



Buffalo Public Schools

# Parent, Family and Community Involvement



*Putting Children and Families First to Ensure High Academic Achievement For All*

**Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy  
Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

**Table of Contents**

I. Core Beliefs and Commitment..... Page 2

II. Purpose of Policy .....Page 2

III. Definitions..... Page 3

IV. Board of Education Responsibilities and Expectations..... Pages 3-6

V. District Responsibilities and Expectations.....Pages 6-8

VI. School Building Responsibilities and Expectations..... Pages 8-9

VII. Parent Responsibilities and Expectations..... Pages 9-10

VIII. Community Responsibilities and Expectations..... Page 10

# **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy**

## **Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

### **Preamble: Parent, Family & Community Engagement Core Beliefs & Commitment**

The Buffalo Public Schools believes that education is a partnership among the student, parent/guardian, school, and community. An equal and high-quality education is every child's civil right; and, as educators, we must deliver on this essential democratic principle. The Buffalo Public Schools will guarantee pathways to opportunity that will lead to achievement and success in exchange for hard work, commitment, and collaboration of our students and parents (See New Education Bargain). The academic achievement and success of our students depend on the actions, relationships, and strengths of parent partnerships.

Students, who are at the center of the partnerships, have unique skills, talents, and learning styles and are ultimately accountable for their own academic achievement. Parents and families provide their children with the foundation of their values, including educational values, responsibilities, expectations, rules for home/school environment, and aspirations. Parents are the primary providers in preparing their children for school readiness and academic success. Parents' knowledge of their children's unique histories, traditions, life experiences, and learning experiences are important to their success. Parents also share knowledge about community resources and challenges, both of which are valuable and critical to their child's progress. The educational responsibility for our students is shared by the parents, district, schools, and community.

### **Purpose of Policy**

This policy establishes the framework and responsibilities for the implementation of strategies to increase the level of effective, meaningful, and authentic family and community engagement throughout Buffalo Public Schools (BPS). The Board of Education supports the development of a goal-oriented, comprehensive implementation of school and district-wide family, and community engagement practices that supports the academic achievement of all students and improvement of schools in addition to meeting state, and federal mandates. This policy seeks to strengthen the partnership among parents/caregivers, the community, staff, schools, the Superintendent, and the Board by providing for parent and family involvement on multiple levels throughout BPS. This partnership will be further strengthened by expanding learning opportunities that help individual parents support their children at home. Such learning opportunities shall be offered at, but not limited to, Parent Centers. This policy outlines areas in which parents (families) can participate in local school and district-wide matters, and is supplemental to rights of parents guaranteed by Board of Education policy and state and federal laws.

This policy in no way eliminates an individual parent's right to make his or her feelings known at any level in the District on any topic of concern, nor does it prevent the District from involving individual parents in appropriate situations.

# Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy

## Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170

### Definitions

- A. BPS – Includes all schools, departments, and components that have a role in accomplishing the goals of this policy.
- B. Parents or families – These terms are used interchangeable and include caregivers who are legally responsible for a child in BPS. This term refers to all families of students in BPS including families of English Language Learners, Multilingual Learners, and students with disabilities.
- C. Community – This term includes, but is not limited to, non-for profit organizations, community based faith institutions, and community members that may contribute to or participate as stakeholders in the implementation of this policy.
- D. Parent involvement – Generally, parent involvement may be defined as the engagement of parents as an important resource and partner in the education of children. However, the Board of Education recognizes that all parents may not choose or have the ability to be involved in the same manner. Therefore, the Board of Education recognizes and supports parent involvement on multiple levels (i.e. parent as teacher, parent as volunteer, parent as leaders in schools, parents as leader at the district level, and parents and partners in decision/policy making).

### **Board of Education Responsibilities/Expectations**

The Buffalo Board of Education values the richness and diversity of all parents who have children in the Buffalo Public Schools. The engagement of parents, families, and community members in the education of BPS students creates a positive bond between the home and school that has a positive impact on student outcomes. The Buffalo Board of Education supports the collaborative approach model developed by parent groups in partnership with the

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

district, which encompasses five major opportunities for parent and family involvement and engagement. In response, the Board of Education will create the following opportunities:

**Opportunity 1:** Parent Involvement (School level)

**Opportunity 2:** Parent Involvement (District level)

**Opportunity 3:** Parent Engagement (Board Recognized)

**Opportunity 4:** Parent Governance (School/District levels)

**Opportunity 5:** Parent Governance (District Level)

**Opportunity 1:** Parent Involvement (School level)

Parents will have multiple opportunities to be involved in school based functions.

**Opportunity 2:** Parent Involvement (District level)

Parents will have multiple opportunities to be involved in district parent opportunities (i.e. Parent Centers, Saturday Academies, Parent and Family Engagement Summit, etc.).

**Opportunity 3:** Parent Engagement (Board Recognized)

The Board of Education recognizes that parent groups play an important role in the education of Buffalo Public School students. To recognize the value of these groups to the important work of educating students the Board of Education will invite interested parent groups to serve on the District Parent Congress, which will serve as a partner in district-level decision making. Parent groups that meet the following criteria would be recognized annually by the Board and have a seat on the District Parent Congress:

- a. Must have Bylaws
- b. Have a greater number of Parents who make up membership
- c. Must have no less than 10 members
- d. Serve a District-wide Purpose

### ***2017-2018 Board Recognized Parent Groups\****

1. **Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization (BPTO)**- In order to facilitate student success within the Buffalo Public School District voices of all members of the community must be engaged through ongoing relationships. Thus, it is the mission of the Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization (BPTO) to initiate, support, advocate for and recognize positive projects, programs and accomplishments of the students, their families, and schools. The BPTO is organized for the purpose of supporting the education of children in Buffalo

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

2. Public Schools by fostering relationships among parents, families, administrators, all school staff (employed and volunteer), and community members.
3. **District Parent Coordinating Council (DPCC)** – See Opportunity 4
4. **Special Education Parents Advisory Committee (SEPAC)** - The Special Education Parent Advisory Committee is dedicated to supporting families, coordinating services, and offering input to the BPS Special Education and the Board of Education. All meetings are open to parents of children receiving special education services in the Buffalo Public School District.
5. *Next Recognized Parent Group*

*\* For the 2017 – 2018 academic year, parent groups will have the opportunity to seek recognition upon approval of this policy until November 2017. This will enable the board to officially recognize parent groups that meet the above criteria for the 2017-2018 academic year.*

*For academic years beyond the 2017 – 2018 academic year, parent groups will have the opportunity to seek recognition beginning July 1 through May 31 of any academic year. For instance, if a parent groups is seeking recognition for the 2018 – 2019 academic year, application can be made July 1, 2017 through May 31, 2018.*

### **Opportunity 4: Parent Governance (School/District levels)**

Each school will identify parents to serve on school based committees (i.e. School Based Management Team).

- Parents will have the ability to elect parent representatives to serve on a district-wide parent body (District Parent Coordinating Council) as outlined in the District Plan for School Based Planning and Shared Decision Making.

### **District Parent Coordinating Council (DPCC)**

The primary purposes of the DPCC are to: 1) Ensure that a partnership is created with the Buffalo Public Schools in accordance with NYSED CR 100.11 and NCLB/ESEA 1118; 2) Monitor and report on the implementation of the Buffalo Board of Education’s Parent Involvement Policy; and 3) Build capacity for parent involvement to improve student achievement (DPCC Bylaws, 2016). All parents of Buffalo Public School children may elect to be members of the DPCC, but the voting members of the DPCC are comprised of a parent representative and alternate elected from the parent committee of each school in the District.

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

### **Opportunity 5: Parent Governance (District Level)**

Parent Congress will be elected representatives of Board Recognized Parent Groups that will participate with equal representation in district-level decision making. No individual or Board recognized parent group will have overriding authority over Parent Congress decisions. The Parent Congress will help inform the following district mandates:

- District Comprehensive Improvement Plan
- District Committee of Stakeholders
- Consolidated Application
- Other Shared Decision Making Opportunities

### ***District Parent Congress***

The purpose of the District Parent Congress is to ensure that opportunities for parent involvement occur on multiple levels. Additionally, the Parent Congress will be elected representatives with equal representation of Board Recognized Parent Groups that will help inform the following district-level decision making mandates:

- a. District Comprehensive Improvement Plan
- b. District Committee of Stakeholders
- c. Consolidated Application
- d. Other Shared Decision Making Opportunities

The Parent Congress will serve as a venue for disseminating relevant and important information from the District, as well as serving as a conduit for parental feedback to the District.

### **District Responsibilities/Expectations**

In support of the above mentioned parent engagement model, the district will utilize the National Network of Partnership Schools parental involvement framework that is based on six types of parental involvement to successfully engage parents, families and the community.

1. **Parenting:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level.
2. **Communicating:** Communicate with families about programs and student's progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication.
3. **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.

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

4. **Student learning at Home:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.
5. **Decision Making:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTO/PTA, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.
6. **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.

Specific activity will be comprised of, but not limited to the following:

1. Work in collaboration with the Parent Congress to develop and/or revise the district Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Plan;
2. Providing, in a collaborative process, leadership training to Parent Congress leaders, based upon the needs identified by BPS and the Parent Congress.
3. Conducting an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy including identifying barriers to greater participation by families (especially family members who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are a racial or ethnic minority) and use the findings to design strategies to support successful school and family interactions;
4. Involve families in district activities, utilizing the Parent Congress to develop, revise, and review the engagement policy;
5. Providing support to assist schools in implementing effective family engagement activities;
6. Helping parents, families and communities to establish home environments that support student learning and social emotional development;
7. Develop communication that is culturally and linguistically accessible and appropriate in compliance with the parent involvement component of the District English Language Learner Policy #8281 and NYSED Commissioner's Regulation Part 154;
8. Developing a system for ongoing effective communication between school and home and community;

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

9. Recruiting and supporting the involvement of parents, families, and community based organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education to partner with school districts and schools to support student achievement and family units;
10. Providing information and resources to families, extended families, and communities to support student learning inside and outside of the classroom through community meetings, telephone contact, and individual schools;
11. Including parents and community members in the engagement decision making process;
12. Continuing to foster a network of sharing best parent, family and community involvement practices among schools through the Office of Parent and Family Engagement;
13. Providing a budget allocation to support district and school parental and family involvement initiatives;
14. Establishing a parent organization in every school;
15. Provide support to any parent group seeking board recognition;
16. Supporting the placement of a parent facilitator/volunteer in every school;
17. Supporting four District Parent Centers that provide learning opportunities, resources collaboration opportunities, and support to parents, students, and community;
18. Providing an effective mechanism to ensure mutual respect and accountability between school – parent and school - community partnerships; and
19. Ensuring compliance with state and federal parent involvement legislation.

### **School Building Responsibilities and Expectations**

Principals, in creating environments that promote parent, family and community engagement, will create meaningful partnerships with parents, families and community stakeholders. Additionally, principals will:

1. Involve parents in School Based Management Teams (SBMT) as outlined in the District Plan for School Based Planning and Shared Decision Making.

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

2. Establish a parent/family organization in each school and shall:
  - a. Call at least one business meeting of the parent organization each year in order to encourage the inclusion of new parents into the organization.
  - b. Elect officers and have regular meetings, scheduled in consultation with parents and announced publicly, inviting all to attend.
  - c. Be maintained as a viable entity to ensure that parents, who are full partners in their child's education, have an opportunity to be included in meetings and decision-making.
  - d. Elect/appoint members to represent all parents from the school community to the district-wide parent body. School Based Management Team, and Action Teams related to student achievement.
3. Involve families in school activities, which may include establishing an advisory board to develop, revise, and review the engagement policy;
4. Establish a parent room in each school, which will include basic resources and infrastructure (i.e. meeting space, desk/table and chairs, a computer, phone, resource materials, etc.).
5. Provide opportunities for community partnership.

### **Parent Responsibilities and Expectations**

*"Children have the greatest chance of reaching their potential and becoming positive members of the school community if schools treat parents as partners" (Wood, 2011).*

Parents play a vital role at all stages of a child's education, and a supportive role in education can improve achievement. A school – parent partnership is essential to the academic and social emotional developmental success of children. All parent involvement is aimed at increasing student achievement through various levels of involvement.

Parents are expected to:

1. Place a high premium on education.
2. Make sure children go to school and to all classes every day prepared and ready to learn.
3. Make sure children do in school work, to the best of their ability, and put in additional study time (up to two hours each day) outside of school hours.
4. Provide a learning environment for children to do homework and actively monitor children's homework and level of completion.

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

5. Be informed about parental rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to participate in shared-decision making in schools and district.
6. Review and support the District Attendance Policy and contribute to any revisions.
7. Review and support the District Code of Conduct and contribute to any revisions.
8. Review and support the District Wellness Policy and contribute to any revisions.
9. Attend parent/family organization meetings, parent/teacher conferences and workshops designed to increase student achievement.
10. Make sure respect is shown to teachers and staff by both parent and student.
11. Communicate with teachers and principals as partners in their children's academic success.

### **Community Responsibilities and Expectations**

The community plays an important part in the education system. Community support is vital to the success of schools and individual students. To ensure that the work of district and community to improve student outcomes is meaningful it will be necessary to form strong partnerships. Interested community stakeholders, seeking to partner with the district, will be expected to:

1. Partner with the district in meeting the academic, social, emotional, and health and wellness needs of BPS students.
2. Work to collaboratively align strategy and resources to maximize impact.
3. Use data to lead and drive decision making.
4. Attend district-level quarterly meetings designed to strengthen the partnership and share and develop strategy.

The Buffalo Board of Education and the Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools endorse and support this plan to help ensure the BPS mission of "Putting children and families first to ensure high academic achievement for all."

## **Parent, Family & Community Involvement Policy Buffalo Public Schools Policy 3170**

NOTE: Refer also to;  
Policies  
# 3110 – Community Relations  
# 7110 -- PK-12 Comprehensive Student Attendance  
# 7310 -- School Conduct and Discipline  
# 7660 -- Parent Involvement -- Children With Disabilities,  
# 8260 -- Programs and Projects Funded By Title I,  
# 8280 -- English Language Learner Policy,  
# 7515 -- District Wellness Policy, and  
Other Documents  
District Plan for School Based Planning and Shared Decision Making

Adopted: 4/24/02  
Revised: 02/13/08  
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### **Works Cited**

*Wood, Chip & Babs Freeman-Loftis (2011). Responsive School Discipline. Northeast Foundation for Children. Turners Falls, MA.*