

Title I Parent & Family Engagement Plan

Decades of research has shown that when schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not just in school but throughout life. Henderson Collegiate, Inc. (HC) believes that learning can best take place when there is shared effort, interest, and commitment among students, parents, extended family members, community members, and staff. The goal of this Parent and Family Engagement Plan is to support in a more consistent and effective manner those things already in practice, as well as to generate new ways of strengthening the partnership between school and home.

Section 1116 of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires the involvement of parents, families, and key community members of participating children in the design and implementation of Title I projects. A local educational agency (LEA) may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of these stakeholders in programs assisted under this part consistent with this section. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents and guardians, extended family members, and community members of participating children.

At HC, we convene annual public meetings to inform these stakeholders about Title I and their right to be involved. Parents, family members, and community members are invited to attend a Back to School Night or Orientation event for each grade level in the first month of school, in which they hear an overview of the school program. These annual meetings take place at the school and all parents, students, and other relations are invited and encouraged to attend through written invitations, flyers, email reminders, and follow-up phone calls. During this time, parents and families have an opportunity to ask questions about the program, to meet our staff, and to view the work of the Title I students. In addition, new students and parents are also involved in initial enrollment meetings with the school principal or designated school administrator, and must attend a New Student Orientation for several days before school starts in the summer. HC maintains on file, at a minimum: documentation of parental feedback and/or evaluation in the form of sign-in sheets and minutes from the presentation/meetings; copies of any relevant presentations; and replicates of flyers, website announcements, message recordings, and/or other advertisements for the Back to School Nights and Orientation meetings.

We offer a flexible number of meetings and parent-teacher conferences to ensure that all parents, family members, and other community members have the opportunity to participate, the ultimate goal of which is improving the achievement of all our children. Since HC utilizes an extended day and year program, we are easily accessible to parents at various times throughout the day. We meet with every middle school parent upon enrollment and twice a year (1st and 4th Quarter). In addition, we meet with elementary school parents at the end of each quarter. High school parents are invited to a variety of meetings throughout the year. These meetings include the child's teachers and begin as early as 7:00 a.m. and continue until 7:00 p.m. We also provide Spanish translators as needed. This allows parents, families, and community members, including those with limited English proficiency and/or disabilities, an equal opportunity to meet with teachers without creating disruption in their workplace. We also host an annual "Parent Pride Night" in December to showcase our Title 1 programming and student work. Additionally, all teachers provide their cell phone numbers to students and parents so they may be reached outside of the normal school hours.

We consult parents, family members, and community members in an organized, ongoing, and timely way for the improvement of the school and its programs; specifically, we include these critical stakeholders in the planning, review, and evaluation of programs and constantly strive to improve programs based on the results of these discussions/meetings. Each year, we evaluate the content and effectiveness of our policy with input from parents, family members, and community members. We maintain on file at the school, at a minimum: copies of the surveys on which parent and family input is specifically solicited; a copy of this policy; and proof that this policy has been made accessible to all families (i.e. website, etc.).

During every student enrollment meeting or home visit, parents, students, and staff jointly sign a commitment to excellence letter agreeing to our mission and goals. The commitment spells out the specific responsibilities of each group. For example, staff members commit to being available for homework help via cell phone every night, the student commits to completing all his or her homework, and the parent/family member commits to reviewing all homework, carefully reading all correspondence sent home, and attending school events and parent meetings.

Beyond these initial enrollment meetings, HC holds annual Back to School Nights (or Orientation in the elementary and high schools), and grade level meetings and individual parent/family meetings throughout the year to review the school's programs, policies, academic standards, assessments, promotional standards, and expectations for student achievement. In addition to these events, all parents and family members hear about curriculum and programming updates through our weekly "Pride Post" mailings sent home throughout the year and teacher letters/syllabi sent home at the beginning of the year. All of these documents are translated into Spanish as well. We also notify parents of and clearly post on the HC website our most recent North Carolina School Report Card data.

Feedback from our parents, family members, and community members on school-wide program performance is specifically solicited each year through parent surveys, which are completed during "Bring a Parent to School" weeks at the middle school, and sent home to families in the elementary and high schools. During "Bring a Parent to School" weeks, parents also have the opportunity to observe instruction personally, and to provide feedback to staff. Further, families have opportunities to comment on school-wide program performance through our weekly email messages, "Pride Posts," and paychecks, through our social media accounts, and through constant contact with all teachers and staff via email, cell phone, and/or face-to-face meetings. As a result, these key stakeholders have multiple opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

We provide parents, family members, and community members with assistance on understanding state academic content standards, the North Carolina Accountability Program, state and local assessments, and student academic performance standards, as well as ways to monitor a child's progress and work with a team of educators to improve the achievement of their children. Beginning with Back to School Nights and Orientation meetings at the start of the year and continuing with ongoing opportunities for parents to visit the school and tour the campus, parents, family members, and community members are provided with firsthand knowledge of their student's learning environment, which assists their understanding of HC expectations. Parent Teacher Conferences also offer an opportunity for parents to get information on academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and how to monitor their child's progress and work with educators to improve achievement. In addition, HC provides a handbook for parents as a guide. Distributed at the onset of the school year, the handbook spells out the specific responsibilities of each stakeholder in the child's education, as well as the means by which those at home can address concerns with the HC staff.

We provide materials and training to help parents, family members, and community members work with their children to improve achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, as well as foster parental involvement. At Back to School Nights at the beginning of each school year, suggestions and guidance are provided to families on how to support their students with homework completion and how to create a home environment for students that is conducive to their concentration. During Family Saturdays at our elementary school, parents are provided with resources to help work with their children to improve achievement. In addition, suggestions are sent home with the Pride Post. Moreover, throughout the year we provide workshops to help parents prepare for their child's transition to college. For example, we bring in college admissions and financial aid officers to explain the importance of long-range financial planning for college as well as to provide parents with a picture of the scholarship opportunities available to students with excellent academic skills. This is built upon when, in senior year, families are invited in for assistance with completing additional required documentation for college, such as the FAFSA and Residency documentation.

We educate school personnel in the value and utility of contributions from parents, family members, and community members. We emphasize how to reach out to, communicate with, and build ties with these critical stakeholders as equal partners in the process of improving student achievement. All staff members commit to valuing parents, family members, community members, and students as members of an extended team and family whose goal is to provide each student with the skills and habits necessary for success in high school, college, and life. All new staff members attend school-based training on how to build powerful relationships with parents, family members, and community members in order to establish an educational partnership. Staff members are educated in the use of HC mechanisms for establishing parental contact (i.e. student planners, phone calls, report card meetings, enrollment meetings, etc.).

We coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children. HC provides families with information about various community events in which they may be interested in engaging with their children, as well as disseminating information about positive after-school and track-out options for students to participate in.

We ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents in a format and in a language the parents can understand. HC makes sure that all parent letters are reviewed by multiple staff members to ensure that the language and format are accessible. Whenever parent meetings are used to disseminate information, the focus of the meeting is to make the information as engaging and understandable as possible. In all parent meetings there are numerous opportunities for parents to ask questions and speak to staff in a more comfortable one-on-one situation.

We provide opportunities for parents, family members, and community members with limited English proficiency, with disabilities, and/or with migratory children to communicate fully with our staff. Per section 1111, stakeholders meeting any of the criteria listed above are provided information and school reports in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language they can understand. Full participation opportunities are provided for parents and families with limited English proficiency, parents or family members with disabilities, and parents/guardians of migratory children. All parents of students in these categories are encouraged to observe their child in classes and work with staff to stimulate their student's academic growth. Regular IEP meetings also allow the parents and family members of identified EC students to get information and school reports in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language they can also understand.