

Advisory Council for Family Engagement

July 1, 2016 – December 6, 2017

The reconstituted Council, as of January 2015, has been effective in carrying out its duties as prescribed in NRS 385.620. The Council met five times in FY2017 and two times in FY2018 so far and was able to learn national best practices on family engagement and determine the feasibility of incorporating strategies statewide, and build a knowledge base around the capacity of school districts to engage parents and families. The Council reviewed district policies, built relationships, and allowed school districts, schools, programs, and organizations to present their best practices. The Council is dedicated to creating dialogue at the state level among school districts in Nevada. It is the Council's expectation that Nevada will become a national leader in family engagement initiatives and results.

Pursuant to NRS 385.620, the Advisory Council for Parent Involvement and Family Engagement shall:

Review the policy of parental involvement adopted by the State Board and the policy of parental involvement and family engagement adopted by the board of trustees of each school district pursuant to NRS 392.457;

The Nevada Policy of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement was reviewed and revised during Council meetings in May and July of 2015. The State Board approved the Council's draft on September 3, 2015. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Council has set to review the Nevada Policy of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement every other legislative year (See Appendix A-NV PIFE Policy). With support from the Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement, the Council reviewed policies adopted by the board of trustees of each school district on February 8, 2017. Sixteen of the seventeen counties are up to date in their family engagement policies. The Office will follow up with school districts to ensure the Council has the most up to date information and will support districts to meet the requirements set forth in NRS 392.457. District policies will be reviewed every two to three years or six months after new policies are published.

Review the information relating to communication with and participation, involvement and engagement of parents and families that is included in the annual report of accountability for each school district pursuant to NRS 385A.320 and similar information in the annual report of accountability prepared by the State Public Charter School Authority, the Achievement School District and a college or university within the Nevada System of Higher Education that sponsors a charter school pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 385A.070;

The Council has heard presentations from numerous school districts, many of which have shared communication and outreach methods, parent participation in decision making and involvement in the education of their children.

The Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement produced a report for the Council that summarized districts' communication methods and schools' parent conference participation percentages.

The Council will review language in NRS 385.3495 to align it with the Nevada Parental Involvement and Family Engagement Policy. Additionally, the Council will request school district's accountability reports to review parent involvement efforts.

Review any effective practices carried out in individual school districts to increase parental involvement and family engagement and determine the feasibility of carrying out those practices on a statewide basis;

The Council has requested a presentation from all school districts to review district wide family engagement efforts as well as individual school efforts. Community organizations that support schools



and districts have also presented before the Council. The following presentations have allowed for the Council to gain a sense of best practices in Nevada:

August 2016 – Nevada Achievement School District, NDE Fellows

October 2016 – Family to Family Connection, Educate Nevada Now

December 2016 – HOPE for Nevada, Opportunity 180

February 2017 – Clark County School District’s Franchise School Principal

June 2017 – Clark County School District, Douglas County School District

September 2017 – Washoe County School District

The Office will coordinate with school district liaisons that have not presented before the Council in order to hear from all 17 school districts every two years.

The Office introduced Promising Practices in Family Engagement, which will be a publication that showcases effective practices being carried out by schools, districts, programs, and organizations in Nevada. The Promising Practices Call for Submission was opened on February 15, 2017 and closed on May 15, 2017. A Task Force was created to review applications and select Promising Practices for the 2017 school year. The Office plans to make the publication available early 2018.

Review any effective practices carried out in other states to increase parental involvement and family engagement and determine the feasibility of carrying out those practices in this State;

In July 2016, Council Members Stavan Corbett and Stacie Wilke and Office staff Cynthia Santos attended the 2016 National Family and Community Engagement Conference. They shared national best practice during the August 2016 PIFE Council meeting.

At every Council meeting, the Office shares updates from national webinars, State Education Agency Family Engagement Leaders phone calls, and conferences to inform members about effective practices taking place across the country. The Council will prioritize its spending to ensure multiple Council members are able to attend national family engagement conferences in the future.

Identify methods to communicate effectively and provide outreach to parents, legal guardians and families of pupils who have limited time to become involved in the education of their children for various reasons, including, without limitation, work schedules, single-parent homes and other family obligations;

The Council learns about district and school outreach methods from presentations and mandated annual district reports. Members continue to advocate for varied methods of communication and outreach to ensure communication is two-way and authentic. Council members provide a conduit for information from the Council and Office to their various constituencies.

In FY2017, the Office shared identified methods of communication and national best practice with school districts contacts during scheduled bimonthly webinars. The Council will continue to make an effort to be a resource for school districts.

The Office has collaborated with other Department offices to disseminate information and better inform parents and families about the Nevada School Performance Framework and the data portal located on the Department’s Nevada Report Card website. The Council was presented this information in September 3017 and December 2017.



Identify the manner in which the level of parental involvement and family engagement affects the performance, attendance and discipline of pupils;

Currently, there is no statewide measurement for family engagement. Districts are tracking participation but have not identified the manner in which it affects performance, attendance, and discipline of pupils as there is no tool available to do so.

In July 2015, the Nevada PTA shared data suggesting a correlation between PTA membership and school performance, as measured by the Nevada School Performance Framework.

The Washoe County School District contracts an external evaluator to determine the effectiveness of their programs and is in the beginning stages of correlating parental involvement to academic achievement, discipline, and attendance.

As the Council learns more about effective measurement tools for schools and districts, they will make the necessary recommendations to ensure data is being collected to support family engagement. Additionally, the Council has identified various partners and has initiated a collaborative effort in obtaining data.

Determine the necessity for the appointment of a statewide parental involvement and family engagement coordinator or a parental involvement and family engagement coordinator in each school district, or both;

The Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement was created in 2011 and has worked closely with the Council since its inception. The Council will review the Office's annual report every August to determine the necessity for the Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement. The Council's work would not be possible without the support of the Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement. The Council will also determine the necessity for a school district coordinator in upcoming meetings.

Work in collaboration with the Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement created by NRS 385.630 to carry out the duties prescribed in NRS 385.635;

The Council and Office work closely to:

- prepare Council agendas and materials
- ensure Council is informed of state and national family engagement best practices
- enlist presenters to hear more about state and national family engagement practices
- communicate family engagement best practices to district liaisons and school staff
- create a Promising Practices in Family Engagement publication
- plan and implement a statewide summit on parental involvement and family engagement

On or before July 1 of each year, submit a report to the Legislative Committee on Education describing the activities of the Advisory Council and any recommendations for legislation;

Submitted.

On or before February 1 of each odd-numbered year, submit a report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmission to the Legislature and to the Legislative Commission in even-numbered years, describing the activities of the Advisory Council and any recommendations for legislation.

Submitted February 2017.

The Council will continue to reach out to school districts, schools, programs, and charters to learn about the effective ways in which they engage Nevada's families. As the Council continues to build its knowledge base and resource references, they will find ways of communicating effectively with schools and school



districts to determine the feasibility of implementing family engagement practices. One way that it will communicate effective practices is by publishing Promising Practices in Family Engagement annually in partnership with the Office.

The Council will also focus on family engagement professional development as all members have indicated this as being a high need area.

Conclusions

In partnership with the Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement, the Council has developed structures to ensure it continues to meet its duties set forth in NRS 385.620. In April 2016, the Council approved a final draft of their Work Plan, which identifies partners, steps, and captures deadlines for completing its statutory duties. FY2016 was a year of building momentum and a foundation of knowledge. The Council expects to build on this foundation going forward by creating two-way communication between schools and districts to share family engagement best practice.

The following outlines recommendations from the Advisory Council for Parent Involvement and Family Engagement for possible statutory changes in order to maximize their impact. This is a preliminary list and future meetings may determine other statutory changes the Council deems necessary to carry out its objectives and duties.

Recommendations for Legislation

Proposed Change: Updating NRS 385.630 and NRS 385.635

The term Family Engagement is inclusive to all members of the family, including parents. During the 2017 Legislative Session, the Advisory Council changed its name from the Advisory Council for Parental Involvement and Family Engagement to the Advisory Council for Family Engagement. The Office name change will coincide with the reasoning of the Advisory Council name change and language reflected in the national federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Replacing the term “Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement” with “Office of Family Engagement” wherever mentioned in NRS 385.630 and NRS 385.635.

Proposed Concept:

Creation of a funding mechanism (e.g. state categorical) specifically for sustaining and expanding evidence-based family engagement practices and strategies in Nevada.



Appendix A **Nevada Policy of Parental Involvement [and Family Engagement]**

Pursuant to NRS 385.620

The Nevada State Board of Education recognizes that parent involvement and family engagement will lead to successful educational results. The term 'parent' is meant to include any and all care-givers who nurture children on a regular and ongoing basis including, but not limited to, parents, grandparents, foster parents, step-parents, etc.

The Nevada State Board of Education also recognizes the absolute need for the collaboration between students, parents, schools and communities to ensure academic success. Meaningful family engagement is based on the premise that parents, educators, and community members share the responsibility for academic, physical, social, emotional and behavioral development of youth. Parents provide the primary educational environment for their children; therefore, it is the partnership between parents and schools that is the fundamental cornerstone for ensuring a child's success. Effective family engagement systems, policies and practices are mindful of diverse school communities that are rich in language, culture, and school experiences. Schools will respect and honor all cultural backgrounds, primary languages and traditions by collaborating with parents and students to create and develop positive relationships.

In order to enhance parental involvement and promote family engagement six essential standards will be fostered:

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community— Parents and families are active participants in the life of the school, feel welcome, valued, and connected to each other.

- A positive educational environment is established by treating families in respectful and culturally sensitive ways.
- Examples include culturally diverse welcome signs, volunteer opportunities, home visits, student work throughout the school, etc.

Standard 2: Communicating effectively—Parents, families and school staff engage in regular, authentic, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

- Families know how to provide input and respond to school communication.
- Written and spoken interaction between families and teachers are respectful. Families receive positive and consistent information as well as recognition for their engagement.

Standard 3: Supporting student well-being and academic success—Parents, families and school staff continuously collaborate to support student learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

- Teachers use data to show parents and families how their student is doing both individually and compared to grade level standards.
- Families receive information, resources and training from teachers and school staff on how they can support their student's learning at home.





Standard 4: Speaking up for every child—Parents and families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

- Teachers work with families to take advantage of resources and programs that support student success. (ELL, tutoring, counseling)
- The teachers and school staff empower families and encourage advocacy for students to resolve problems/conflicts.

Standard 5: Sharing power—Parents, families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

- The teacher collaborates with families to establish an equal voice and mutual understanding in decisions regarding their student's education.
- Encourage families to become active participants in the school culture at the local and district level. The schools will encourage purposeful engagement in parent advisory groups, school board meetings, school functions, and activities.

Standard 6: Collaborating with community—Parents, families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

- The teacher and school staff communicates with families about services/resources make referrals to programs and plan activities that expand learning opportunities. Schools will develop resources to purposefully include and collaborate with community organizations to participate in classrooms, school events and activities.