Great schools have families that are engaged and supportive. Baltimore City Public Schools’ Family and Community Engagement policy sets out the responsibilities of central office, school staff and parents to ensure strong school-family partnerships. City Schools is committed to building engagement capacity in communication, parenting across the grades, volunteering, at-home learning, decision-making/advocacy and collaborating with the community. This Family Involvement Plan, aligned with City Schools’ Master Plan, sets forth more specific efforts to involve and build the capacity of parents, community members and educators in forming quality partnerships that promote high achievement for every student. These activities are in support of Title I and other federal requirements and the Family and Community Engagement policy. The role of central office—particularly the Office of Partnerships, Communications, and Community Engagement and the Title I office—focuses on guidance, support and accountability through the specific activities detailed below. This plan incorporates input from Title I parents that was collected through a series of workshops held in the summer of 2009.

**Engage Title I Parents as Partners in Planning the Work**

1. Involve Title I parents in jointly developing, implementing and revising the Family and Community Engagement Policy and the District Title I Family Involvement Plan.
   a. Invite all Title I parents to develop, review, give feedback and revise the District Title I Family Involvement Plan through at least two discussion sessions about the Plan.
   b. Invite all Title I parents annually to review the template for the School Improvement Plan that the central office requires from each school; the template is an important aspect of guidance to schools on family engagement.
   c. Annually, assess the implementation of the Family and Community Engagement Policy and Plan with the input of Title I families to measure the effectiveness of the policy and the degree to which annual goals have been met. This assessment will occur at the beginning of the 2009-10 school year and will include review of the annual report to the Board on the implementation of the policy and an opportunity to provide input on the district’s family engagement plan for the next year.
   d. Provide informational workshops to Title I parents throughout the year on the Family and Community Engagement Policy and Plan.
   e. For each opportunity for parents to provide input in the implementation, evaluation and revision of City Schools policies or the District Title I Family Involvement Plan, to access trainings or other supports discussed in this plan, City Schools will use various means of communication to invite and inform all parents of opportunities to be involved, including, but not limited to, district focus groups, Global Connect calls, City Schools website, Channel 77, and other advertisements.
f. Distribute the district policy in parent-friendly format to all Title I parents in the district at the beginning of the school year. Make hard copies available at all Title I schools (located in Family and Community Engagement Binder), with stakeholders (e.g. Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB), Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC), Baltimore Education Network, Maryland Disability Law Center, ACLU); and at the Office of Partnerships, Communications and Community Engagement.

g. Work with the Parent Community Advisory Board (PCAB) to engage Title I families in monthly PCAB forums, meetings and workshops where input is developed to City Schools on various matters affecting family engagement.

2. Involve parents in the activities of Title I schools. The Office of Partnerships, Communications, and Community Engagement will provide guidance, support and accountability to schools to ensure that schools:
   a. Provide opportunities throughout the year for Title I families to participate in the dialogue and decision-making related to Title I school programs. This will include feedback on the school budget, including Title I funds, through the school’s Advisory Team, and particularly on the Title I parent involvement budget.
   b. Involve Title I parents in the development, revision and implementation of the school’s Family and Community Engagement Action Plan
   c. Develop partnerships with community-based organizations to coordinate and promote effective parent involvement programs and activities at Title I schools, including the Community Support for Schools initiative.

3. Provide and publicize a formal central office concern/complaint process through the City Schools Connect for Title I families to identify and resolve issues.

Expand and Support Effective Strategies to Involve Parents

1. Provide support, workshops and materials to Title I schools, parents and supporting community members on the planning and implementation of effective parent involvement activities to improve student achievement and school performance
   a. Staff from the Office of Partnerships, Communications and Community Engagement will meet at least annually with the Engagement Team of the School Family Council at each school at a meeting open to all parents and school staff at Title I schools, to discuss effective practices, challenges, and/or future steps to support parent involvement
   b. Provide a menu of workshops through The Title I Family Institute sites that provide parents with information on how to improve achievement.
   c. Provide online opportunities for Title I parents to learn about best practices to improve student achievement and school performance (e.g. Learning at Home on Parent Portal, webinars)
   d. Family and Community Engagement staff will visit each Title I school at least quarterly to provide technical assistance and support to ensure that each school is effectively implementing their Family and Community Engagement Action Plan.
e. Provide technical assistance, upon request, to Title I schools on the implementation of effective parent activities
f. Create a train-the-trainer model for Title I parents to become workshop trainers

2. Educate Title I school staff, with the help of parents, on the value of engaging parents, how to work with parents as equal partners in the education of children, and how to foster active parent and community involvement.

   a. Involve Title I parents in the development of the School-Parent Compact training at the district level in summer, 2009 as well as in the work on the Compact at each school
   b. Conduct district policy focus group(s) at least twice a year that include Title I parents, teachers and principals that will provide input on Family Institute trainings offered to school staff.
   c. Involve Title I parents in the development and delivery of training for school staff on how to work with parents as equal partners through the Family Institute.
   d. Provide quarterly workshops through the Family Institute for Title I staff on effective strategies to engage parents and help parents support student achievement. This will include specific workshops targeted to help new teachers.
   e. Staff from the Office of Partnerships, Communications and Community Engagement will offer quarterly tailored technical assistance to parent involvement coordinators and other school staff based on needs identified by schools through a school assessment.

Build Capacity of Parents, Educators and Community to Help their Children and Schools Achieve

1. Provide assistance to Title I parents in understanding Maryland’s academic content standards, state and local academic assessments (e.g. Stanford 10, MSA, HSA), Title I requirements, monitoring of their child’s progress, and working with schools to improve student achievement.

   a. Provide training for principals of Title I schools on the Title I required content that must be covered at an annual meeting: yearly school and student progress, school plans to increase academic achievement for all students, budget information, Title I requirements, and the school’s implementation of the Family and Community Engagement Action Plan
   b. Offer workshops at least twice a year to Title I parents through the Family Institute on understanding academic standards and assessment (including workshops on understanding the Stanford 10, MSA and HSA), Title I requirements, and how to work with the school and their child to monitor and improve their child’s progress.
   c. Offer workshops to Title I parents and community members associated with Title I schools to empower them to share information with other Title I parents about standards and assessments, Title I requirements, transitions in school, and
supporting their child’s learning. This “parent to parent” training is an important means for expanding parents’ capacity.

d. Maintain and update the City Schools website to include information on Title I, Maryland State academic content standards, and state and local assessments

e. Provide workshops and trainings for Title I parents and teachers on the use of the Parent Portal

i. Make information about the Maryland Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) available to Title I parents through City Schools’ website and Channel 77 and encourage and support parent participation in Maryland PIRC activities. Families can reach the Maryland PIRC at 301-657-7742 or visit www.mdpirc.org

2. Develop and use effective communication methods to ensure that all Title I families, regardless of income, ethnic background, or language share and receive school-to-home and home-to-school communications about the district and school-level programs and activities. City Schools through its Communication function will employ a variety of formats to reach out to parents, including postcards, brochures, Global Connect calls, newsletters, fliers, email, City Schools website, and Channel 77.

3. Provide communications, along with ESOL office, to Title I parents, to the extent possible, in a language and format that parents can understand. Provide translations of all documents that go widely to families into Spanish and other languages as appropriate and post on the website; provide guidance, training and support to Title I schools to help them make appropriate use of City Schools’ live translation and on-line document translation services. Simultaneous translation will also be available at City Schools events.

4. Provide reasonable supports and resources associated with parent involvement activities as requested by Title I parents. Staff in the Office of Partnerships, Communications and Community Engagement will offer ad hoc workshops, trainings and other supports as needs are identified by Title I parents. City Schools will provide child care, transportation and other supports as much as feasible to help parents attend Family Institute workshops and other events.

5. Maximize family involvement and participation by scheduling meetings at a variety of times and locations that are convenient to Title I families. These will include evening, weekend, morning and other times that are identified by Title I families.

6. The Title I Family Institute will offer Title I families courses and other support such as peer workgroups to build parent capacity to effectively manage student transitions (from elementary to middle, and from middle to high school). Family Institute courses will include resources for parents of students with an IEP (Individual Educational Plan).
Coordinate and Integrate Strategies With Other Groups That Support Parent Involvement

1. At least annually, coordinate and integrate parent programs and/or activities, including with the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Head Start and the Baltimore City Health Department, and community-based non-profits (e.g. Friends of the Family, Family Tree, Centro de la Comunidad). The focus of coordination will include programs focused on school readiness and will involve City Schools’ Office of Early Learning and other state and federal programs. This effort will include a strategy to reach out to Title I parents participating in pre-K programs.

   a. Coordinate and support community-based family engagement programs with the Office of Early Learning around programs such as: Universal Pre-K and Countdown to Kindergarten
   b. Promote and support the Early Learning Fair and other activities such as Learning Parties
   c. Provide resources for Title I parents on early learning opportunities and options
   d. Offer opportunities throughout the year for parents to find out about supports and options for their children (e.g. Supplementary Educational Services Fair).

2. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; City Schools will train and coordinate community-based organizations working with Title I schools through the Community Support for Schools initiative and other partnerships so they can help Title I parents understand the requirements of Title I and help Title I schools better engage parents. City Schools will recruit partners and volunteers to support Title I parent involvement efforts.

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i Family Institute: a yearlong calendar of courses, trainings, peer-to-peer opportunities and other programs to empower and educate parents and school staff

ii School-Parent Compact: a jointly developed agreement between parents and the school that describes how parents, students and the school work together to achieve academic standards and provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for all students

iii Parent Portal: is a recently improved feature of the City Schools Teacher Support System (TSS). Parents now have online access to resources and tools to help them support their child’s learning.