



2024 - 2025
District Family Engagement Policy

Aspen Academy, District 4184, 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 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.

This policy document is reviewed every spring using a discussion format and review of survey and exit ticket data. Exit tickets are collected from caregivers at Title 1 sponsored events. Parents of scholars receiving Title 1 services are provided surveys. The evidence gained from these data sources are used to create this policy document and Title 1 Plan.

This policy document will include bold headers for broad topics, followed by text in italics, which summarizes a policy requirement area. The Aspen Academy implementation pieces follow, in bulleted format. This is followed by Aspen Academy's plan for how to successfully meet the requirements.

A. The policy will describe the means by which each Aspen will:

1) Convene an annual meeting, and/or, (2) offer a flexible number of meetings, and (3) involve parents in the review of the family engagement policy.

- Every fall there are a series of 3 - 4 meetings that all parents with scholars receiving Title 1 services are invited to attend. The meetings explain Title 1 programming, requirements, and the rights of parents to be involved.
- Parents may attend the meetings with their children, or join via zoom. The fall meetings are a combination of information sharing, and active participation in planning the Family Math and Literacy Night event.
- In the spring there is an annual meeting reviewing: exit ticket data from events throughout the year, the Family Engagement Policy, the Partnership Agreement/compact and Aspen Academy Title 1 FAQ sheet for parents.

(4) Provide parents with timely information about Title programs, descriptions of curriculum used at school, forms of academic assessments used to measure progress, and the achievement levels of academic standards.

- Caregivers receive documents from Aspen Academy when their scholar has been found eligible for services including: a letter explaining how their scholar was found eligible,

and an Aspen Academy Title 1 FAQ sheet that includes basic facts about Title 1 at Aspen and where to find additional information on the website. Title 1 information is also reiterated at fall conferences when student progress data is shared via a graph with caregivers and classroom teachers. A formal progress report is also provided at that time, explaining the scholar's performance compared to grade level targets.

- Aspen Academy's Family Math and Literacy Night is a fun way for parents to learn about Title 1 and the curriculum used in classrooms and in Title 1. The scholars demonstrate Title 1 reading and math lessons or intervention sessions, to their caregivers, facilitated by the adults that serve them. Caregivers are provided explanations of the curriculum content. Scholars and caregivers also learn a variety of math games that they can do at home to enhance math skills in a variety of areas. Aspen Academy's curriculum nights are accessible to the families of all scholars and are an excellent way to learn about the classroom's instructional scope and sequence and how academic standards are addressed. Caregivers complete an exit ticket at the end of the event.

B. The charter school shall jointly develop with parents a compact, or Partnership Agreement

This document outlines how parents, staff and students will share the responsibility of improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards. Describe (1) the school's responsibilities; (2) the caregiver(s) responsibilities and the child's use of extracurricular time; and (3) the importance of regular communication between teachers and parents.

- At the annual spring Title 1 meeting, the Family Engagement Policy, and the Partnership Agreement/compact and FAQ sheets are reviewed and updated as needed.
- The Partnership Agreement/compact includes lists of the school's, caregiver (s) and scholar's responsibilities. It is posted on the Aspen Academy website, and provided to all caregivers with scholars who begin receiving Title 1. The Partnership Agreement/compact is discussed at conferences and meetings. It mentions caregivers should dedicate time for reading and math activities/homework at home. Copies are signed by all parties. A copy is provided to caregivers, and another copy is retained in a scholar's cumulative file.
- All Aspen Academy caregivers are invited to participate/observe in classrooms and are provided many opportunities to volunteer. E-mails, newsletters, as well as phone calls are provided to facilitate communication with caregivers. Progress reports are another form of communication and are provided 4 times per year for scholars that begin services at the beginning of a school year and are serviced the full year. Scholars may be dismissed throughout the year if progress indicates students are performing at grade level and no longer have a need for Title 1 services, or a less intensive intervention would meet their needs.

C. To ensure an effective partnership between school, parents, and community to improve academic achievement, the school will:

(1) Provide assistance to caregivers about assessments, standards, Title 1 requirements and how to monitor a child's progress and collaboratively work to improve their achievement; (2) provide materials and training to assist parents in working with their scholars; (3) educate staff regarding how -to communicate and partner with caregivers; (4) integrate parent involvement with other programs that support parents in participating in the education of their children; (5) ensure information about meetings and events are in a format/language that parents can understand; (6) provide other reasonable support for parent involvement as requested by parents.

- Title 1 progress reports include a scholar's progress monitoring graph, an explanation of the assessment, and how their scholar's performance compares to grade level standards. Progress reports are also explained in person at conferences.
- To assist caregivers in supporting their scholar's reading achievement, we have a system of assigning passages for scholars to read at home. Students in Title 1 reading services are provided a green reading folder of passages from the reading intervention curriculum. Every time a story or list of words is completed as part of a lesson, the story or word list is assigned to read at home to someone three times. The name of the story or word list is written on the log, and the listener has to initial on the log each time the scholar reads the story or word list . Directions are provided for how to listen to a scholar read aloud at home, and how to correct a student when they read a word incorrectly. A video is provided on the website showing the series of steps. The reading practice routine and correction procedure is also explained during conferences with caregivers. Students receiving Title 1 Math services are provided a set of materials including directions and manipulatives needed to play math games at home. The games are also modeled and played at the Family Math and Literacy Night event. There is an annual Proactive Parenting session open to all Aspen caregivers, provided by a guest speaker, to support social/behavioral skill development in children/ families. Caregivers complete an exit ticket at the end of the session.
- Educating staff about the value of collaborating with parents is an on-going process shared by the Title 1 committee, and the Student Support Team. Specialists such as the Title 1 coordinator, MTSS coordinator, school counselor, school social worker, administrators and curriculum coordinator provide on-going support and professional development to teachers and staff to promote caregiver communication and collaboration. The Family Engagement Activities and Events portion of this document describes school-wide efforts to facilitate communication with caregivers.

- The Family Engagement Activities and Events portion of this document describes efforts to work with early childhood programs in the community that may have caregivers that are considering enrolling their children at Aspen Academy.
- Aspen Academy has a translation feature on its website allowing viewers to change the language. Translation services are offered and provided to caregivers as needed.
- Support for parent involvement is provided as requested by parents. For example, parents requested the development of a Title 1 FAQ sheet. The FAQ sheet was created with parents and staff and is updated as needed every school year. It is included in the initial documents provided to caregivers when their scholar is found eligible for Title 1 services. Parents requested summer reading materials for their scholars at the spring meeting. In response, the Title 1 staff assembled passage sets and optional reading lists for each scholar that appropriately matched each scholar's skill level. Title 1 staff will continue to support parents and honor their requests as needed.

The charter school shall inform parents and parent organizations of the existence of the family policy, and will update them periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

- The policy will be posted on the website and copies will be discussed and provided to caregivers as part of the Title 1 meetings.

Family Engagement Activities and Events

Aspen Academy's family engagement plan includes Activities and Events for all scholars, regardless if they are receiving Title 1 services. These include: considerations for new families, various communication methodologies, participation in academics, celebrating differences, and amplifying caregiver voices while providing support. The following document lists specific activities and events that support family engagement throughout a typical school year at Aspen Academy.

New families to Aspen Academy are provided tours, and a welcome folder of information about the school and the necessary registration information. Incoming families with kindergarten scholars are invited to attend a kindergarten round-up event in the spring to learn about the school's policies and procedures as well as give their children a chance to meet the teachers, other students and participate in a brief lesson. There are play-dates on the playground when new and returning scholars can come to school with their caregivers and scholars and meet and visit. Parents can be provided a 'buddy' returning parent that will provide answers to questions. The school's weekly newsletters can be accessed in different languages via the translation feature on the website and include information for new and returning families.

To help link families to learning, and enhance communication, many teachers send frequent classroom or grade level newsletters sharing about current grade level projects that can be completed collaboratively between scholars and caregivers. Caregivers are invited to observe their scholars doing presentations or demonstrations in classrooms. There are curriculum nights when each grade level team of teachers presents about the scope and sequence curriculum components that will be addressed during the school year. Parent/teacher Conferences are a very important time to share school assessment results and allow teachers and parents to collaborate to support the educational needs of scholars. All staff are encouraged to contact 3 parents per week with a positive comment about a scholar, to help foster a positive climate and relationship. During conferences the Title 1 coordinator meets with parents and explains the Partnership Agreement/compact and services. These different forms of communication help families feel part of their student (s) learning.

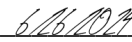
One way Aspen **addresses celebrating differences** in the school's student population is via the Festival of Nationals evening. Caregivers play active roles in the Festival of Nations multicultural evening. They make food from various countries, wear traditional clothing, and engage in dance and music performances. Title 1 committee, engage in volunteer opportunities in classrooms and the cafeteria, and assist with Family Math and Literacy Night. An ice cream social is hosted in the fall on the playground for families, scholars and staff to socialize.

Aspen amplifies family voices by asking for their participation in planning. Families were invited to participate in drafting the long-term strategic plan for Aspen Academy. There were a large number of caregivers present and actively engaged, approximately 60 adults with scholars in kindergarten through 8th grades. The evening was facilitated by an expert in strategic planning.

We support families with parenting strategies and material goods they may need. We have a community closet at school that includes donated uniforms, and outwear as well as toiletries that families may need and can access at any time. Our school social worker provides professional development to staff about the McKinney-Vento Act and supporting scholars experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or other stressors or trauma. We are also part of a program that provides free tickets to events like professional sports games and stage performances for families with economic challenges. We have a guest speaker every fall that provides a free Proactive Parenting session for parents, and the school staff provide free childcare during the session. Our website has a translator feature that can be used to provide parents speaking various languages to have immediate access to website content in the language they choose. We ask families about their need for communication supports when their first language is not English, and provide assistance when requested.



Melanie Jiskra, Executive Director



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