

## Boston Public Schools – Engagement Policy

### Boston Public Schools Mission Statement

As the birthplace of public education in this nation, the Boston Public Schools is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families, and students to develop in every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

#### I. Purpose

This policy establishes the framework and responsibilities for the implementation of strategies to increase the level of effective, authentic family and community engagement throughout Boston Public Schools (“BPS”). The Boston School Committee (“BSC”) supports the development of a goal-oriented, comprehensive implementation of school and district-wide family, student and community engagement practice that supports the academic achievement of all students and improvement of schools in addition to meeting local, state, and federal mandates.

#### II. Definitions

- A. *BPS* – Includes all departments and components of BPS that have a role in accomplishing the goals of this policy.
- B. *Parents or families* – These terms are used interchangeably and include caregivers who are responsible for a child in BPS. This term refers to all families of students in BPS including families of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.
- C. *Community* – This term includes, but is not limited, to community-based, faith institutions, non-profit organizations and community members that may contribute to or participate as stakeholders in the implementation of this policy.

#### III. Policy Standards

- A. Boston School Committee Strategic Vision affirms the engagement of families, students and community as a core belief and expectation for Boston Public Schools.
- B. The Boston Public Schools believes that family and community engagement is an important component for student success and school improvement. The engagement of parents, families, and community members in the education of our students creates a positive bond between the home and the school that has an impact on student outcomes.
- C. Boston Public Schools recognizes that strong, continuing family and community engagement practice, in all aspects of school programs and activities, provides support for measurable improvement in student achievement.
- D. An effective, school-family community collaboration assures parents, families, and community members the opportunity to effectively work together and participate in making decisions at all levels in support of improved academic performance for all students. BPS is committed to supporting and building engagement capacity to meet the standards set by the Massachusetts Fundamentals for Family, School and Community Partnerships; [see Attachment 1]

Fundamental 1: Welcoming All Stakeholders

Fundamental 2: Communicating Effectively

Fundamental 3: Supporting the Success of Children and Youth

Fundamental 4: Advocating for Each Child and Youth

Fundamental 5: Sharing Power and Responsibility

## Fundamental 6: Partnering with the Community

- E. To provide a more responsive and inviting school climate and increase the level of family and community engagement, BPS will continue to develop and implement system-wide and school-based strategies and supports, based on the US Department of Education's Dual Capacity Building Framework and other research-based programs. [See Attachment 2]
- F. The School Committee is required to establish a Special Education Parent Advisory Council [SPED PAC] as a representative body for families of student with disabilities [in accordance with Section 3 of MA Chapter 71B] to serve as advisors to the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs.
- G. BPS recognizes the Citywide Parent Council as the umbrella organization for school-based School Parent Councils (SPC). Each school is required to establish a School Parent Council and identify representatives to serve on the Citywide Parent Council.
- H. The Boston Public Schools superintendent will regularly consult and meet quarterly with the Citywide Parent Council and Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- I. All BPS Schools will use a uniform school climate survey to gauge the level of school support for parent, student and family engagement as well as other aspects of the school. BPS will provide a uniform climate survey for all schools.

### IV. Implementation Strategies

- A. BPS will provide coordination, support and training for the engagement of all parents, families, students, and community members. This policy also supports the fulfillment of federal and state parent involvement mandates, including but not limited to Title I, Part A; IDEA, Sec.670 and MA Education Reform Act.
- B. BPS will regularly provide opportunities for parents, families, students and community members to participate in the dialogue to inform and influence policy and decision-making related to district-wide and school-based issues.
- C. Each BPS school will establish and implement a school-wide plan for engaging families and the community in student learning and school improvement [in accordance with Title I, Part A]. Each school will involve parents in jointly developing school-wide engagement plans.
- D. Each BPS school shall develop a Home-School Parent Compact [in accordance with Title I, Part A], to identify the responsibilities of school staff, parents, families, and students to ensure the academic achievement of all students.
- E. Each BPS school will involve parents the process of school review and improvement [in accordance with Title I, Part A].
- F. Each BPS school that receives Title I funding shall hold at least one annual public meeting to share school goals, data and progress and how their Title I funds are used [in accordance with Title I, Part A], which all parents shall be invited at a time convenient for family and community members.
- G. Each BPS school shall establish and support a recognized, organized School Parent Council (SPC) that is inclusive and represents the diversity of the school community. The principal/headmaster will meet periodically with the SPC to share school data, progress, annual goals and budget plans.

- H. Each BPS school shall have an active School Site Council (SSC), to serve as the primary decision-making body for the school that includes the principal/headmaster, parents/guardians from SPC, school staff and students, at the high school level, as required by the Boston Teachers Union/Boston School Committee Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- I. Every BPS program effort that requires parental input shall be formally presented to the recognized school-based and/or district level parent groups (such as SPC, CPC, SPED PAC), as an agenda item, at a publicly scheduled meeting.
- J. BPS will implement and make available a complaint/concern process for all families and members of the public.
- K. BPS and each school will offer classroom based strategies, training and materials to help parents/families monitor and support the academic achievement of their children. Materials and information sent home to parents shall be in clear and understandable format and language that the parent is able to read and understand [in accordance with Title I, Part A].
- L. BPS will provide a comprehensive and coordinated program of training, peer-to-peer sessions, technical assistance and other supports to build the capacity of parents, community partners, and school staff in planning and implementing effective parent engagement strategies to improve student and school performance [in accordance with Title I, Part A].
- M. BPS will develop and use effective two-way communication methods to ensure that all BPS families, regardless of income, ethnic background, or language share and receive timely communications about district decisions, school and classroom programs, and student progress. Information on school and parent programs will be provided in a multiple formats and language that parents can understand [in accordance with Title I, Part A].
- N. BPS will, in accordance with federal requirements and to the greatest extent possible, provide parents with access to information, training and support in their native language. Translation services at IEP meetings and IEP interpreted for parents are required by law [in accordance with Title I, Part A].
- O. BPS will coordinate family engagement strategies with other programs, such as Head Start, that involve parents in participating in the education of their children. BPS will support schools in developing partnerships with community-based organizations that promote family engagement [in accordance with Title I, Part A].

## **V. Compliance**

- A. For this Policy, the Superintendent retains authority to approve the administrative directives, which will be issued in Superintendent's Circulars. Therefore, if and when there are proposed changes to the administrative directives, the BPS must first consult with appropriate stakeholders, including the recognized district-wide parent groups. The final proposed changes will be presented to the Superintendent for review and approval before such changes are implemented.
- B. The Boston Public Schools requires that the Superintendent annually assess the implementation of this policy. BPS will develop, with the input of parents/families and community members, an annual assessment tool at both the school level and the system level to measure the effectiveness of this policy and the degree to which annual goals have been met.
- C. The Superintendent shall report to the Boston School Committee annually on the implementation of this policy. BPS will make the Superintendent's report available to the principals/headmasters, School Site Councils, and organized parent groups in each school and at the district level. BPS will use public forums,

focus groups, surveys and other methods to involve parents in the periodic review and proposed amendment as necessary of this policy [in accordance with Title I, Part A].

## **Attachment 1**

### **Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals**

#### **Fundamental 1: Welcoming All Stakeholders**

Schools create and ensure a welcoming culture and environment for all families, children and youth, school staff, and community members. Stakeholders are valued and connected to each other in support of high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development.

#### **Fundamental 2: Communicating Effectively**

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful dialogue about learning, high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development of students. Schools systematically share information and solicit input about school goals and initiatives with the broader community.

#### **Fundamental 3: Supporting the Success of Children and Youth**

Families, schools, and community organizations focus their collaboration on supporting student learning and healthy development in all settings (including home, school, and community) and provide regular, meaningful opportunities for children and youth to strengthen the knowledge and skills needed to be effective 21st century citizens.

#### **Fundamental 4: Advocating for Each Child and Youth**

Families, schools, and community respect and value the uniqueness of each child and youth and are empowered to advocate for all students to ensure that they are treated equitably and have access to high quality learning opportunities.

#### **Fundamental 5: Sharing Power and Responsibility**

Families, school staff, and community partners have equal access, voice and value in informing, influencing, and creating policies, practices, and programs affecting children, youth and families.

#### **Fundamental 6: Partnering with the Community**

Families and school staff collaborate with community partners to connect students and families to expanded learning opportunities and community services in order to support achievement

**Attachment 2: US Department of Education: Dual Capacity-Building Framework**

Figure 2: The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

