

PARENT/GUARDIAN AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT REGULATIONS

The Alexandria City School Board believes that the education of Alexandria’s young people is a shared responsibility of families and schools. When families are involved in their children’s education, the attitudes, behaviors, and achievement of students are positively enhanced. Consequently, families are vital and necessary partners with the educational community throughout their children’s school career. By recognizing the important role that they play, and by assisting families to understand curricula and ways they can support children, students benefit.

I. DEFINITIONS

“Parents/guardians and families” include any caregivers/guardians who assume responsibility for nurturing and caring for their child, and who interact with the child’s early childhood program or school. This may include fathers, mothers, grandparents, foster parents, formal and informal guardians, and siblings, among others.

“Parent/guardian” includes a parent or legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the student lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the student). Only parents/guardians may access their student’s educational records.

“Involvement” includes family participation in school and out of school meetings and program activities.

“Engagement” is a *shared responsibility* for schools, out of school programs and families. It involves partnering with families to support student learning and success. It includes ongoing, goal-directed relationships between staff and families that are mutual, culturally responsive, and that support what is best for children and families, both individually and collectively.

II. DIVISION-WIDE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROVISIONS

A. ACPS:

1. Provides activities that will educate and connect parents/guardians and families to learning opportunities to support their children’s academic and social-emotional development. These activities will promote cooperation between the Division and other agencies or school/community groups and disseminate information regarding parenting skills and child/adolescent development;
2. Implements strategies to involve parents/guardians and families in the educational process, including:
 - a) Keeping families informed of opportunities for involvement and encouraging participation in various programs;
 - b) Providing access to educational resources for parents/guardians and families to use with their children; and

- c) Keeping parents/guardians informed of the objectives of the Division's educational programs as well as of their child's participation and progress with these programs;
3. Enables families to participate in the education of their children through a variety of roles. For example, family members are encouraged to:
 - a) Provide input into Division policies; and
 - b) Volunteer time within the classroom and school programs.
4. Provides professional development opportunities for new hires during their first year and continued learning opportunities for all staff to enhance their understanding and ability to implement effective family engagement strategies.
5. Performs regular evaluations of parent/guardian and family engagement at each school and at the Division level;
6. Provides access, upon request, to any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum;
7. Ensures meaningful communication with limited English proficient (LEP) parents/guardians in a language they can understand. In addition, for parents/guardians of students eligible for English Learner programs, ACPS informs them of how they can be active participants in assisting their children
 - a) To learn English;
 - b) To achieve at high levels in core academic subjects; and
 - c) To meet the same challenging academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet.
8. Provides supplementary aides and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when needed to communicate effectively with parents/guardians who have communication disabilities. Such services will be provided unless doing so would result in an undue burden to ACPS. **Staff will submit requests using the online system (<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/translation>) following Division procedures.**

B. Family and School Partnerships

To enhance family-school partnerships, the following essential elements shall be promoted to support and align with the ACPS strategic plan:

1. Welcoming all Parents/Guardians and Families
 - a) Schools shall promote an atmosphere where all parents/guardians and families feel welcomed, valued and connected to the school community.

- b) Parents/guardians shall have the opportunity to meet their children's teachers, tour the school building and meet other parents/guardians during open houses held annually at each school building.
 - c) Welcome packets shall be provided to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year and upon enrollment. Packets shall include important school information, including Division contact information, language access information and Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center information.
 - d) Schools shall strive to eliminate barriers to family engagement by arranging school meetings at a variety of times, such as in the morning or evening, and by providing child care, transportation, and interpretation services at family engagement events when possible.
2. Communicating Effectively
- a) School staff shall engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication with parents/guardians in regard to student learning.
 - b) To communicate effectively, school staff will be respectful of and address issues such as cultural diversity, language differences and special needs.
 - c) Appropriate steps shall be taken to allow authentic communication between participants, which includes communications with:
 - Parents/guardians with communication disabilities; and
 - Limited English proficient (LEP) parents/guardians, whether oral or in writing, in a language the parent/guardian can understand.
 - d) ACPS has developed and implemented a process for determining LEP parents'/guardians' preferred language of communication. The school division shall adequately notify LEP parents in a language they can understand, and provide meaningful access to the same information about schools, programs, services or activities as non-LEP parents/guardians.
 - e) Spontaneous oral interpretation for LEP parents/guardians and family members is often provided by bilingual ACPS staff members, including parent liaisons. However, all essential information provided by the Division and schools, including written translation and oral interpretation at official meetings (i.e., parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, disciplinary hearings, etc.), shall be provided by certified staff, or vendors contracted to provide such services, except in cases where the safety of a child is in jeopardy. **Translation and interpretation services provided to parents/guardians and family members must be requested by ACPS staff using the online system (<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/translation>) following Division procedures.**
3. Supporting Student Success
- a) Schools shall provide opportunities for parents/guardians and families to learn effective ways to support their child's educational needs, including information about how to support learning at home, promoting effective study habits, and monitoring their child's progress through student achievement data.

- b) Schools shall collaborate with the ACPS Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center to ensure family engagement activities and materials are aligned with best practices identified by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - c) Schools shall assist families in understanding expectations regarding transition points in their child's educational progression, including entering preschool or kindergarten, and moving from elementary to middle or from middle to high school.
4. Speaking up for Every Child
- a) Parents/guardians and families shall be empowered to advocate for their children and the children of other families to ensure that all students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that support achievement.
5. Sharing Responsibility
- a) Schools shall promote an equal partnership with parents/guardians and families in making decisions that affect their children.
 - b) Schools and the Division shall make efforts to recruit and support participation by parents/guardians and families representing all student groups on advisory committees and in school organizations that influence school policies, practices and programs.
 - c) The role of parents/guardians and families in decision-making shall be continually evaluated and refined at the Division and school levels.
 - d) Schools shall offer a range of meaningful opportunities for parents/guardians and families to volunteer within schools.
6. Collaborating with the Community
- a) Schools shall collaborate with health and human services agencies to provide access and coordinate support services for students, parents/guardians and families.
 - b) Schools shall provide parents/guardians, families and students with community resources and opportunities that link to learning, skills and talents, including out-of-school time, enrichment, mentoring, internships and summer programs for students.
 - c) Community partners shall be invited to share resources with schools through the Office of School, Business and Community Partnerships.

C. Review and Reporting

The School Board will receive data related to student success and family engagement as part of the annual Strategic Plan Goal 2 Performance Update. The Department of School, Business and Community Partnerships will monitor this regulation and implement aligned family engagement initiatives. Data regarding such initiatives and their outcomes will be made available to the School Board annually as part of the department plan reporting process.

III. PARENT/GUARDIAN AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TITLE I SCHOOLS

A. Parent/Guardian and Family Involvement in Division Plan: Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 6318)

ACPS encourages parents/guardians and families of children who are eligible to participate in Title I, Part A programs to participate in the development of the Division's Title I plan. They may provide their input by participating in their school's Title I school leadership or school improvement team, or Title I Parental Advisory Committee; through attending their school's Annual Title I Meeting; or by responding to Title I surveys and/or contacting the Division's Title I Office directly.

B. Parent/Guardian and Family Involvement in School Review and Improvement: Title I, Part A

ACPS encourages parents/guardians and families of children who are eligible to participate in Title I, Part A, and English Learner programs to participate in the process of school review and, if applicable, the development of support plans under 20 U.S.C. § 6311 (d)(1) and (2). They may do so in two ways: first, by serving on either the school improvement team or school leadership team, or second, by sending their comments to those teams.

C. Division Responsibilities: Title I, Part A

1. ACPS, and each school which receives Title I, Part A, funds:
 - a) Provides assistance to parents/guardians and families of children served by the school or Division, as applicable, in understanding topics such as Virginia's challenging academic standards, state and local academic assessments, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
 - b) Provides materials and training to help parents/guardians and families work with their children to improve their academic achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent/guardian and family involvement;
 - c) Educates teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, other school leaders and staff, with the assistance of parents/guardians and families, in the value and utility of families' contributions and how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with them as equal partners, how to implement and coordinate parent/guardian and family programs, and how to build ties between families and the school;
 - d) To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinates and integrates parent/guardian and family involvement programs and activities with other federal, state and local programs, including public preschool, and conducts other activities, such as Parent Resource Centers, that encourage and support full participation in the education of their children;

- e) Ensures that information related to school and family programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents/guardians of participating students in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents/guardians can understand; and
 - f) Provides such other reasonable support for parent/guardian and family involvement activities as may be requested.
2. ACPS, and each of its schools that receives Title I, Part A, funds, **MAY**:
- a) Involve parents/guardians and families in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;
 - b) Provide necessary literacy training from Title I funds if the Division has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training;
 - c) Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parent/guardian and family involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents/guardians and families to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
 - d) Train parents/guardians and families to enhance the involvement of other parents/guardians and families;
 - e) Arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct (in-home) conferences between teachers (and/or other educators who work directly with participating children) and their parents/guardians who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize their involvement and participation;
 - f) Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parent/guardian and family involvement;
 - g) Establish a Division-wide Title I Parent Advisory Committee to provide advice on all matters related to parent/guardian and family involvement in programs supported by Title I; and,
 - h) Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent/guardian and family involvement activities.

**D. School Responsibilities for Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement:
Title I, Part A**

Each school served under Title I, Part A, jointly develops with, agrees on and distributes to parents/guardians and family members of participating children a written, school-based policy that describes the means for carrying out the following:

- 1. Convening an annual meeting at a convenient time, to which all parents/guardians and families of participating children are invited and encouraged to attend, to inform them of their school's participation in Title I, Part A and to explain the law's requirements, and of their right to be involved;

2. Offering flexible meeting schedules such as meetings in the morning or evening, and if needed, schools may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;
3. Involving parents/guardians and families in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I, Part A, programs, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school-based policy for parent/guardian and family engagement and the joint development of the school-wide program plan under 20 U.S.C. § 6314(b), except that if a school has a process in place for involving parents/guardians and families in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents/guardians and families of participating children;
4. Providing parents/guardians and families of participating children
 - a) timely information about Title I, Part A, programs;
 - b) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging state academic standards; and
 - c) if requested by parents/guardians and families, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible; and
5. If the school-wide program plan under 20 U.S.C. § 6314(b) is not satisfactory to the parents/guardians and families of participating children, submitting their comments on the plan when the school makes it available to the School Board.

E. Parent/Guardian and Family Involvement in Allocation of Funding: Title I, Part A

Parents/guardians and family members of children receiving services under Title I, Part A, are involved in the decisions regarding how funds provided under that law are allotted for parental involvement activities.

ACPS will involve parents/guardians and families of children served in Title I schools in decisions about how the one percent of Title I, Part A, funds reserved for parental involvement is spent, and will ensure, as required by law, that not less than 90 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the school.

F. Policy Review: Title I, Part A Provisions

ACPS conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents/guardians and family members of children who are eligible to participate in Title I, Part A programs, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the Title I provisions of this policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under Title I, Part A, including identifying:

1. Barriers to greater participation by parents/guardians and families (with particular attention to those who are economically disadvantaged, have disabilities, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy or are of any racial or ethnic minority background);
2. The needs of parents/guardians and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
3. Strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

Established: June 7, 2018

Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. §§ 6311, 6314, 6318.
42 U.S.C. § 2000(d).
42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12134.
30 C.F.R. Part 100.
Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78.

Cross Refs.:	AD	Educational Philosophy
	BCF	Advisory Committees to the School Board
	IAA	Notification of Learning Objectives
	IGBC	Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement
	IICB/IICC	Community Resource Persons/School Volunteers
	IKA	Parental Assistance with Instruction
	IKA-R	Regulations for Parental Involvement with Student Learning
	IKCA	Reports to Parents/Guardians
	KA	Goals for School-Community-Parent Relations
	KB	Public Information Program
	KK	School Visitors
	KMA	Relations with Parent Organizations as Partners
	KP	Parental Rights and Responsibilities