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1. Purpose

Community engagement is an essential element in order to increase academic and social success throughout the educational career of each student. The community plays an important role in strengthening the education of all children. Schools and community members must work collaboratively, effectively, and efficiently, to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

2. Scope


Community engagement is an evolving, dynamic movement composed of programs, principles, and approaches. To support this, procedures provide systemic consistency

3. Responsibilities


The Superintendent/Designee has the responsibility for enforcing these regulations by communicating them to all relevant parties and by providing necessary instructions (if appropriate) to all staff members.

4. Procedures

- A. Communicate proactively and regularly with the community
 1. Use a variety of communication tools in a clear, concise format to facilitate ongoing, two-way, meaningful interaction
 2. Provide opportunities for community members to communicate with principals and other administrative staff
 3. Offer information regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of ongoing, two-way, meaningful communication between the school and the community.
- B. Make engagement a priority and establish an infrastructure

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1. Develop mission statements and policies with the input of community members
 2. Establish or expand advisory groups for school and systemic initiatives
 3. Set aside resources to prepare community members to become advocates and leaders
- C. Listen to the community and respond to its feedback
1. Provide community town hall meetings, public forums, surveys, and focus groups to address issues and concerns
 2. Share feedback from the community and incorporate changes made using community input
- D. Offer meaningful opportunities to participate
1. Invite community members to become involved in school and district wide committees.
 2. Offer classes to help community members develop skills to better support students
 3. Establish times for community members to volunteer or attend events
 4. Ensure schools and offices create a climate in which community volunteers feel valued and welcome
 5. Survey community volunteers regarding their interests, talents, and availability, and coordinate with existing resources
 6. Provide recognition for all volunteers
 7. Create an inviting climate and effectively utilize community volunteer resources
 8. Communicate the need for community volunteers throughout the school year
- E. Provide opportunities for community members to be leaders and advocates
1. Invite community members to be active members of the school system's decision-making process and methods for providing input to the local schools, to the Superintendent's office, and to the Board of


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Education regarding decision-making, raising issues or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems

2. Ensure open communication and transparency through the decision-making process
3. Encourage families to become active members of the decision making process
4. Provide information to the public concerning the school system's decision-making process and the methods for providing input to schools, THE Superintendent's office, and to the Board of Education regarding decision-making, raising issues or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems
5. Ensure open communication and transparency through the decision-making and advocacy process
6. Provide materials in multiple languages as needed
7. Disseminate information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals
8. Ensure all parties are aware of cultural diversity, language differences and special needs
9. Ensure schools and offices create a climate in which community members feel valued and welcome

F. Family and Community Collaboration

1. Develop partnerships with local business and service groups to advance student learning and assist schools and families
2. Encourage student participation in community service
3. Inform staff members of the partnerships available in the community
4. Involve community members in school volunteer programs
5. Include community representatives on advisory committees and school improvement teams

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6. Seek community representation on system and school committees as needed
7. Promote community participation on school, district, state, and national committees
8. Collaborate with community agencies to provide schools with such services as wellness, healthcare, social services, and childcare
9. Provide workshops for parents and community members
10. Connect parents and families with learning opportunities, services and agencies, and civic participation

5. References

- a. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education: "Policy Statement of Family Engagement from the Early Years to the Early Grades"
- b. Maryland State Department of Education: Maryland's Prek-12 Family Engagement Framework: A Shared Responsibility
- c. National PTA Standards
- d. Reform Support Network, Strategies for Community Engagement in School Turnaround

6. Definitions

- A. "Community" means all other people involved in supporting the child (i.e., neighbors, schools, businesses, churches, etc.)
- B. "Community Collaboration" means identifying and integrating resources from the community or business to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development

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- C. "Educational Champion" means a partnership that has direct benefit to students through mentoring or tutoring
- D. "Educational Partnership" means a yearlong partnership that is a renewable, collaborative effort to achieve mutually agree upon goals and objectives in order to improve educational programs for students and to strengthen the relationships between communities, businesses, and industries
- E. "Educational Patron" means a partnership through which a business or community agency provides foods and/or services to a school or the school system
- F. "Mentoring Program" means a program that provides volunteers to work with students for academic and career development both within the school and community environment
- G. "Service Learning" means a requirement that promotes community involvement and lifelong learning and interests in the community
- H. "Partnership" means an association of two or more parties taking part in some activity in common with one another or others, working towards the same goals
- I. "Educational Champion" means a partnership that has direct benefit to students through mentoring or tutoring