

The School Board of Miami-Dade County

Bylaws & Policies

Unless a specific policy has been amended and the date the policy was revised is noted at the bottom of that policy, the Bylaws and Policies of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools were adopted on May 11, 2011 and were in effect beginning July 1, 2011.

2111 - PARENT INVOLVEMENT– A HOME-SCHOOL-DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

Strong, continuing family and community involvement in all aspects of school programs and activities provides support for measurable improvement in student achievement.

A collaborative environment is encouraged in which the parents and families of District students are invited and encouraged to be involved stakeholders in the school community. This policy establishes the framework and responsibilities for implementation of strategies to increase family and community involvement. A copy of this policy must be distributed to all parents (e.g., by providing paper copies, electronic copies, or other appropriate means of distribution).

"Parent" refers to any adult--mother, father, older sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent, guardian/foster parent, mentor--who plays a significant role in the care of a student or students enrolled in the District. Although parental involvement is the specific focus of this policy, all those concerned with the education of students must work together cooperatively to meet the needs of students.

"School" is defined in the broadest possible sense. It refers not only to the customary kindergarten through grade 12 programs, but also to the early childhood, adult education, and community schools' programs.

The Superintendent shall implement administrative procedures by which a school-parent partnership can be established and maintained throughout the student's career in the District.

Parent Responsibilities

The importance of parents as teachers shall be recognized by parents and supported by the school. Schools will provide parents with the appropriate support and assistance needed in understanding and meeting the expectations of this role. Parents are expected to:

- A. set guidelines and clear expectations of good behavior and academic performance;
- B. ensure that their children have a quiet place and time to read, study, and complete homework;
- C. discuss daily work assignments, progress reports, and report cards with their children;
- D. ensure that their children attend school on time every day and promptly report any absences or tardiness;
- F. communicate with the school through written and electronic messages, telephone, and/or conference meetings;
- F. ensure that their children have the materials needed to complete class work and home learning;
- G. take an active part in school activities, such as Back-to-School Night, PTA meetings, participating in workshops, and parent/student activities, etc.;
- H. keep their children healthy by ensuring that they get enough sleep, appropriate nutrition, and medical care;
- I. bring to the attention of appropriate school personnel any problem or condition that negatively affects their children, or other children in the school community;
- J. help their children develop a good self-image by providing care, discipline, support, interest, and concern;
- K. provide the school with current and accurate home, work, and emergency contact information; and
- L. foster in their children a positive attitude towards school and learning.

Parents as Advisors, Advocates and Participants in Decision Making

- A. Advisors
Parents are encouraged to participate in and influence decisions, raise issues or concerns, appeal decisions, and resolve problems.
- B. Advocates
Parents are encouraged to become advocates for children on issues that affect children. They are urged to join and take a leadership role in a PTA, PTSA or other parent organization.
- C. Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils
Parents must be elected to serve as active members of Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils (EESAC) and in other important decision-making bodies, where required by State and Federal statutes. This will include the involvement of parents in the development of the Local Educational Agency Title I Plan required under The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as well as their involvement in the process of school review and improvement required by the Act.
- D. Title I School-Parent Compacts
In each school implementing the Title I Program, parents shall, jointly with the school, develop the annual Title I School-Parent Compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. This compact will also identify how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.
- E. Title I School's Parental Involvement Plan
In each school implementing the Title I Program, parents shall jointly with the school develop the Title I School's Parental Involvement Plan. Additionally, parents in the Title I Program shall be involved in the annual evaluation and redesign of the content and effectiveness of this document, in efforts towards improving the academic quality of the school.

School Level Strategies And Responsibilities

- A. Parent Outreach Liaisons. Each school principal will identify one (1) or more individuals who will serve as a liaison to all parents in the school community. Responsibilities include: assessing the needs of parents; communicating this information to the school's principal and the school's advisory group(s); and informing parents of school and District services, offerings, and programs in their primary language. This individual may be a Community Involvement Specialist, another staff member, or a certified volunteer.
 - B. Space for Parents. School principals will provide a Parent Resource Center as a place for parents to meet, post, and review current bulletins, and exchange information.
 - C. Access to Schools. Reasonable efforts will be made to make the school building a welcoming place, clearly accessible to parents. Parents should recognize, however, that their right to access does not transcend the rights of students and teachers to an orderly educational environment.
 - D. Sensitivity to Exceptionalities. Reasonable efforts will be made to assist parents in understanding the needs and rights of their children. Reasonable efforts should be made to assist school personnel, students and parents in understanding the needs and rights of children with different exceptionalities.
 - E. Accommodations for Parents. School personnel should use flexible and creative methods to accommodate the schedules of parents, and, with the assistance of businesses, agencies and organizations, to encourage participation by addressing the need for child care, transportation and other resources. Every reasonable accommodation should be made for Board employees who are parents to participate in the education of their children.
 - F. Communication. Communication between parents and the school shall be encouraged at all grade levels, including regular parent/teacher communication, and providing parents with meaningful scope of student work. Reasonable efforts will be made to communicate with parents in their primary language. The mode of communication should also be adjusted when necessary to promote comprehension, acceptance, and trust. Additionally, schools implementing the Title I Program will distribute annually to parents, at the onset of the school year, the Title I Program Notification Letter, in a format, and to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.
 - G. Parent Orientation. Schools will conduct orientation meetings that provide information about school procedures and programs as well as opportunities for active participation. Additionally, schools in the Title I Program should conduct the Title I Annual Parent Meeting at the onset of the school year to inform parents of their school's participation in the Title I Program, to explain the parental requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and to explain the rights of the parents to be involved.
 - H. Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils. Schools must ensure that parents are included as active members of Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils and other important decision-making bodies as required by Federal and State statute. To ensure that parents are knowledgeable about this involvement, all parents must receive information regarding the role of EESAC, meeting schedules, and parent elections. With the support of the EESAC, principals will develop and support strategies that facilitate opportunities for all parents to be involved in at least one support activity during the course of the year.
 - I. Title I School-Parent Compacts. Each school implementing the Title I Program shall ensure that parents in the Program are involved in jointly developing, and that they receive, the annual Title I School-Parent Compact as required in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic 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.
 - J. Title I School's Parental Involvement Plan. In each school implementing the Title I Program, parents shall jointly with the school create a plan. Additionally, parents in the Title I Program shall be involved in the annual evaluation and redesign of the content and effectiveness of this document, in efforts towards improving the academic quality of the school.
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- K. Learning Opportunities for Parents. With the assistance of The Parent Academy and other appropriate District offices, schools should identify and implement community-centered, parent friendly programs and affiliations for parents to learn. The learning opportunities should target appropriate student age levels, including the needs of children from birth to age six as well as the developmental and cognitive needs and expectations of students. Additional learning opportunities should be provided for young adults, including those who are already parents, to learn how to be effective parents.
 - L. Volunteers and Tutors. Principals should utilize the special knowledge, abilities, talents, and cultural experiences of parents to enhance school activities and experiences. In order to maintain a strong volunteer program, principals will identify staff who will actively recruit, train, appropriately place, support, and monitor parents in instructional and extra-curricular programs. Volunteer procedures and forms will be made available throughout the year.
 - M. Resources for Parents. In order to assist parents, resources should be made available for check-out at the school site or through the District web site or Parent Portal, such as: audio/visual, print, computer, and web-based programs; "how-to" programs broadcast on educational television and radio; pamphlets and books developed especially to aid the parent-as-teacher; copies of course schedules and homework assignments; lists of grade level and course objectives; testing guidelines; and schedules. Additionally, the Title I Handbook should be made available for check-out to parents of students in the Title I Program.
 - N. Advocacy. Schools, regional centers, and the District will support parents to become advisors and advocates for their children. They will provide understandable, accessible, and well-publicized opportunities as well as information about student and parent responsibilities and rights in order that parents may advocate effectively. Regional Parent Liaisons will provide information and assistance to parents including the parents of children with exceptionalities.

District Level Strategies and Responsibilities

- A. District Parent Resource Office. The Office of Parental Involvement functions as a liaison with parents to provide a District level point of communication for referral and direction on parental involvement issues. It is the primary responsibility of this office to promote parental involvement, facilitate implementation of this policy, and maintain contact with various groups and individuals representing parents. The office will assist other programs in the implementation of parent involvement strategies. These programs will include the Parent Academy, Early Childhood Programs, Bilingual Parent Outreach Program, State and District-run Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) programs, and Title I administration.
- B. Parent Involvement Training. The Office of Parental Involvement, in cooperation with the Parent Academy, Title I administration, and other appropriate District offices, where applicable, will develop and provide training programs to give parents the information, tools, and resources on how to be successful advisors, advocates, and partners in the decision-making process. The training programs must include assistance to parents to understand such topics as the Sunshine State Standards, the FCAT and other assessments, the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ways to monitor a child's progress, and ways to work with educators to improve student achievement. The District should also facilitate parent-to-parent training programs.
- C. Support for Parental Involvement Strategies. Through the Office of Parental Involvement, the Parent Academy, Title I administration, and other appropriate District offices, the District shall provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance as well as to build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement as defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Additionally, schools implementing the Title I program will receive support and assistance through the following Title I components: parental District Advisory Council's general and executive board meetings, the Parent Outreach Program, Community Involvement Specialists, Parent Advisory Councils, and District and school-site Parent Resource Centers.

- D. **Support for Communication.** Appropriate District offices will develop and implement effective communication methods to ensure that all families, regardless of income, ethnic background, or language, receive and share school-to-home and home-to-school communications. Additionally, Title I administration will provide to schools implementing the Title I program the sample Title I Program Notification Letter, to be distributed to their parents annually, at the beginning of the school year.
- E. **Staff Training.** Training procedures should include the importance of parental involvement. Training programs will be identified by the Office of Parental Involvement, Title I administration, the Parent Academy, and other appropriate District offices, to assist personnel in acquiring techniques that promote effective communication with parents and the cultivation of parental involvement.
- F. **Resource Guide.** A resource guide will be developed for school staff members, parents, and the community, to include best practices and a directory of contact information for programs, and persons with expertise in the area of parental involvement. Additionally, the Title I Administration Handbook is an appropriate resource to support schools implementing the Title I program, in this area.
- G. **Title I School-Parent Compacts.** Title I administration will ensure that all schools participating in the Title I program jointly with parents develop the annual Title I School-Parent Compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. Title I administration will assist with ensuring that schools distribute the Compacts to all parents in the Title I program.
- H. **Title I District Wide Parental Involvement Policy.** This policy serves as the Districtwide Parental Involvement Policy required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for schools implementing the Title I program. This policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed upon by, parents of children participating in the Title I program. Title I administration will assist in ensuring that this policy is distributed to all parents in the Title I program.
- I. **Evaluation.** The Office of Parental Involvement and the Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee, on which the majority of the members are parents, will annually assess the implementation of the Parent Involvement Policy, using outcome-based data, including, but not limited to, the School Climate Survey and the Parent Benchmarks Survey, and will make written recommendations for improvement. This assessment will identify barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background. The findings of the evaluation will be used to design strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise existing parental involvement policies.
- J. **Business Involvement.** The active cooperation of the community's municipalities, businesses, agencies, organizations, and post-secondary institutions will be sought to partner with the District to provide on-site opportunities for parents to learn more about the School District, the educational needs of students, and about parenting in general. These entities may be asked to partner with the District to provide educational experiences at the school sites. Members of the community will be encouraged to assist students by participating in programs such as Listeners, Mentors, and Role Models. Businesses will be encouraged to provide flexible time or release time for employees to visit their children's school. The District will establish a program to designate businesses as "school friendly" when they meet established District criteria.