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Curriculum & Instruction
Adopted: February 1, 2021

Title I School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Section 1: Purpose.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Marion P. Thomas Charter School (“the District”) provides for the proper execution and implementation of programming and procedures of the Title I, Part A, (“Title I”) federal aid grant. Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESEA”), provides financial assistance to local educational agencies for children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Such programs, activities, and procedures are to be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children (“parents”).

Section 2: Title I Schools.

It is the intent of this policy, as pursuant to Section 1118 of the ESEA, to ensure consistency throughout the District so that all schools within the District receiving Title I are similar or identical in the execution of the requirements stipulated under Section 1118.

Section 3: Defining Parent and Family Engagement.

This policy defines parent and family engagement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including the following:

- (a) Ensure that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning.
- (b) Ensure that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school.
- (c) Ensure 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) Ensure the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1116 of the ESEA.

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Section 4: Title I Committee.

The District is to establish, at each school, a Title I Committee. The committee's membership will consist of the parents of that particular school and is to be coordinated and managed by a designee of the District. The committee's purpose will be to facilitate and coordinate the joint works between the District and the parents as it relates to this policy and the implementation of Title I. All committee meetings are to be scheduled flexibly with the scheduling needs of parents in mind.

The District is to establish a physical location for each committee to meet within each respective school. It is to serve as the committee's primary office and as a parent resource center within the school, and it is to encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children. Such a place will be easily and readily accessible to all parents when school buildings are open to the public. The location and times of accessibility will be promulgated throughout the District, physically and electronically, at committee meetings, and at any other parent gatherings that the school or District may host.

- (a) The committee is to involve parents in the joint development of its school parental involvement plan under Section 1118 of the ESEA by conducting several meetings between April and June.
- (b) The committee is to jointly develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement under. The committee will convene a meeting with parents to create/revise compact. The compact is to be approved by the Board of Trustees and shared publicly.
- (c) The committee is to invite parents to participate in the Annual Local Review meeting of the Title I program under Section 1116 of the ESEA. In addition, the District will conduct at least two surveys per academic year. One survey is to be conducted between September 1 and January 31. The second survey is to be conducted between February 1 and May 31. At least one of the surveys will be conducted as an in-person focus group.
- (d) The committee is to hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I, to explain the Title I requirements, and to explain the right of parents to be involved in Title I programs. The committee is to convene the meeting at a time convenient for parents and will offer a flexible number of additional parental involvement meetings, such as in the morning or evening, so that as many parents as possible are able to attend. The committee will invite all parents to this meeting, and will encourage them to attend, by sending out correspondence via all available means to all addresses on record, including advertising on all digital platforms, such as the district-wide website. The committee will offer transportation, child care, or home visits if needed.
- (e) The committee will provide parents with information in a timely manner about Title I programs that include a description and explanation of the school's curriculum, the forms of

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academic assessment used to measure children's progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet by conducting meetings in August and September. The District will ensure that each school's website and the district-wide website is updated to provide this information.

- (f) The committee will meet regularly to serve as a safe-space forum for parents to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school and/or the District is to respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
- (g) The committee will host information sessions and/or workshops to provide assistance to parents, as appropriate, in understanding 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 Title I, how to monitor their child's progress, and how to work with educators. The District is to also ensure that such information is readily available through each school's website and the district-wide website.
- (h) The committee will assist the District in educating 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. Such training for staff must occur once each marking period.
- (i) The committee, to the extent feasible and appropriate, will coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, public preschool, and other programs. The District's Title I designee will be responsible for leading this effort.
- (j) The committee will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as math and literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by hosting training workshops.
- (k) The District, coordinated through the committees at the several schools, will sponsor parent meetups by grade level across the entire district.
- (l) The committee, through the Title I designee, will deliver any and all feedback and reports generated through the work of the committee, to the appropriate official within the school and to the Chief School Administrator.

Section 5: Additional Title I Actions.

The District is to provide each parent timely notice when their child has been assigned or has been taught for four (4) or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified within the meaning of the term in section 200.56 of the Title I Final Regulations (67 Fed. Reg. 71710, December 2, 2002) by sending a letter, electronically and through postal service. The

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letter should explain the circumstance and a tentative timeline for a corrective action, or an explanation as to the cause of the delay in the corrective action.

The District will provide each parent an individual student report about the performance of their child on the state assessment in at least math, language arts, and reading by mail, either electronically or postal service. In the event there is not a state assessment conducted, the District is to provide each parent an individual student report about the performance of their child.

In carrying out the Title I, to the extent practicable, the District is to provide full opportunities for the participation of parents of children with limited English proficiency, parents of children with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language(s) parents understand.

The District is to involve the parents in decisions about how Title I funds reserved for parent and family engagement are spent, and will ensure, if applicable, that the appropriate amount of reserved funds goes directly to the schools.

The District's Title I designee is to ensure that information related to the school and parent-programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. Such communiques are to be carried out using every means available, including and not limited to electronic and postal mail, digital platforms, social media, and the various district-owned websites.

The District will inform parents and parental organizations of the purpose and existence of the Parental Information and Resource Center in New Jersey.

If the school-wide program plan for Title I developed under Section 1114(b) of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school submits the plan to the Board.

If the District plans for Title I are not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the District will submit any parent comments with the plan upon request by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

The District will incorporate this district-wide parent and family engagement policy into its district plan.

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Section 6: Title I Coordinator.

The Title I Coordinator (“the Coordinator”) is the District’s Title I designee, and is to be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Coordinator is to execute all programs and activities as outlined in this policy and as required by Title I. The Coordinator is to monitor and administer the operation of the Title I programs according to federal and state guidelines. The Coordinator is to put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents at each school. These programs, activities, and procedures will be jointly planned and operated with meaningful consultation from parents. The Coordinator oversees the development of Title I programs and activities and monitors the budgets in accordance with established federal and state policies.

The Coordinator reviews each school’s plan, timeline, documentation, and budget, and responds to inquiries about the Title I program and related programs that support the activities prescribed by ESEA. The Coordinator oversees and directs the Title I grant application and approval process for funds, the allocation of Title I funds to each school, works with school administration, teachers, parents and the community to design, implement, and evaluate Title I programs and plans. The Coordinator monitors the effectiveness of the Title I program, ensuring adherence to federal and state policies. The Coordinator is to manage and coordinate the Title I committee meetings at each school.

Section 7: Chief School Administrator.

The Chief School Administrator (“the CSA”) serves as the chief administrator of Title I and to ensure additional policies as it relates to the execution of Title I are created and promulgated throughout the District. In the absence of a Coordinator, the CSA is to assume the duties and responsibilities of Title I Coordinator as outlined herein. The CSA is to audit all activities carried out under Title I and ensure compliance with federal and state guidelines and this policy.

Section 8: School Business Administrator.

The School Business Administrator (“the SBA”) is to assist the Coordinator and/or the CSA in fulfilling the fiduciary obligations of Title I and ensuring financial compliance. All purchases using Title I funding must be approved by the Coordinator and the SBA. The SBA is to audit Title I financial records to ensure compliance with federal and state guidelines. Any and all discrepancies must be reported to the CSA and Coordinator immediately upon discovery.

Section 9: Adoption.

The District’s Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents, as evidenced by meeting minutes. This policy was adopted by the Marion P. Thomas Charter School and will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic year. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I children on or before February 3, 2021.