

### **Current APS Policy: Family and Community Engagement**

Albuquerque Public Schools affirms that the involvement of family and community partners is critical to student success. To better engage our families and community partners, Albuquerque Public Schools shall strive to utilize the histories and cultures of our families, community and students as the foundation of an educational program that ensures every student is eager to be a world-class citizen. Collaborative decision-making processes shall be incorporated in appropriate district actions to improve student outcomes.

Albuquerque Public Schools shall strive to actively build partnerships with families and the community by:

- Fostering safe and welcoming environments
- Strengthening relationships and capacity with families, teachers, school and district administrators and community partners
- Expanding communication between families, community partners and schools
- Cultivating equitable and effective systems

### **APS Policy: Visitors to Schools**

Family members and community partners are encouraged to visit the schools throughout the school year.

Conferences between visitors and employees shall not interrupt the educational process or interfere with employee assigned duties.

All visitors shall sign-in at the administrative office of the school. Visitors shall verify their identity and the purpose for their visit. All visitors shall be required to wear identification of their visitor status while at the school. Visitors are guests to school sites and may not have unsupervised access to students.

A school administrator, or his/her designee, shall have the authority to reasonably deny a visitor access to a building or classroom if that denial is in the best interest of the school, staff or student.

### **APS Procedural Directive: Family and Community Engagement**

#### **General Provisions**

Albuquerque Public Schools has created this administrative procedural directive in order to formalize the significance of community and family engagement. Within this administrative procedural directive there are references to the school district's goals, expectations, and responsibilities in engaging the community to increase student success in the Albuquerque Public Schools. This procedural directive reinforces the district goals which outline specific actions taken within the Albuquerque Public Schools to meet the intent found within this procedural directive.

References to Albuquerque Public Schools are made throughout this procedural directive. When discussing Albuquerque Public Schools, it is the intent of this procedural directive that the term mean more than just our schools, but also includes all the administrative departments and employees throughout the district.

Albuquerque Public Schools recognizes the important role families and community play in the improvement of our schools and the wellbeing of our students. Engaged communities and families is a critical component to reach our goal of dramatically increased student achievement. Albuquerque Public Schools affirms also that the involvement of family and community partners is critical to the overall success of our students and is essential to maintain the Albuquerque Public Schools initiative to implement innovative programs to meet the needs and interests of all our students. Albuquerque Public Schools must comply with state statute and regulations that mandate specific programs; however, Albuquerque Public Schools is committed to including the community and families in the creation, selection and implementation of programs that utilize our cultural histories, diversity and community assets whenever possible when educating students. Albuquerque Public Schools recognizes that to ensure every student is eager to be a world-class citizen we must utilize the histories and cultures of our families, communities and students as the foundation for our educational programs. Our histories and diversity should be viewed as one of our greatest strengths and will be used to inform the decisions we make about how to best respect our community and families, communicate with our community and families and engage our community and families.

Albuquerque Public Schools shall strive to actively build partnerships with families and the community by:

- Fostering safe and welcoming environments;
- Strengthening relationships and capacity with families, teachers, school and district administrators and community partners;
- Expanding communication between families, community partners and schools; and
- Cultivating equitable and effective systems.

#### **Engaging Families and Community Partners in Decisions**

Albuquerque Public Schools will consider the intent of this procedural directive when considering changing existing policies, putting a new policy in place, changing administrative procedural directives, developing district goal actions or taking other actions that will have significant impact on students and their families.

There are a few instances in which a different set of engagement protocols is dictated by law. Please refer to the Title I Parent Involvement Agreement or the Indian Education Procedural Directive for information regarding those engagement plans. Additionally, Albuquerque Public Schools may make decisions without specific community or family input, but will strive to do so only when absolutely necessary.

### **Promoting Thoughtful Conversations about Engaging Families and Community Partners**

Albuquerque Public Schools believes that family and community engagement is not a one-size fits all program. Rather than establish specific programs and rules for engaging families and community partners, Albuquerque Public Schools poses the following questions for consideration. Every member of the Albuquerque Public Schools community – staff, families, community partners and students – should reflect upon these questions when making decisions:

- How should I set the example for students that education is an important priority?
- How can I help emphasize the importance of academics at home, including reading and homework?
- How can I help families work with their children on the homework assignments?
- How can I help create an educational environment at home and in the community that supplements the educational learning that occurs in school?
- How can I help families make sure children get to school on time, rested, nourished and ready to learn?
- How can I guarantee families get involved in the schools where their children are being educated?
- How can I intervene when a child may be struggling?

### **Safe and Welcoming Environments**

Albuquerque Public Schools shall strive to create safe and welcoming environments. A safe and welcoming environment means that all visitors to a school are recognized, greeted, treated respectfully and provided the best information possible about their schools. Albuquerque Public Schools recognizes that a welcoming environment is a balance between open schools and the protection of our students. All visitors will be welcome in our schools, but Albuquerque Public Schools shall continue to require proper identification of visitors to ensure the safety of our students and the proper educational environment for students.

As outlined in the district goal action plans, Albuquerque Public Schools will strive to:

- As financially possible, have welcome signs posted at the front entrance of schools.
- Have signage at schools and informational materials distributed to students, families and community partners posted in languages spoken by the community of the schools.
- Provide training to staff members, particularly office staff members, which stress behaviors to make visitors to schools, families and community partners feel welcome. Staff shall strive to verbally welcome visitors to schools and use strategies learned in training to make those visitors feel welcome at the school.
- Staff shall strive to exhibit deep respect for student's, their families and the contributions families make to a student's education.
- Support schools to identify strategies to ensure individuals who speak the languages spoken by community members are present in the school and that the individual may help families who require translation services.
- Provide volunteering and other participation opportunities in the schools. For more information on volunteering, please refer to volunteering procedural directive.
- Show appreciation for family and community participation in the schools, be it volunteering or attending a school event, and make families and community feel valued for that participation.
- Identify unsafe situations for students, including violent behavior and bullying, and intervene to control those situations to the best of our ability. Intervention may include, but not be limited to, mediation, mental health services and disciplinary actions. For more information on safety and bullying, please refer to bullying prevention and school safety administrative procedural directives.

### **Strengthening Relationships**

Albuquerque Public Schools shall strive to strengthen relationships and capacity with families, teachers, school and district administrators and community partners. Albuquerque Public schools recognizes the importance of families as educators in their student's lives. Albuquerque Public Schools respects and honors the insights, knowledge and skills that families contribute to the success of their students and schools. Albuquerque Public Schools believes that working together with families and the community is the best way to increase student success. Albuquerque Public Schools, through curriculum selection committees, instructional councils, health and wellness committees, parent organizations, Title I resources and many other committees upon which families and community has representation, will share resources and seek the advice of the community for development of educational programs. These committees represent the epicenter of information sharing and capacity building.

Albuquerque Public Schools recognizes also the importance of continuing education for our families. Albuquerque Public Schools will continue to pursue educational programs that provide educational opportunities for adults, as well as children.

As outlined in the district goal action plans, Albuquerque Public Schools will strive to:

- Stress the importance of family engagement and fostering partnerships with community based agencies.
- Provide educational opportunities for families through the district's parent university.

- Provide information for families and community partners regarding their legal rights and the rights of their students.
- Hold curriculum evening events when schools explain the educational programs for students, academic standards and expectations to families.
- Encourage and support schools in identifying formal ways to collect information regarding family and community interests in the schools their students attend and availability to participate. Schools should consider results of this information when scheduling school events and communicating with families.
- Receive feedback from families through school climate surveys in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of schools and their family and community engagement.
- Provide opportunities for families to understand and ask questions about school performance.
- Identify and refer families to community resources that may be helpful in the individual situation of the family.

### **Expanding Communication**

Effective communication is a way of sharing information in which the expertise and insights of both families and schools is validated and utilized to improve the lives of students. Communication includes active listening with the intent to understand and enter into respectful dialogue with all involved parties.

Effective communication is critical to provide clarity regarding the academic and social-emotional needs of students and to increase the number family members engaged in their student's education. Albuquerque Public Schools accepts the responsibility of communicating district decisions, goals and academic programs. Albuquerque Public Schools encourages families and community partners to actively participate and listen to information so meaningful dialogue may take place between the district and the community.

As outlined in the district goal action plans, Albuquerque Public Schools will strive to:

- Use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis.
- Use communication that is language-appropriate, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate to the community. Appropriate translation and interpretation services will be made available to non-English speakers for communication unless there are extenuating circumstances which limit the district's ability to provide translation.
- Schools will work with families that may require augmentative communication strategies due to a disability or the family primary language being sign language.
- Establish both formal structured and informal opportunities for families and educators to share information, including open houses, community forums, parent commitment cards, feedback forms, newsletters, the APS website, school websites, and parent centers.

### **Equitable and Effective Systems**

Equitable and effective systems exist when every school, regardless of geographic location, institutionalizes strategies for ensuring that all students and families are adequately served.

As outlined in Board of Education policy, Albuquerque Public Schools shall strive to integrate innovative educational programs to address the diverse needs of students, ensure that each student succeeds, and close the educational gap. Albuquerque Public Schools must provide the necessary supports to teachers in each school to establish an effective academic environment that supports the success of each student in collaboration with family and community members.

As outlined in the district goal action plans, Albuquerque Public Schools will strive to:

- APS will utilize our cultural diversity as one of our greatest strengths, celebrate the cultural diversity of our schools and continue conversations about cultural proficiency in the district.
- Collect and maintain records in formats that are accessible and understandable to the appropriate families, community members and students. Schools will use their educational plans for success to communicate specific family engagement strategies and activities at the school. Those plans shall be made available upon request.
- Have a family and community group at every school consisting of school staff and family representatives. These groups might include, but are not limited to Instructional Councils, School Health Advisory Councils, PTA, and PTSO.
- Ensure that family members have an opportunity to be included on appropriate decision-making and advisory committees such as School Health Advisory Councils and Instructional Councils

Cross Ref.:

- [K.01 Family and Community Engagement](#)

## **Proposed new Policy KB1 Parent Rights and Responsibilities**

The Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Board of Education believes that the success of a child's education is the result of a collaborative effort among parents, students, and the school. APS recognizes parents as valued partners in the educational process and will incorporate parent/guardian and family involvement as a district core value. APS Board of Education policy, goals and core values recognize that parents have rights. APS also believes that active and regular parent/guardian involvement will significantly increase a student's potential for academic success.

Therefore, APS recognizes parents as valued partners in the educational process and incorporates parent/guardian involvement as a district core value. All school and district activities will give proper consideration to the involvement of parents.

Participants in the educational process deserve respectful and courteous treatment at all times. Schools reflect the richness and diversity of Albuquerque, and the district prohibits harassment and hostile environments of any kind, because students have the right to an education free of discrimination.

## PHILOSOPHY OF PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As full partners in a child's education, parents/guardians have rights and responsibilities. It is the objective of APS to list and communicate these rights and responsibilities in a format that is convenient and accessible for parents.

### PARENT RIGHTS

Parents, in their relationships with schools, have the right:

- To a school environment for their child that is safe and supportive of learning
- To be treated with courtesy by all staff
- To be included as full partners in the educational process and to have access to the system on their child's behalf
- To a mutually supportive and respectful partnership with the school
- To expect school outreach ensuring all families have opportunities to participate, including those for whom English is not their primary language
- To opportunities for families to participate in the instructional process, particularly by engaging in school scheduled events and established structures like Parent Teacher Association groups and Instructional Councils

Parents, in order to support high academic achievement for their children, have the right:

- To examine their child's curriculum materials
- To expect qualified teachers who follow the code of conduct
- To expect textbooks, materials, and supplies that reinforce learning
- To expect an instructional program that recognizes individual learning styles
- To receive assistance from school personnel to further their child's progress and improvement
- To expect their child receives a full day of education or instruction (as legally defined)
- To have access to school performance data

Parents, in order to be knowledgeable about their children's educational experience, have the right:

- To receive information concerning the academic performance standards, proficiencies or skills their child is expected to accomplish
- To be informed in advance about school rules, school calendars, activities, attendance policies, dress codes, and procedures for visiting the school
- To visit their child's classrooms
- To have access to all educational records of a school district concerning their child in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This includes, but is not limited to, transcripts, attendance, test scores, grades, disciplinary records, Individualized Education Plans (IEP's), 504 plans, educational and/or social support plans, school counseling records, and school health records
- To question anything in their child's records that they believe is inaccurate or misleading or is an invasion of privacy
- To receive prompt responses to inquiries
- To be notified on a timely basis of their child's absence from school
- To be notified promptly about disciplinary action against their child
- To be included in any educational and/or social support plans
- To be informed of their child's progress in school and of the appropriate school personnel they should contact if problems arise

- To receive information about and to agree or deny permission concerning psychological testing involving their child
- To be informed of processes to address parent/guardian concerns or available grievance procedures
- To confer with their child's teacher

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents, in their relationships with schools, have the responsibility

- To treat school personnel with courtesy and as partners in their child's education
- To support school, district, and classroom rules for student behavior and ensure that their child conduct themselves according to district standards
- To participate in decisions related to the child's education
- To instill in their child self-discipline and courtesy toward others
- To adhere to school rules and procedures
- To instill in their child a respect for teachers and authority
- To teach their child to take care of school materials and facilities

Parents, in order to support high academic achievement for their children, have the responsibility:

- To ensure that their child attends school every day
- To send students to school on time and prepared to learn
- To be informed of, acknowledge, and understand the rules applicable to their child's school
- To support learning that takes place in the classroom
- To ensure that homework is completed and turned in on time
- To work with their child at home in learning activities
- To engage in literacy activities with their child
- To have high expectations for their child
- To be role models for their child
- To emphasize the value of education
- To remain involved with their child from preschool through high school

Parents, in order to be knowledgeable about their children's educational experience, have the responsibility:

- To be knowledgeable of all communications from the school
- To promptly supply accurate, updated information (including current address and when available, current telephone numbers) to the school
- To monitor their child's progress and communicate with the child's teacher
- To become informed about the school's policies and programs
- To confer with their child's teacher