

## **AISD FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN (School, Family and Community Partnerships)**

*The Austin Independent School District recognizes that effective school-family-community engagement and partnerships are critical to student learning and success in school.*

**Introduction:** We in AISD value and see family and community engagement as a collaboration between families and schools that drives student achievement. We consider family engagement to be a central educational pillar which strengthens all of the work at the classroom, school, district, and community levels. Family and community engagement in AISD is not considered an add on program, but rather a shared mindset within our district.

**Background:** The Austin Independent School District's Parent Engagement Support Office and AISD departments are charged with developing and implementing an adaptive, customizable framework for schools to use to enhance authentic family and community engagement in our district based on the dual capacity framework in collaboration with students, families and community partners.

- Family: These are the adults responsible for the child's care and in the child's life who support the learning, well-being and development of the child.
- Family and Community Engagement: The mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities is to build relationships that support student learning and achievement, family well-being, and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated into the child's educational experience, supports the whole child, and is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate.
- Family and Community Engagement Plan: AISD's plan creates a foundation for the collaboration of mutual partners, embraces the individuality and uniqueness of families, and promotes a culture of learning that is child-centered, age-appropriate, and family-driven.

**Contents:** AISD's authentic family and community engagement plan is based on a multidimensional approach that outlines a menu of opportunities for teachers, school sites, and the district as a whole. Strategies and goals have been developed with put from families, staff and community partners through a robust interactive process as well as selected from a variety of research-based family engagement publications and resources. Our goal to enhance school, family and community partnerships are outlined throughout the document.

**Alignment:** AISD's family and community engagement plan serves as a tool to align and support the district's priorities and as a whole in meeting federal and state requirements and utilization of evidence-based practices.

### **Four Core Beliefs:**

- All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
- All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.
- Families and school staff are equal partners.
- The responsibility for cultivating and sustaining partnerships among school, home, and community rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.

## **AISD's Principles of Family and Community Engagement**

(Shared leadership, Co-designing, Co-planning)

- *Partnership*: The reciprocal relationship between families and staff is one of equality and respect, resulting in the creation of a mutually beneficial partnership. Success comes from promoting the excellence of all partners.
- *Family Strengths*: Families are assets, not barriers to overcome or work around. They are vital resources to the success of our students, to one another, and to school programs.
- *Social Support*: Support is essential to all families. Social support networks create connections and build relationships, promoting the overall well-being of the child, the family, and the community.
- *Cultural Competence*: Each family's culture is recognized, valued, respected, and reflected in practice. All staff will receive training on cultural inclusion.
- *Shared Leadership and Power*: Families and AISD staff are partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
- *Shared Responsibility*: All community members recognize that learning begins at birth and occurs in multiple settings and all take responsibility for expanding learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.
- *Child Success*: Families, staff, and community members collaborate to advocate that children have access to opportunities that equitably support their success and healthy development.

### **AISD's Family and Community Engagement Goals**

1. Establish a districtwide Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council that is representative of AISD's diverse community to provide insight and recommendations on all matters related to family and community engagement.
2. Establish with fidelity, open and two-way verbal and written communication between families, the district and schools, using a variety of strategies and methods.
3. Increase learning opportunities for family engagement in classroom, school, and district activities to gain knowledge and skills in parenting and fostering conditions to assist and support their children's learning and development at home.
4. Increase learning opportunities for AISD administrators and staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in family engagement using a cultural & equity lens.

### **AISD's Family and Community Engagement Evidence Based Strategies**

**Every School & Department in AISD will:**

1. Develop and maintain a comprehensive Family and Community Engagement Plan, as a component of the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP), as stipulated in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
2. Convene an annual meeting(s) to familiarize the school community about the school's Family and Community Engagement Plan. These meeting(s) should be held at a convenient time and all families of enrolled students should be invited and strongly encouraged to attend. At this meeting(s), it is imperative to inform families and community members of their opportunities for participation in continuous school planning and of training opportunities that will be offered throughout the school year. In partnership with AISD's State and Federal Department or Parent Engagement Support Office.
3. Offer a flexible number of meetings, including morning, evening and weekends, with sufficient notice.
4. Involve families, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the school wide family and community engagement plan.
5. Provide families of enrolled students:
  - A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure a student's progress and the achievement levels of state standards.
  - Decision making opportunities to participate in regularly scheduled meetings to formulate suggestions and as appropriate, determine decisions relating to the education of their children. The district will use this feedback to continuously improve their model.
  - Provide learning opportunities specifically for families of new students to AISD (including pre-kindergarten, transfers, newcomers or other students entering the district) to receive pertinent information regarding the school and opportunities to participate. Further, this information should include how families of students in special education will receive support during their transition.
6. Recognize the shared responsibilities for high student academic achievement.
  - Each school shall jointly develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improving student academic achievement.
  - School and families will strive to build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards.
7. Promote the Dual Capacity Framework as the model for building family engagement using the following evidence-based standards of practice:
  - Establish a Family and Community Engagement Team that is representative of their community to provide insight and recommendations on all matters related to family and community engagement.
  - Provide assistance to parents of children enrolled at school, as appropriate, in understanding academic standards, how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.
  - Provide materials and training to help parents/families to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology as appropriate, to foster parent engagement.

8. With input and support from families, provide ongoing professional development to all teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school staff on how to:
  - Engage, communicate with and work with parents as equal partners
  - Implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents/families and the school
  
9. Coordinate and integrate across departments, parent/family engagement programs and activities with other federal, state, and local programs that encourage and support parents/families in more fully participating in the education of their children.
  
10. Ensure that information related to school and parent/family programs, meetings and other activities is sent to the parents in a format and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
  
11. Involve families in the development of trainings for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training.
  
12. Allocate funds for parent/family/teacher training, necessary expenses associated with engagement or training activities, including transportation, childcare, interpreters to enable parents/families/teachers to fully participate in school related meetings and training.
  
13. Encourage families, teachers and community members to join Parent Teacher Association.

AISD's Family Engagement Plan is a working document that is reviewed ongoing bases to assure that we cultivate and strengthen our trust, relationships, partnerships with all our AISD students, families, educators and community partners.