

# REGULATION

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Related Entries:** ABA, ABA-RA, ABC, BMA, FAA, IEA, IEB, IED, IFB, IGP-RA, IRB-RA

**Responsible Office:** Family and Community Partnerships

### Parent and Family Involvement

#### I. PURPOSE

To facilitate a strong home-school partnership, promote and increase effective and comprehensive parent and family involvement practices, and support efforts to ensure that parent and family involvement reflects the diversity of local school communities.

#### II. RATIONALE

Research indicates that parent and family involvement in education has a positive effect on student learning and healthy development. It is an important strategy in reducing the achievement gap and it helps to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment.

#### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Community* is comprised of numerous constituents with a vested interest in the education of children.
- B. *Diversity* encompasses differences based on, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, and disability.
- C. *Family member* of a child means a relative by blood, adoption, or marriage.
- D. *Parent* is a biological parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent, an appointed surrogate parent, an individual acting in place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, step-parent, or other relative) with whom the student lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the student's welfare.
- E. *Parent involvement* is based on, but not limited to, the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

1. Welcoming all families into the school community
2. Communicating effectively
3. Supporting student success
4. Speaking up for children
5. Sharing power
6. Collaborating with Community

#### IV. PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Employees are expected to convey a commitment to building respectful, inclusive school communities and take advantage of professional development opportunities on cultural competence and effective parent and family involvement. To build strong family-school partnerships, local schools will do the following:

- A. Ensure that staff understands the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and receives strategies to implement the standards.
- B. Work collaboratively with central offices in identifying and using resources and supports that promote parent and family involvement.
- C. Ensure there is a positive environment in their buildings where all parents feel welcomed and are treated with respect.
- D. Provide a variety of opportunities for parents to volunteer from home and at school.
- E. Use multiple methods and languages, as appropriate, to ensure effective and timely communication, including, but not limited to, newsletters, the school website, listservs, EdLine, and Connect-ED.
- F. Offer programs and activities for families that are clearly linked to improving achievement, such as Family Math and Literacy nights, workshops explaining the instructional program, information about the Seven Keys to College Readiness, school procedures, and school and community resources. Schools should identify an area or place in the school where materials for parents can be accessed.

- G. Work collaboratively with the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and other parent groups to support and engage parents as advocates for their children and as participants in the school improvement process.
- H. Include on their school improvement teams parents who reflect the diversity of the local school community and who are given the opportunity to participate meaningfully on the team.
- I. Use multiple methods to collect feedback from parents, including, but not limited to, the Survey of School Environment, and to share the feedback with the parent community. Appropriate action steps should be included in the school improvement plan.
- J. Ensure there is a clear process for addressing and resolving parents' concerns.
- K. Develop partnerships with local business and community groups to support student learning and parent involvement.

**V. PROCEDURES FOR CENTRAL OFFICES**

Employees in all central offices are expected to convey a commitment to parent and family involvement and treat parents in a respectful manner in all interactions. Staff will take advantage of professional development opportunities on cultural competence and effective parent and family involvement. Appropriate central office staff will support schools in their parent involvement efforts and will do the following:

- A. Provide training on the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and share best practices, strategies, and resources for effective parent and family involvement.
- B. Work with colleges and universities that prepare teachers and administrators to support the inclusion of parent and family involvement practices in their academic programs.
- C. Assist schools in their efforts to include parents in the school improvement process and to develop and implement action steps related to the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- D. Provide appropriate mechanisms, training, and support to assist schools in their two-way communication efforts, including, but not limited to, EdLine, Connect-ED, web publishing system, Language Line, and translation and interpretation services.

- E. Regularly review parent participation and results from the Survey of School Environment, as well as data on EdLine activation and Connect-ED usage, to determine if systemwide improvements are necessary and to identify supports to assist schools in their communication efforts.
- F. Provide systemwide parent materials in multiple formats (print, video, web) and in multiple languages.
- G. Inform schools of resources for families available in the community and through government agencies.
- H. Provide orientation and training for school volunteer coordinators and support schools' efforts to include parents as volunteers.
- I. Provide systemwide programs, workshops, and supports to increase parents' knowledge and understanding about the school system and to assist in the development of their leadership and advocacy skills.
- J. Provide opportunities for parents to participate in the Board of Education strategic planning and budget processes and to participate on systemwide work groups and advisory committees.

*Regulation History:* New Regulation, August 21, 1991; revised July 21, 2003; revised September 3, 2010.