RESOURCES FOR PARENTS
Resources For Parents

Thank you for supporting your children, the students of Michigan’s education system. Your encouragement is essential in helping them to fulfill their academic and personal goals.

It has been proven that children whose parents and families are engaged in their education are more successful in school and have higher academic goals. This involvement not only includes participating in your child’s school fundraiser or attending his or her performances and athletic events, but also means partnering with your child’s school to support learning at home.

This section is designed to help parents build a strong family-school partnership and provides:

- information about the school system so you can better understand the educational process.
- explanation of your rights as a parent and your child’s rights as a student.
- information about how to get involved in your child’s education.
- resources on how to support your child at any age.
- additional resources on topics of interest to you.

We hope this information will encourage your partnership with your child’s school and support you as you collaborate with them to ensure your child’s continued academic success.

Parent Engagement Committee, 2011
Michigan Department of Education
The Basics

Overview

First things first: who is “a” parent and how do we define “parent” in our ever-changing social culture? As our society evolves, family structures are also changing and roles are being redefined. Therefore, it is important to be clear to whom we are referring and why.

Educational institutions whether schools, colleges or universities are bound by certain regulatory requirements to meet various standards or comply with funding regulations.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/No Child Left Behind (NCLB) includes a definition for “parent.”

Legal Definition of “Parent”

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/ No Child Left Behind (NCLB) includes definitions for “parent” and “parental involvement.”

“(31) PARENT.—The term ‘parent’ includes a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare).”

Parent Engagement Committee Definition

Parent: significant adult who cares about a child.

The Parent Engagement Committee acknowledges that the term “parent” can be restrictive and limiting. We recognize that all family members – parents; step-parents; parents’ significant others; foster parents; siblings; grandparents; aunts, uncles, and other extended family; friends and neighbors; and others – often contribute in important ways to a child’s education and development.

Toolkit Definition of “Parent”

For the purpose of this document, we utilize the term “parent” to indicate any adult who plays a significant role in a student’s life. This term may be used interchangeably with the word “family” or the phrase “parents and family” in reference to those who share responsibility for the well-being of a child.
What Does It Mean To Be “Engaged Or Involved?”

The distinction between involvement and engagement is important. A definition of involve is “to enfold or envelope;” conversely, engage can be defined as “to come together and interlock.” Thus, involvement implies doing to, whereas engagement implies doing with. Moreover, the term parent engagement indicates a shared and continuous responsibility for student achievement and learning that occurs across multiple settings.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - Legal definition

“(32) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.—The term ‘parental involvement’ means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

“(A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning.

“(B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school.

“(C) that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

“(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118.”

Parent Engagement Committee - Definition

Parent Engagement: a collaborative partnership. While the term “parent involvement” is recognized by the committee, for the purposes of this document the phrase “parent engagement” will be used to indicate all activities that parents undertake to help their children succeed in school and life.

Parent engagement is vital to student success and as one can see it has been recognized within state and federal legislation as well as in school and district policies. Therefore it is important to recognize that a partnership between schools and parents can contribute significantly to a child’s education and academic success.

Parent involvement is a common term used to bring teachers and parents together in schools. Parents who are "involved" serve the school's agenda by doing what educators ask or expect parents to do. The focus of parent involvement is that the school/educator is driving the outcome.
Parent engagement also brings parents and schools together however the perspective and expectation is that parents are "partners" bringing their own knowledge "together" with schools, share decision making, determination of goals and outcomes.

Parent engagement is comprehensive in nature, with the school consistently interfacing with parents at many points, in many venues, over the course of the schooling years.

Parent engagement means that school personnel listen to the families who aren't engaged, assess what we really believe about parents, and celebrate all of the things families do at home for school success.

Parent engagement involves personal contact, educational support at home, two-way communication between home and school, parents involved in school decision making, parents as volunteers working on student achievement, schools as parent resource sites, and schools as welcoming places.

Additional Information & Resources

1. *Involvement or Engagement?* [http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may11/vol68/num08/Involvement-or-Engagement¢.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may11/vol68/num08/Involvement-or-Engagement¢.aspx)


The Parent Engagement Committee  
Why Parent Engagement is Important  
Resources for Parents  
Contact Us

About the Toolkit  
Legal Requirements  
Resources for Schools and Districts  
Reference