

# Alma Middle School

## 2018-2019 Parental & Family Engagement Policy

**Challenging and Preparing Our Students** — We believe that a partnership must exist between our parents and our school. We promote positive communication between the school and our students' homes. The school provides a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in activities supporting our school. We believe teachers have a responsibility to provide the needed framework for parents to nurture their child's formal instruction at home. We will provide materials that can successfully be used at home to reinforce the academic success of children. It is our goal to provide an atmosphere where parents are able to express their views and to assist in problem solving. We want parents to understand that we view them as joint policy and decision makers and plan to emphasize their roles as advocates.

**Gathering Information to Support the Parental Education and Engagement Plan**—The Alma Middle School serves grades 6-8. Our school status is Achieving; we are a Title I school district wide; and 55% of our population is free/reduced lunch. Our Parental Engagement committee members are as follows:

Spring Stout – Media Specialist & Family Engagement Facilitator (sstout@almasd.net)

Bob Wolfe – Principal

Jason Reeves – Assistant Principal

Stacie Dyer – Teacher

Amanda Taylor – Teacher/Parent

Astrid Lanich – Parent

Kimberly Bates – Parent

Elizabeth Shook – Parent

The Title I Parental and Family Engagement Committee, consisting of school parent coordinator, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, have developed the following list of services and activities to promote parental and family engagement and provide additional support for student learning:

1. **School staff will use a variety of communication strategies to provide additional information to parents and to increase parental and family engagement in supporting classroom instruction.**
  - The District/school will post on its website information for parent access including:
    - a) Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP);

- b) Description of how the school will use National School Lunch Funds and state categorical funds for the current and previous school year (ACSIP);
  - c) The school's annual report card;
  - d) Teacher qualifications.
  - e) A parent-friendly explanation of the school's status of Achieving, why the school is identified, and what the school is doing to change this status;
  - f) The identification of any supplemental educational services available;
  - g) The school's parental and family engagement policy along with informational packets as required by AR State Law;
  - h) The school shall prepare an informational packet available to the parent(s) of each child in the school, appropriate for the age and grade of the child, describing:
    - i) The school's parental and family engagement policy;
    - ii) The recommended role of the parent, student, teacher, and school;
    - iii) Ways for the parent to become involved in the school and his or her child's education;
    - iv) A survey for the parent regarding his or her interests concerning volunteering at the school;
    - v) Activities planned throughout the school year to encourage parental engagement; and
    - vi) A system to allow the parents and teachers to communicate in a regular, two-way, and meaningful manner with the child's teacher and the school principal.
- The school has brochures available, posts notices in school facilities, on social media, and on the school's website providing information about parent workshops and meetings. Mass notifications of these meetings are also sent out as text and email messages.
  - The school will provide parents with information annually on the school's approach to improving student performance.
  - The school will send parents their child's test results and standardized test scores.
  - The school will provide to parents reports/report cards every quarter with information regarding their child's academic progress and upcoming classroom and school events.
  - The school will distribute a monthly newsletter to parents via Blackboard with parenting tips relating to school achievement such as homework tips, organizational skills, and study skills.
  - Parents can access student grades through Chalk and individual class websites which list pertinent assignments with due dates and test dates through Blackboard and Google Classroom.

- Each teacher will periodically send to parents, student papers and work samples.
- Teachers will contact parents on an individual basis to communicate about their child's progress. Teachers will conduct at least two (2) parent/teacher conferences each year.
- The school's handbook can be found on the website will include the process for resolving parental concerns including how to define a problem, whom to approach first, and how to develop solutions.

**2. The school will hold parent meetings, conferences, and activities regularly throughout the year to increase parental engagement and build staff and parent capacity to engage in these types of efforts.**

- The school will hold regular meetings to explain:
  - a) What students will be learning;
  - b) How students will be assessed;
  - c) What parents should expect for their child's education; and
  - d) How a parent can assist and make a difference in his or her child's education.
- Provide instruction/information via the Parent Center located in the Library Media Center to a parent on how to incorporate developmentally appropriate learning activities in the home environment, including without limitation:
  - a) The use of and access to Department of Education website tools for parents;
  - b) The use of and access to Tasseltime;
  - c) Assistance with nutritional meal planning and preparation; and
  - d) Engage in other activities determined by the school to help a parent assist in his or her child's learning which may include role play or other strategies or curricula.
- The school will provide two (2) hours for teachers and three (3) hours for administrators professional development in addition to the minimum number of hours of professional development as required by the State designed to enhance understanding of:
  - a) Effective parent engagement strategies; and
  - b) The importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation.
- The school shall provide annual training when there are volunteers assisting in an instructional program for parents.
- These meetings may include a series of family literacy and math nights that provide an opportunity for parents and their child to experience the school situation in a positive and helpful manner while school staff may provide any needed assistance or encouragement.

- The meetings will be held at various times during the day or evening to better accommodate parents.
- The school will hold an annual open house for parents with information available about the school's participation in the Title I program and parental engagement with reviewing and revising of the School's Title I Policy (Plan).
- Teachers will annually hold two (2) conferences with parents of children in their classrooms. Parents will be given a summary of the student's test scores and an explanation of the interventions teachers are using to assist the child in reaching achievement goals. Parents will be asked to engage in discussion of how they can support these efforts. Parents will also be given suggestions for coordinating school-parent efforts and explanations of homework and grading procedures.
- The school officials will be available to provide an explanation of the statewide assessment systems, standards, and other accountability measures.

**3. The school will provide information to parents about volunteer opportunities.**

- The school will provide a list of volunteer opportunities and solicit ideas for other types of volunteer efforts during orientation of parents. Teachers will explain the requirements to parents and encourage them to become involved in the school.
- The school will work with Alma Intermediate School to help provide a smooth transition to Alma Middle School by raising parent awareness of procedures and related activities. The school will host special orientation programs for students to help with the transition. Parents will have the opportunity to meet the new teachers at the Open House at the beginning of the school year.

**4. The school will provide a School–Parent–Student Compact to parents.**

- School staff, parents, and students have developed a school–parent–student compact. This compact outlines how parents, school staff, and students share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high academic standards. All stakeholders will sign the compact.

**5. The school will provide an opportunity for parents to engage in decision–making processes in regarding the school's Title I, Part A program.**

- The school will involve parents on school improvement planning via Parental and Family Engagement and ACSIP committees.
- To take advantage of community resources, the school shall consider recruiting alumni from the school to create an alumni advisory commission to provide advice and guidance for school improvement.
- The school shall enable the formation of a Parent Teacher Association or organization that will foster parental and community engagement within the school.

**6. The school will provide a parent resource center for parents.**

- The school has a parent center located in the upper library with resources available for parents. Parents may check out materials and use the computer to visit educational websites. A suggestion sheet will also be available for parental input. The school will open the resource center at hours that are convenient to parents.
- The school will distributed Informational packets each year that includes a copy of the school's parental engagement plan, survey for volunteer interests, recommended roles for parents/ teachers/students and school, suggestions of ways parents can become involved in their child's education, parental engagement activities planned for the current school year and information about the system that will be used to allow parents and teachers to communicate (notes, phone calls, e-mail...).
- To promote and support responsible parenting, the school shall, as funds are available: Purchase parenting books, magazines, and other informative materials regarding responsible parenting through the school library, advertise the current selection, and give parents the opportunity to borrow the materials for review.
- Included in the school's policy handbook is the school's process for resolving parental concerns, including how to define a problem, whom to approach first, and how to develop solutions.
- Mrs. Stout, Alma Middle School Media Specialist, serves as a parent facilitator.

**7. The school will engage parents in an evaluation of parental engagement efforts.**

- The school will engage parents in the annual evaluation of the Title I, Part A program's Parental and Family Engagement Policy. The school will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. The Title I Committee, made up of teachers, parents, and school staff, will determine the effectiveness of the Parental and Family Engagement Policy and make changes if warranted.

**8. How will your school use the parent interest surveys to select, plan and implement parental engagement activities that will be offered throughout the year?**

- The school will ask parents to fill out a parent interest survey at registration or the beginning of each school year to get information from parents concerning the activities they feel will be most beneficial in the efforts to support their child academically.
- The school will use the results of the parent interest survey will be used to plan the parental and family engagement activities for the year.
- The school will evaluate the activities that were suggested by the parents at the end of the year as part of the annual parental and family engagement plan evaluation.

**9. When will your school plan the Annual Title I Meeting that must be conducted separately?**

- The school will conduct an Annual Title I Meeting for parents of the students who participate in the Title I, Part A Program.
- The school will hold their annual Title I meeting separate from any other meetings or activities to ensure that they have ample time to provide a description/explanation of school curriculum, information on forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress and information on proficiency level students are expected to meet.
- For each Title I, Part A School, an Annual Title I Meeting must be conducted. The agenda, the sign-in sheet and the minutes for this meeting must be generated separately from any other events and kept on file in the school's office.