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**Parent & Family Engagement Policy**

**Purpose**

Gulf District Schools recognizes that a child’s education is a responsibility shared by parents, families, schools, and the community during the entire period the child is enrolled in school. Creating positive, home, school, and community partnerships is essential to carrying out the shared responsibility necessary to improve schools and reinforce the importance of academic achievement.

The Parent and Family Engagement Policy is being adopted in order to:

* Support and secure strong effective partnerships among parents, families, schools and the community that serves to improve academic quality and student performance;
* Provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist schools in planning and implementing effective family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance; and
* Comply with Title I, Part A requirements regarding the establishment of a parent and family engagement policy according to Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

**Guidelines**

Gulf District Schools is committed to fostering and promoting family engagement, and strives to maximize engagement by implementing programs, activities and procedures that emphasize effective family-school-community partnership and shared responsibility for high academic achievement and student success. To accomplish this goal, these initiatives will be planned and implemented by:

* Fostering a welcoming and responsive environment for all families regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic status, political beliefs, or any other protected affiliations;
* Promoting family and community engagement participation in school district, learning network and school level decisions;
* Increasing access to information to assist caregivers in navigating the school district so their children can obtain the resources required to help them achieve their maximum academic potential;
* Responding to caregiver concerns and/or complaints to ensure children’s educational needs are met;
* Providing caregivers opportunities to acquire necessary information, knowledge, and skills to build capacity for leadership and advocacy to support their children’s education at home and at school; Ensuring accountability of staff at all levels throughout the District in working with caregivers as partners;
* Setting high expectations for excellent customer (caregiver/family) service.

District-wide programs and initiatives include:

* Offering multiple entry points that parents and community can use to access information and get support in resolving their concerns through:
  + District and school websites which provide information about services, initiatives and programs
  + Parent Resource Centers which offer parents in person support in resolving concerns and exploring ways to better support their child’s education; offers information about District’s policies, procedures, programs and services; shares information about community based programs and resources and hosts a variety of caregiver workshops and events
  + Parent Liaison, whose many functions include assisting schools in expanding family engagement opportunities and building stronger school-family partnerships, supporting parents in resolving their concerns through one-on-one case management support, acting as a liaison between district office/school staff and families, collecting and disseminating information about services and resources, organizing and facilitating caregiver workshops and information fairs, helping schools form a School Advisory Council, and providing other services and resources to meet the diverse needs of all families.
* Improving Access to Information
  + Making information about District programs, services, processes and procedures available on the school and district website
  + Using social media and traditional media partners to share information with families and community;
  + Using automated call outs to provide up-to-date information
  + Providing an online parent portal for constant access to their child’s attendance and grades.
* Securing Input and Feedback
  + Provide updates on the latest happenings in the School District by inviting all stakeholder groups, including caregivers, students, staff and community members, to participate in Parent Advisory Council meetings other school-based meetings to receive input, get new ideas and solicit feedback to inform District policies and priorities.
  + Strengthening family and community involvement in school-based decision making through the School Advisory Councils (SAC) – an advisory body that ensures school-wide representation when discussing matters that affect the whole school. Bringing together peer-elected representatives from all stakeholder groups: parents (who have a majority voice on the SAC), school leadership and staff, community partners and students (in high schools). SACs provide a platform for discussion and collaboration to ensure success of all students.
  + Soliciting input on a variety of topics through Title I, ESE, and Climate Surveys
  + Schools will obtain parent input on the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
* Follow Statutory Requirements
  + The District will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents, consistent with section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A programs. Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with caregivers of participating students.
  + Consistent with section 1116, the School District will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level family engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1116(d) of the ESSA.
  + In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, the District and schools will provide opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency or disabilities, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language caregivers understand.
  + The District will involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement are spent, and will ensure that those funds go directly to the schools for parent activities as agreed upon between the parents and the school administration with approval of the School Advisory Council.
  + The District will host at least one parent meeting a year to involve all interested parents in the discussion of eligible family engagement programs and activities.