A. PURPOSE

1. The Board of Education (Board) is committed to promoting to establish inclusive, culturally responsive, and antiracist processes for parent/guardian engagement in decisions affecting their students and their students’ schools.

2. To affirm a framework for family-school partnerships in alignment with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and in compliance with federal requirements for building the capacity of parents/guardians/families and school staff to engage in meaningful, two-way engagement.

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1 For the purposes of this policy, the terms “parent/guardian” and “family” are not always interchangeable, and have been intentionally used in the following ways: “parent/guardian” is used where there is a reference to the legal authority to make educational decisions on behalf of a child; “family” is used where there is a reference to the many roles family members, in addition to the student’s legal custodian, perform on behalf of children and their school communities.
partnerships to support the education and well-being of all children

meaningful family-school partnerships as an essential component to students’ academic success.

2. The Board encourages parent and family involvement in the school community to support children’s education, healthy development, and well-being. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will take actions to promote family involvement efforts that encompass the diversity of the community.

B. ISSUE

Families are children’s first teachers, and as students reach school age, families and school staff have the opportunity to become partners working towards the shared goal of nurturing the development of healthy, resilient, and competent young adults.

C. POSITION

1. The Board is committed to a strength-based approach to family engagement that recognizes and leverages students’ and families’ experiences to achieve every student’s best outcomes.

2. The Board expects all Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) employees to promote and demonstrate a commitment
to high expectations for achievement for all students, in partnership with their families.

2. All MCPS employees are expected to promote and demonstrate a commitment to parent and family involvement.

Research indicates that family involvement in education has a positive effect on student learning and healthy development and is an important strategy in reducing achievement gaps. Additionally, meaningful and effective home-school partnerships help to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment.

3. The Board affirms the following six principles to guide family-school partnerships supports the development of parent and family involvement programs and services that are comprehensive and linked to student learning and success, based on, but not limited to, the National Parent/Teacher Association’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

a) Welcoming all families into the school community; families are active participants in the life of the school

As affirmed in Policy ACA, Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency, the Board promotes the engagement of all parents/guardians in their children’s education and works to remove barriers that impede their active participation without regard to actual or perceived personal
characteristics. MCPS and local schools will create welcoming, responsive, and inclusive environments where—

(1) families and students feel welcomed, heard and respected, valued, and enjoy a sense of belonging and connectedness connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are;

(2) the diverse needs, abilities, personal characteristics, and backgrounds of families are valued; and

(3) family engagement activities are high-quality, relevant, and connected to supporting student social, emotional, and academic learning and doing in class development.

b) Communicating effectively: families

To promote early and thorough awareness for families, MCPS and local school staff and families will engage in regular, meaningful two-

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2 Personal characteristics include race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.
way communication about student learning and development through multiple, strategically implemented mechanisms and tools.

(1) Through effective, inclusive, culturally responsive, and antiracist communication strategies, all families will be provided opportunities to learn the critical educational benchmarks, course sequences, service-learning requirements and opportunities, timelines, and applications processes required for their students to access rigorous instruction and educational opportunities (e.g., magnet, gifted and talented, language immersion, and dual enrollment programs; courses leading to college and career readiness, including industry-recognized career credentials and other professional certification; scholarships; and leadership—development opportunities). ±

††(2) Consistent with Board Policy KBA, Policy on Public Information, the Board promotes accessibility of information to the broadest community possible.
(1) The Board is committed to building families’ capacity to advocate effectively for their children and also building MCPS staff members’ capacities for effective, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically competent family engagement.

(2) As set forth in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act\(^3\), the Board is consistently mindful of parents/guardians who may need additional support to advocate for their students without enhanced communication, interpretation or translation, meeting facilitation or support.

(3) Normative engagement practices shall be critically examined to identify and develop alternatives to traditional practices that may exclude identifiable groups from meaningful family engagement in student learning decisions, school-home communication, and school community life.

\(^3\) Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015) Title I, Title III, and Title IV programs, such as those for low-income and migrant students and emergent language learners, include specific requirements for building the capacity of parents/guardians/families and school staff to engage in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning.
(4) In critically examining engagement activities, Board members and staff will consider timing and participation options that account for the range and variety of parent/guardian work schedules.

and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

d) Speaking Speak up for children every child:

MCPS and local schools staff will encourage efforts of families, are empowered to students, and staff to advocate for their children, to ensure that students—recognize and eliminate bias in family engagement practices, and to advocate for fair treatment and have equitable access to learning opportunities that will support and supports for all students their success.

(1)

e) Sharing Share power: families

(1) Families and school staff are important and valued partners with unique information
regarding decisions that affect children. Families and School staff will consult and collaborate with families and students to together inform, influence, and create school policies, rules, practices, and programs, including full engagement in the school improvement process, planning, using methods appropriate to the participation goals.

(1) who are

(2) As set forth in Board Policy ABA, Community Engagement, schools will actively seek the participation of parents/guardians who are representative of the school community in school improvement planning and innovation processes, as well as community engagement in Board decision-making processes, developing and revising school system policies, strategic planning, budget development, and implementation of school district initiatives.

f) Collaborating with community:

f) Collaborate with community:

(1) MCPS and local school staff encourage student involvement in student-led organizations, such as student government and interest/advocacy groups which benefit
student academics, interests, and personal
development. MCPS and local schools will
engage with student leaders and members of
such organizations in school-related
decisions aligned with their interests using
methods appropriate to the participation
goals.

(2) MCPS and local school staff value the support
of the many organizations that represent and
build relationships among families of students
and their essential contributions to student
development, parent/guardian advocacy, and
school community vitality. The Board seeks
every effort to provide equitable experiences
for students. MCPS and local schools will
engage with the leaders and members of such
organizations in school-related decisions and
decisions related to their focus area(s),
using methods appropriate to the participation
goals.

(3) MCPS and local school staff will
collaborate with community members
organizations in order to connect students to
service learning and career readiness
opportunities, as well as to connect families
and staff to community services.
D. DESIRED OUTCOME

All MCPS staff will **effectively** collaborate with **all** families to build strong family-school partnerships **towards the shared goal of nurturing the development of healthy, resilient, and competent young adults.**

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The superintendent of schools will review existing policies and procedures, and develop necessary **engage parents/guardians as equal partners in student learning and family-school partnerships through effective, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and antiracist practices, as follows:**

   a) **Develop and implement** regulations and procedures to support this policy, including but not limited to –

      (1) a definition of documents that are vital to families’ access to their students’ education program, in alignment with federal and state law; and

      (2) the provision of language interpretation and translation services.
b) Develop goals, indicators, and metrics for effective and inclusive family engagement; monitor the milestones and data points annually; and identify barriers to participation, with particular attention to parents/guardians who may need additional support to advocate for their students without enhanced communication, such as interpretation or translation.

2. The superintendent of schools and the Board of Education will monitor the milestones and data points associated with Goal 3: Strengthen Productive Partnerships for Education in the MCPS Strategic Plan.

c) Designate staff responsible for providing coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to build the capacity of MCPS staff to plan and build effective family-school partnerships to improve student academic achievement and school performance.

d) Consult and collaborate, with parents/guardians and families, using methods appropriate to the participation goals, to develop –

(1) professional learning for staff, regarding the value and utility of contributions of families, and in how to reach out to,
communicate with, and work with parents/guardians,

(2) models for relevant and effective family outreach programs, including those for families who arrive at different times throughout the school year, or who may have little familiarity with MCPS,

(3) well-publicized structures for two-way communication with families who do not speak English, and other assistance for parent/guardians to make informed choices about their students’ academic programs, and school activities; understand key academic milestones, options, and implications of those decisions; and access available resources. of our diverse community is integral to The Board provides opportunities for parents and other members of the public to provide feedback through public comments at Board meetings, written and e-mail correspondence, service on advisory committees, and participation in public hearings and community forums. Feedback from a broad spectrum

e) Develop templates and tools for school use that effectively communicate the following information
(1) This policy and school improvement plans.

(2) State academic standards, state and local academic assessments, and tools for monitoring a child’s progress.

(3) Student rights and responsibilities, student codes of conduct (including restorative justice processes), critical educational benchmarks, academic planning information and course sequences, timelines and applications processes required to access rigorous instruction and educational opportunities (e.g., magnet, gifted and talented, language immersion, and dual enrollment programs; courses leading to college and career readiness, including industry-recognized career credentials and other professional certification; scholarships; and leadership development opportunities).

(4) Information related to school and parent/guardian/family programs, meetings, and other activities, such as parent/guardian councils and school events.
F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

Related Sources: *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015) Title I, Title III, and Title IV National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, 2022*