will be reviewed with continued attention given to the needs of parents whose children are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, and/or are of any racial or ethnic minority background.
 - All decisions for revisions and strategies for more effective parental involvement will be made jointly by administrators, teachers and parents.
 - All stakeholders will review and approve the final policy document.
6. The Willingboro Public School District will build the schools' and parent's capacity for strong parental involvement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:
- A. The school district will, with the assistance of its Title I, Part A schools, provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph --
- the State's academic content standards,
 - the State's student academic achievement standards,
 - the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments,
 - the requirements of NCLB Title I Part A,
 - how to monitor their child's progress, and
 - how to work with educators:
- Workshops during the school day and evenings: As the yearly calendar is developed, workshops will be included. Meetings will be held at schools with parents from all elementary and secondary, public and nonpublic, schools invited to attend.
 - Parent/Child trips/presentations: a series of trips/presentations for parents and children are scheduled throughout the year encouraging parents to attend a variety of events.
 - Parent members of School Improvement Team: each school has established a School Improvement Team (SIT) to plan and implement activities to address their individual needs. Composed of all stakeholders, the SIT frequently includes staff representatives, student representatives, parents and community members.
- B. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic

achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by:

- Using portable laptop computers and lab computers, workshops will be provided to parents to expose them to the technology that is available to both them and their children and to the District's website. Parents will be trained on the new technology program.
 - Parent workshops may be held at the Willingboro Public Library to assist parents in learning about both the technology and the literacy options available to both them and their children.
 - At workshops, parents have the opportunity to acquire books, puzzles and other educational items to take home that will support their child's academic efforts.
 - A Parent Lending Library will be available, encouraging parents to borrow books to assist them in addressing issues including such topics as child development, dealing with loss and health issues. In addition, children's books, with parent guidance sheets, can be borrowed for parents to use at home.
 - At all parent workshops, informational materials are provided to parents to use as a reference and a resource.
- C. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, 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, by:
- The district's approved Professional Development Plan provides ongoing and sustained training for all administrators, teachers and other staff members in all areas that positively impact student achievement.
 - To coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, the district Parent Involvement Coordinator establishes an annual Parent Involvement Calendar that includes workshops held at individual schools and field trips held at local sites.
- D. The school district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with other related programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children, These include but are not limited to:
- Coordinated through the Central Office, all district programs/activities, including parental involvement programs, are integrated through a district calendar formulated through the input of each school (PreK to 12) and each program. These include but are not limited to:
 - Parent handbooks to provide parents with policy issues and general information about the school and district

- Volunteering their time and support to Reading Across America in association with Dr. Seuss's birthday in February
 - Attendance at student performances and exhibitions to support the efforts of their child and school
- E. The school district will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand:
- Parent workshop notices that are distributed through the Parent Facilitator notify parents of upcoming workshops either during the school day, evenings, or Saturday sessions. Logistical information is provided along with a brief description of the workshop's topic. In order to provide sufficient refreshments and material, parents are asked to respond regarding their ability to attend.
 - Progress Reports are sent home by teachers at a midpoint in the marking periods to notify parents of the progress or lack of progress of their children. These reports provide the opportunity to work with parents to help address and/or remedy any areas of need.
 - Computer generated report cards are sent home on a quarterly basis to notify parents of their child's effort and academic progress.
 - Parents are welcomed into the schools to attend "Back to School Night," and/or "Parents Night" when they can learn first hand from their child's teachers what their child will be doing throughout the school year and how they can help to ensure their child's success.
 - Parents are welcomed into the school during "National Education Week" to visit their child's classrooms to observe the learning process.
 - The district website www.willingboroschools.org is user friendly and has links to information that is useful for parents to access.
 - Parent Handbooks have been developed to provide parents with policy issues and general information about the school and the district.
 - The New Jersey School Report Card, accessible to parents, found under <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/> presents thirty-five fields of information for each school in the following categories: school environment, students, student performance indicators, staff, and district finances.

PART III. DISCRETIONARY DISTRICT WIDE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

Other discretionary activities that the school district, in consultation with its parents, chooses to undertake to build parents' capacity for involvement in the school and school system to support their children's academic achievement, such as the following discretionary activities listed under section 1118(e) of the ESEA:

- providing necessary literacy training for parents from Title I, Part A funds, if the school district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for that training;
- paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- training parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;
- in order to maximize parental involvement and participation in their children's education, arranging school meetings at a variety of times.
- adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parental involvement;
- developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parental involvement activities; and
- providing other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under section 1118 as parents may request.]

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PART IV. ADOPTION

This District wide Parental Involvement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by school level meetings.