

**Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School
437 Turret Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15206**

Board of Trustees Policy

**PARENT AND FAMILY MEMBERS ENGAGEMENT POLICY
FOR TITLE I REQUIREMENTS**

The Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School (“Charter School”) will develop, jointly with teachers, principals, program administrators, and parents and family members of participating children, a Title I Parent and Family Members Engagement Policy. This policy shall be incorporated into any Charter School consolidated application for selected programs funded under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The ESSA serves as the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) which was last reauthorized in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Since its inception, the intent of the law has been to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. Parent and family engagement and consultation have always been a key piece of the law, focused on the low-income parents of “Title I-participating” children.

Title I is a 100% federally funded supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (“LEAs”) to improve educational opportunities for educationally deprived children. Title I programs are designed to help children meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics. For LEAs with 40% or more of their students designated as coming from poverty, the Title I funds may be used to upgrade the entire curriculum of the Charter School as Schoolwide Programs. For LEAs with less than 40% poverty rates, programs are designed to help specific children and are targeted assisted programs. LEAs and district schools are subject to consequences of school choice and supplemental education services if they do not meet adequate yearly progress as determined by the State Educational Agency.

In order to receive Title I funds, LEAs must conduct outreach to parents and family members and must implement programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents and families in Title I-funded activities. Each LEA must jointly develop with and distribute to families, in a language they can understand, a written Parent and Family Engagement Policy. This policy must be periodically updated to

reflect the needs of families and be incorporated into the LEA's school improvement plan.

The Charter School, as an LEA, welcomes the participation of parents and family members in support of student learning and recognizes that parental and familial engagement increases the opportunities for student success. It is the policy of the Charter School to foster and maintain ongoing communications with parents and family members concerning their opportunities for involvement, their child's eligibility for special programs, their child's educational progress, the professional qualifications of their child's teachers, and the status of their child's school. The Charter School strives to provide such information in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. To the extent practicable, the Charter School shall also provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and Charter School reports required under Section 1116 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand. Communications with parents shall, at all times, respect the privacy of students and their families.

RATIONALE UNDERLYING PLAN AND SPECIFIED PLAN PROVISIONS (20 U.S.C. §6312(b)(1-13)

To ensure that all children receive a high-quality education, and to close the achievement gap between children meeting the challenging State academic standards and those children who are not meeting such standards, each LEA, such as Charter School, shall develop a plan to describe:

- (1) how the Charter School will monitor students' progress in meeting the challenging State academic standards by—
 - (A) developing and implementing a well-rounded program of instruction to meet the academic needs of all students;
 - (B) identifying students who may be at risk for academic failure;
 - (C) providing additional educational assistance to individual students the Charter School determines need help in meeting the challenging State academic standards; and
 - (D) identifying and implementing instructional and other strategies intended to strengthen academic programs and improve Charter School conditions for student learning;
- (2) how the Charter School will identify and address any disparities that result in low-income students and minority students who may be taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers;

(3) how the Charter School will carry out its responsibilities if identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement by meeting in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other Charter School leaders, teachers, and parents), to locally develop and implement a comprehensive support and improvement plan for the Charter School to improve student outcomes.

(4) the services the local educational agency will provide homeless children and youths, including services to support the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youths, in coordination with the services the local educational agency is providing under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §11301 et seq.);

(5) the strategy the local educational agency will use to implement effective parent and family engagement as set forth in this Policy pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §6318;

(6) how teachers and Charter School leaders, in consultation with parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and specialized instructional support personnel, in schools operating a targeted assistance school program will identify the eligible children most in need of services under this part;

(7) how the Charter School will implement strategies to facilitate effective transitions for students from middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary education including, if applicable –

(A) through coordination with institutions of higher education, employers, and other local partners; and

(B) through increased student access to early college or career counseling to identify student interests and skills;

(8) how the Charter School will support efforts to reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom;

(9) any other information on how the Charter School proposes to use funds to meet the purposes of this part, and which may include how to develop effective Charter School library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.

WRITTEN POLICY:

A. Each LEA that receives funds under this part shall develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children, a written parent and family engagement policy. The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under 20 U.S.C. § 6312, establish the agency's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement, and describe how the Charter School will:

- 1) Involve parents and family members in the joint development of the Title I Plan (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(A)).
- 2) Involve parents and family members in the process of Charter School review and improvement (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(A)).
- 3) Provide technical assistance and support in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and Charter School performance (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(B)).
- 4) Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with other Federal, State, and local laws and programs (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(C)).
- 5) Conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and the effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of the Charter School, including identifying:
 - barriers to greater participation by parents and family members, 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 needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with Charter School personnel and teachers; and
 - strategies to support successful Charter School and family interactions (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(D)).
- 6) Use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence based strategies for more effective parent and family involvement, and revise, if necessary, the Parent and Family Engagement Policy (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(E)).

7) Involve parents and family members in the activities of the Charter School, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members to adequately represent the needs to the population; revising; and reviewing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2)(F)).

The Charter School will be governed by the following statutory definition of parental involvement/engagement, and will carry out programs, activities and procedures in accordance with this definition found under 20 USCS § 7801(32):

Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other Charter 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 the Charter 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 20 U.S.C. §6318.

B. Reservation of Funding

In general

The Charter School shall reserve at least one (1) percent of its allocation to carry out the activities described in this section, except that this subparagraph shall not apply if one (1) percent of such agency's allocation for the fiscal year for which the determination is made is \$5,000 or less. This shall not be construed to limit the LEA from reserving more than 1 percent of its allocation to carry out activities described in this section. (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(3)(A)).

Parent and family member input

Parents and family members of children receiving services under this part shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for parental involvement activities. (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(3)(B)).

Use of funds

Funds reserved shall be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the Charter School's parent and family engagement policy, including not less than one (1) of the following:

- Providing professional development for LEA personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other Charter School leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.
- Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at the Charter School.
- Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
- Collaborating with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
- Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the Charter School determines are appropriate and consistent with the Charter School's parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(3)(D))

Parental comments

- If the Plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the Charter School shall submit any parent comments with such plan when the Plan is submitted to the State.

C. Policy involvement

The Charter School shall:

(1) convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of the LEA's participation under this part and to explain the requirements of this part, and the right of the parents to be involved (20 U.S.C. §6318(c)(1);

(2) offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement (20 U.S.C. §6318(c)(2);

(3) involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the planning, review, and improvement of the LEA parent and family engagement policy (20 U.S.C. §6318(c)(3);

(4) provide parents of participating children--

(A) timely information about programs under this part;

- (B) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the Charter School, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and
 - (C) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible (20 U.S.C. §6318(c)(4)); and
- (5) if the Plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the Plan when the Charter School makes the Plan available (20 U.S.C. §6318(c)(5)).

D. Shared responsibilities for high student academic achievement

As a component of the parent and family engagement policy, a Charter School-parent compact shall be jointly developed that outlines how parents, the entire Charter School staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the Charter School and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. Such compact shall--

- (1) describe the Charter School's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging State academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time (20 U.S.C. §6318(d)(1)); and
- (2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum--
 - (A) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement;
 - (B) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;
 - (C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and
 - (D) ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and Charter School staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand (20 U.S.C. §6318(d)(2)).

E. Building capacity for involvement

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the Charter School, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, the Charter School:

- (1) shall provide assistance to parents of children served by the Charter School, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the challenging State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(1));
- (2) shall provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as: literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(2));
- (3) shall educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other Charter School leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the Charter School (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(3));
- (4) shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool 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 (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(4));
- (5) shall ensure that information related to Charter School parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(5));
- (6) may involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(6));
- (7) may provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the Charter School has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(7));
- (8) may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable

parents to participate in Charter School-related meetings and training sessions (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(8));

(9) may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(9));

(10) may arrange Charter School meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at the Charter School, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(10));

(11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(11));

(12) may establish a parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(12));

(13) may develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(13)); and

(14) shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request (20 U.S.C. §6318(e)(14)).

F. Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements of this part, the Charter School, to the extent practicable, shall provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children), including providing student information in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand (20 U.S.C. §6318(f)).

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS CONTROL. THIS POLICY IS NOT INTENDED TO CONFLICT WITH CHARTER REQUIREMENTS.