

Working Agreements

Description and Purpose: The **Partners in Education (PIE) Working Group is a multi-generational group of family and school leaders working to inspire other families to elevate their voices and perspectives to promote improvements in their children’s education. Our goal is to develop a new vision for family engagement which empowers families to work with schools as full partners to ensure the quality of their children’s education. Together we will create a new family engagement policy to help us make that vision a reality.**

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION (PIE)

PLAN FOR JOINTLY DEVELOPING THE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT POLICY

<p>What does “Joint Development” mean?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group effort between the school and the families of the school in which all the participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have a voice and develop the plan from the beginning ○ Are engaged before a decision is made ○ Are not simply being heard – but are developing it together, throughout the process, as equal partners ○ Come to the table with much of the same basic background information needed to inform the decision
<p>Who is involved in developing the policy? How are they selected?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to all, but a core group of at least 25 members, with roughly equal numbers of family and school staff, including at least two students; staff should include teachers, administration when possible, social workers, key School-Family Council members, and a school-community liaison • The core group should be committed to the process and be willing attend at least six meetings in four months of developing the policy • A steering committee will work with Grand Partners staff to plan PIE meetings. The steering committee is made up of at least 3-4 grandparents and parents, the school principal, vice principal, and the school’s lead staff person for family engagement. Additional grandparents and parents who take leadership roles in the PIE working groups may be invited to join the steering committee
<p>How do we prepare parents and grandparents to be involved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of meetings and process; visuals describing process and school structure; training seminars • Grandparents and parents who join the PIE working group after the initial training session may receive individual training from Grand Partners staff and/or other steering committee members.
<p>How will they work together?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the criteria for addressing each parent involvement requirement? • What are the ground rules for the Partners in Education family engagement policy development working group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start discussion of each requirement of the policy by asking what is the goal or specific purpose for that part. • Each part of what we develop must demonstrate that it is clear enough, specific enough, and good enough to effectively carry out the requirement and fulfill its purpose. • Strive to make decisions by consensus. If not achieved, a vote showing basic widespread agreement both among the families and among the staff can allow the group to go forward until the next discussion. • A safe space to share input emphasizing respect and listening to everyone • A clear time frame for input before final decisions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will meetings be organized? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, meetings should be jointly facilitated by Grand Partners staff, school personnel, parents/grandparents, and students. • A Steering Committee of grandparents and parents will plan each of the meetings August through December with feedback from school staff.
<p>How will ongoing communication among group members take place?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each meeting will have a note taker who will compile consolidated minutes from PIE meetings and PIE steering committee meetings. • Monthly communications about key decisions and discussions will happen by sharing consolidated minutes in the following ways: posting them on the school parent board, making copies available in the front office, emailing them to all PIE participants, posting them on the school website, and sending them home in the weekly folders with the children. Social media may also be used. Work/discussions will be done in both small and large groups • Small groups could include work on research and communication tasks. They will be outcome driven. • Each small group will have a lead facilitator/reporter. • Small groups will receive a template/framework to follow and use to report out. • Each discussion needs strong facilitation to ensure everyone has a chance to be heard and no one dominates. • Each meeting should conclude with a review of clear deadlines. • All communications should include a combination of email, phone calls, or hard copy communications based on the parents/caregivers' preferred communications methods. • PIE participants will be asked their communication preference when they sign up. • Outreach for the initial PIE meeting will be conducted through: having grandparents/parents stationed at the door to invite people to the meetings, putting flyers into the materials of local businesses, sending a mailing through the school's system, and sending a message through the school's robo-call system. • When the core members of the PIE working group have been determined, they will be publicized to parents/grandparents through the minutes.
<p>How will the draft policy be approved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the policy is finalized, school staff will share it in advance of a full vote through regular mail (sharing in December is recommended). Parents/grandparents and school staff will be invited to come in person to give feedback on the full policy. • A full vote on the policy will take place in January. • As part of developing the family involvement policy, the Working Group will hold additional discussions and make decisions about the details of the approval process.