Instruction

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Overview

The Sitka School District views parents and family as full and integral partners in their children’s education at school. Parent-school partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, build community support, and increase student achievement and success. The purpose of this policy is to encourage active and ongoing parent and family engagement, and to define how the district and schools will facilitate this.

This policy is designed to meet Federal requirements, as well as to reflect best practice in engaging families in helping to educate their children, because students do better when parents are actively involved in the education process, both at home and at school.

The Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) emphasizes equal access to education to ensure that every student succeeds. The current version of ESEA was authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and signed into law on December 10, 2015. Section 1116 of Title IA of the ESEA requires that each district and school receiving Title I, Part A funds have a written parent and family engagement policy developed jointly with, agreed on with, and distributed to parents and family members of participating children.

(cf. 6171 - Title 1 Programs)

Joint Development

This policy was jointly developed with parents and family members. District and school administration requested input via focus groups and school parent advisory committees.

In general, the Sitka School District plans broadly for all programming, and then allocates resources, including Federal funding, as appropriate and available. Parents and family members will participate in developing the District ESEA Plan, Consolidated Grant Applications, and School Improvement Plans through the District Strategic Planning Process and school-based planning processes.

Technical Assistance

Sitka School District will provide the support necessary for schools receiving ESEA Title IA funding to implement effective parent and family engagement practices. The District Office supports schools in implementing effective parent and family engagement practices in the following ways:
• Developing draft school parent and family engagement policies and school-parent compacts that meet the requirements of Title IA and are consistent with District policy
• Reminding school principals of Title IA requirements and collecting evidence that schools have met those requirements
• Identifying effective family engagement practices and coordinating implementation of strategies across schools
• Identifying and designating resources to support implementation of effective parent and family engagement practices
• Consulting and coordinating school-based consultation with community partners, including Tribal partners, employers, business leaders, philanthropic organizations, and individuals with expertise in effective parent/family engagement practices

Coordination

The Sitka School District will coordinate parent and family engagement efforts made under the requirements of Title IA with other parent and family engagement activities taking place within the District. The District will also coordinate with local partners to provide additional supports and resources to families.

Annual Evaluation

Annually, Sitka School District will evaluate this policy on its content and effectiveness in improving the academic quality of Title I schools. This evaluation will include meaningful involvement of parents and family members of district students, and may identify:

• Barriers to parent/family engagement, especially for parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, racial or ethnic minorities, or who have limited literacy or English proficiency
• Ways to support parents and family members in assisting their children’s learning, including engaging with school personnel
• Strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

Annual evaluation will take place as part of the annual District Strategic Planning Process, led by the Superintendent of Schools or designee and including input from parents/family, students, and staff.
Evidence-Based Strategies

The Sitka School District will identify evidence-based strategies to improve parent and family engagement in areas identified during the annual evaluation. The District will revise this policy and/or associated Administrative Regulations to reflect updated strategies as necessary, with ongoing consultation with parents and family members.

Building Capacity of Parents and Family Members

Sitka School District and its schools will build Title I parents’ and family members’ capacity for school engagement by providing assistance in understanding academic standards and assessments, how to monitor student progress, how to work with educators to support students, and the requirements of Title IA. The District/schools will also provide training to families to develop the skills needed to help their children improve their academic achievement.

Building Capacity of School Staff

The Sitka School District will provide annual professional learning to teachers and staff in Title I schools, to include:

- The value of parental contributions
- How to communicate to parents
- How to work with parents as equal partners
- How to implement parent programs, and
- How to build ties between parents and the schools.

(cf. 6000 - Concepts and Roles)

Legal Reference