

Utopian Academy for the Arts

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

2020-2021
Revised May 6, 2021
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What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement means the participation of parents and family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- (A) That parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- (B) That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education.
- (C) That parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- (D) The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA.

About the Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Utopian Academy for the Arts School District (UAFASD) has developed this parent and family engagement policy that establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe UAFA's commitment to engage families in the education of their children and to build the capacity in its Title I schools to implement family engagement strategies and activities designed to achieve the district and student academic achievement goals. Title I ("Title One"), a provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed in 1965, is a program created by the U.S. Department of Education to distribute funding to schools and school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families. The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a

fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and enjoy school more. Title I, Part A provides for substantive family engagement at every level of the program, such as establishing a parent advisory board and in carrying out the district and school improvement provisions. Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains the primary Title I, Part A requirements for schools and school systems to involve parents and family members in their children's education. Consistent with Section 1116, the UAFA will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116(d) of the ESSA.

Jointly Developed

During the annual Stakeholder input meeting on May 6th, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district Parent and Family Engagement Policy for the 2021-2022 school year. The district sent an email to all parents informing them about this meeting and posted an announcement on the school district website. During this meeting, parents also reviewed and discussed the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). A second opportunity was offered on July 29, 2021 on the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Parent Compact, and the school-wide plan.

Upon final revision, the district Parent and Family Engagement Policy was incorporated into the CLIP which is submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy at any time on the school's website or by submitting written comments to your child's school.

The district Parent and Family Engagement Policy is posted on the school's website, distributed during the Annual Title I school meeting, and is made available in the schools' parent resource center.

School-Parent Compact

A School-Parent Compact was developed with input from teachers and students and revised along with the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

The purpose of the School-Parent Compact is to list strategies that the school, parents and students agree to implement to ensure that students achieve academically in school. Parents, teachers and students will be expected to sign the compact and abide by the agreement.

Strengthening Our School

This year, the district Parent & Family Engagement Coordinator (FEC) will provide assistance and support to ensure family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that family engagement strategies and activities are being implemented. Utopian leadership and staff will receive notifications and resources from the FEC to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school support, the FEC will hold three meetings with its Title I Principal and staff to review family engagement plans and activities.

One of the meetings will allow the FEC to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year.





Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation

Input and suggestions from parents and family members are an essential component of the district and school improvement plans that are developed each year. All parents of students eligible to receive Title I services are invited to attend two meeting opportunities described in this section to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students to reach our student academic achievement goals.

Annual Title I Meeting ~ August 26, 2021

All parents are welcome to hear the latest Title I updates from Utopian Academy for the Arts School District as well as review the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Parent and School compact and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will be emailed to all parents in advance of the meeting. The district will also communicate information regarding this meeting on the school district's website.

Stakeholder Input Meeting ~ July 29, 2021 and May 3, 2022

UAFA will host an online meeting for parents and family members to participate in roundtable discussions to review the schoolwide plan, the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy as well as provide input on the family engagement budget and programs. UAFA will send invitations home via email and text parents notifying them about the date and time of the forum. Information regarding the Stakeholder Input meeting will also be made available on the school's website.

Parent input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs may also be provided through the annual district survey. The survey will contain questions related to the family engagement budget as well as a section for parents to provide their comments.

Unable to attend these meetings? Please visit www.utopianacademyforthearts.com to review the meeting documents and leave your input.

Building Capacity

UAFA will build parents' capacity for strong family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and family members and to support a partnership among the Title I school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement. Parent-Teacher conferences, morning coffees, and quarterly curriculum meetings will be held to support parents.

Of Parents - UAFA will work as a school to provide assistance to parents in understanding state and district academic information connected to their student's learning and progress, as well as information regarding the Title I program. UAFA will provide workshops for parents to gain knowledge about the challenging state academic standards, local academic assessments, as well as the required assessments for Georgia students including alternative forms of assessment. The dates and locations for these workshops will be posted on the school's website and shared through each Title I school's newsletter.

UAFA will also coordinate pages on the school's website that will contain resources to help parents work with their children at home. Copies of these materials will be made available for those families who may have limited internet access. To assist parents with understanding the online student information systems such as Infinite Campus Parent Portal and other digital educational resources, UAFA will provide workshops to provide parents with support to access these resources.

UAFA has established a Parent Advisory Council comprised of parent representatives from the school. The Parent Advisory Council will provide advice on all matters related to family engagement in Title I, Part A programs. Community leaders and business partners will be invited to serve on this council.

The UAFA parent handbook states that parents are required to volunteer a minimum of 12 hours per school year combined as a family, and they are given several opportunities to gain these hours throughout the school year. Credit for participation in schoolwide activities, will be documented through a sign-in sheet and/or electronic tracking software. In addition, parents are viewed as partners in education and therefore, Utopian Academy provides flexible opportunities for allowing parents to complete their volunteer hours. Volunteer opportunities will be posted on the parent information board, on the website, and through text messaging.

Of School Staff - The Utopian Academy for the Arts FEC, with the assistance of its parents, educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principal, and other school leaders and staff on the value and utility of the contributions of parent programs, and builds ties between parents and schools by implementing some or all of the following:

- Creating and delivering a presentation to all faculty and staff in the fall of each year called, "Effective Collaboration between the School and Parents" on how to effectively team with parents to ensure maximum student achievement. The FEC will be responsible for inviting all parents to participate in the creation and delivery of this training.
- Participating in professional learning opportunities provided by the GA Department of Education that focus on parental involvement, diversity, and communication skills and will share what she learns with teachers and staff.
- Collaborating with local and state agencies that provide programs for parents and families.
- Involving parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of training.

UAFA will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement activities with partners, such as Clayton State University, Parent Resource centers and area high schools that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children. To prepare 8th grade students with high school transition, we will collaborate with local area high schools and connect parents with other Parent Resource Centers. UAFA will collaborate with Clayton State University to provide advanced learning opportunities that equip students with college readiness. Students will participate in our college and career readiness center and collaborate with Morehouse College to increase college readiness.

To ensure that information related to district, school, parent programs and activities is available to all parents, each Title I school is required to send home and post online information for parents and family members in an understandable language and uniform format. At the beginning of the year, school staff will be trained on parent notifications and resources to be sent home in parents' native language, where applicable, and providing interpreters at parent events. Information posted on the school's website will be translated to the extent practicable. The school will also utilize Infinite Campus and the school's website to post information for parents.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, the UAFA will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey and the Stakeholder Input meeting.

Beginning in May, UAFA will send home a survey to parents to provide valuable feedback regarding the parent and family engagement activities and programs. These surveys will also be posted on the school's website for parents to complete. In addition to the

annual survey, the school will also use the Stakeholder Input meeting to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective family engagement.

The UAFA will use the findings from the school forums and the survey results to design strategies to improve effective family engagement, to remove possible barriers to parent participation, and to revise its parent and family engagement policies.

Accessibility

In carrying out the Parent and Family Engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the FEC will work to ensure full opportunities for participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children including providing information and school reports in a language parents can understand.

Mark Your Calendars

For Parents

Annual Title I Parent Survey
May 3 -20, 2022

Stakeholder Input Meeting
May 3, 2022 6:00 P.M.
July 28, 2022 6:00 P.M.

For Schools

Annual Title I Parent Meeting
August 26, 2021

Curriculum Nights
August 26, 2021
October 21, 2021
January 7, 2022

Adoption

This Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly and agreed upon with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by the collaboration of parents, school, and personnel at the Annual Stakeholder Input Meeting.

This policy was adopted by the Utopian Academy for the Arts District on August 26, 2021 and will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The school will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before October 1, 2021.

