



Union Area School District

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UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2023-24 PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

ESSA Section 1116

Reviewed/Revised 4/18/2023

The Title I Parent and Family Engagement section of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 1116(b) requires each Title I school to develop a written parent and family engagement policy that describes the means for carrying out the requirements of Section 1116. The school must ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities are sent to the parents of Title I children in a format and in a language the parents can understand.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

- The Union Area School District will reach out, by various means of communication, to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents and families in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Those programs, activities, and procedures within the district's Title I program will be planned and carried out with meaningful consultation by including the families of participating students. ESSA, Section 1116 (a)(1)
- The Union Area School District and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents and families; including those with limited English proficiency, disabilities, and of migratory children. This information and school reports will be provided in an understandable and uniform format. This will include alternative formats upon request; and will be written in a language parents and families can understand.

The Union Area School District will gather information and develop the plan jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating students in a written parent and family engagement policy. Section 1116 (a)(2).

- ❖ *The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112 (District Improvement Plan).*
- ❖ *The policy will establish the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement.*
- ❖ *The policy will be reviewed and revised during meetings involving the families (parents and students), administrators, education specialists, classroom teachers, and community members during meetings throughout the school year.*
- ❖ *The policy will be distributed through varying types of communication and family engagement meetings for input, review, and revision to inform families and the community regarding the plan.*
- ❖ *The policy will reflect the goal of the Union Area School District which is to promote parent and family engagement and to build strong and effective partnerships with families that can help children and families thrive. These partnerships are grounded in positive, ongoing, and goal-oriented relationships with families.*

- The Union Area School District will: involve parents and family members in jointly developing the local educational agency plan (DIP) under section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1111(d). Section 1116 (a)(2)(A)
- The plan will be annually reviewed, updated, and revised as necessary by a group of individuals which includes family members of the students.

In the Union Area School District, Family Engagement is defined as: the participation of parents and families in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. The district will offer programs, activities, and procedures which support this definition.

Parents and families are encouraged to:

- ❖ *Play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;*
- ❖ *Be actively involved in their child's education;*
- ❖ *Are full partners in the child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;*
- ❖ *Help in the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA and section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act.*

The school district will inform and promote to families and parental organizations the existence of the Pennsylvania Resource Center, where information and materials regarding Family Engagement and other varying topics are offered.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The Union Area School District will take the following actions to involve parents and families in the joint development of its district wide family engagement plan under section 1116(a)(2)(A) of the ESSA:
 - ❖ *Conduct meetings between administration, teachers, staff, families, and students*
 - ❖ *Extend opportunities to attend other conferences through the Intermediate Unit IV and SPAC (Pennsylvania State Parent Advisory Council)*
 - ❖ *Plan Title I Reading oriented in-service sessions for staff members*

- The Union Area School District will take the following actions to involve families in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116(a)(2)(A) of the ESSA:

Parents and Families will be invited and encouraged to participate in the following:

- ❖ *Annual meetings at convenient and flexible times which are conducted for the purpose of planning, reviewing, and implementing the district's Title I policies and practices*
- ❖ *Activities which provide experiences involving topics which include reading, math, and technology literacy training; STEAM enrichment; student assessment; and related subjects*
- ❖ *Annual meetings at convenient and flexible times such as the Title I Family Engagement Meeting, Family Engagement Nights, Open House/Meet & Greet Night, PTO activities*
- ❖ *Utilizing enrichment and training tools made available online and in other formats*
- ❖ *Joint opportunities provided by community-oriented organizations and agencies*

- The Union Area School District will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance as required in the ESSA (Section 1116 (a)(2)(B)):

- ❖ *Updating and maintaining the district's website*
 - ❖ *Providing additional supplemental programs and opportunities involving types of tutoring and promoting all areas of literacy and Family Engagement*
 - ❖ *Assessing the achievement of all students three times per year using a School-Wide Testing program*
 - ❖ *Conducting meetings including parents, staff, and students to promote the individualized educational needs of all students (Child Study Team, Individualized Instructional Plans, Parent/Teacher conferences)*
 - ❖ *Different tools to encourage and promote communication between families and the school district (Parent Square, Remind)*
- The Union Area School District will coordinate and integrate family engagement strategies in Part A with family engagement strategies under the following other Federal, State and local laws and programs such as Head Start, local preschools, etc. (ESSA, Section 1116 (a)(2)(C):

The following opportunities to support transitioning will be provided:

- ❖ *District representatives will attend annual IEP and transitional meetings to make parents aware of the various programs available in the District.*
 - ❖ *Parents will be given the opportunity to visit the school prior to their child beginning the school year.*
 - ❖ *A Kindergarten Orientation, tailored for parents, will be held to provide information and answer questions regarding the available programs, registration process, classrooms, and building itself.*
- The Union Area School District will take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents and families, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by families in family engagement activities (with particular attention to families who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its family engagement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective family engagement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of families) the parent and family engagement policies and all strategies to support successful school and family interactions (ESSA, Section 1116 (a)(2)(D)(i-iii)).
 - ❖ *Administer State-Driven Standards Testing—Tests conducted by the following: Guidance Counselors, School Psychologists, Classroom Teachers; and notify families of the student's scores.*
 - ❖ *Administer Curriculum-Based Testing—Testing conducted by the following: Title I teachers, classroom teachers; and families will be notified of qualifying students.*
 - ❖ *Administer School-Wide Testing—Testing conducted by the following: classroom teachers, Title I teachers, and staff. Families are notified of the results.*

- The Union Area School District will build the schools' and family's capacity for strong family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of families and to support a partnership among the school involved, the families, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below (ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(E)):

The school district will, with the assistance of its Title I Part A schools, provide assistance to families of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding, providing training and materials on topics such as the following:

- ❖ *The State's student academic content and achievement standards,*
- ❖ *The State and local academic assessment including alternate assessments*

- ❖ *Monitoring their child's progress*
 - ❖ *How to work with educators by providing experiences and opportunities including meetings, workshops, or conferences offered by the Pennsylvania State Parent Advisory Council; Midwestern IUIV; and the school district*
 - ❖ *District-provided technological equipment, software, textbooks and supplies, and support*
- The Union Area School District will, with the assistance of its school and families, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff; in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with families as equal partners in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the family can understand. The value and utility of contributions of families and how to implement and coordinate family-based programs and build ties between families will be supported by:
 - ❖ *Title I District and School Policies*
 - ❖ *Handouts/Brochures*
 - ❖ *Personal Contacts: meetings, phone calls, letters*
 - ❖ *Links from the school website*
- The Union Area School District will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate family engagement programs and activities with transitional agencies such as Head Start, home instruction programs; public and private preschools and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as family resource centers, that encourage and support families in more fully participating in the education of their children.
- The Union Area School District will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand:
 - ❖ Through the English as a Second Language Program staff, communication of school events will be given to and explained to parents.
 - ❖ Translation of notification of meetings, workshops, test scores, District Report Card, PSSA results, etc., through the PDE provided services.

DISCRETIONARY POLICY COMPONENTS

NOTE: The district-wide Parent and Family Engagement Policy may include additional paragraphs listing and describing other discretionary activities that the school district, in consultation with its families, chooses to undertake to build the family's capacity for involvement in the school and school system to support their children's academic achievement, such as the following discretionary activities listed under section 1118(e) of the ESEA and ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(F):

- *Involving families in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training;*
- *Providing necessary literacy training for families from Title I, Part A funds, if the school district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for that training;*
- *Paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with family engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable families to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;*
- *Training families to enhance the involvement of other families;*
- *In order to maximize family engagement and participation in their children's education, arranging school meetings at a variety of times, or conducting in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with families who are unable to attend those conferences at school;*
- *Adopting and implementing model approaches to improving family engagement*

- *Establishing a district-wide stakeholder's committee to provide advice on all matters related to family engagement in Title I, Part A programs by revising and reviewing the policy*
- *Developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in family engagement activities;*
- *Providing other reasonable support for family engagement activities as parents may request*