

North Providence School Department Parent, Student and Community Engagement Policy	
	First Read: 12/19/12 Second Read: 1/23/13 Third Read: 2/27/13

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to define and promote parent involvement in the education of their children in the North Providence Schools in full compliance with the Rhode Island Department of Education Basic Education Plan (BEP). The District shall ensure that parents are valued as partners in their children’s education, and that all school personnel and facilities are oriented to making parents feel welcomed.

Position: The North Providence Schools recognize that parents are the first teacher of their children. The District recognizes the critical relationship that exists between the home and school and promotes active parent engagement in our educational community.

Administrative Authority and Responsibilities

The Superintendent shall ensure that the School Department, at both the District and school-based levels, establishes processes and procedures and designates staff to develop and implement meaningful outreach strategies for parent engagement.

Establishment of Parent Advisory Council

A Parent Advisory Council shall be established to ensure that parents maintain an organized voice in the district; that parents are involved in decision-making processes and procedures, as appropriate and permitted by law; and that parent needs, concerns and issues are communicated to, addressed by, and resolved before the School Committee and Superintendent regularly and effectively. The Parent Advisory Council shall be representative from the schools themselves, with one from each school in the District. The parents within each school shall devise a method for engaging and/or selecting one parent representative. The Superintendent shall ensure that the selection procedure actually results in a Parent Advisory Council that is roughly reflective of the District’s student population, including its racial, ethnic and socio-economic demographics. One (1) member shall be a representative from the Special Education Local Advisory Committee and one (1) member shall be selected by the Superintendent from the community-at-large. The Parent Council shall meet regularly throughout the school year.

District Responsibilities

The District shall conduct, with the involvement of the Parent Advisory Council, an evaluation at least every other year to review the effectiveness of this Parent Engagement Policy in improving the academic quality of the schools. This bi-annual evaluation may include a re-evaluation of the Policy’s content and an identification of the barriers to greater participation by parents. The District shall use the findings of such annual evaluation to design strategies for more effective parent involvement in the forthcoming year. The evaluation will be submitted to the School Committee by the last day of the academic year. The evaluation will be submitted to the School Committee by the last day of the academic year.

School Staff Responsibilities

The staff at each school (e.g. administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, school nurses, clerical, custodial and yard monitors and all other personnel) ("School Staff") shall work diligently and in good faith to ensure that parents are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process of their school. Its efforts shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

- School staff shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents a written parental involvement plan. Parents shall be notified of the plan in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practical, provided in a language the parents can understand. This plan shall be made available to the local community and be updated annually to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.
- School staff shall ensure that there are parent members active on its School Improvement Team (SIT).
- School staff shall work to develop and support the efforts of organized parent groups, however designated, that seek to create an organized parent presence at the school.
- School staff shall afford parents opportunities for regular meetings or events at which parents can formulate suggestions and participate, as appropriate and permitted by law, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and at which school staff can respond to suggestions from and give feedback to parents and concerns or problems raised by parents.
- School staff shall afford parents multiple opportunities to meet with administrators and teachers to receive feedback on how their children are doing academically and socially; to have any questions and/or concerns addressed; to learn more about the school's curriculum, standards and assessment tools; and, to be informed of the school's performance, as measured by district, state, and federal standards. These meetings shall include, but not be limited to, group meetings, information forums, and individual meetings and parent-teacher conferences. The extent possible, these meetings shall be held at times that are convenient for parents and afford enough time so as to be meaningful.
- School staff must ensure that communication with parents remains open and consistent.

Section G-14-2.2 of the BEP refers to student, family, and community engagement. It holds that students can offer viable solutions to some of the policy, program, and funding challenges our changing schools face. In addition, it is both possible and desirable to create structures and processes to facilitate student engagement at the district and school levels.

The North Providence School Department shall:

1. Establish policies, processes, and procedures that facilitate regular participation of a representative group of school youth in discussions regarding how to improve the school environment, curriculum, and instruction to ensure increased access to challenging, hands-on learning experiences and supports and to ensure student success on state and local achievement measures;

2. Document the process of selection and orientation of these youth as well as the proposals that they put forth, how these proposals were evaluated, and the extent to which they were incorporated in LEA decision-making;
3. Authorize and support youth led events to solicit input from and provide feedback to the larger school community; and
4. Provide a broad spectrum of activities, programs, and services that directly involve families in their children's education and personally engage families in the school. Therefore, each LEA shall adopt the national Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) *Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*, which state:
 - a. Communication: Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and;
 - b. Parenting: Parenting skills are promoted and supported;
 - c. Student Learning: Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning;
 - d. Volunteering: Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought; and
 - e. School Decision Making and Advocacy: Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
5. Facilitate partnerships with community organizations and agencies, municipal entities, and businesses to meet the needs of students and families including:
 - a. Ensuring community representation on the school improvement team or other decision-making teams;
 - b. Identifying and recruiting businesses to provide career exploration activities for students;
 - c. Soliciting community organizations or business members to mentor students;
 - d. Facilitating on-site services of local organizations at the school, e.g. counseling, food pantry, tax assistance, legal aid; and
 - e. Recruiting volunteers from community organizations and businesses.
6. Facilitate consistent and age-appropriate individual school procedures regarding parent conferences, open house events, grading and grade reporting practices.
7. Promote welcoming practices by encouraging service-orientated greetings, clear practices for parent admittance to the building.
 - a. Ensuring that notices and school materials are available in Spanish and other languages as necessary.
8. Develop uniform procedures for selection of School Improvement Team (SIT) members and ensure with SIT compliance with Basic Education Plan (BEP) regulation.

Legal Reference: Basic Education Plan G - 14 - 2.2