# 2111 - PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

**Highest Student Achievement**

The District is committed to setting high expectations that result in highest student achievement and believes that:

A. Collaborative working partnerships with families are critical to attaining highest student achievement for all students.

B. Higher academic achievement results when family members are actively engaged in supporting education.

C. Involving families in the teaching and learning system is a strong indicator of student academic success.

**Parents’ Responsibilities**

"Parent" is either or both parents of a student, any guardian of the student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent. Together with the parental responsibilities detailed in the Code of Student Conduct, the District believes that:

A. In order for students to achieve at the highest level, parents must provide a climate in the home that supports education, set high expectations for student learning and behavior, and be involved in their children’s education.

B. Students whose parents are involved in the above manner have better grades, higher test scores and better attendance.

C. Regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background or education level, when parents are involved in their children’s educational process, students achieve more.

D. When parents and teachers collaborate there are higher expectations for the student's success.

E. There are significant benefits for learners when parents of students at all ages and all grade levels are directly involved with their education.

**School’s Responsibilities**

The District believes that:

A. Parent and family involvement is a critical component of an effective school. It is not a substitute for high quality educational programs, effective instruction or systemic research-based school improvement.

B. Parents contribute most effectively to improved student achievement and school effectiveness when they are treated as equal partners and given needed information in a timely manner.

C. Schools that work well with families improve teacher morale and engender more teacher support by parents.

D. When parents receive frequent and effective communication from a school, their attitude about the school is more positive and their involvement increases. A school’s practices to inform and involve parents are strong determinants in the frequency and quality of parent involvement.

E. There are many different ways for schools to involve parents in their child’s education. To have long-lasting results, parent and family involvement activities must be planned, continuous, inclusive and comprehensive.

F.S. 1000.21(5), 1000.42, 1002.23

# 2111.01 - PARENT PARTICIPATION IN TITLE I PROGRAMS

In accordance with the requirement of Section 1118 of Title I, programs supported by Title I funds must be designed and implemented in consultation with parents of the students being served. Federal funds may be used to purchase food to support parent training and meetings when Federal program guidelines permit such use.

The Superintendent shall ensure that each school's Title I plan contains a written statement of procedures which has been developed with, approved by, and distributed to parents of participating students. The procedures shall describe how:

A. the District/school expects the parents to be involved in the program, including their participation in the development of the plan;

B. meetings will be conducted with parents including provision for flexible scheduling and whatever assistance the District/school may be able to provide parents in order to better ensure their attendance at meetings, and for providing information in a language the parents can understand;

C. meetings will include review and explanation of the curriculum, means of assessment, and the proficiency levels students are expected to achieve and maintain;

D. opportunities will be provided to parents to formulate suggestions, interact and share experiences with other parents, and participate appropriately in the decision-making about the program and revisions in the plan;

E. parents will be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of the Title I program;

F. information concerning school performance profiles and their child's individual performance will be communicated to parents;

G. parents will be assisted in providing help to their children in achieving the objectives of the program by such means as ensuring regular attendance, monitoring television-watching, providing adequate time, and the proper environment for homework; guiding nutritional and health practices, and the like;

H. timely responses will be given to parental questions, concerns, and recommendations;

I. the District will provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist Title I schools to develop effective parental participation activities to improve academic achievement;

J. an annual evaluation of the parental involvement plan will be conducted with parents, identifying any barriers to greater parental involvement (such as limited English, limited literacy, economic disadvantage, disability, etc.) and devising strategies to improve parental involvement;

K. the parental involvement plan will be coordinated with other programs, such as Head Start, Reading First, Even Start, Parents as Teachers, and Home Instruction for Preschool Youngsters;

L. other activities will be conducted as appropriate to the plan and State or Federal requirements.

The Superintendent shall also assure that each Title I participating school develops a specific plan, with parental involvement, to:

A. convene an annual meeting at a convenient time to which parents of participating children are invited, to explain the parents' rights to be involved and the schools obligations to develop an involvement plan;

B. devise a flexible meeting schedule and describe assistance to encourage parental involvement, such as child care, transportation, home visits, or similar aid;

C. involve parents in an organized, on-going, and timely way in the development, review, and improvement of parent involvement activities;

D. provide participating students' parents with:

1. timely information about the Title I programs;

2. an explanation of the curriculum, the forms or academic assessment, and the proficiency levels expected;

3. regular meetings, upon request, to make suggestions and receive response regarding their student's education;

E. develop jointly with parents a school-parent compact which outlines the responsibilities of the school staff, the parents, and the student for academic improvement, including:

1. the school's responsibility to provide high quality curriculum, and instruction in a supportive, effective learning environment;

2. parent's responsibility for such things as monitoring attendance, homework, extra-curricular activities and excessive television-watching; volunteering in the classroom;

3. the importance of parent teacher communication at least annually; parent teacher conferences to discuss achievement and the compact; frequent progress reports to the parents; and reasonable access to the staff and to observe and participate in classroom activities.

20 U.S.C. 6318 et seq., Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
34 C.F.R. Part 200 et seq.

# 2111.02 - FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Parent/Family Involvement** (see also [Policy 2111](#z2111) - Parent Involvement in the School Program)

The School Board recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To support the School District's strategic direction of highest student achievement for all students and to educate all students effectively, the schools and parents must work together as knowledgeable partners. The District shall foster and support active parent involvement by using the components listed below including, but not limited to, the following implementation strategies.

Although parents are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. The District, in collaboration with parents, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent involvement and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.

To this end, the Board supports the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of a parent involvement program in each school to involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The parent involvement programs will be comprehensive and collaborative in nature. The program will adhere to the following components of successful parent involvement programs:

A. communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful;

B. responsible parenting is promoted and supported;

C. parents play an integral role in assisting student learning;

D. parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought;

E. parents are full partners in the educational decisions that affect children and families;

F. community resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

The Board supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective parent involvement strategies. The Board also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation. Engaging parents is essential to improved student achievement.

School personnel will treat parents and students with respect and courtesy. Parents are expected to treat school personnel courteously and respectfully, and instill this kind of behavior in their children.

Professional development opportunities will be made available to administrators, teachers, and staff to promote family friendly schools and enhance family and community partnerships.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "parent" refers to any adult - mother, father, older sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent, guardian, mentor - who plays a significant role in the care of a student or students enrolled in the District.

When the term "school" is used in this policy, it is used 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 charter school programs.

When Federal guidelines permit such use, Federal funds may be used to purchase food items when used to support parent training and meetings.

**Statutory Requirement**

As required by the Florida's Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement Act each school board must adopt policies that strengthen family involvement in education. These policies must be developed with input from teachers, administrators, families, students, and key community based organizations and businesses. The policies must address the following four (4) areas:

A. Opportunities for Parental Involvement in the Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of Family Involvement Programs

The District will:

1. encourage parents to become active participants of the School Advisory Councils (SAC), PTA, support organizations, and school-based committees;

At the District level, parent involvement opportunities will include various District planning committees, District Monitoring and Advisory Committee (DMAC), Title I District Advisory Council, countywide SAC organization and Pinellas County Council of PTAs. In these roles, parents will be able to participate in meetings and resolve problems.

2. use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis to facilitate two-way interaction between the home and the school;

The use of best practices for parent/teacher conferences will be expected (by accentuating the positive with opportunities for improvement) and school personnel will use flexible and creative methods to accommodate the schedules of parents. Immediate contact between parent and teacher should occur when concerns arise.

3. encourage communications with parents regarding positive student behavior and achievement;

4. provide staff training on effective communication techniques, parent/teacher conferences, and the importance of regular two-way communication between the school and the family;

5. make a reasonable effort to reach out to all parents, not just those who attend parent meetings;

6. make a reasonable effort to assist parents in understanding the needs and rights of their exceptional children;

7. direct schools to offer support to parents regarding educational issues;

Parent advocates will serve as liaisons between families and schools, train parents in effective communication skills, and provide support to parents responding to educational issues.

8. distribute a student expectations guide to parents at the beginning of the school year outlining grade level expectations and suggestions of how parents can foster learning at home;

9. make available information and provide opportunities to guide parents on ways to assist with homework, give feedback to teachers, and how parents can help their children improve skills and perform well on assessments;

10. publish a parent guide annually and make it available to parents providing information needed to make decisions about their child's education and how to assist in their child's progress;

11. make a reasonable effort to communicate with parents in their primary language or in the language in which they feel comfortable.

B. Opportunities for Parents to Participate on School Advisory Councils and in School Volunteer Programs and Other Activities

The Community Involvement Program will administer a program to utilize parent volunteers at the school and District level, provide ample training on volunteer procedures and school protocol, tutor and mentor training, and encourage parent participation in school and related activities. School staff has a responsibility to involve parents in the school's decision-making efforts. Likewise, parents have a responsibility to contact the school and seek out ways in which they might participate in and influence decisions that will affect the children. Furthermore, the District will:

1. provide parents with current information regarding changes in school policies, discipline, assessment tools, and student and school performance data;

The District will encourage parents to participate as partners when setting school goals, developing or evaluating programs and policies, or responding to performance data.

2. encourage and support the formation of PTAs or other parent groups in order to identify and respond to issues of interest to parents;

3. direct each school to work with parents and school staff to develop a unique plan to incorporate parent/family involvement in the individual School Improvement Plans;

4. encourage parents to be involved in the development, implementation and annual evaluation of the parent involvement programs as outlined in the School Improvement Plan, and to be included as members of School Improvement Teams;

5. encourage parents to visit their schools for beginning of the year events such as "Back-to-School Night", "Open House", and new student orientations;

These events will be used to disseminate information on school policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals.

6. encourage parents to attend additional activities (such as parent workshops and training) throughout the year;

7. direct schools to make the school building a welcoming plan, clearly accessible to parents.

C. Links with Community Services

The District will:

1. afford opportunities for school personnel, students and parents to learn about different cultures, cultural practices and cultural preferences so that understanding and communication can be promoted;

2. provide the Family/Multicultural Center to serve as a resource center providing parents information and training opportunities to learn about parenting skills, health, safety, nutrition, home environments that support education, and other topics of child and adolescent development;

3. distribute information to students and parents regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other resources that serve families within the community;

4. seek the active participation of area businesses, agencies, and faith-based organizations to encourage community support in the schools, through financial, goods and services, and volunteer contributions;

5. encourage members of the community to participate in the volunteer programs at their local school;

6. develop partnerships with local organizations, such as the Juvenile Welfare Board, the Pinellas Education Foundation, community agencies, local city and county governments, and faith-based organizations to advance student learning and assist schools and families;

Student participation in community service will be encouraged.

7. seek and foster partnerships with outside business, community, and faith-based organizations, such as the Pinellas Education Foundation, to sponsor student incentive programs such as Doorways and S.A.V.E.

D. Parental Choices and Responsibilities

The District will:

1. provide Family Education and Information Centers to serve as information centers offering parents the opportunity to register children for school, learn about the many programs and school choices available in the District, including countywide magnet and fundamental programs, academies, ESE, ESOL programs, Title I and other academic support programs;

2. expect parents to recognize that their right to access does not transcend the rights of students and teachers to an orderly instructional environment;

3. encourages parents to become involved in the education of their children.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

The District will implement the strategies outline in this policy to integrate parent involvement into school improvement policies. Additional strategies to include direct consultation with parents and the inclusion of these parents as members of the District's planning committees formed to implement NCLB will ensure parent involvement activities improve student academic achievement and school performance.

The Family Service Team, chaired by the Supervisor of Community Involvement and comprised of parents, teachers, principals, District personnel, and community agency representatives, will coordinate the District's parent/family involvement efforts, provide technical assistance, direction and support to assist schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement strategies.

The District will implement school based monitoring of parent participation to evaluate the effectiveness of increase parent participation. The Superintendent will report the findings to the Board and the Department of Education and will make the findings available to the community on an annual basis. The District will use the findings in designing new strategies for parent/family involvement and school improvement.

The District is committed to setting high expectations that result in highest student achievement and believes that while parent/family involvement is not a substitute for high quality educational programs, effective instruction, or systemic research-based school improvement, it is a critical component of an effective school. The District encourages development of additional parent/family involvement strategies and, encourages the use of practices suggested for successful programs such as outlined in the guidelines of the National PTA *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*.

F.S. 1001.32(2), 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43