Family Engagement Plan Overview

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Family engagement is defined as:
"The mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities to build relationships to support student learning and achievement, support family well-being, and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated in the child's educational experience and is both culturally and linguistically appropriate." Texas Administrative Code §102.1003.

It has long been recognized by both researchers and practitioners that family engagement plays a non-negotiable role in education. It is no longer a suggestion, rather a mandate, in Texas with the passage of house Bill 4 in 2015. Texas Education Code §29.168, created by House Bill 4, 84th Texas Legislature, 2015, requires a school district or charter school to develop and implement a Family Engagement Plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. The local Family Engagement Plan shall be based on the family engagement strategies established by Texas Education Agency in collaboration with other state agencies.

The Gustine ISD Pre-Kindergarten and all other grade levels promotes a culture of learning that is child centered and age appropriate. Building partnerships between educators and families, by way of the Family Engagement Plan, ensures that every learner is encouraged, supported, and challenged to achieve the highest levels of knowledge, skills, and character.

The six Gustine ISD Family Engagement Plan strategies are based on empirical research and are proven to demonstrate positive short-term and long-term outcomes for early childhood education. This plan expresses what is contained in the Commissioner's Rule (102.1003(f)) in addition to specific examples of how each of the family engagement strategies will be accomplished in our high quality PK program. The following articulates strategies within each of the six domains.

Strategies in Action: (A) Facilitating Family-to-Family Support

- ★ Gustine ISD's PK-12 program creates a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other and ensures opportunities for continuous participation in events designed for families. Examples of events include:
    - "Book Fair" for all grades, where families can get to know one another and share community and school experiences
    - "Meet the Teacher" night for grades PK-12th grade facilitating family to family interactions, networking, and community/school support
    - Sponsored events encouraging parent volunteer opportunities allowing parents to work collaboratively and designed to match families who have similar interests, goals, or challenges and providing opportunities for families to have ongoing connections
    - Organize class field trips and other activities that include family participation including Fall Festival, Turkey Walk, Homecoming Parade.
    - School Health and Advisory Council and Site Based Decision Making Teams provide opportunities for parents to interact and network with other parents interested in supporting public education in the Gustine community
    - Gustine ISD PK Registration. Early indicators of the following year enrollment
    - Parent Square App available
    - Encouraging bilingual family members to translate for new parents, thus enhancing better communication
    - Purchasing and providing translation devices to Spanish speaking parents

Strategies in Action: (B) Establishing a Network of Community Resources

The Gustine ISD PK, Elementary & Secondary Family Engagement Plan builds strategic partnerships by leveraging community resources; establishing and maintaining partnerships with businesses, faith-based organizations, and community agencies; monitoring and evaluating policies and practices to stimulate innovation and create learning pathways; identifying support from various agencies, including mental and physical health providers; partnering with local community-based organizations to create a family-friendly transition plan for students arriving from early childhood settings; and identifying partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language. Examples of Strategies in Action (B) include:

- ★ Provide vision checks for PK-5th grade & all students new to Gustine ISD and other vision resources as needed
- ★ Child Nutrition Information Elementary & Secondary
- ★ Immunization Information Elementary & Secondary
- ★ Health & Attendance Guidelines Elementary & secondary
- ★ Concealed Carry Campus: Elementary & Secondary
- ★ PK Registration Flyers will be distributed to help share information about PK and other community resources.
- ★ Local Area Fire/Police Department/Military Personnel visits and speakers that share resources with students, families, and the school promoting safety and overall well-being
- ★ Local partnership to provide food, school supplies, and back to school backpacks for learners in need: Elementary & Secondary
- ★ Gustine ISD Bilingual employees provide (as needed) translation services for families at events, meetings, newsletters, etc: Elementary & Secondary
- ★ Making active referrals with families (e.g. calling with the family, bringing intake workers from other programs to meet with families) that include making a personal connection between families and service providers: Elementary & Secondary
- ★ Following up with families on referrals to see if services were received and parents were satisfied: Elementary & Secondary
- ★ Purchasing and providing translation devices to Spanish speaking parents

Strategies in Action: (C) Increasing Family Participation in Decision-Making All Grade Levels

Gustine ISD promotes family participation in decision-making by developing opportunities related to campus goal-setting efforts targeting family engagement; developing and supporting leadership skills for family members and providing opportunities for families to advocate for their children; collaborating with families to develop strategies to solve problems and serve as a problem solvers; engaging families in shaping program activities that reflect two-way communication; developing, in collaboration with families, clearly defined goals, outcomes, timelines, and strategies for assessing progress; providing each family with an opportunity to review and provide input on program practices, policies, and communications in order to ensure family needs are met.

Utilize appropriate tools such as surveys or focus groups to gather feedback on the **Family Engagement Plan**. Examples of family participation in campus decision-making opportunities include:

- ★ Campus Decision-Making Committee composed of staff, community, and parents focusing on planning, curriculum, budgeting, staff development, overall school organization, focused on student achievement
- ★ Campus visitation and volunteering opportunities
- ★ Share strategies with parents on how to advocate for themselves and their children appropriately
- ★ Educate families regarding their rights under State and Federal law regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- ★ Create an environment that affirms parent leadership.
- ★ Parents and staff reviewing family engagement results and decision making regarding plans for continuous improvement
- ★ LPAC parent representation
- ★ Regularly held parent/teacher conferences
- ★ Progress monitoring information is shared with parents
- ★ Purchasing and providing translation devices to Spanish speaking parents

Strategies in Action D: Equipping Families with Tools to Enhance and Extend Learning

All educators in Gustine ISD recognize the families of our learners as the first and best teachers in the child's life. In order to equip families with tools to enhance and extend their child's learning, our educators work with families to design or implement existing home educational resources to support learning at home while strengthening the family/school partnership; provide families with information and/or training on creating a home learning environment connected to formal learning opportunities; equip families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offering opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the pre-kindergarten school year; provide complementary home learning activities for families to engage in a home with children through information presented in online tech tools, social media, parent/family-teacher conferences, or other school-related events; provide information focusing on age-appropriate developmental expectations; collaborate with families to appropriately respond to children's behavior in a non-punitive, positive, and supportive way; and assist families to implement best practices that will help achieve the goals and objectives identified to meet the needs of the child and family. Examples of how Gustine ISD equips families with tools to enhance and extend learning include:

- ★ Gustine ISD offers a high-quality full day PK program to eligible learners, enhancing and extending socialization and facilitating parent involvement for Pre-K families
- ★ Teacher/parent conferences held throughout the school year
- ★ Collaborating with them in setting goals for their children while in the PK program
- ★ Encouraging family members to volunteer in the classroom, using the time to foster enhanced communication regarding their child's development
- ★ Suggested extension home activities that correspond to activities done in the classroom
- ★ Sharing technology tips/resources that are family-friendly to enhance parents' knowledge on child development (Accessible Downloadable Apps)
- ★ PK registration throughout the summer and school year that include campus tours and school/program information
- ★ District webpage that shared information supportive of enhancing and extending learning for children participating in the PK program
- ★ District webpage includes recommended learning links
- ★ Parents are encouraged to access class/campus/district information from the Parent Portal & Parent Square on the Gustine ISD website
- ★ Parents are provided with learner progress by way of regular report cards, teacher communication, etc.
- ★ BOY, MOY, and EOY benchmarking & STAAR
- ★ NWEA and Edmentum
- ★ Gustine ISD Code of Conduct
- ★

Strategies in Action: (E) Developing Staff Skills in Evidence-Based Practices that Support Families

Gustine ISD believes in a continuous improvement philosophy. We provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, including training, promoting and developing family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff; and developing staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies.
Strategies in Action (E) include:

- ★ Develop educator skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies
- ★ Promoting and developing family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff
- ★ Continuous professional development achieved through training opportunities from Region 14
- ★ PK: Utilize developmentally appropriate activities to help children understand differences in families, cultures and traditions
- ★ Train educator about the resources that are available in the community that support families' interests and needs
- ★ Educators will participate in professional learning that focuses on strength-based approach to family engagement
- ★ Continuation of educator awareness of how culture may influence perspective in child-rearing, communication styles, caregiving, discipline, etc.
- ★ Implementation of the Gustine ISD Discipline Policy
- ★ Continuing membership in the ESC 14 as a means of professional learning, program effectiveness, and practices associated with HQPK implementation
- ★ PK: Training children to greet and say goodbye to their parents and classmates as a means to show respect for all program participants
- ★ Using developmentally appropriate activities to help children understand differences in families, cultures and traditions
- ★ Making space available for educators to meet with parents privately
- ★ Committing to hiring staff that reflect the diversity of the community
- ★ Purchasing and providing translation devices to Spanish speaking parents

Strategies in Action: (F) Evaluating Family Engagement Efforts and Using Evaluation for Continuous Improvement

Self-assessment will be a cornerstone to the overall process of evaluating for program effectiveness and to support future improvements. Our PK program develops a data collection systems that monitor family engagement; uses data to ensure alignment between family engagement activities and district/school teaching and learning goals and to promote continuous family engagement; employs an evaluation plan to guide action; uses a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment; and ensures educators and parents play a role in the family engagement evaluation process. Efforts contributing to the evaluation process include:

- ★ Child-centered goals setting collaborations with parents will continue at the BOY. Progress monitoring and reporting will occur at the BOY, MOY, and EOY
- ★ Parent/teacher conference at least annually on the effectiveness of the education experience for their child and their family
- ★ Incorporating goals related to family engagement into the program/campus strategic planning initiatives
- ★ Utilize the “High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Self-Assessment” instrument created by the TEA to include results indicating strengths, opportunities to grow, and next steps for continuous improvement.
- ★ Participation in family involvement activities will be quantitatively documented and monitored at the campus/district levels. Qualitative data will be collected to ensure the specific needs of families are being addressed through surveys. Evaluation results will be used in future planning efforts in an effort to optimize family involvement within the school and Gustine community.
- ★ Setting child-centered goals with parents at the beginning of the school year. Check in with them several times during the school year to discuss the progress that has been made in achieving the mutually-developed goals.
- ★ Surveying parents at least annually on the effectiveness of the education experience for their child and their family