

**WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION**

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING PARENTS' ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION 1160.1

The Washoe County School District Board of Trustees recognizes that parental involvement is key to academic achievement. **The term “parent” refers to any caregiver/guardian who assumes responsibility for nurturing and caring for their children.** When parents are involved in their children’s education, the attitudes, behaviors, and achievement of students are positively enhanced.

Parents and families provide the primary educational environment for children; consequently, parents are vital and necessary partners with the educational communities throughout their children’s school career. Although parents come to the schools with diverse cultural backgrounds, primary languages, and needs, universally all parents want what is best for their children. Washoe County schools, in collaboration with parents, teachers, students and administrators, shall develop and promote strategies that enhance parental involvement and reflect the needs of students, parents and families.

In order to enhance parental involvement, six essential elements shall be promoted:

- 1. Communication between home and school is Regular, Two-Way, and Meaningful:** Effective communication requires school-initiated contact with the parent and parent-initiated contact with the school where both parties provide vital information about a child’s strengths, challenges and accomplishments. To communicate effectively, both parties must be aware of and address issues such as cultural diversity, language differences and special needs. Appropriate steps shall be taken to allow clear communication between participants.
- 2. Responsible Parenting is Promoted and Supported:** The family plays a key role in a child’s educational environment. School personnel and program staff shall support positive parenting by respecting and affirming the strengths and skills needed by parents to fulfill their role. Parents shall be linked to programs and resources within the community that provide needed support services.
- 3. Parents Play an Integral Role in Assisting Student Learning:** Student achievement increases when parents are actively involved in the learning process. Schools shall therefore provide opportunities for parents to learn effective ways to support their child’s educational needs including information about how parents can support student behaviors such as punctuality and regular attendance that are closely tied to student success in school.
- 4. Parents Are Welcomed as Volunteers in Schools:** Parent volunteers are essential for advancing student achievement. Therefore, parents shall be welcome and invited to volunteer at all educational levels. Volunteer opportunities shall capitalize on the

expertise, interests and skills of the parents, and have a direct connection to school and district goals.

- 5. Parents Are Full Partners in the Decisions That Affect Their Children and Families:** Parents and educators have a mutual responsibility to make informed decisions related to all aspects of the education provided to our students. Schools shall actively enlist parent participation in decision-making. Further, efforts shall be made to recruit and support participation by parents representing diverse student groups such as: limited English proficient, special needs, gifted and talented, and homeless. The role of parents in decision-making shall be continually evaluated, refined, and expanded at the district and school levels.
- 6. Parents, School and Community Collaborate in Order to Enhance Student Learning, Strengthen Families and Improve Schools:** Parents, educators and community members will work together in order to promote and effectively increase educational opportunities for children. When schools and communities form partnerships, both make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own.

Providing all students with equal access to quality education is a primary goal. It is vital that all partners (parents, educators, businesses and communities) have the opportunity to provide input and offer resources to meet this goal. Developing cooperative efforts and providing access to resources will ensure improved academic achievement for all students, as well as quality schools.

I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The Washoe County School District also agrees to implement the following federal requirements:

- The WCSD will put into operation programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1118, the WCSD will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parental involvement policies meet the requirements of section 1118(b) of the ESEA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1118(d) of the ESEA.
- The WCSD will incorporate this district wide parental involvement policy into its LEA plan developed under section 1112 of the ESEA.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental involvement requirements, to the extent practicable, the WCSD and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports

required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.

- If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the WCSD will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the State Department of Education.
- The WCSD will involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parental involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools.
- The District will be governed by the following federal statutory definition of parental involvement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parental involvement means the participation of parents 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 at school;
- 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 1118 of the ESEA.

- The Washoe County School District will also inform parents and parental organizations of the purpose and existence of the Nevada State Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) under the Education Collaborative of Washoe County.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Washoe County School District will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of its district wide parental involvement plan under section 1112 of the ESEA:
 - The WCSD will work in consultation with the District’s Parent Involvement Council to appoint parent representatives to serve on the committee for the

District Improvement Plan. The WCSD PIC will work to provide broad representation for the committee including parents of elementary, middle, high school, pre-kindergarten and special needs students. WCSD will also share the parent involvement plan with the Council for input and feedback.

2. The Washoe County School District will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:
 - The WCSD encourages parent participation on all School Improvement Plan committees. The District will provide, train and encourage parents to better understand the school review and improvement process so that parents are knowledgeable of the process and can make informed contributions to SIP committees.
3. The Washoe County 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 parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:
 - The WCSD Title I Office will work with the District's Parent Involvement Office and the Nevada State PIRC to provide professional development to the Title I funded Parent Involvement Facilitators at each of the District's Title I schools. Research-based programs and best practices will be shared with the school and PIFs. Support for implementation will be provided by the District and the Nevada State PIRC.
4. The Washoe County School District will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies in Part A with parental involvement strategies under the following other programs: [Insert programs, such as: Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Parents As Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-operated preschool programs], by:
 - The District's Parent Involvement Council provides the vehicle for coordinating and integrating programs and activities. Representation on the Council includes key staff from Head Start, Reading First, Even Start, the Nevada State PIRC and State-operated preschool programs (Virtual Pre-K, COW and CALF). Key staff collaborate to share strategies and integrate programs through this structure.
5. The Washoe County School District take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parental involvement policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities (with particular attention to parents 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 parental involvement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to

revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parental involvement policies.

- The District's Parent Involvement Council will collect school site data on parent involvement annually through a comprehensive district-wide needs assessment. Data will be collected from parents, teachers and administrators, synthesized by external program evaluation experts and provided in individual reports to schools and collectively to the District's Parent Involvement Council, leadership staff and the Board of Trustees. The data will be provided to schools in time to guide program improvements in working towards more effective parental involvement for the next school cycle.
6. The Washoe County School District will build the schools' and parent's capacity for strong parental involvement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:
- A. The school district will, with the assistance of its Title I, Part A schools, provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following, by undertaking the actions described in this paragraph --
- The State's academic content standards,
 - The State's student academic achievement standards,
 - The State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments,
 - The requirements of Part A,
 - How to monitor their child's progress, and
 - How to work with educators:

The WCSD uses the following research-based programs and best practices to build parents' capacity in understanding critical topics:

- Math and Parent Partnerships
- Family Literacy Experience
- Parent School Partnerships – Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- Center for Parent Leadership
- Workshops on School Improvement and No Child Left Behind
- Edline
- Monthly District Family Learning Nights
- Annual Parent Leader Symposium
- And other research-based programs as identified

The District's Title I Office also provides key school site parent involvement staff monthly professional development opportunities, and national training opportunities through conferences such as the National Title I Conference and the Family Literacy Conference.

- B. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by:

The WCSD uses the following research-based programs and best practices, and works with the Nevada State PIRC to build parents' capacity in understanding critical topics:

- Math and Parent Partnerships
- Family Literacy Experience
- Edline
- Monthly District Family Learning Nights
- Training on District K-12 and Pre-K Academic Standards
- A video on Parent Involvement in English and Spanish

- C. The school district will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, by:

The District will work with the Parent Involvement Council, the District Title I Office, the Parent Involvement Office, the University of Nevada, Reno and the Nevada State PIRC to provide professional development on parent involvement to its administrators, teachers and support staff. The training will include information on how to positively use existing resources such as the Nevada State Educational Involvement Accord, parent groups and Professional Learning Communities.

- D. The school district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children, by:

- The District's Parent Involvement Council provides the vehicle for coordinating and integrating programs and activities. Representation on the Council includes key staff from Head Start, Reading First, Even Start, the Nevada State PIRC and State-operated preschool programs (Virtual Pre-K,

COW and CALF). Key staff collaborate to share strategies and integrate programs through this structure.

- E. The 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:

The District uses a variety of media methods to communicate the availability of programs to parents. These methods include but are not limited to: direct mail to home, flyers sent from school, the District's website, a parent email listserv, collaboration with other related programs and an electronic phone dialing system, Connect Ed.

The District provides communication in other languages when possible and provides a dedicated phone line with information in Spanish.

III. DISCRETIONARY COMPONENTS

The Washoe County School District, in consultation with its parents, may choose when practicable, to undertake to build parents' capacity for involvement in the school and school system to support their children's academic achievement, using the following discretionary activities listed under section 1118(e) of the ESEA:

- Involving parents in the development of training on parent involvement for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of parent involvement training;
- Providing necessary literacy training for parents 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 parental involvement activities, including transportation, child care costs and other applicable costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- Training parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;
- In order to maximize parental involvement 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 parents who are unable to attend those conferences at school;
- Adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parental involvement;
- Establishing a district wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement including Title I, Part A programs;
- Developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parental involvement activities; and

- Providing other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under section 1118 as parents may request.

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IV. ADOPTION

This District wide Parental Involvement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by documentation and membership on the District's Parent Involvement Council and documentation of outreach to Title I parents.

This policy was adopted by the Washoe County School District on November 20, 2007 and will be in effect for the period of one year. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children with a copy of the Nevada State Educational Involvement Accord on or before January 31, 2007.

Monitoring Report Indicators:

Legal Reference:

NRS 392.475

Sections 1112 and 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA)

Adopted: 03-12-02

Revised: 11-20-07