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# PROGENY ACADEMY

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## POLICY #612-2: District and Family Engagement

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### **I. Vision for Family Engagement**

Progeny Academy is committed to the goal of providing quality education for every child in this district. We want to establish partnerships with parents and with the community. Everyone gains if the school and home work together to support high achievement of our children. We can't do this job alone. 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. Progeny's guiding philosophy was created with input from our teachers, staff, and families through an iterative process of development. By engaging stakeholders, we determined the necessary supports and modes of communication that would help our families navigate our academic environment. We are committed to a high rigor environment that sets college-ready expectations for all students, regardless of where they are from or what languages they speak. We take these three focuses - cultural responsiveness, knowledgeable staff, and high expectations - and couple them with our program's core mission: to develop students to be critical thinkers and intelligent leaders, expanding their opportunities to contribute positively and productively to society. This document was created with the input of families collected throughout the 2021-2022 School year. It will be reviewed annually based on results from a family engagement Needs Assessment and feedback from parents.

### **II. Family Engagement Expectations**

Progeny Academy 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, A Part, 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 State 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 one percent reserved goes directly to the school.
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. the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1116 of the ESEA.

### **III. Timeline**

The engagement plan development will begin in the spring of the prior academic year with a needs assessment. The assessment will consist of gathering data in the areas of academic and non-academic school programming. The data will also consist of formal and informal data collection from family and community members. Upon completion of the data collection, information will be shared in the fall at one of the family engagement initiatives. The plan will then be created and remain in effect for the duration of the current school year (September 1-June 30 of the current academic year).

#### **IV. Documentation**

All gatherings, meetings and work completed will be recorded and documented in the following ways (including, but not limited to):

- A. Participant Sign in forms
- B. Attendance forms
- C. Survey Documentation
- D. Notes taken by staff member at meetings
- E. Files maintained of needs assessment data collected

All information will be kept on file with the school in accordance with district record keeping policy and will be made available to stakeholders upon request. Information will also be shared to the Board of Directors throughout the school year as part of regular scheduled board meetings.

#### **V. Description of Current Family Engagement Initiatives**

##### **A. Back to School Nights**

The Back-to-School Night is open to all enrolled scholars and families, returning and new, as a welcome and information-session for the upcoming school year. The event, held in late August, is hosted at the school with presentations and stations taking place throughout the building. The program usually includes the opportunity to meet with school leaders and teachers, a station on setting up transportation assignments, the ability to purchase school uniforms, and collection of Free and Reduced Lunch Forms. Families and scholars can ask questions and expectations for the school year are shared. Moreover, the event serves as a celebration and pump up for the start of a successful school year.

##### **B. Report Card Conferences**

Held trimesterly, the report card conference is a formal meeting between families and school staff to discuss scholars' academic progress. All families are expected to attend in order to receive the scholar's report card. During the conference, families will review the scholar's work products, hear about specific academic gains and growth goals, and ask the teacher questions about the class. The Family Engagement Survey is distributed during the first and second trimester conferences and the data generated is used as part of the network's dashboard, goal-setting, and planning of further initiatives for the District Family Engagement Plan. Additionally, the conferences are used to engage with families for the purpose of information gathering, including Free and Reduced Lunch Form collection (during the first trimester conferences) and the intent to return form (during the second trimester conference).

In addition to academic staff being present at conferences, student support services staff is also available. During conferences, The support team is also present to answer questions about bussing and transportation and to update contact information in our student data system to ensure the school can properly communicate with families. School administration is also posted around the school to engage with families and answer questions.

### **C. Family Meetings and School Visits**

Throughout the year, parents and families may request a meeting with their student's teachers as needed by calling, texting, or emailing the teacher. Likewise, the school may request family members to attend ad hoc meetings focused on a variety of issues including academics, behavior, and attendance. The school believes strongly that this open communication and mutual support between the school and families is crucial to ensuring academic success for scholars.

Visitors, especially parents/guardians/families, are a vital part of the Progeny Academy community. We welcome them as volunteers, observers, and partners in the education of our students. Unfortunately, unannounced visits can be disruptive to our educational program, but family members who would like to spend time at school should simply call in advance and schedule a class-visit appointment.

## **VI. Plan for Continued Family Engagement**

### **A. Education Opportunities for Families**

There will be several education opportunities at the school that will serve the needs of the families at Progeny Academy. Based on events that other schools have done that were successful and the ideas from families at a Parent Teacher Organization meeting, the proposed opportunities are below.

### **B. Parent and Family Outreach**

Priority Areas from Parents: Based on ideas from families in the 2021-2022 school year, there are several areas that the Progeny Academy should prioritize for the 2022-2023 school year and future academic school years (annual updates).

#### **1. Translation**

A barrier which prevents families from fully participating in their child's education is a lack of translation for both written and oral communication from the school. The leadership team should prioritize hiring staff who can speak Somali and Spanish, the main languages of families in the EL department. If that is not possible, the administration should work to create a partnership and a leadership opportunity for parents to provide translation services.

Every written document from the school, no matter the department, should be translated into the main languages present in the EL population: Spanish, Somali and Tajik. Teachers and staff members should submit any written documents to the representatives who are designated to translate throughout the school year. All staff members, when communicating with families who speak a language other than English should ask them if they would like a translator, to which they are entitled by law. The school uses Language Line when they are making phone calls to families, and can use that same service when they are in person by using the speaker phone function. Robo calls and texts from the school, and all social media posts that include reminders, school cancellations, or other information should be translated into the main two languages represented in the EL population at the school.

## 2. Multiple Forms of Communication

The families also requested multiple forms of communication relating to all school related information, events, reminders, and information about student progress. Parents appreciated experiences with teachers when they were well informed about their student's learning and academic progress via text messages, calls, weekly newsletters and connecting through classroom platforms such as Google Classroom. It is the responsibility of the school to establish systems that lead to more consistency amongst all staff when it comes to parent communication. All of the communication should be in a language that parents can understand. This will lead to an increased trust in the school, and the development of meaningful relationships between school and families.

## **VII. Soliciting Parent and Community Feedback**

As part of the meetings held throughout the year, feedback will be solicited from families relating to the engagement initiatives' effectiveness. This will be done primarily through the needs assessment done at the beginning and end of each academic year by network and school leaders. Parents will also be asked about the school parental involvement plan, as well. They will be free to give feedback through a brief survey in addition to or instead of the needs assessment survey. Information from both surveys will be used in the planning, development, and implementation of programs for the following school year.

## **VIII. Accessibility for Stakeholders**

Progeny Academy 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.

## **IX. Accessibility for our EL Students and Their Families**

English language learners make up about 41% of the student population

This means that teachers will have an average of 7 EL students in their class there. One way to promote academic success for all students is to develop a positive relationship with students' families. But because of linguistic and cultural differences between our staff and the families of EL students, there are different methods and strategies that teachers and staff should utilize to build trust.

The EL department can support staff by providing specific information about engaging parents during professional development during the year. If the school provides a workshop about building relationships with families, the EL staff can add to the information presented by specifying ways that can improve communication. This can include how to include parents in the classroom (i.e. volunteering), in school events and in their child's education, the historical context around mistrust of school systems by communities of color, and experiences of families in our school. One essential component for staff is to use translation services provided by the

school through Language Line whenever they are interacting with families who need access to translation or interpreting services.

**X. Fostering Family and Out-of-School Relationships**

For students to progress in their academics, it will be essential that their teacher(s) and their families are mutually supportive of one another. Therefore, it is important to also keep parents and families informed of these strategies so that they can help their student at home with homework, and can keep them connected to opportunities at schools. By partnering together, students will get multiple opportunities to practice these strategies to have academic success at school.

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