

Mountain Discovery Charter School (MDCS) recognizes the value of family engagement in a child's academic success. Our mission is to inspire students to enjoy and lead their own learning. The education of children is an ongoing cooperative partnership between the home and the school and MDCS strives to support parents and provide meaningful opportunities to become involved in the programs offered by the Title I program for Schoolwide Assistance in our school. MDCS encourages parents and families to participate in the design and implementation of the programs and activities in order to increase the effectiveness of the school system's Title I program in helping students meet state and local achievement standards.

MDCS builds capacity for strengthening parent and family engagement by:

- Helping parents and family members, school staff and community volunteers understand the importance of parent and family engagement;
- Helping parents and families understand national, state and local standards;
- Sending information and communication to parents and families in an easy to understand format;
- Providing materials and training to parents and families to assist with their child's education;
- Including parents on School Improvement Teams;
- Inviting parents to work together with teachers about their children's school performance, to attend meetings to discuss programs and activities, and to consult in the design and implementation of programs particularly those supported with Title I funds;
- Encouraging parents and family members to volunteer in and visit classrooms;
- Coordinating and integrating parental and family engagement strategies of the school with parental and family engagement strategies of other programs;
- Involving parents and family members in the activities of the school;
- An annual review of this policy and of the strategies for parent and family engagement occurs annually in collaboration with parents, school and district staff. This summary of the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy will be distributed each year in a printed version to parents of Title I schools with a link and/or information about how the whole policy can be accessed.

A. DEFINITION OF PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

For the purposes of this policy, the term "parent and family engagement" means the participation of parents, guardians, and other family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- Parents and families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
- Parents and families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education;
- Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;
- MDCS utilizes activities to support parent and family engagement in the Title I programs.

B. PURPOSE AND OPERATION OF TITLE I PROGRAM

The Title I program is a federally supported program that offers assistance to educationally and economically disadvantaged children to help ensure they receive an equitable, high-quality, well-rounded education. The Title I program provides instructional activities and supportive

services to eligible students in addition to those provided by the regular school program. Through the school-wide Title 1 Program, we provide services to eligible students most in need of assistance in the school. Eligibility criteria includes, for example, but not limited to, standardized test scores, NWEA MAP benchmark assessments, teacher observations, and input, and other measures of student progress.

C. ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Each year, the Co-director's must invite parents to a meeting explaining parental rights, discussing the programs and activities provided with Title I funds, and solicit input on the Title I program and this policy. Additionally, the Co-director's must provide parents and families a meaningful opportunity annually to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the Title I program and the parent and family engagement policies and plans. This information will be collected in a Google Form specific to the Title 1 program. Data collection will include learning gains and end of year proficiency scores of those children served in the program.

D. PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

MDCS believes that the involvement of Title I parents and family members in the design and implementation of the Title I program will increase the effectiveness of the program and contribute to the success of the children. Title I and all school staff strive to conduct outreach to parents and family members and involve them in activities throughout the school year. Outreach will include messages and invitations in our weekly "Happenings" newsletter, on our website, and through the messaging system.

The Co-director's shall ensure that this parent and family engagement policy and plan are developed and agreed upon with, and annually distributed to parents and families of students. Our Title I program shall jointly develop and annually distribute to parents and families a written parent and family engagement plan that describes the means for carrying out policy, sharing responsibility for student academic achievement, building the capacity of school staff and parents for involvement, and increasing accessibility for participation of all parents and family members of children participating in Title I programs. This includes parents and families who have limited English proficiency, have disabilities, or are migratory. The plan will involve parents in the planning and improvement of Title I activities and will provide for the distribution to parents of information on expected student achievement levels and the school's academic performance.

In addition, the Co-director's and Title I school personnel shall do the following:

- Involve parents and family members in the joint development of the Title I program and school support and improvement plan by including parents on the School Improvement Team and any other appropriate committees that review the Title I program;
- Provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist and build the capacity of all participating members in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities designed to improve student achievement and school performance; including Title 1 Family nights, parent conferences, and Curriculum nights;
- Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies in the Title I program with parental engagement strategies established in other federal, state, and local laws and programs; including mandatory notices of student eligibility criteria, identification

process, and serve expectations as well as parent participation in required meetings including IEP and ELL placement or evaluation meetings;

- Conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the school's parent and family engagement policies and program in improving the academic quality of the school and assisting students to meet MDCS' academic standards. During this process, the School will identify:
 - barriers to greater participation of parents;
 - the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers;
 - strategies to support successful school and family interactions.
- Strive to eliminate barriers to parental participation by assisting parents who have disabilities, who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, are migratory, or have other backgrounds or characteristics that may affect participation;
- Provide outreach and assistance to parents and family members of children who are participating in Title I programs in understanding the state's testing standards, the assessments used, Title I requirements, and all national, state, and local standards and expectations through such efforts as community-based meetings, posting information on school websites, sending information home, newsletters, and workshops,
- Design a parent-student-staff compact that sets out respective responsibilities in striving to raise student achievement and explains how an effective home/school partnership will be developed and maintained; this is included in our family handbooks and the Title 1 participation documents and agreement;
- With the assistance of parents, ensure that teachers, instructional support personnel, Co-director's, and other staff are educated in the value of parents as partners in the educational process and understand how to work with, communicate with, and reach out to parents as equal partners in education; this is included in our Staff handbooks and Board operating manuals;
- Distribute to parents information on expected student proficiency levels for their child and the school's academic performance, and provide materials and training to help parents monitor their child's progress; this is accomplished in our weekly newsletters, website, and messaging. This is also expressly communicated in all Title 1 family nights, Curriculum nights, and parent conferences;
- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with federal, state, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities in the community that encourage and support parents to more fully participate in the education of their child; this is accomplished through the Parent Partnership, and the School Improvement Team;
- Strengthen the partnership with agencies, businesses, and programs that operate in the community; this will be accomplished through our general outreach programs led by the Co-director's and including Board members in recruiting community and business leaders' support;
- Ensure that parents are involved in the school's Title I activities;
- Provide such other reasonable support for Title I parental involvement activities as requested by parents.

E. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

The Co-director's and Title I school staff shall provide effective notice of the following information as required by law. The notice will be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

- Program for English Learners
 - Each year the Co-director's or designee shall provide notice of the following to parents of English learners identified for participation in a Title I, Part A or Title III funded language-instruction educational program: a. the reasons for the child's identification; b. the child's level of English proficiency and how such level was assessed; c. methods of instruction; d. how the program will help the child; e. the exit requirements for the program; f. if the child has a disability, how the language instruction educational program meets the objectives of the child's individualized educational program (IEP); g. any other information necessary to effectively inform the parent of the program and the parental rights regarding enrollment, removal, and selection of a program for English learners; and h. notice of regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents. i. These expectations will be met through proper notice to all meetings related to IEP or ELL plans and may be given in the parent's home language;
- School Report Card
 - Each year, the School shall disseminate the school report card containing information about the school including, but not limited to: a. student achievement, graduation rates, performance on other school quality and/or student success indicators, the progress of students toward meeting long-term goals established by the state, student performance on measures of school climate and safety, and, as available, the rate of enrollment in post-secondary education; b. the performance of the school on academic assessments as compared to the state as a whole; c. the percentage and number of students who are: i. assessed, ii. assessed using alternate assessments, iii. involved in preschool and accelerated coursework programs, and iv. English learners achieving proficiency; d. the per pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funds; and e. teacher qualifications. f. The School report card will be posted according to NC statute and the information will be available as it is disseminated to Schools and permission is granted to release the formally approved School Performance Grades and correlating data.
- Teacher Qualifications
 - At the beginning of each year, the School will notify parents of students who are participating in Title I programs of the right to request certain information on the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals providing services to the child. c. The Co-director's or designee shall provide timely notice informing parents that their student has been assigned to or has been taught for at least four consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level or subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.
- Parental Rights and Opportunities for Involvement

- Each year, the Co-director's shall provide notice to parents of the school's written parent and family engagement policy, parents' right to be involved in their child's school, and opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in the school. b. Each year, the Co-director's shall provide notice to parents of their right to request information regarding student participation in state-required assessments.

F. WEBSITE DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

Each year, MDCS shall publicize on the website; 1. the report card described above and 2. information on each assessment required by the state organized by grade level. The information must include: a. the subject matter assessed; b. the purpose for which the assessment is designed and used; c. the source of the requirement for the assessment; d. if available, the amount of time students will spend taking the assessments and the schedule of the assessments; and e. if available, the time and format for distributing results. f. This information will be shared in the published calendars, weekly newsletters, reminders, and through curriculum nights and Title 1 parent meetings. The Co-director's shall develop any administrative procedures necessary to implement the requirements of this policy.