



# THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

## *Castor Gardens Middle School* **Parent and Family Engagement Policy**

*School Year 2024-2025*

*Revision Date:*

*03/20/2024*

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Castor Gardens Middle School receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by section 1116(h) and (c) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the school's expectations for parent and family engagement and describes how the school will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the school's plan submitted to the local educational agency (LEA).

**Castor Gardens Middle School agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:**

Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, Part A, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- Update the school parent and family engagement policy periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, distribute it to the parents of participating children, and make the parent and family engagement policy available to the local community.
- Provide full opportunities, to the extent practicable, for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the ESSA is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.
- Be governed by the following statutory definition of parent and family engagement and will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parent and Family Engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- (A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- (B) Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
- (C) 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) Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA

### **DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SCHOOL WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS**

### **Section A: JOINTLY DEVELOPED**

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including opportunities for regular meetings, if requested by parents, to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

*In the Spring each year parents are invited to a Title I meeting to review and give input into this policy and the School-Parent Compact. This year's Spring Title I meeting was held on March 20, 2024. Parents were informed of this meeting through google classroom, automated phone calls, and our school's website. During in-person learning, parents are informed of meetings and events through the electronic board located on the lawn.*

### **Section B: ANNUAL TITLE I MEETING**

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to conduct an annual meeting, at a convenient time, and encourage and invite all parents of participating children to attend to inform them about the school's Title I program, the nature of the Title I program, the parents' requirements, the school parent and family engagement policy, the schoolwide plan, and the school-parent compact.

*We hold our annual Title I meeting during Back-to-School night in September each year. At this time, the Principal or designee will give a presentation about the requirements of Title I part A, parents' right to know, state and local assessments including the PSSAs, school curriculum, how to work with educators and to track student progress, as well as this policy and the school parent compact.*

### **Section C: COMMUNICATIONS**

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to provide parents of participating children with (1) Timely information about the Title I programs, (2) Flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, (3) transportation, child care or home visits, as such services relate to parent and family engagement and may use Title I funds and (4) Information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

*Throughout the year, parents are invited to meetings through website/google postings, letters/flyers, electronic calendar notices, automated phone calls and social media in parent friendly language. We also use the electronic lawn sign to relay important meeting dates and times. District translators are used to offer translation services for students and parents in many languages. Materials and letters can be provided in multiple languages and school-based bi-lingual support counselors will be available to all parents and students. Translations can always be made by request.*

### **Section D: SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT**

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to jointly develop with parents of participating children 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.

*In the Spring each year parents are invited to a Title I meeting to review and give input into this compact. This year's Spring Title I meeting was held on March 20, 2024. Parents were informed of this meeting through google classroom, automated phone calls, and our school's website. During in-person learning, parents are informed of meetings and events through the electronic board located on the lawn.*

### **Section E: RESERVATION OF FUNDS**

If applicable, Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent by:

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*We share budget allotments for the upcoming school year at our annual Winter Title I Parental Input Meeting. During this meeting, parents provide direct input for spending, including the Title I- 1% Parent Set-aside funds. This year, the Winter Title I Meeting was held on December 18, 2023. Parents are informed of the 1% set-aside during the Spring Title I meeting as well as during the Back to School Night (Annual TI Meeting) presentation. The money set aside for parent and family engagement is used, specifically, for the production of the student handbooks, which include information on family engagement for the year, and the materials used for conduction of parent workshops. These funds will also be used for the production and mailing of information to families as well as materials for parent workshops.*

#### **Section F: COORDINATION OF SERVICES**

Castor Gardens Middle School will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement 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 by:

*Castor Gardens Middle School's Parent Resource Center is located on the first floor in the Marble Hallway. Materials, publications and brochures are housed in the center. In addition, shelving is supplied with information and other materials for public view. A copy machine, computers, telephone and conference table are available for use. Informational workshops are planned for parents, including CCTC therapeutic services and the high school application process. Additionally, the school coordinates with STEAM, Al-Bustan and other cultural organizations, Temple L.I.F.E, and Delaware Valley Fairness Project. Castor Gardens also coordinated with local businesses who provide discounted or donated items recognizing student achievements. We add to the list as needs are expressed to the school.*

#### **Section G: BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS**

Castor Gardens Middle School will build the parents' capacity for strong parent and family engagement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following:

- Providing parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and
- Materials and training to help parents to work with their child to improve their child's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent and family engagement
- Providing assistance to parents of participating children, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:
  - The challenging State's academic standards
  - The State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments
  - The requirements of Title I, Part A
  - How to monitor their child's progress
  - How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child

*To assist parents with the above bulleted points, Castor Gardens Middle School will email information to families including events, names, time, location and topic. A monthly calendar will be posted on our school's website, in addition to automated phone calls in order to announce school events and available parent workshops (Parent Portal, Attendance Matters, Math/Literacy Night, etc). Additionally, MTSS meetings are held as needed in order to ensure that all students are receiving an equitable education and that parents are involved in the process. Finally there is regular availability to technology for use in our Parent Resource Center.*

#### **Section H: BUILDING CAPACITY OF SCHOOL STAFF**

Castor Gardens Middle School will provide training to educate 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 by:

*In order to build the capacity of the school staff, we will use a variety of strategies. During a District PD in the Fall, the Principal or designee will lead a training on communicating effectively with parents. Staff will review parent survey results and discuss feedback on best practices for engaging parents. Also, weekly teacher meetings will be scheduled into teacher rosters in order to discuss ways to work with parents as partners. Additionally, school staff will be taught how to utilize School Messenger in order to communicate with parents and will be trained on the translation resources available such as Language Line. Additionally, staff will have the opportunity to connect and work with parents in order to ensure all students receive equitable educational opportunities during monthly MTSS meetings. Finally, staff will be regularly encouraged to participate in all aspects of family engagement including the School Advisory Council in order to partner with parents and develop relationships.*

Castor Gardens Middle School will provide other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities under Section 1116 as parents may request by:


*We will engage the school community and develop community partnerships while simultaneously inviting our existing partners to visit our school with ideas to support one another.*

**Principal's Signature**

**Dr. Shawn McGulgan**

**Date Signed**

**May 21, 2024**

  
8-13-2024