



## Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Garrison Elementary School  
1200 S St NW, Washington, DC 20009  
School Year 2022-23

DC Public Schools believes parents and families are our strongest partners. Family and community engagement is built into everything we do, at every level of our work. At Garrison, we believe that every Wildcat should be loved, challenged, and prepared to thrive in life. We believe that parents and families are our most critical partners in building rigorous academic experiences and a joyful learning environment for all students. The parents and families we serve are key partners in achieving that mission.

The policy describes how parents and family members will be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy in alignment with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), section 1116. It outlines how the school and families will work together to develop meaningful communication that advances the learning of all students and builds a joyful and welcoming learning environment for all. Parents and family members of students at Garrison partnered in the development of this policy document by hosting a discussion with parents and guardians prior to the start of the new school year.

### **Shared Decision-Making and Communication with Parents and Families**

Garrison agrees to do the following to foster shared decision-making with parents and families enrolled and build trusting relationships through meaningful, two-way communication:

Involve parents and families in the planning, review and improvement of the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy.


Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time;

- which all parents and family members of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend;
- to inform parents of their schools' participation as a Title I school; and
- to explain the requirements and the rights for parents to be involved.

Review the Parent and Family Engagement policy during in-person meetings hosted before- and after school hours to accommodate a variety of schedules.

Encourage parents through the weekly *Gazette* and the monthly PTO newsletter to review the policy and submit any questions to either the Principal or the PTO executive board.

Annual meetings will be hosted to allow parents the space to review the policy, ask questions, and become informed of their role in the policy. Faculty and staff members will be encouraged to attend in order to help present information and answer questions or address concerns. Any presentation materials and meeting notes will be shared with all parents for posterity in English, Spanish, and Amharic. Interpretation in Spanish and Amharic will be made available at these meetings.



Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the Title I program, Comprehensive School Plan, and other school improvement plans, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school's parent and family engagement program.

School improvement plans will be discussed at quarterly Parent Teacher Conferences, held in October, February, and May. Additional ad-hoc meetings to address any necessary improvement strategies will be hosted by faculty before and after school hours.

Provide parents of participating children with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of District of Columbia academic standards and DCPS grade-level expectations.

The Parent Compact document outlines several ways for parents to stay aware of current curriculum and metrics for student success. Every individual teacher is also available to parents by several modes of communication in addition to weekly in-person check-ins.

If requested by parents; provide opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their students. Garrison will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

Parents can schedule ad-hoc meetings with an individual teacher or members of the administration including the Principal. Parents are also regularly encouraged to attend PTO meetings, which occur three times, at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

Involve parents and family members in the joint development of the school's Comprehensive School Plan, which includes the schoolwide plan and targeted assistance plan requirements under Section 1114 per ESSA, as applicable.

The previous Comprehensive School Plan will be distributed to families digitally prior to the first annual meeting, during which families will be given the opportunity to ask questions and submit suggestions for updating the plan. Garrison administrators and faculty encourage families to highlight any areas that need further development or clarification.

Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents and family members of participating children in a format and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents and family members can understand.

Garrison partners with Spanish and Amharic translators to ensure full clarification of all distributed materials, including information on upcoming school events, parent-teacher conferences, and extracurricular activities. A digital newsletter as well as a paper version are distributed weekly. Garrison also partners with the DCPS Language Acquisition Department to provide families with Spanish and Amharic interpreters for all official school gatherings.

Provide, to the extent practicable, opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children).

Garrison PTO and Garrison faculty and staff will continue to host Family Nights for Amharic-speaking and Spanish-speaking families to learn how our school can best support its students and communities. Garrison utilizes interpreters to ensure proper communication. Meetings have previously been both virtual and in-person. Meeting notes with translation are distributed after every meeting for posterity.

### **Involvement of and Assistance to Parents & Families on Academic Progress of Students**

Garrison agrees to do the following to provide assistance to and involve families in working with their students on progress toward academic goals:

Provide assistance to parents and family members in understanding:

- District of Columbia academic standards and DCPS grade-level expectations,
- DC state assessments (PARCC in English language arts and math and DC Science, as appropriate),
- DCPS and school-level assessments, and
- how to monitor a student's progress and work with teachers to improve the achievement of students.

Garrison will provide the above academic progress information in multiple places to ensure families' full understanding of academic goals. Resources are listed in the Parent and Family Compact, as well as hosted on multiple scholastic sites used by Garrison teachers and faculty. Individual teachers are also briefed on how to regularly communicate with parents about their child's progress.

Provide materials and training to help parents to work with their students to improve their students' achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, to foster parent involvement.

Garrison will distribute materials digitally and via print consistently throughout the school year, either through the school-wide newsletter or on a class-by-class basis depending on the type of material being distributed. Parents and families will have the opportunity to ask any questions they might have during Back to School Night, other ad-hoc family meetings, or before and after school with the Principal and other relevant faculty members.

Garrison will, at the beginning of the school year, notify the family of each student attending that they may request information on the professional qualifications of the student's teachers and paraprofessionals. The school will also inform parents of their right to know the level of achievement their student attained on PARCC. Garrison will provide parents timely notice if their student has been assigned to, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

### **Capacity Building for Educators and Families**

Garrison agrees to do the following to build the capacity parents, teachers, school leaders and other staff at the school:

Educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents and family members, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents and family members as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and family members and the school.

Garrison will continue to work closely with the PTO to maximize communications between families and the school and to advocate for students' needs and resources. The PTO executive board includes a Garrison teacher liaison in order to help the PTO prioritize teacher input.

To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate, and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other federal, state, and local programs including public preschool programs and conduct other activities that encourage and support parents and family members in more fully participating in the education of their children.

Garrison will continue to work closely with the PTO to create a supportive environment for parents and families to become more involved in their children's education, including hosting monthly PTO meetings and providing resources for parents and families that include new ways to be involved in school programming.

#### **Development of School-Parent Compact**

Garrison will jointly develop a School-Parent Compact with parents and family members. The compact outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share in the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and the parents will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the state's high standards. The compact shall:

- describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging state academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children;
- address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum:
  - parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to supporting the individual child's achievement;
  - frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;
  - reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities;
  - ensuring regular, two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

*(Note: DCPS has developed a template for the School-Parent Compact that addresses these requirements here.)*

#### **Adoption**

Garrison's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy for SY22-23 was developed in consultation with parents and families.

*Brigham Kiplinger*



Brigham Kiplinger, Principal  
19 October, 2022