

**BLUFFVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL
POLICY 612.1
DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICIES FOR TITLE I
PROGRAMS**

[Note: This policy reflects recent federal statutory changes made by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which require school districts and schools to meet with parents and jointly develop parent and family engagement policies at both a district wide and school building level. This policy lists the required components of the parent and family engagement policies described herein and serves as a framework for their development. The policies and these components are mandatory in order for the school district to receive federal funds under this program.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and facilitate involvement by parents of students participating in Title I in the educational programs and experiences of students. The policy shall provide the framework for organized, systematic, ongoing, informed, and timely parental involvement in relation to decisions about the Title I services at Bluffview Montessori School.

Bluffview is committed to the goal of providing quality education for every child in Bluffview Montessori School. We want to establish partnerships with parents and with the community, acknowledging that everyone gains when Bluffview staff and families work together to support high achievement of our children. Parents and families play an extremely important role as children's first teachers. Their support for their children and for the school is critical to their children's success at every step along the way.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The policy of Bluffview Montessori School is to plan and implement, with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children, programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents and families in its Title I programs.
- B. The policy of Bluffview Montessori School is to fully comply with 20 U.S.C. § 6318 which requires Bluffview Montessori School to develop jointly with, agree upon with, and distribute to parents of children participating in Title I programs written parent and family engagement policies.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRICT LEVEL POLICY

The school board will direct the administration to develop jointly with, agree upon

with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that will be incorporated into Bluffview Montessori School's Title I plan. The policy will establish the expectations for meaningful parent and family involvement and describe how Bluffview will:

- A. Involve parents and family members in the joint development of Bluffview Montessori School's Title I plan and the development of support and improvement plans;
- B. Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within Bluffview Montessori School in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education;
- C. Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with similar strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant federal, state, and local laws and programs, such as SPED, ADSIS, Title I;
- D. Conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or who are of a racial or ethnic minority background); the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and strategies to support successful school and family interactions;
- E. Use the findings of such evaluations to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise, if necessary, the district-level and school-level parent and family engagement policies; and
- F. Involve parents in the activities of the schools, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by Bluffview Montessori School to adequately represent the needs of the population served by Bluffview Montessori School for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the parent and family engagement policy.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEVEL POLICY

The school board will direct the administration of Bluffview Montessori School to develop (or amend an existing parental involvement policy) jointly with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed upon by such parents and families, that shall describe the means for carrying out the federal requirements of parent and family engagement. Parents shall be notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. Such policy shall be made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

- A. The policy will describe the means by which each school with a Title I program will:
1. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I programs, and to explain to parents of participating children the program, its requirements, and their right to be involved;
 2. Offer 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;
 3. Involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of the parental involvement programs, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the school-wide program plan, except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children;
 4. Provide parents of participating children with: timely information about Title I programs; 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; 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; and

5. If the school-wide program plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent's comments on the plan when it is submitted to Bluffview Montessori School.
- B. As a component of this policy, Bluffview Montessori School shall jointly develop with parents a school/parent compact which outlines how parents, 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 compact shall:
1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables participating students to meet state student academic achievement standards;
 2. Describe the ways each parent will be responsible for supporting his or her child's learning by volunteering in his or her child's classroom and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to his or her child's education and use of extracurricular time.
 3. Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an on-going basis through the use of:
 - a. Annual parent-teacher conferences to discuss the compact and the child's achievement;
 - b. Frequent progress reports to the parents; and
 - c. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer, participate in the child's class, and observe in the child's classroom.
 - d. 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.
- C. To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and community to improve student academic achievement, the policy will describe how Bluffview will:
1. Provide assistance to participating parents in understanding such topics as the state's academic content standards and state academic achievement standards, state and local academic

assessments, Title I requirements, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;

2. Provide materials and training to assist parents in working with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement;
 3. Educate school 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 school;
 4. Coordinate and integrate parental involvement 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 to the extent feasible and appropriate;
 5. Ensure, to the extent practicable, that information about school and parent meetings, programs, and activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand; and
 6. Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as requested by parents.
- D. The policy will also describe the process to be taken if Bluffview chooses to:
1. Involve parents in the development of training for school staff to improve the effectiveness of such training;
 2. Provide necessary literacy training with funds received under Title I programs if all other funding has been exhausted;
 3. Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
 4. Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;

5. Arrange meetings at a variety of times or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, and parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school in order to maximize parental involvement and participation in school-related activities;
 6. Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement;
 7. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and business in parental involvement activities; and
 8. Establish a Bluffview Montessori School-wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in Title I programs.
- E. To carry out the requirements of parent and family engagement, Bluffview, to the extent practicable, will 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 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that is understandable to the parents.
- F. Bluffview shall inform parents and parent organizations of the existence of family engagement in education programs.

The policies will be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. § 6318 (Parent and Family Engagement)

Cross References: See attached Implementation Plan below

Parent and Family Engagement for Title I Programs Implementation Plan

District Expectations

Bluffview Montessori agrees to implement the following requirements:

1. The school district will put into operation programs, activities and procedures for the engagement of parents and family members in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.
2. Consistent with section 1116, the school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1116(d) of the ESSA.
3. In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, limited literacy, disabilities, of migratory children, who are economically disadvantaged, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background, 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.
4. The school district will incorporate this district wide parent and family engagement policy into its district plan developed under section 1112 of the ESSA.
5. If the district plan for Title I, Part A found in the State Educational Record View and Submission (SERVS), developed under section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the Minnesota Department of Education.
6. The school district with a Title I, Part A allocation of over \$500,000, will 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 parental involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to the schools.
7. The school district will be governed by the following definition of the term “parent” includes legal guardian or other person standing in place of a parent (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare).
8. Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:
 - a. that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning;
 - b. that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school;

- c. that 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. that other activities are carried out, such as those described in section 1116 of the ESEA.

Description of How the District/School Will Implement Required Components

1. Bluffview will engage parents and families who have Title I students in developing and/or revising Bluffview Montessori School policy.
 - a. The policy will be in the family handbook and posted on the Bluffview website for easy reference.
 - b. The policy will be discussed at the Title/ADSIS Intervention meeting that takes place during the Back to School BBQ in the fall and with stakeholders at the District Advisory Committee meeting(s).
2. Bluffview will take the following actions to engage the parents and families in jointly developing the district Title I plan (section 1112) which is in the SERVS application and the development and review of the Schoolwide or Title I Targeted Assistance Plan. If applicable the Comprehensive Support and Improvement and the Targeted Support and Improvement plan, in the schools' identified for improvement plans. [Section 1111(D) (1)(2)]
 - a. Should Bluffview fall into a category of needing additional support (we do not currently), the task of developing a [School Wide Improvement or Targeted Assistance Plan](#) would fall to the Pedagogy Committee to commission a sub committee. The sub committee would be populated with parents and staff, actively recruited by the pedagogy committee via email, school newsletter, and other communication avenues used by Bluffview. This committee would submit minutes and plans to the pedagogy committee, which would in turn report to the District Advisory Committee.
3. Bluffview will coordinate technical assistance and other support that is necessary to build the capacity of staff in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance. This could include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders and philanthropic organizations or individuals with this experience in effectively engaging families in education.
 - a. As part of the ESSER requirements, Bluffview developed an Asset Map. This includes individuals, businesses, employers, and other organizations.
 - b. Bluffview maintains memberships with the Winona Chamber of Commerce, and the Winona Non-Profit Alliance.
 - c. Bluffview is actively involved with Winona Area Public Schools, Winona State University, and Saint Mary's University as other community resources.

- d. Bluffview annually administers a staff survey and a family/parent survey, the results of which are presented to the School Board for discussion/analysis.
- 4. Bluffview will coordinate and integrate with federal, state and local programs, including public preschool programs, to implement effective parent and family engagement strategies that improve student achievement and school performance.
 - a. Bluffview's Vision/Mission is always at the forefront of our decision making as it relates to federal, state, and local programming.
 - b. Bluffview has access to, but is not limited to, Semcac, Head Start, Winona Area Public Schools, Winona State and St Mary's University for support in implementing effective strategies.
- 5. Bluffview will take the following actions to conduct, with the engagement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy (programs/activities) in improving the academic achievement of Title I students and the schools.

Reviewing and evaluating the parent and family engagement activities/programs:

- a. Identify barriers and the needs of parents and family members that keep them from participating in their child's education, especially the economically disadvantaged, disabled, limited English proficiency, or any racial or ethnic minority.
- b. Identify the needs of the Title I parents and family members to assist the learning of their children and the teachers and school staff.
- c. Identify strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

Bluffview regularly hosts parent conferences (fall and spring), family events, and includes family input in our planning minimally through the District Advisory Committee. Our annual survey is critically reviewed for information that indicates areas of strength we can focus on and areas for improvement where we can accelerate our program. As a charter school, at least 2 parents of students within our school are Board members. This means that at our highest level of leadership, parents are directly aware of the family experience and are making decisions about policy and governance.

- 6. Bluffview will use the findings of the evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement as necessary and to revise the parent and family engagement policy as necessary.
 - a. This will be accomplished through Board review of the annual survey data and through the work of the District Advisory Committee. The Board may also direct the Pedagogy Committee to review the data if deemed necessary. If deficiencies are identified, the Pedagogy Committee and the District Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the Board for policy augmentation.

7. Bluffview will involve parents in activities directly. This could be establishing a parent advisory board that represents the population of Title I parents and family members, that develops, evaluates and reviews or revises the parent and family engagement policy.
 - a. Families/Parents invited to the Title/ADSIS Intervention fall informational meeting will be directly invited to the District Advisory Committee meeting.
8. Bluffview will convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, when the parents of participating children are available to attend. The Title I annual meeting will inform parents about the Title I program, explain the requirements of parent and family engagement and the rights and responsibilities of the parents to be involved.
 - a. The Title/ADSIS Intervention meeting each fall, and the District Advisory Committee will engage in discussions around the rights and responsibilities of parents to be involved. There is a specific slide in the District Advisory Committee meeting documents that outlines their rights and responsibilities.
9. Bluffview will offer flexible meeting times during morning, evening or weekends and may provide transportation, child care or home visits.
 - a. Meetings will generally be in the evenings. Childcare may be provided as needed by school staff. If requested, a virtual link will be provided.
10. Bluffview will involve parents in the planning and review of the school improvement plan and the joint development of the schoolwide plan when applicable. If the schoolwide plan is not satisfactory to the parents, submit comments on the plan when submitted to Bluffview Montessori School. [Section 1114(b)]
 - a. If a schoolwide improvement plan were needed, it would be sent out to all families/parents for review. A copy of the plan would be posted on the school website. A survey would be conducted to determine opinions/solicit suggestions to improve the plan. The survey results would also be on the website.
11. Bluffview will provide assistance to parents of Title students:
 - a. Timely information about programs offered to engage in their child's education.
 - b. An explanation of the curriculum, state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments, and the achievement levels of the state academic standards.
 - c. If they request, opportunities for regular meetings to hear their suggestions and participate in decisions related to their child's education.

1. ACTIVITIES

- a. Participation in Educational Programs
 - i. Bluffview may expand the District Advisory Committee to meeting monthly. Parents may also attend/join the Pedagogy Committee.
 - ii. Welcome to visit/observe classrooms/open house nights and/or parent education sessions.

- iii. Partner with individual teachers to develop the best possible education plan for each child i.e. Title I services.
- iv. Participate by sharing skills or talents
- v. Accompany classes on field trips.
- vi. Encourage/initiate communication.
 - 1. Outgoing communication including but not limited to emails, RSS feed, phone calls, parent/teacher conferences, etc.
- vii. BMS website is maintained.
- viii. Encourage borrowing materials from the parent bookshelf located in the library, providing books on Montessori education, child development, and parenting skills. Utilize reading materials in the parent section of the library.
- ix. Fill out parent-school compact if involved in Title I.
- b. Contributing to the School Community.
 - i. Serve on the Board of Directors (2 seats are mandated parent seats).
 - ii. District advisory committee meets in the late fall to:
 - 1. Review MCA previous years scores/Northstar reporting.
 - 2. Learn about the academic screening program (Fastbridge).
 - 3. Discuss State Standards.
 - 4. Discuss local academic assessments.
 - iii. Work as a volunteer or volunteer coordinator.
 - iv. Serve on committees like Pedagogy, Technology, etc.
 - v. Attend the social, cultural and education activities offered throughout the year.
 - vi. Participate in fundraising activities.
 - vii. Fill out an annual parent survey.

Description of Shared Responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement

Bluffview will jointly develop with Title I parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement to meet the state academic standards. The compact should:

- 1. Describe the curriculum and instruction that help their student meet the state standards, identify where their child is performing and discuss ways the parent can support their child's education at home and at school.
- 2. Talk about the importance of the teachers and parents communicating on an ongoing basis at a minimum:
 - a. Conduct a parent-teacher conference in elementary schools, at least annually, during which time the compact is discussed as it relates to the individual child.
 - b. Provide frequent reports to parents on their children's progress.

- c. Provide information on how parents can contact staff and staff can best contact parents, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.
- d. Make sure that two-way meaningful communication between family members and school staff is addressed and when at all possible, is in a language the parents and family members can understand.

Accessibility

Bluffview will meet the requirements of parent and family engagement of Title I, to the extent practicable, we will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with children with limited English proficiency, parents with children with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents can understand.