

Uncommon Schools NYC Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy

As a Title I Schoolwide district, each Uncommon New York City (NYC) charter school implements a parent and family engagement policy in adherence to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing for outreach to all parents and family members and offering programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents and families in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These programs, activities and procedures are planned and operated annually with the consultation of a parent representative group and Title I Stakeholders Committee. This Parent and Family Engagement Policy amends and restates the policy set forth in the Student and Family Handbook, previously distributed to all parents and families. Each Uncommon NYC charter school commits to the following:

In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental and family involvement requirements, to the extent practicable, each Uncommon NYC school will provide full and meaningful opportunities for the participation of all parents and families, including without limitation, parents and family members with limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members 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.

- Uncommon Schools NYC defines parental and family involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—
 1. that parents and family members play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
 2. that parents and family members are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
 3. that parents and family members are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on committees to assist in the education of their child;
 4. the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA.
- Uncommon Schools NYC implements effective parental and family involvement activities throughout the year to improve student academic achievement and school performance. These activities include but are not limited to periodic Report Card Nights, Parent University orientations, math and literacy nights, and college prep evening events for parents and family members. Uncommon Schools NYC recognizes the important role that parents play in their child's success and requires parents to meet with teachers at the end of each grading period to monitor their child's progress.

Uncommon Schools NYC as part of its Title I schoolwide plan, will involve the parents of all children in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parental and family involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools, with priority given to high need schools. This discussion will generally take place at the annual Title I meeting, in conjunction with Uncommon School NYC's Back to School Night and August Orientation. Funded parent and family engagement activities will include not less than one of the following:

- Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for local educational agency and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.
- Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
- Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
- Collaborating, or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate, with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
- Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the local educational agency determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's parent and family engagement policy.

In addition to the above Uncommon Schools New York City parents and family members are involved in the community in the following ways:

- **WEEKLY INFORMATION FOLDERS:** Every week, parents receive in a folder all announcements, permission slips, calendars, and behavior reports that shows how well their child(ren) did behaviorally. These folders are signed and sent back to school as evidence that the parent has received and read the information. Over 95% of the parents report reading the information in their folders on a regular basis.
- **PARENTS PICK UP REPORT CARDS AT SCHOOL:** All Uncommon Schools NYC parents pick up their children's report cards at the end of each trimester or quarter during the school year. At that time, all faculty members are available to discuss with parents their children's progress. Parents also attend teacher-scheduled conferences during trimester mid-points, for updates on their children's work.
- **PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS ATTEND WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK AS PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS:** School-wide events for parents and family members include high school enrollment meetings, Parent University (for all incoming 5th grade parents), Back to School Nights, Enrichment Celebrations, Math and Literacy Nights, and New Student Orientation.

Parents and family members of students are actively involved in the Uncommon Schools NYC community. Uncommon Schools NYC parents and family members are all eligible to participate in the parent representative group, Parent Partners for Advocacy (PPFA) and attend its activities, events, and workshops. PPFA is comprised of parent and family members from all Uncommon Schools NYC K-12 schools, they meet regularly and at varied days of the week and times in order to ensure maximum participation to organize events and advocate for Uncommon Schools NYC. PPFA members sit on the Title I Stakeholder committee, which, along with the Uncommon Schools NYC leadership members, annually develops, reviews, and improves Uncommon Schools NYC Title I schoolwide plan and parent and family involvement plan.

Uncommon Schools NYC will conduct an annual evaluation of its Parent and Family Engagement Policy. At the annual Title I Stakeholder Committee meeting, PPFA representatives participate

actively in this evaluation of parent and family involvement events, communication, and policies, in addition to the thorough evaluation of Uncommon Schools NYC Title I Schoolwide program as a whole.

During this review, the committee will also review the plan to continue to identify barriers to greater participation especially for parents and family members with limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, parents and family members of migratory children, parents and family members with limited literacy or who are economically disadvantaged or parents or family members of any racial or ethnic minority background. The committee will seek to continue to identify the needs of families to assist with the learning of their children and identify strategies to support successful school and family interactions as per ESSA Section 1118(a)(2)(D)(i-iii). These findings will be used to design evidence-based strategies for more effective family engagement and will revise the policies as necessary.

Each Uncommon Schools NYC school will build a capacity for strong parent and family involvement and engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and family members and to support a partnership among the school, family, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described below:

- A. Each school will provide assistance to parents and families of children, in understanding topics such as a description and explanation of the curriculum, the challenging State's academic standards and the form of academic assessments, including alternate assessments utilized. A brief overview of these assessments and standards can be found in the Student and Family Handbook, and these topics are also reviewed at the Annual Title I Meeting. In addition, Uncommon Schools NYC will work with parents and family members to help them monitor their child's progress and collaborate with educators to further their child's progress.
- B. Each school will provide materials and training to help parents and family members work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement. This includes the periodic offering of Parent University orientations, as well as college-prep evening events, which are open to all parents and families.
- C. Uncommon Schools NYC will educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other staff, on how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents and family members as equal partners, the value and utility of contributions of parents, and how to implement and coordinate parent and family programs and build ties between families and schools. These trainings will focus on the school's ongoing parental involvement events, including Parent University, Report Card Nights, and college-prep evening events. This will happen annually during August Professional Development.
- D. Uncommon Schools NYC will ensure that information relayed at school and parent and family programs, meetings, and other activities, is shared in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents and family members can understand. This Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy supplements the 2018-19 Student and Family Handbook, which outlines in detail the expectations of Uncommon Schools NYC parents, and the opportunities for involvement that are offered as part of the Title I schoolwide plan.
- E. Uncommon Schools NYC will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs including pre-school programs.

- F. Uncommon Schools NYC will ensure that resources are provided to parents and family members that encourage full participation including staggered start times for different meetings, parent selected report card conference times and child care support during conferences.

Uncommon Schools NYC will make available a copy of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy to all parents and families as required by law. This will be distributed annually in the Student and Family Handbook as well as posted on each school's website.