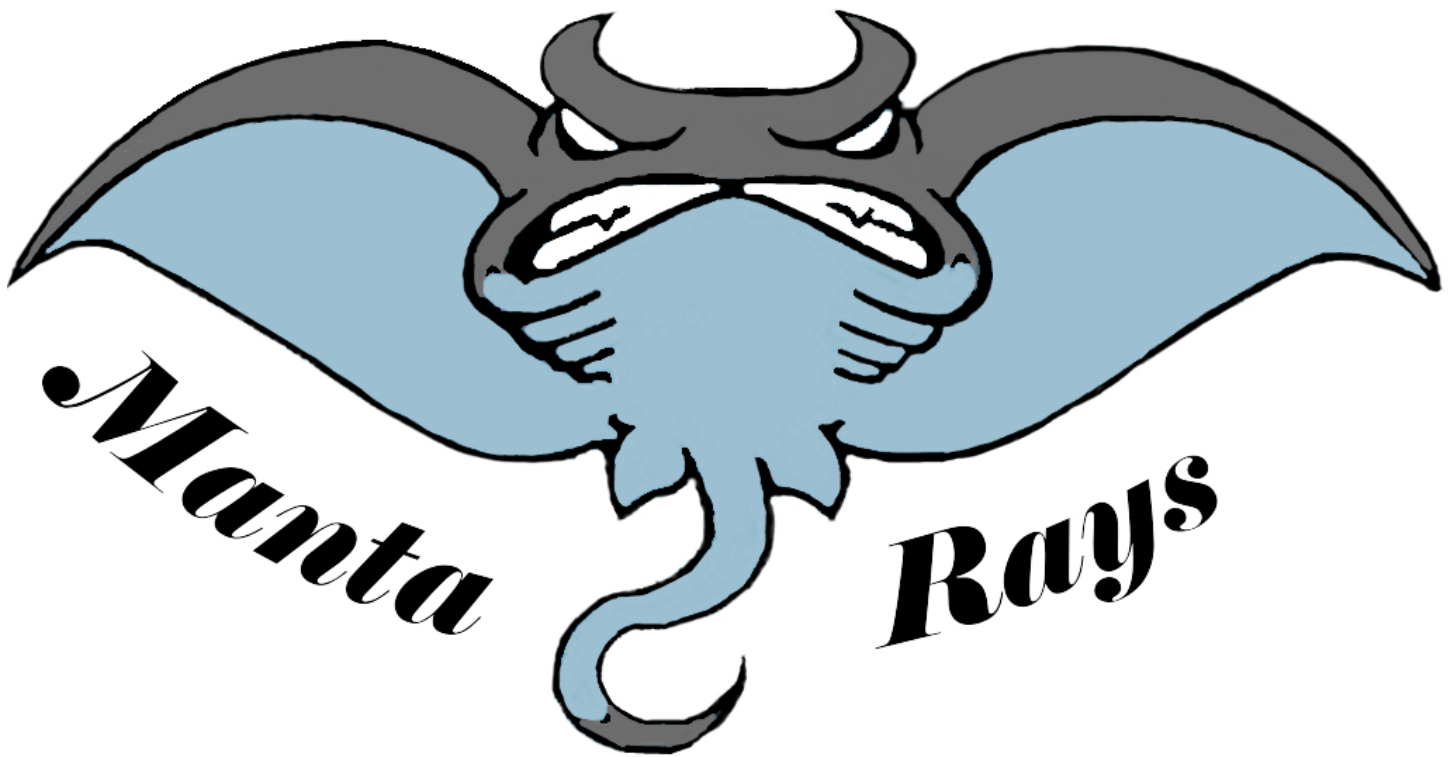


MERIT



Title I School-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

MERIT Academy

10/06/2023 12:30 pm, 2023-24

2.0 With approval from the local governing board, MERIT Academy has jointly developed with, and distributed to, parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed upon by such parents, and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school. (EC Section 11503; 20 United States Code [U.S.C.] Section [§] 6318[b][1-4]) [\[Describe how the school jointly develops with, and distributes to, parents and family members of Title I students a written parent and family engagement policy.\]](#)

Annual Title 1 meeting is held on "Welcome Back Night" or during one of our evening events in the fall, where parents are presented information about Title 1, and ways to get involved with programmatic decisions--be it through School Site Council, or through the Parent Partnership Program (spearheaded by our sitting parent member of SSC). The slides are printed and passed out, and a digital copy is available on the MERIT website. Furthermore, we provide copies of the Annual Title 1 presentation in our New Parent packet. School Site Council Meetings (for the whole year) are posted on the school website, in the parent waiting area of the front office, as well as on a digital scroll on the TV in the office.

2.1 Involvement of Parents in the Title I Program

The school-level parent and family engagement policy shall describe the means for how MERIT Academy school shall carry out the following requirements: (20 U.S.C. § 6318[b][1])

[Briefly describe or list the activities the school will implement to address this requirement.]

- a) The school convenes an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited to attend and encouraged to attend, to inform parents and family members of their school's participation in the Title I program and to explain the requirements, and the right of the parents to be involved. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[c][1])

The Annual Title I meeting is held during Parent Night early in the Fall term (10//20/23, during our Fall Festival), wherein parents are shown a presentation informing them of the Title I and CSI programs, how we have traditionally spent the monies, upcoming ideas of how to spend monies, and information about how to attend School Site Council meetings.

- b) The school offers a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with Title I funds, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[c][2])

School Site Council convenes quarterly on Fridays in the afternoon (usually starting around 12:30 or 1:00), that way the student selected for the committee is still on campus and does not need additional transportation; furthermore, the parent member is always available at this time, and is frequently on campus as a parent liaison on Fridays. Transportation has been required for the student member and one community member in the past, but is not currently a necessity.

- c) The school involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Title I program, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[c][3])

Currently we have one parent attending School Site Council on a regular basis; when the parent is absent, she votes via email. This parent is instrumental with her participation/cooperation, and she has continuously supported our Parent Partnership Program in lieu of a non-existent PTA. This Parent Partnership has allowed for parent assistance in contacting other parents and encouraging them to attend our recurring seasonal festivals, opportunities to chaperone student activities, completing the family survey, and how to attend School Site Council meetings.

- d) The school provides parents of participating children with the following:

i. Timely information about the Title I program. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[c][4][A])
Information about upcoming School Site Council meetings is posted on the school events calendar (which parents can see), and the admin assistant posts the schedule and agenda to the school website, along with contact information if they, too, would like to attend upcoming meetings.

ii. A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging state academic standards. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[c][4][B])

This is largely handled during Parent Night, where parents spend 15 minutes in each of their students' classes--period by period--and view teachers' presentations for the upcoming year. These presentations highlight any major units that will be covered, additional reading materials that might be required, state testing as appropriate, as well

as being handed a hard copy of the course syllabus (and sign any permission slips as required for the course--e.g., Photography field trips).

- iii. 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][C])

This is another area that the newfound Parent Partnership Program has been helpful in gathering parent voices in a less standard "email or call" format. Emailing or calling remains the most viable option, but tends to be a case-by-case basis.

- e) If the schoolwide program plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school submits any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency (LEA). (20 U.S.C. § 6318[c][5])

Parent concerns are presented and heard during Site Council meetings, and addressed in the end of the year SPSA review and SPSA evaluation, as appropriate.

2.2 Building Capacity for Involvement

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school and local educational agency assisted under Title I, Part A shall carry out the following requirements: (20 U.S.C. § 6318[e])

[Briefly describe or list the activities the school will implement to address this requirement.]

- a) The school provides assistance to parents of children served by the school or LEA, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the challenging state academic standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I, Part A, 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])

This information is discussed by the principal during Parent Night. Furthermore, information about the Title Program is discussed during the Annual Title I Meeting held on Parent Night, and literature about the Title Program has been collected in a Parent Library located in the Administrative Office.

- b) The school provides materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[e][2])

Reading materials are collected in a Parent Library located in the Administrative Office. Further pertinent information is discussed during IEP Meetings by school and mental health staff, as appropriate.

- c) The school educates teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other 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 school. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[e][3])

Teachers are reaching out to parents regarding their students' IEPs frequently (sometimes weekly). MERIT started a Parent Partnership Program this year to pilot the program and learn how to grow our communication and parent involvement in new and various ways. When programmatic changes occur during the school year, the principal hosts a virtual town hall meeting via Zoom in order to present the proposed changes, gather parent feedback, and problem solve any lingering, unresolved, or unforeseen issues that arise during the planning stages.

- d) The school, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinates and integrates parent involvement programs and activities with other federal, state, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conducts 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])

MERIT started a Parent Partnership Program this year to pilot the program and learn how to grow our communication and parent involvement in new and various ways. This effort has been aided greatly by having a parent liaison who also attends School Site Council meetings.

- e) The school ensures that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to 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])

Copies of the agenda and previous meeting minutes are sent to translation services, as appropriate.

- f) The school provides such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[e][14])

As proposed during Parent Partnership Program activities, and during virtual town hall meetings held via Zoom.

2.3 Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements of Title I, Part A, MERIT Academy, 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 information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 6311), as amended by ESSA, in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[f])

[\[Briefly describe or list the activities the school will implement to address this requirement.\]](#)

The Annual Title I presentation has been sent to translation services to support known languages of our student population. Translators are invited to IEP meetings, as appropriate. The IEP document in SEIS is translated into the language spoken at home for the both the draft of the document presented prior to the meeting, and the final document after the parent has signed.

2.4 School-Parent Compact

As a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy, each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved

student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards. The school-parent compact shall carry out the following requirements: (20 U.S.C. § 6318[d])

[Briefly describe or list the activities the school will implement to address this requirement.]

- a) Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I, Part A 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])

Each teacher is a content area specialist, and each teacher is credentialed to teach special education with various authorizations (including, but not limited to, Mild Moderate, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Emotional Disturbance, and Other Health Impairment). Teachers create and modify curriculum to meet each students' learning needs based off of their disability and the IEP team decisions for instructional modalities that are most beneficial for the given student. Additionally, teachers and parents communicate regularly about grades, behavior, interventions, and for other reasons on a regular basis (sometimes weekly basis). Further, the Parent Partnership Program is codifying procedures for parents to participate in classes, chaperone on community instruction outings, and various other ways of enriching parent involvement at school, in the community, and at home.

- b) Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum, the following: (20 U.S.C. § 6318[d][2])

1. 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. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[d][2][A])

N/A. MERIT Academy is not an elementary school.

2. Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[d][2][B])

Parents receive quarterly progress reports and final grades at the end of both terms. IEP meetings (Initial, Annual Review, Triennial Review, and Check-In) review grades and behavior. Teachers will send home weekly emails detailing grades and missing work, on a case by case basis.

3. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[d][2][C])

Teachers have frequent communication with the parent, and they are always available by phone or by email. Upon request, parents are invited into the classroom to observe activities. Parents are encouraged to help out at home with any homework that needs to be completed. Parents are invited to attend tutoring sessions with their student in order to observe all relevant instructions to assist their student.

4. Ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[d][2][D])

Talking Points is utilized for immediate translation services (that doesn't sound like Google translation) so teachers and parents can communicate via text or email. Translation services is provided at IEP meetings.

**It may be helpful to include the parent and family engagement policy review in the annual review of the Single Plan for Student Achievement.*

***The policy must be updated periodically to meet changing needs of parents and family members and the school. If the school has a process in place for involving parents and family members in planning and designing the school's programs, the school may use that process if it includes adequate representation of parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services.*