

# WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

## Parent Involvement Beliefs

Westminster Community Charter School (WCCS) believes that education is the shared responsibility of the students, parents, family, school and community and that the academic achievement and success of our students depend on the strength of the partnerships developed among these stakeholders. For the purpose of this policy, parent is defined as any parent, guardian, and/or person in parental relation to a child or children. All parents in the district will be encouraged to become involved in the educational processes of their child(ren).

Students, who are at the center of these partnerships, have unique skills, talents and learning styles and ultimately are responsible for their own academic achievement. Parents and families provide their children with the foundation of their values, and aspirations. Parents' knowledge of their children's unique histories, traditions, experiences, learning styles, resources and challenges is a valuable resource which is critical to their children's successful achievement in school.

To ensure success for all of our students, WCCS will support parent involvement by providing a continuum of opportunities including all six of the following types taken directly from the Joyce L. Epstein model of the National Network of Partnership Schools at John Hopkins University:

**“Parenting:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

**Communicating:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

**Volunteering:** Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

**Learning at Home:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

**Decision Making:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

**Collaborating with the Community:** Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups and provide services to the community.”

### **Parent/Family Organizations**

WCCS has established a parent group. The goal of establishing this organization is to increase parent involvement to assist in meeting the needs of our students and parents. Our parent group allows for independent parent input into school-based decisions, and ensures a partnership with the school administration and staff to implement the school’s goals for parent involvement. Our parent group involves all parents (including parent, guardian, and/or person in parental relation to child or children) of students in WCCS who wish to participate.

The principal must call at least one business meeting of our parent group each year, in order to encourage the involvement of new parents in the School. Our parents are involved in a variety of school activities, including fundraising events, field trips, and promotion of the charter school throughout the community. The parent group also will be involved in the governance of the school, selecting a delegate to work with and advise the Principal and Board of Trustees on policies and practices of the school, plans for providing information to parents, and strategies for arranging staff interaction with parents.

A parent of a student in the school shall fill at least one seat on the Westminster Community Charter School’s Board of Trustees. The parent group will select the parent to serve on the Board of Trustees. At each regular meeting of the charter school’s Board of Trustees, the parent representative shall be allotted a set amount of time to present any issue to the Board, if the parent group so desires. From time to time, as the Board of Trustees or Principal requests, the parent group will be asked to participate in or comprise advisory committees to study or implement a specific policy or action of the school. For example, committees may be formed to study and advise the Board on building expansion plans, budget issues, and school programs to help the Board determine how the charter school should best proceed.

Participation in the parent association is voluntary and open to all parents, and a parent need not formally belong to or participate in the parent association to participate at public meetings of the Westminster Community Charter School, serve on ad hoc committees, or meet with or make recommendations to the school’s Board of Trustees or administration.

### **References**

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, developed by the National PTA, January 1997  
School, Family, and Community Partnerships by J L Epstein et al, Corwin Press Inc, 1997

Parent Associations and the Schools. (“The Blue Book”), New York City Board of Education Policy Statement adopted June 1993

Partnership Policy, Syracuse City School District, (December, 1998)

Title 1 – Parent involvement policies

“What Research Says About Parent Involvement, “Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, July 24, 1997

Student Learning Improves When Families Get Involved, “Tools for Schools, Family Matters April 2005

### **Section I: Title I Parent Involvement Policy**

Educational research shows a positive correlation between effective parental involvement and student achievement. The overall aim of this policy is to develop a parent involvement program that will ensure effective involvement of parents and community in our school. Therefore Westminster Community Charter School, *in compliance with the Section 1118 of Title I, Part A of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, is responsible for creating and implementing a parent involvement policy to strengthen the connection and support of student achievement between our school and the families. Westminster community charter School’s policy is designed to keep parents informed by actively involving them in planning and decision-making in support of the education of their children. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in the Parent Association, and Title I Parent Advisory Council, as trained volunteers and welcomed members of our school community. Westminster community charter School will support parents and families of Title I students by:

1. providing materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their achievement level (e.g., literacy, math and use of technology);
2. provide information about Title I programs to parents of participating children in a timely manner through the automated phone system, memos, newsletters, and the web page.
3. providing parents with the information and training needed to effectively become involved in planning and decision making in support of the education of their children;
4. fostering a caring and effective home-school partnership to ensure that parents can effectively support and monitor their child’s progress;
5. providing assistance to parents in understanding City, State and Federal standards and assessments;
6. sharing information about school and parent related programs, meetings and other activities in a format, and in languages that parents can understand.

7. 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;
8. providing professional development opportunities for school staff with the assistance of parents to improve outreach, communication skills and cultural competency in order to build stronger ties between parents and other members of our school community;

Westminster Community Charter School's Parent Involvement Policy was designed based upon a careful assessment of the needs of all parents/guardians, including parents/guardians of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Our school community will conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent involvement policy with Title I parent Advisory to improve the academic quality of our school. The findings of the evaluation through school surveys and feedback forms will be used to design strategies to more effectively meet the needs of parents, and enhance the school's Title I program. This information will be maintained by the school.

In developing the Westminster Community Charter School Title I Parent Involvement Policy, parents of Title I participating students, parent members of the school's Parent Association, as well as Parent Advisory members, were consulted on the proposed Title I Parent Involvement Policy and asked to survey their members for additional input. To increase and improve parent involvement and school quality, Westminster Community Charter School:

- The Policy will be posted on the school web site
- Parents of new participating students will receive the policy upon registration if eligible for Title I
- actively involve and engage parents in the planning, review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's Title I program as outlined in the Comprehensive Educational Plan, including the implementation of the school's Title I Parent Involvement Policy and School-Parent Compact;
- engage parents in discussion and decisions regarding the required Title I set-aside funds, which are allocated directly to schools to promote parent involvement, including family literacy and parenting skills;
- ensure that the Title I funds allocated for parent involvement are utilized to implement activities and strategies as described in our Parent Involvement Policy and the School-Parent Compact;
- support school-level committees that include parents who are members of the Parent Association, Parent Advisory and Title I Parent Advisory Council. This

includes providing technical support and ongoing professional development, especially in developing leadership skills;

- maintain a Parent Liaison or dedicated staff person to serve as a liaison between the school and families. The Parent Liaison or a dedicated staff person will provide parent workshops based on the assessed needs of the parents of children who attend our school and will work to ensure that our school environment is welcoming and inviting to all parents. The Parent Liaison will also maintain a log of events and activities planned for parents each month and file a report.
- conduct parent workshops with topics that may include: parenting skills, understanding educational accountability, grade-level curriculum and assessment expectations; literacy, mathematics, accessing community and support services; and technology training to build parents' capacity to help their children at home;
- provide opportunities for parents to help them understand the accountability system (e.g., NCLB/State accountability system, student proficiency levels, Annual School Report Card, Progress Report, Adequate Yearly Progress, Special Education, Quality Review Report, Learning Environment Survey Report;)
- host the required Title I Parent Annual Meeting on or before December 1st of each school year to advise parents of children participating in the Title I program about the school's Title I funded program(s), their right to be involved in the program and the parent involvement requirements under Title I, Part A, Section 1118 and other applicable sections under the No Child Left Behind Act;
- schedule additional parent meetings (e.g., quarterly meetings, with flexible times, such as meetings in the morning or evening, to share information about the school's educational program and other initiatives and allow parents to provide suggestions. In addition, in an attempt to reach each parent, WCCS may provide transportation, child care, and/or home visits, paid for with Title I funding as long as these services relate to parental involvement.
- translate all critical school documents and provide interpretation during meetings and events as needed; and
- conduct an Annual Title I Parent Fair/Event where all parents are invited to attend formal presentations and workshops that address their student academic skill needs and what parents can do to help.

**Westminster Community Charter School will further encourage school-level parental involvement by:**

- holding an annual Title I Parent Curriculum Conference;
- hosting educational family events/activities throughout the school year;

- encouraging meaningful parent participation on Parent Association, Parent Association and Title I Parent Advisory Council;
- establishing a Parent Resource Center or lending library; instructional materials for parents.
- hosting events to support such as: men asserting leadership in education for their children. parents/guardians, grandparents and foster parents;
- encouraging more parents to become trained school volunteers;
- providing written and verbal progress reports that are periodically given to keep parents informed of their children's progress;
- developing and distributing a school newsletter or web publication designed to keep parents informed about school activities and student progress; and
- providing school planners/folders for regular written communication between /teacher and the home in a format, and to the extent practicable in the languages that parents can understand;

### **WCCS Participation**

In order to strengthen our partnership with parents and focus on family involvement and school improvement goals, WCCS will provide support to parents in the school. Support will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Creating an atmosphere at the district and building level that invites, promotes and encourages the participation of all parents
- Creating rules, regulations and protocols that are non-discriminatory and inclusive of all parents
- Creating rules, regulations and protocols that are parent friendly
- Creating an atmosphere conducive to collaboration
- Ensuring technical assistance
- Ensuring parent leadership development
- Providing staff development on how to effectively involve parents
- Establishing a Parent Organization
- Aligning policies and practices
- Providing comprehensive information on school policies and activities in a timely fashion through newsletters or other appropriate means; holding parent information meetings and/or workshops; and ensuring that regular, uninhibited communication occurs between parents and instructors of their children.
- Encouraging volunteerism in every facet of the educational program

## **Parent/Guardian Participation**

Through our parent group, ACES, our parents provide security for our students (Parent, Patrol), volunteers, chaperons, and tutors. Parents also plan their own parenting classes (EPIC, and child-support in-services), and “family nights.” Parent support of the child and the school community will include, but not be limited to:

- Parents will participate in school report card night and teacher conferencing days.
- Parents will volunteer throughout the school year.
- Parents will support our homework policy and assure that homework is done accurately and completely on a regular basis.
- Parents will read to their children at least 15 minutes per night.
- Parent will assure that their children report to school everyday and on time, appropriately dressed, and prepared to learn.