

## **Myrtle Beach Early Childhood School Parent and Family Engagement Policy**

Horry County Schools encourages, supports, and values the participation and involvement of parents and families in the educational experiences of their children. The District recognizes each parent as a child's first teacher and acknowledges the powerful influence of parents on the child's life. The District shall be committed to developing family-friendly schools, offices, and programs that welcome and serve parents and families in positive and supportive environments.

The District acknowledges that students learn best when families and schools work together and develop relationships of shared responsibility and mutual support. The District recognizes that families are diverse in culture, language, and needs. It shall be the goal of the schools and teachers to meaningfully collaborate with all parents in meeting the needs of individual students.

The District shall assist parents in learning how home environments can support the academic achievement of students. Communicating the value of an education and the importance of high expectations will be emphasized. Strategies such as parenting classes, home visitation opportunities, and adult education programs will be offered to support parents. The District acknowledges the responsibility to help parents access and secure educational information, services, and opportunities for their children. Special assistance will be provided to ensure that non-English speaking parents may also participate as full partners in their child's education.

Parents make valuable contributions to the educational process and shall be included as participants in important school and district decisions. The District supports the work of the members of the Strategic Planning Committee and School Improvement Councils to participate as decision-makers. Parents and families are encouraged to participate on committees and parent organizations at both the school and district level and to serve as volunteers for classroom, school, and district-wide activities.

Professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other district employees shall be offered to enhance the ability of schools to effectively service all students, parents, and families. As a priority focus for the District, parent and family engagement activities will be supported through the allocation of District and special revenue resources. The District shall also collaborate and cooperate with businesses and community agencies to support the needs of parents and families.

**Horry County Schools adheres to the mandates set forth by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I.**

**Involve parents with joint development of the district plan and in the process of school review and improvement.**

- Collaborate with community stakeholders at all levels of district and school strategic planning through School Improvement Councils, Title I planning committees, PTO, etc. in the development of goals.
- Schoolwide planning teams review the schoolwide plans and provide input into revisions, additions, and deletions for activities and budget.
- Findings from the school's needs assessment will be utilized.
- Present Title I program/activities and requirements of Title I at parent meetings.
- Schoolwide plans are also presented to parents at an annual meeting each year.

**Provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.**

- Parents are involved in the decisions regarding how funds are allotted for parental involvement activities.
- Not less than 1% of the Title I allocation will be reserved for parent involvement activities including family literacy and parenting skills.
- Not less than 95% of the funds reserved for parental involvement shall be distributed to schools and used for activities such as parent education workshops and home visits.
- Provide training to school staff, administration, and parents to strengthen parent involvement efforts by reaching out to, communicating with, and working with parents as equal partners.
- Provide a school counselor program in coordination with mental health counselors in order to provide services such as individual and group counseling, home visits, character education, and career education programs.
- The Title I program will provide coordination for effective parent involvement through the school's School Improvement Council.

**Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement.**

- Involve parents in the planning of the Title I plan.
- Provide parent conference opportunities.
- Family nights are offered and provide information on literacy, math, assessments, monitoring their child's progress, science, and the state's academic standards.
- Volunteer programs are supported in schools.
- Parents are invited to observe in classrooms.
- Student Study Teams (SST) identify at-risk behavior at an early stage and begin intervention through the efforts of parents, teachers, school counselor, and student.
- Provide a Parent/Student Orientation Night prior to the beginning of school.

**Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as Head Start, First Steps, Even Start, etc.**

- Home visits are provided for four-year program children to orient them to school programs.
- Parents with children participating in these programs will be encouraged to become involved in all parenting activities.
- Horry County Schools provides two comprehensive Family Literacy Programs. The services include Adult Education, Parenting, Interactive Literacy Activities, and Early Childhood.
- Information is provided to parents concerning First Steps, Head Start, and family literacy programs.

**Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy that will determine the effectiveness of the present policy and any barriers to participation in the parenting activities.**

- Solicit comments from parents regarding the parent involvement policy through an annual survey conducted in the spring and during school registration.
- Appropriate revisions are made based on suggestions and/or recommendations for improvement.
- The final (*DRAFT*) parent involvement policy is distributed to parents in the fall.
- The policy will be updated as needed and reviewed annually by parents, community members, school and district administrators, and school staff members in order to continuously meet the changing needs of parents, students, and the school.
- The findings of this evaluation will be used to design strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise the parent involvement policy, if necessary.
- Frequent reminders, such as flyers, newsletters, telephone contacts, and email messages, will be provided to parents concerning meetings, workshops, and conferences.

**Involve parents in the activities of the school served under Title I, Part A.**

- Schedule parent-teacher conferences at a variety of times to accommodate parents' schedules.
- Provide family night workshops.
- Encourage two-way communication between home and school through newsletters, email, phone calls, home visits, parent conferences, surveys, etc. in an understandable and uniform format.

**Develop jointly with parents a school-parent compact.**

- Solicit comments from parents regarding the school-parent compact.
- Appropriate revisions are made based on suggestions and/or recommendations for improvement.
- The revised compact is discussed by the teacher, the parent, and the student.
- The compacts involve parents by having them make a commitment to share the responsibility for their children's performance.
- The school and parents build and develop a partnership to help the students achieve the state's standards.

Horry County Schools shall also implement the following provisions:

- **Choice** - Parents who have children in Title I Schools that are Focus or Priority Schools may request to send their children to identified schools of Choice selected by the District. This opportunity is available to all students in accordance with Title I law.
- **Supplemental Education Services** – Parents have children in low performing schools may request before school or after school tutoring services or other academic assistance and remediation. The services are provided to eligible students in accordance with Title I law.