



SY 23-24 PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, each school that receives Title I, Part A, grant funds from the federal government (such as Empowerment Academy), must develop jointly with, agree on, and distribute to, parents/guardians of children participating in its grant-funded programs (“Parents”), a written Parent and Family Engagement Policy (“Policy”).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) stipulates that the Policy must: I) establish a school’s expectations of fulfilling specific statutory requirements of the ESEA, and II) include policy components required by the ESEA.

We invite Empowerment Academy Parents to review this policy, attend a School Staff-Parent Title I Planning Meeting, and become actively engaged with Empowerment Academy.

Parents may choose to engage with our school through our PTO, one of our Title I Advisory Committees, or via a multitude of other opportunities that will be made available to Parents throughout the school year.

Part I. District Expectations

Empowerment Academy will fulfill the following statutory requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act:

1. Empowerment Academy will develop and operate its Title I, Part A programs, activities, and procedures with the involvement and agreement of Parents, consistent with Section 1116 of the ESEA. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation of our Parents.
2. Consistent with Section 1116 of the ESEA, Empowerment Academy will ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) of the ESEA and will have, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116(d) of the ESEA.
3. Empowerment Academy will incorporate this school-wide parent and family engagement policy into the school plan it develops under Section 1112 of the ESEA.
4. In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements, to the extent practicable, Empowerment Academy will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
5. If Empowerment Academy’s plan for Title I, Part A, developed under Section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, Empowerment Academy will submit parent comments with the plan if requested by the New Jersey Department of Education.

6. As per federal regulation, Empowerment Academy will involve the parents of children in decisions about how one percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent. If as Empowerment Academy grows, it should ever have a school that does not qualify as a Title I school, Empowerment Academy will ensure that not less than ninety percent of that one percent goes to Empowerment Academy's Title I schools.
7. As mandated by statute, Empowerment Academy will define parent and family engagement as meaning "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; and
 - d. The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESEA."
8. Empowerment Academy will inform parents and parental organizations of the purpose and existence of Parental Information and Resource Centers in New Jersey.

Part II. Required Policy Components

1. Empowerment Academy will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of Empowerment Academy's District-School Parent and Family Engagement Plan:
 - a. At the beginning of every school year, Empowerment Academy will distribute to Parents information about: Title I legislative requirements; the school's Title I policies and grant funded programs; ways in which Empowerment Academy, Parents and families can partner to help children academically achieve at a high level; and ways in which Parents and families can participate with Empowerment Academy staff in annually updating the school's Title I policies and its plans and programming to support Parent and family engagement in scholar learning.

In this current school year, the information to be distributed will include, among other items:

- (i) Invitations to participate in Empowerment Academy Staff-Parents Title I Planning Meetings;
- (ii) The existing Title I School-Wide Parent and Family Engagement Policy developed collaboratively and agreed upon by school staff and Parents;
- (iii) The Title I, School-Parent-Scholar Compact developed and agreed upon by school staff and Parents;

- (iv) The Parents-Right-to-Know Letter developed and agreed upon by school staff and Parents; and
 - (v) Information concerning, and encouragement for our Parents to participate with, our PTO and Title I Parent Advisory Committee(s).
- b. To provide a full opportunity for engagement by Parents, including parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, parents of migratory children, and parents unable to attend meetings in person or at a given time, Empowerment Academy will, as per Part V of this Policy:
- (i) Distribute Title I information and meeting invitations via multiple means – e.g., website posting, email and text, flyers sent home with participating students, surface mail, phone calls or verbal announcement at events and meetings;
 - (ii) Endeavor to make its written communications relating to Title I school policies, programs, and meetings, and relating to school reports required under Section 1111 of ESEA, consistently clear and understandably formatted;
 - (iii) As practicable, provide communications in English, Spanish, and Arabic;
 - (iv) Upon request, provide communications in yet other languages or using alternative formats;
 - (v) Distribute information and meeting invitations on a timely basis (i.e., giving parents time for document review and to make any arrangements necessary to be able to attend a meeting);
 - (vi) Utilize Zoom and other distance meeting utilities that enable Parents to attend meetings virtually; and
 - (vii) Provide alternate meeting dates or other opportunities for Parents to share comments and participate in policy and program decision-making.
- c. At Empowerment Academy's Annual School Staff-Parents Title I Planning Meeting, Empowerment Academy staff will engage Parents in discussions regarding:
- Grant funds set-aside under Title I to be allocated directly to schools to promote parent engagement, as defined above;
 - How Parents can participate in the development of plans for general and grant funded strategies and activities that will support family engagement -- e.g., training in various parenting skills, such as how parents can support their child(ren)'s learning, or the provision of capacity-building support to parents, such as supporting parent access to ESL or literacy programs;

- How Parents can participate in updating of this Policy so as to memorialize and guide the implementation of decisions jointly made by Empowerment Academy staff and Parents to support Parent and family engagement in SY23-24;
 - How parents can participate in conducting a year-end evaluation of the effectiveness of this Policy and this year's programs for Parent and family engagement;
 - How parents can participate in Empowerment Academy's school improvement process; and
 - How parents can participate with our PTO and Title I Parent Advisory Committee(s).
2. Our SY23-24 Empowerment Academy Annual School Staff-Parents Title I Planning Meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 29, 2024 at 6 pm. It will be held via Zoom to enable Parents who cannot come in-person to participate.
 3. Alternate meetings will be scheduled for parents who cannot attend on January 29th. Some of these alternate meetings will be held in-person. Parents who cannot attend any of the meetings scheduled but would like to participate in Empowerment Academy's planning and programs for family engagement can email our Parent Engagement Coordinator at mfabio@empacad.org for information about how to do so.
 4. To provide technical assistance as its staff and Parents work together to design and implement effective parent and family engagement activities that improve student academic achievement, Empowerment Academy will designate a staff person to serve as its Parent Engagement Coordinator. Michelle Fabio will be our Empowerment Academy Parent Engagement Coordinator in SY23-24. As the Coordinator, she will, among other responsibilities:
 - Serve as a liaison between the school and Parents;
 - Ensure critical documents are translated into languages that are understandable to Parents and schedule interpreters, when necessary, at meetings;
 - Schedule our Annual School Staff-Parents Title I Planning Meeting early in the school year, and additional Parent and Family Engagement Meetings throughout the year at varying times of the day to ensure Parents have continuing opportunities to learn about, or provide comment regarding, our Parent and Family Engagement Policy and programs;
 - Prepare agendas and take minutes at Parent and Family Engagement Meetings;
 - On an on-going basis, communicate Parent suggestions to Empowerment Academy leadership for making our school environment welcoming and inviting to all Parents;

- On an on-going basis, communicate to Parents about opportunities to support their child(ren)'s learning, including about Parent Skills Training Workshops that have been organized in response to the assessed needs of scholars; and
 - Maintain a log of events and activities planned for Parents each month, for school reporting purposes;
5. To increase the capacity of its staff and Parents to design and implement effective parent and family engagement activities that improve student academic achievement, Empowerment Academy will:
 - Conduct information and skills-training workshops with topics that may, for instance, include: how to support your scholar's learning; understanding educational accountability, our grade-level curriculum and assessments; accessing community and support services (including ESL and literacy programs); how to use technology and school programs to help your children at home; and
 - Provide opportunities for parents to learn about school accountability systems (e.g., the ESEA and NJDOE accountability systems, student academic proficiency evaluation systems, the NJDOE School Report Card, school Progress Reports, etc.)
 6. Upon request, Empowerment Academy will provide Parents with opportunities for meetings with school staff so on an on-going basis, parents can make policy and program improvement recommendations that staff can review and, when constructive, implement as soon as practicable.
 7. Empowerment Academy will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies under Title I with parent and family engagement strategies under Jersey City's Abbott Pre-School Programs, as practicable.
 8. Following its Annual School Staff-Parents Title I Planning Meeting, Empowerment Academy staff and Parents will develop their SY23-24 plan for involving Parents and family representatives in conducting a year-end evaluation of the effectiveness of this Policy and this year's programs for Parent and family engagement. Parents and family members interested in participating in this evaluation will be able to volunteer at the Annual Meeting and at subsequent Parent and Family Engagement Meetings.
 9. Following its Annual School Staff-Parents Title I Planning Meeting, Empowerment Academy staff and Parents will also develop their SY23-24 plan for involving Parents in a Title I Parent Advisory Committee charged with participating in the process of school improvement. Parents and family members interested in participating in the school improvement process will be able to volunteer at the Annual Meeting and at subsequent Parent and Family Engagement Meetings.
 10. After Empowerment Academy makes its Annual School Plan (ASP) public, if the Plan is not satisfactory to any Parents, those Parents will be encouraged to submit their comments to the Title I Parent Advisory Committee charged with participating in the process of school improvement, which shall communicate those comments to Empowerment Academy's Parent Engagement Coordinator and school leadership.

Part III. Shared Responsibilities for High Student Achievement: Empowerment Academy's School Parent-Scholar Compact

Empowerment Academy, its Parents, and its participating students will make pledges as part of a School Parent-Scholar Compact: 1) that they will do their part, as outlined below, to help the student attain high academic achievement; and 2) that they will work on building a partnership that helps the student achieve mastery of New Jersey's challenging state academic standards.

School Pledge:

The entire Empowerment Academy Charter School staff will assure that:

- High standards have been set and will be clearly communicated to students and parents
- All students will be provided a supportive and effective learning environment
- All students will be regularly assessed on their performance
- Parents will be provided regular, periodic progress reports
- Parents will receive timely responses to suggestions or concerns about the education of their children
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled
- Instructional staff will be accessible to parents
- Parents will be welcomed into the school as volunteers
- Parents will be notified about school and district meetings regarding Title I
- Staff will update homework assignments and scholars' grades on Schoology & Powerschool
- Homeroom Teachers will review students' agendas/folders and establish a daily routine for collecting scholars' form; and
- Staff will provide support for scholars, parents, and guardians to work together.

Parent / Guardian Pledge:

Parents will be asked to make the following pledge: "I will..."

- Ensure that my child attends school every day on time (Elementary 7:20/8:15am, Middle 7:20a, High 8:15am) at the designated arrival spot (except when my child is sick)
- Ensure that my child is picked up on time at the designated pickup spot
- Read with my child every day for *at least* 15 minutes
- Make certain that homework is completed and handed in on time
- Check my child's folder & planner once a day; check email, Calendar, website, Schoology, Powerschool, DeansList, newsletter periodically
- Check my child's academic progress on Schoology and Powerschool at least once a week
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my child's education
- Participate in at least 3 school-community events (examples: PTO Meetings, Back to School Night, Promotion Ceremony, Math Night, Literacy Night, etc.) per academic year; and
- Attend at least 1 scheduled Parent- Teacher Conference."

Student Pledge:

Participating Students will be asked to make the following pledge: "I will share the responsibility to improve my academic achievement and master the State's high standards. Specifically I will..."

- Do my homework every day and ask for help when I need it;
- Read every day outside of school time;
- Study and prepare myself for all classes and tests; and
- Give to my parent/guardian (who is responsible for my welfare) all notices and information received by me from my school every day.

Part IV. Discretionary Engagement Policy Components

Empowerment Academy staff and Parents may adopt additional Policy components relating to increasing School-Family engagement if they choose.

Part V. Accessibility

To provide a full opportunity for engagement by Parents, including parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, parents of migratory children, and parents unable to attend meetings in person or at a given time, Empowerment Academy will:

1. Distribute Title I information and meeting invitations via multiple means – e.g., website posting, email and text, flyers sent home with participating students, surface mail, phone calls or verbal announcement at events and meetings;
2. Endeavor to make its written communications relating to Title I school policies, programs, and meetings, and relating to school reports required under Section 1111 of ESEA, consistently clear and understandably formatted;
3. As practicable, provide communications in English, Spanish, and Arabic;
4. Upon request, provide communications in yet other languages or using alternative formats;
5. Distribute information and meeting invitations on a timely basis (i.e., giving parents time for document review and to make any arrangements necessary to be able to attend a meeting);
6. Utilize Zoom and other distance meeting utilities that enable Parents to attend meetings virtually; and
7. Provide alternate meeting dates or other opportunities for Parents to share comments and participate in policy and program decision-making.

Part VI. Adoption

Empowerment Academy's Lead Person shall provide an assurance that this Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed upon by, Parents.

Jointly developed and agreed upon Policy shall then be adopted by the Empowerment Academy Board of Trustees and the adoption date shall be noted at the end of this Policy .

The adopted Policy shall be in effect for a period of one year and will be updated, as needed, on an annual basis.

The school will distribute this Policy to all Parents of children participating in Title I, Part A funded programs before October 1 of each school year.