

POLICY NUMBER	252
SECTION	Students
TITLE	Parent Family Engagement Policy
ADOPTED	November 11, 2010
Amended	April 9, 2025

Freire Charter School (the “Charter School”) is fully committed to creating meaningful and mutually beneficial opportunities for parental engagement. We recognize parents as essential partners in our ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for all students across every grade level. The Board of Trustees reviews this policy annually and updates it as needed to reflect evolving circumstances and best practices.

As a single-school Local Education Agency (LEA), the Charter School has structured this policy into two distinct sections: the LEA level and the school level. This division is intended to provide parents and families with a clearer understanding of expectations both at the institutional level and at the level of direct student support.

LEA LEVEL POLICY

Federal Policy states: All Local Education Agencies (LEA) receiving Title I funds are required under Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to develop a written Parent and Family Engagement Policy for the LEA. The LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy must be jointly developed with parents and family members, incorporated into the LEA plan (Consolidated Application), and distributed to parents of participating children in a format and language that parents can understand. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents and family members of participating children.

SECURING INPUT AND FEEDBACK

CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION AND SCHOOLWIDE PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The Charter School involves parents and family members in the joint development of the Consolidated Application (ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(A)).

Parents and families play an essential role in the planning and continuous improvement of the Charter School’s Consolidated Application. Their involvement includes reviewing academic performance data and family

engagement outcomes, as well as providing valuable feedback and recommendations regarding Charter School programs and budget allocations.

Opportunities for parents and families to participate in the development and evaluation of the Consolidated Application and Schoolwide Plan are available at the following scheduled parent events:

- New Parent Clinic (Aug)
- Annual Title I Meeting @ Back to School Night (Sept)
- Student-Parent-Teacher conferences (Nov, Jan, Mar)
- Annual Parent Engagement Summit, (April)

Parents and Families are notified about these events via regular updates via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, and robocalls. Meetings are conducted both in-person at the school and virtually via Zoom, with translation services available upon request. Once approved by the board, the Consolidated Application will be posted on the website.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS

In alignment with *ESSA Section 1116(a)(2)(B)*, the Charter School offers technical assistance and support to its school to help plan and implement effective parent and family engagement activities aimed at improving student academic achievement and overall school performance.

The development of trainings and materials is guided by feedback gathered from parents and families during previous engagement events. These resources are designed to address identified needs and enhance collaborative efforts between schools and families.

Examples of technical assistance include:

- In collaboration with Charter School staff, planning and leading workshops focusing on academic data, curriculum strategies, and parent coaching at various points throughout the school year.
- Providing print and electronic materials for teachers and staff to effectively partner with parents.
- Providing remote participation options to ensure accessibility.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

ANNUAL POLICY EVALUATION

The Charter School conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and the effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of the Charter School, including identifying

- barriers to greater participation by parents and family members, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
- the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with Charter School personnel and teachers; and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. (*ESSA. Section 1116(a)(2)(D)(i-iii)*).

The Charter School will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the policy by:

- Conducting surveys, focus groups, and public feedback sessions during the Annual Title I Meeting at Back to School Night.
- Identifying barriers to participation and necessary supports for families.
- Using parent and staff feedback to guide continuous improvement.

POLICY REVISION AND EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

The Charter School will use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family involvement, and revise, if necessary, the Parent and Family Engagement Policy (*ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(E)*). With parent and family support, the Charter School will:

- Analyze evaluation findings.
- Revise the policy accordingly.
- Implement evidence-based strategies to enhance family engagement.

ANNUAL SET-ASIDE FOR PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Charter School is required to set aside 1% of funds to be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the LEA's parent and family engagement policy. Planning for use of the set aside funds will take place at the Annual Title I Meeting at Back to School Night and the Annual Parent Engagement Summit, in the Spring. With input from Parents and Families, these funds will be used in alignment with the following ESSA guidelines:

- Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for LEA and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members (*ESSA, Section 1116(3)(D)(i)*).
- Supporting the Charter School programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school. (*ESSA, Section 1116(3)(D)(ii)*).
- Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members (*ESSA, Section 1116(3)(D)(iii)*).
- Collaborating with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement (*ESSA, Section 1116(3)(D)(iv)*).
- Engaging in various other activities and strategies that the Charter School and Parents and Families determine are appropriate and consistent with the Charter School's Parent and Family Engagement Policy (*ESSA, Section 1116(3)(D)(v)*).

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

The Charter School will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with other federal, State, and local laws and programs (*ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(C)*). Engagement strategies will be integrated with:

- IDEA (Special Education) and other federal and local programs.
- Other programs that link students and families with outside services, such as McKinney Vento outreach and support.

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Per *ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(F)* the Charter School involves parents and family members in the activities of the school by:

- Establishing a representative parent advisory board.
- Hosting family nights and engagement workshops.
- Providing structured feedback opportunities throughout the school year.

SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY

Federal Policy states: The Title I Parent and Family Engagement section of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 1116(b) requires each Title I school to develop a written parent and family engagement policy that describes the means for carrying out the requirements of Section 1116. The school must ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities are sent to the parents of Title I children in a format and in a language the parents can understand.

SECURING INPUT AND FEEDBACK

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

Parents and family members will be involved in the planning, review and improvement of the Charter School's Parent and Family Engagement Policy (*ESSA, Section 1116(b)(1)*).

- The Charter School will actively involve parents and family members in the planning, review, and improvement of this policy. We use multiple feedback channels to gather this information including surveys, focus groups, comment forms. This will take place at the Annual Title I Meeting held in September during Back to School Night.
- The Charter School will provide parents of participating children with information about its Federal Programs (*ESSA, Section 1116(c)(4)(A)*) in a timely manner through notifications and invitations via the bi-weekly newsletter, along with a notice on the website.
- Draft policies shared for review at parent meetings.
- The Policy is distributed through the Student Parent Handbook and available on the Charter School website, and hard copies upon request at the front desk.

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

The school-parent compact will be jointly developed with parents and family members and the compact outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share in the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the Charter School and the parents will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the State's high standards. The compact will

- Describe the Charter School's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging State academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time (*ESSA, Section (d)(1)*); and
- Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and Charter School staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand (*ESSA, Section 1116(d)(2)(A-D)*).

- The Compact will be discussed and evaluated at the Annual Title I meeting held in September during Back to School Night and at the Annual Parent Engagement Summit in the Spring. All families will be invited to these meetings via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, robo-calls and a notice on the website.
- The Compact is distributed through the Student/Family Handbook and available on the Charter School website.

CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION AND SCHOOLWIDE PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The Charter School will involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the Consolidated Application and Schoolwide Plan, including the planning, review, and improvement of the Charter School's parent and family engagement policy (*ESSA, Section 1116(c)(3)*).

- Parents have the opportunity to participate in the planning and evaluation of our Federal programs grant at the following parent events:
 - New Parent Clinic (Aug)
 - Annual Title I Meeting @ Back to School Night (Sept)
 - Student-Parent-Teacher conferences (Nov, Jan, Mar)
 - Spring Parent Engagement Summit (April)
- All families will be invited to these meetings via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, robo-calls and a notice on the website.
- At these meetings, parents participate in the planning and improvement of the Charter School's Federal Programs by reviewing academic performance data and engagement outcomes and providing feedback and ideas around programming and budget.
- The Schoolwide Plan is then distributed to the broader community on the Charter School's website.

SUPPORTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Charter School will provide parents of participating children 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 (*ESSA, Section 1116(c)(4)(B)*).

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT SUPPORT

The Charter School will provide assistance to parents and family members in understanding the challenging State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with teachers to improve the achievement of their children (*ESSA, Section 1116(6)(e)(1)*).

- Parents have the opportunity to participate in info sessions where a member of the Freire staff presents on relevant topics including the Charter School's curriculum, the state assessments students take, achievement expectations, as well as other information that helps parents support their children such as the college application process and Act 158 graduation requirements. During these info sessions, a staff member reviews the information and after the presentation, there is time for questions and discussion.
- Parents are notified about these events via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, robo-calls and printed materials upon request.
- Any materials distributed during the session are then shared with all families via email.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS TRAINING

The Charter School will provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement. Potential workshop topics include literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent involvement (*ESSA, Section 1116(6)(e)(1)*).

- Parents have the opportunity to participate in workshops and 1:1 meetings where they learn how to support their students' academic success. Topics will include literacy strategies such as reading for gist, effective student/parent communication, and technology that enables parents to support and monitor student learning.
- Parents are notified about these events via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, robo-calls and printed materials upon request.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Charter School will educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents and family members, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents and family members as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and family members and the school (*ESSA, Section 1116(6)(e)(3)*).

- Based on input and feedback from parents, the School will plan a professional development session on family engagement strategies and how best to communicate with families.
- At least one session will occur on a Charter School PD day so that all staff are available to attend.
- Parents/family members will have the opportunity to participate in the staff training so that staff are hearing directly from them about communication strategies that work.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

In accordance with *ESSA Section 1116(c)(1)*, the Charter School will convene an Annual Title I Meeting at a convenient time, to which all parents and family members of participating students will be invited and encouraged to attend. The purpose of this meeting is to inform families of the school's Title I designation, explain the program requirements, and outline parents' rights to be actively involved in their child's education.

To support planning for the upcoming school year, the Charter School will also host a second meeting, the Annual Parent Engagement Summit, in the Spring to gather input and feedback from parents and families.

ANNUAL FALL TITLE I MEETING

- The Charter School will hold its annual Title I meeting each year at Back to School Night.
- The Charter School will involve parents and family members in:
 - the joint development of the Schoolwide Program Plan under Section 1114 per ESSA (*ESSA, Section 1116(5)*);
 - the joint development of the Consolidated Application (*ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(A)*);
 - the evaluation of the School-Parent Compact;
 - the evaluation and amendments to the Parent Engagement Policy; and will
 - inform families of the Charter School's Title I status, requirements, and parental rights.
- Training will be provided to help interpret assessment results and provide feedback.
- Parent feedback will be formally gathered from a survey given at the conclusion of the meeting.
- Parents are notified about these events via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, robo-calls and printed materials upon request.

ANNUAL PARENT ENGAGEMENT SUMMIT

- The Charter School will involve parents and family members in:
 - the joint development of the Schoolwide Plan under Section 1114 per ESSA (*ESSA, Section 1116(5)*);
 - the joint development of the Consolidated Application (*ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(A)*);
 - the evaluation of the School-Parent Compact;
 - the evaluation and amendments to the Parent Engagement Policy; and will
 - inform families of the school's Title I status, requirements, and parental rights.
- Training will be provided to help interpret assessment results
- Parent feedback will be formally gathered from a survey given at the conclusion of the meeting.
- To accommodate diverse family schedules per (*ESSA, Section 1116(c)(2)*), the school will:
 - Offer flexible meeting schedules with opportunities in the morning and evening.
 - Provide virtual participation options via Zoom.
- Parents are notified about these events via the bi-weekly newsletter, emails, text messages, robo-calls and printed materials upon request.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

PARENT COMMUNICATION

The Charter School will provide, 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 (*ESSA, Section 1116(c)(4)(C)*).

- Parents may request meetings at any time via email or phone.
- The Charter School will respond to suggestions promptly and take appropriate action.
- Contact with teachers and administration is encouraged to support student learning.
- Each grade level has a dedicated academic advisor. This individual reaches out to the family of any student failing one or more classes at the conclusion of the first semester so that a family meeting can be scheduled and appropriate measures taken to support the student.
- Freire's student report cards also offer information beyond the traditional content of grades, teacher comments, and attendance information. Our report cards provide parents with their student's progress on standardized tests, a record of their behavior, and information on their student's participation in extracurricular activities.

INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

The Charter School will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate, and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other federal, State, and local programs, and conduct other activities, that encourage and support parents and family members in more fully participating in the education of their children (*ESSA, Section 1116(6)(e)(4)*).

LANGUAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Charter School will ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents and family members of participating children in a format and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents and family members can understand (*ESSA, Section 1116(6)(e)(5)*).

- To the extent practicable, provide communications in clear and simple language.
- Ensure that the Charter School's communications include a telephone number that caregivers can call for clarification.
- Provide language access services to families whose first language is other than English through telephonic interpretation services, as appropriate.

EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

The Charter School, 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) (*ESSA, Section 1116(7)(f)*).

- Special outreach will be conducted to ensure the inclusion of families with unique needs (e.g., ESL, special education, migrant).
- Print materials shared via email following meetings for those families who cannot attend in person.
- Virtual and telephone meetings offered as alternatives to in-person attendance.