

Parent and Family Engagement Policy: California Connections Academy Schools

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Introduction

Parent and family involvement and engagement are critical to the success of California Connections Academy Schools ("the Schools") and integral to improving student academic achievement. Parents serve as Learning Coaches and play an active role in the learning process, providing input and communicating regularly with teachers. Parents have access to their student's Grade Book at any time by logging into the schools' proprietary education management system (EMS). This provides parents with transparency into their student's academic performance on a day-to-day basis.

This document explains how California Connections Academy Schools will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for involving parents in its Title I, Part A programs, consistent with Section 1010 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Those programs, activities, and procedures are planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating students consistent with Section 1010 of the ESSA. This document also explains how the schools provide opportunities for parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children to participate. The schools provide information and school reports required under the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format (including alternative formats upon request) and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand. The schools involve parents of students served by the Title I, Part A program in decisions about how Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent involvement are spent.

If the plan for Title I, Part A, developed under Section I 006 of the ESSA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating students, the schools will submit any parent comments with the plan when the schools submit the plan to the California Department of Education.

Accompanying this Parent and Family Engagement Policy is California Connections Academy Schools' *School-Parent Compact*.

A Description of How California Connections Academy Schools Will Implement Required Parent and Family Engagement Policy Components

California Connections Academy Schools build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement. This ensures effective involvement of parents and supports a partnership among the schools, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described herein.

1. California Connections Academy Schools provide assistance to parents in understanding topics such as California's academic content and academic achievement standards, state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments, how to monitor their child's progress, and how to work with educators. The schools provide materials and training to help parents work with their students to improve their student's academic achievement and use technology, as appropriate, to foster parent involvement.

During the school year, teachers and parents communicate regularly via WebMail, telephone, and LiveLesson™ sessions. Teachers formally conference with parents regularly. In addition, parents are directly involved in checking daily student work for completeness and may view student grades and other progress indicators in real time. Progress reports are provided to parents at least quarterly for every student. Parents receive notifications from the school about student attendance and participation in various aspects of the program.

Parents have the opportunity to be intimately familiar with their students' progress on a day-to-day basis. The schools' unique EMS technology platform ensures that all parents have access to complete data about their children's learning on a 24/7 basis. In the EMS, parents can view in real time whether their student is on track and making adequate progress. Students who are not on track are identified if and when certain thresholds are reached related to completion of lessons, attendance, contact with the teacher, and/or submission of required assessments or portfolio assignments. The schools contact the parent of any student identified as needing support to discuss issues impeding student's progress and to discuss strategies for getting the student back on track. Parents are also provided with frequent reports on their student's progress. For students who are struggling, school staff meet to develop an intervention plan that directly involves the student and parent.

Materials to encourage parent involvement are provided (with no cost to the family) including online training, a handbook, and school communications such as newsletters and message boards. Daily lesson plans are accessible 24/7 and enable parents to review and understand the objectives of each lesson so that they can support their student's learning effectively. The teaching and administrative staff and curriculum and technical support staff are also available via WebMail or telephone to provide required assistance and advising support.

California Connections Academy Schools provide ongoing training and support to help parents carry out their important role while making optimum use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support. The schools' specific training and support efforts include an orientation for parents to familiarize themselves with the features and components of the EMS. The training also includes building an effective understanding of the academic program (content, standards and assessment) as well as real-time tools for monitoring and improving student performance. Additional parent training opportunities are provided throughout the school year. There is an area of the schools' website specifically devoted to parent training and resources.

California Connections Academy Schools hold parent-teacher conferences during which the School-Parent Compact is discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement. If there are performance concerns, or if students are falling behind and in escalation, the student's teacher contacts parents via phone and/or WebMail and includes other teaching or administrative staff as needed. The call focuses on the student's performance and what actions need to occur to get the student back on-track. Teachers may also set up an in-person meeting to discuss any student or parent concerns and to work collaboratively to set goals and identify a timeline for improvement.

Parents have multiple opportunities to shape the overall school experience. They can volunteer to chaperone student field trips, assist with student activities, serve on the schools' Board of Directors as well as participate in Title I planning meetings. Parents, Caretakers, and families may volunteer for the school, however, volunteering is not required.

2. California Connections Academy Schools involve all school staff, parents, and students in the joint development of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact for improved student academic achievement under Section 1006 of the ESSA and to build and develop a partnership with parents in the process of school review and improvement to help children achieve the California's high standards under Section 1010 of the ESSA.

At least one meeting is held annually to discuss the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School Parent Compact. Further feedback is solicited through multiple avenues, including the "feedback" link on EMS, phone, WebMail, regular school communications, field trips and back to school activities, and other parent-oriented activities. The Board of Directors intends to maintain at least one parent representative

among its members. The schools also survey parents each year in order to evaluate the school on a number of criteria, including student progress, teacher support, and the quality of curriculum.

3. Evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact

California Connections Academy Schools conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this Parent and Family Engagement Policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A plan. The evaluation includes identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parent involvement activities (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 schools use the findings of the evaluation about its Parent and Family Engagement Policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parent involvement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parent involvement policies. Evaluation methods include:

- Hold at least one annual meeting, with the option to participate virtually
- Administer an annual parent satisfaction survey which includes questions about academic interventions.
- Solicit feedback through multiple avenues, including the "feedback" link in the EMS®, telephone, school communications, and WebMail.

4. California Connections Academy Schools educate teachers, principals, and other staff on how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; on the value and utility of contributions of parents; and on how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools.

California Connections Academy Schools are committed to providing high-quality and ongoing professional development for both parents and staff to improve instruction and drive toward proficiency on academic standards. California Connections Academy Schools provide teacher training and professional development programs to equip teachers with the following:

- A working knowledge of the Connections Academy® curriculum.
- How to communicate and work effectively with parents/families.
- How to utilize and navigate the tools in the EMS.
- How to develop personalized learning plans and individualized instructional programs, including communicating with parents regarding instruction.
- Review of the different forms of assessment and how to utilize test results to guide instruction.
- Knowledge of school processes and policies.
- How on-site staff and virtual teachers work collaboratively in the best interest of each student.

5. California Connections Academy Schools ensure that information related to the schools and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of all participating children, including parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, in a format and language parents can understand (including alternative formats upon request) and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

- California Connections Academy Schools make effective use of all available technologies to distribute information to parents.
- In addition, parents are encouraged to set up conferences to discuss their student's performance.
- Regular school communications announce upcoming school events and are available online to all parents.
- Certain critical communications may also be provided in print format. For example, the parent training modules are available in print as well as online, and official communications from the schools about withdrawals are also provided via hard-copy mail.
- The schools also develop and make available, via EMS, a school handbook that details all policies

and procedures specific to the schools. Translation of materials or availability of materials in other formats (e.g., for those who have difficulty with their vision) are made available upon request.

6. California Connections Academy Schools build the schools' and parent's capacity for strong parent involvement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the schools involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities.

As virtual learning schools, California Connections Academy Schools are able to use technology and the working partnership between parents and school staff to facilitate the full participation of parents who might otherwise face barriers to involvement. For example, parents with disabilities who might otherwise find it difficult to participate in their child's brick-and-mortar classroom can readily interact through our online tools and resources. California Connections Academy Schools make every effort to provide information in an understandable language and format so that parents can actively participate in their student's schooling.

7. California Connections Academy Schools provide parents of students receiving Title I services reasonable access to staff and opportunities to volunteer, participate, and observe their child's (virtual) classroom. The schools also provide other reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.

- Students have the opportunity to participate regularly in both face-to-face and virtual community activities. Face-to-face activities include field trips and community outings, in accordance with federal, state and local health guidelines. Teachers use the telephone quite extensively in communicating with students and parents.
- WebMail is the proprietary private email system included in the EMS. WebMail is a "closed" system. Students, parents, and teachers may only use it to communicate with each other, and are protected from spam, contact from strangers, and other mainstream email issues.
- Other examples of support to be provided for parent involvement activities include, but are not limited to: providing multiple ways to attend meetings (face-to-face, phone, LiveLesson™ sessions, and recordings), a private regional Facebook page for parent interactions, translating materials upon request, and holding one-on-one meetings and so forth.

PART IV. ADOPTION

This Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of students participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by agenda and minutes of annual parent meetings.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of California Connections Academy on the date noted below and will be reviewed annually. This policy will remain in place until any subsequent changes are adopted by the Board of Directors.

_____ (Signature of Authorized Official)

_____ (Date)

California Connections Academy Schools Parent Compact

Parents, students, and the entire school staff have a shared responsibility to help students achieve academic success. This compact lists mutual responsibilities for attaining the school's mission.

California Connections Academy and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the students, and the entire school staff will share the responsibility for 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.

California Connections Academy's Commitments

- We will provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment
- We will provide assistance in understanding academic achievement standards and tests, how to track your child's progress, and how to establish a successful homework setting and routine
- We will provide opportunities for regular communication between parents and teachers through:
 - Parent-teacher conferences;
 - Frequent reports about your child's progress;
 - Opportunities to talk to staff, volunteer in class, and observe classroom activities;
 - Ensuring regular communication between family members and school staff to the extent possible, in a language that family members can understand.
- Involve parents in developing the school-wide program plan, including the family engagement policy and plan, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.

Parent/Guardian Commitments

I understand that my participation in my child's education will positively impact his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I will do my best to:

- Ensure that my child attends/participates in school regularly.
- Ensure that my child will use positive school behavior.
- Encourage positive use of my child's additional/non-school time.
- Establish a time and quiet place for my child to complete schoolwork and support effort, completion, and correctness.
- Actively participate in decisions relating to the education of my child.
- Attend school functions, support school activities, and make every effort to attend parent-teacher conferences.

Student Commitments

I know that my education is important and that I am responsible for my success. Therefore, I will do my best to do all of the following:

- Participate in school regularly and be prepared with all materials, including homework and a positive attitude.
- Put forth my best effort that includes paying attention and participating in class discussions and asking for help when needed.
- Cooperate with other students and adults involved in lessons and classes.
- Respect the rights and property of others and follow all school rules.