

Somerville ISD

2018 - 2019

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY



APPROVED BY THE SOMERVILLE ISD BOARD OCT. 2018

SOMERVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Family Engagement Policy

Statement of Purpose

Somerville Independent School District is committed to the goal of providing a quality education for every child that enrolls in the district. To this end, the district wants to work collaboratively with parents in the community. Parents play an extremely vital role as their child's first teachers. Everyone gains if the school and parents work together to promote high achievement for ALL children. The district recognizes that neither the home nor the school can do the job alone, and for us to accomplish our mission of providing ALL students a quality education, parents must first be treated as stakeholders and actively be involved in their child's education.

The goal of family engagement is to provide opportunities; training and information for parents that will help them assume a more meaningful role in improving student achievement and increase their effectiveness when participating in the planning, design, implementation, evaluation, and revision of the Title I program and Family Engagement Policy.

Title I and the Law

The purpose of Title I is to improve the basic programs of the Somerville Independent School District, and to provide opportunities for children to acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the state content standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – TEKS) and to meet the state performance standards (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness - STAAR). The most recent law that affects Title I is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The law requires:

- That school districts have a written policy regarding parental involvement;
- That parents be involved in the design, operation and evaluation of Title I
- That parents be consulted about home/school activities and be trained to help their children;
- That whenever possible, activities should be presented in the language spoken by the majority of the Title I parents.

Districts receiving Title I, Part A funds must implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parent in the Title I program. A written family engagement policy must be developed and agreed upon jointly with parents and distributed to parents. Family engagement is a requirement as one of the ten components of a Schoolwide Title I program.

Family Engagement in Developing the Policy

The Family Engagement Policy will be developed jointly with parents. The District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC) composed of teachers, parents and other interested parties will meet to discuss the design and implementation of the *Family Engagement Policy*. The DEIC will convene at a time and place convenient to all its members.

In addition to the development of this *Family Engagement Policy*, the community will be consulted in the design, development and implementation of the Title I program. Parents and students needs will be assessed through questionnaires and parental suggestions as well as a variety of other measures targeted at creating a successful school environment. Parents will be informed of involvement activities through the campus offices. The district will welcome and promote parental suggestions.

Building Capacity

Somerville ISD values the partnership of the parents in their children's education. There are many ways parents can make significant contributions to student success both at home and by volunteering at the school. Student achievement is the result of effective home-school-community partnerships.

To strengthen this partnership the district:

- Shall aid parents in how to monitor a child's progress, and how to work with educators to improve student achievement.
- Shall provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve student achievement.
- Shall provide training to teachers and school personnel with the assistance of parents to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and the school.
- Shall provide information in a format and language the parents understand.

- May involve parents in the development of training for teachers.
- May provide necessary literacy training.
- May pay reasonable expenses associated with local parental involvement activities.
- May arrange school meetings at a variety of times or conduct in-home conferences.
- May develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations in parental involvement activities.

Family Engagement Opportunities

The district will support many varied ways of parental involvement as it strives to develop and maintain an optimum learning environment for all students. Parents may contribute through volunteer programs at school as well as creating a supportive home atmosphere. The community may also participate through an array of activities that promote student success.

Parent Organizations: Somerville Primary Room Parents Association, various Booster Clubs

Volunteer Programs: Campus Volunteers

Other Activities: School District Open House, Campus Open Houses, Freshman Orientation, General Mills Box Tops for Education, helping with student musicals/plays and science fair, parent STAAR information nights, Book Fairs, parent conferences, individual class activities, field trips

The district also highly encourages parent to volunteer to serve on district and campus committees. Efforts are made that committee selections represent the diversity of the community and the different student sub-groups served by the district.

Parent input is also solicited through parent surveys in order to evaluate current programs and to have input in the future of the school. Surveys are done in both English and Spanish, and parents are highly encouraged to complete and return these anonymous surveys to the school.

In addition, each campus will develop their own parental involvement activities best suited to meet their individual needs in order for them to promote student success.

School/Parent Communication

The district recognized that an important way to foster parental involvement is through various avenues of communication throughout the school year. Newsletters, conferences, personal contracts, phone calls and written notices will be utilized to establish and maintain an open line of communication.

Staff members will be trained in promoting positive communication activities as well as effective ways to work with parents and community members. The staff is encouraged to keep in close contact with parents not only in situations where there is an academic or behavior concern, but also when good things are going on in the classroom.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school and/or their child's teachers if they have any questions or concerns about the instructional program. Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed simply by a phone call or a conference with the child's teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG (LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. In general, the student or parent should first discuss the complaint with the campus principal. If unresolved, a written complaint and a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

Family Engagement, Responsibilities and Rights

The Somerville ISD believes that the best educational result for each student occurs when all three partners are doing their best: the campus staff, the student's parents and the student. Such a partnership requires trust and much communication between home and school. To strengthen this partnership, every parent is urged to:

- Encourage your child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunity the school provides.
- Encourage your child to attend school regularly. Contact the school when your child is unable to attend school.
- Encourage your child to do their homework and study at home.
- Instill a wholesome attitude toward school and respect for teachers in your child.
- Review the information in the student handbook and student code of conduct with your child and sign and return the acknowledgement form(s) and the directory information notice.

- Become familiar with all the child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs offered in the district. Discuss with the counselor or principal any questions, such as concerns about placement, assignment, or early graduation, and the options available to the child. Monitor the child's academic programs and contact teachers as needed.
- Attend school conferences and request additional conferences as needed. A teacher will usually arrange to return the call or meet with the parent during his or her conference period or at a mutually convenient time before or after school.
- Exercise the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other aids, and to examine tests that have been administered to his or her child.
- Review the child's student records when needed. A parent may review (1) attendance records, (2) test scores, (3) grades, (4) disciplinary records, (5) counseling records, (6) psychological records, (7) applications for admission, (8) health and immunization information, (9) other medical records, (10) teacher and counselor evaluations, (11) reports of behavioral patterns, and (12) state assessment instruments that have been administered to his or her child.
- Grant or deny any written request from the district to make a videotape or voice recording of the child unless the videotape or recording (1) is to be used for school safety; (2) relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular activity; or (3) relates to media coverage of the school as permitted by law.
- Temporarily remove the child from the classroom, if an instructional activity in which the child is scheduled to participate conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, the child must satisfy grade level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.
- Become a school volunteer.
- Participate in campus parent organizations. Parents can support and be involved in various school activities, either as leaders or in supporting roles.
- Offer to serve as a parent representative on the district level or campus level planning committees formulating educational goals and plans to improve student achievement.
- Attend Board meetings to learn more about district operations, including the procedures of addressing the Board when appropriate.
- Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concerns: (1) political affiliation or beliefs of the student or the student's parent, (2) mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family, (3) sexual behavior or attitude, (4) illegal, antisocial, self-incrimination, or demeaning behavior, (5) critical appraisals of

individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship, (6) relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, (7) religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents, (8) income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in special programs or to receive financial assistance under such as program. **You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.**

- As a parent, you also have the right to receive notice and opt your child out of participating in: (1) any survey concerning the private information listed above, (2) school activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information, (3) any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. See policies EF and FFAA.
- As a parent, if you choose that your child's artwork, special projects, photographs and the like not be displayed to the community on the District's Web site, in printed material, by video, or any other method of communication, you must notify the principal in writing.
- Parents also have a right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which the state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.
- To request that your child be excused from participating in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the state flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required moment of silence or silent activity that follows.
- To request that your child be excused from reciting a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week. The request must be in writing. State law requires the recitation as part of social studies classes in grades 3-12 unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the District determines that your child has a

conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

- To request in writing, if you are a noncustodial parent, that you be provided for the remainder of the school year a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to misconduct that may involve placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion. See policies FL (LEGAL) and (LOCAL), FO (LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.
- To request a transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if the board or its designee to be a victim of bullying as the term has verified Education Code 25.0341 defines your child. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent for information.
- To request a transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the District if your child attends a school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child was a victim of a violent criminal offense while in school or on school grounds. See policy FSS (LOCAL).

Coordination with Other Programs

Emphasis will be placed on collaboration with Somerville's PTO, SHAC, Booster Clubs, District Education Improvement Committee, campus site-based committees, Title I teachers, grade level teachers and the school administration.

Evaluation of Family Engagement Program

The DEIC and campus site-based committees will annually review and evaluate all aspects of the Family Engagement program. Parents will be questioned about the effectiveness of the program and offer suggestions for improvement. Parent surveys will be one method of obtaining this input. The district and campuses will revise the *Family Engagement Policy* based on the results of this annual review.

Approval of Family Engagement Policy

As the governing authority for Somerville ISD, the Board of Trustees will have the final authority to approve the District's *Family Engagement Policy* while considering input from the DEIC, CEIC and the district's parents.

Reservation of Funds

Somerville's Title I, Part A allocation is less than \$500,000; therefore, no money is required to be reserved for Family Engagement. However, the district and campus will provide a parental involvement program and services.

Conclusion

The goal of the parents and the objective of the school are synonymous. The Family Engagement Policy is intended to help you, as a parent, make the fullest contribution to your child's success in school.

Approved by the Somerville ISD Board of Trustees

Board President: Bryan Crook Date: October 10, 2018

Board Secretary: Linda Pinkerton Date: October 10, 2018

Approved by the District Education Improvement committee (DEIC)

Chairman: Stephanie Anepia Date: 10/16/18