

VISTA CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

601 North Fairview Street
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www.vistacharterpublicschools.org

Collin Felch, Ed.D., Superintendent
Karen Amaya, Assistant Superintendent



Vista Charter Public Schools Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Vista Charter Public Schools (“VCPS” or the “Charter School”) has developed a written Parent and Family Engagement Policy (“Policy”) with input from Title I parents and families. VCPS distributes the Policy to parents of Title I students by including it in the parent-student handbook, making copies available in the school office, sharing it at coffee with the principal and at advisory council meetings, and posting it on the website, as the means for carrying out the following Title I parent and family engagement requirements.

Charter School Expectations and Objectives

In establishing the Charter School’s expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement, VCPS has established the following practices:

1. VCPS involves parents and family members in the joint development of the Charter School’s Parent and Family Engagement Plan.

Throughout the year VCPS convenes a series of parent and family input meetings at each school site, scheduled at varied times to accommodate working families, at which a draft of the Plan is presented and discussed. Feedback is also solicited through the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), Community Schools Steering Committee and other established parent groups, as well as through an annual written survey distributed to all Title I families in a format and language they understand. Comments received are compiled and reviewed by the Principal and the Director of Community Schools and Growth, revisions are incorporated into a revised draft, and the revised draft is returned to parents and family members for a final round of comment before it is presented to the Board for adoption.

2. VCPS provides the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity within the Charter School in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education.

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Charter School administration, in coordination with site Principals and designated family engagement staff, provides ongoing coordination, technical assistance, and support to school staff in planning and implementing parent and family engagement activities. This includes assisting staff and parents in interpreting student achievement data, including California School Dashboard results, state and local assessment reports, and progress reports, so that families can use that information to support learning at home. VCPS also offers a series of family workshops throughout the year, including workshops on supporting student homework, literacy-at-home workshops, and English Language Development workshops, scheduled at varied times and offered in a format and language families understand. Where additional expertise is needed, VCPS consults with community partners, local employers, and philanthropic organizations experienced in engaging parents and family members in education.

3. VCPS coordinates and integrates parent and family engagement strategies to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant federal, state, and local laws and programs.

VCPS plans its Title I parent and family engagement activities together with the parent engagement required under other programs rather than separately. The PAC, ELAC, DELAC, and the Community Schools Steering Committee meet on a coordinated calendar, receive information about Title I programs and student achievement data, and are invited to comment on this Policy and on the use of Title I parent and family engagement funds. Input gathered through those committees, through parent input meetings, and through the annual family survey informs the goals, actions, and services in the Charter School's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), and the parent engagement priorities adopted in the LCAP in turn guide the activities offered under this Policy. Engagement activities are also coordinated with the Charter School's English learner, special education, homeless and foster youth, and other categorical programs so that families of students served by more than one program receive consistent information and are not asked to participate in duplicative meetings.

4. VCPS conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the Policy in improving the academic quality at the Charter School.

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In late spring, in preparation for the annual performance review in June, VCPS reviews this Policy and the engagement activities carried out during the year with parents and family members. The review draws on the annual family survey, sign-in and participation records from workshops and parent meetings, and student achievement data, including California School Dashboard results and local assessment results, with attention to whether the measures taken during the year corresponded to changes in student outcomes. Results of the review are presented to and discussed with parents through the PAC, ELAC, DELAC, the Community Schools Steering Committee, and site parent meetings, and parents are asked which activities were most useful and what should be changed. Any resulting revisions are brought back to parents before being presented to the Board.

5. VCPS conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of barriers to greater participation by parents/families (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background).

As part of the annual review, VCPS asks parents directly what keeps families from participating. The annual family survey includes questions on barriers such as work schedules, transportation, child care, language, literacy, disability access, and technology access, and is offered on paper and online in the languages spoken by VCPS families. Participation records are examined to identify groups that are underrepresented at meetings and workshops relative to their share of enrollment, including English learner families, families of students with disabilities, families experiencing homelessness, and foster and immigrant families. Staff follow up with individual parents from those groups by phone, text, or conversation at drop-off and pick-up to hear why they have not been able to attend and what would make participation possible. VCPS also works through ELAC, DELAC, PAC, the Community Schools Steering Committee, and community-based organizations that already serve these families to gather input and encourage involvement. The barriers identified are documented with the annual evaluation and are used to adjust meeting times, locations, formats, translation and interpretation services.

6. VCPS conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with Charter School personnel and teachers.

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VCPS asks parents and family members directly what training and support they need to help their children learn. The annual family survey and the parent input meetings held at each school site include questions about the topics families want offered and the times, locations, and formats that would allow them to attend, and the same input is gathered through the PAC, ELAC, DELAC, the Community Schools Steering Committee, and conversations with teachers at parent-teacher conferences. Requests identified through that process shape the family workshop calendar, which has included Discipline with Love workshops, English Language Development workshops, cooking classes, and driver's education. The needs identified are documented with the annual evaluation and used to set the following year's parent training and family tutoring offerings.

7. VCPS conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of strategies to support successful Charter School and family interactions.

VCPS gathers parent and family feedback on how the Charter School communicates and works with families through ongoing, informal contact throughout the year rather than through a single formal instrument. Principals hear directly from parents at coffee with the principal, and site staff and teachers hear from families in conversation at drop-off and pick-up, at parent-teacher conferences, at school events, and by phone and email. What families report about what is working and what is not is shared with site Principals, staff and the VCPS leadership, discussed with parents as part of the annual review of this Policy, and used to adjust the Charter School's practices for the following year.

8. VCPS uses the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental and family engagement, and to revise, if necessary, the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

At the close of each school year, site Principals and VCPS leadership review the findings of the annual evaluation together: the family survey, participation records, student achievement data, the barriers families identify, and the feedback Principals, staff, and teachers gather informally from parents throughout the year at coffee with the principal, at conferences and school events, and in day-to-day conversation. Activities that families used and found helpful are continued; activities with low participation or poor feedback are changed or replaced, for example by adjusting meeting times and locations or adding translation and interpretation. Those

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decisions set the engagement activities planned for the coming year. If the findings show this Policy no longer matches the needs of families or the practices of the Charter School, VCPS revises it, reviews the revisions with parents, and presents the revised Policy to the Board for adoption.

9. VCPS involves parents in the activities of the Charter School to adequately represent the needs of the population, for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the policy.

The Charter School uses its existing parent bodies (the PAC, ELAC, DELAC, and the Community Schools Steering Committee) for the purpose of developing, revising, and reviewing this Policy. Membership in these groups is drawn from parents and family members of students served by the Charter School and is recruited so that it reflects the school community, including parents of Title I students, English learners, students with disabilities, and students served by the Charter School's other categorical programs. These groups meet throughout the year on a coordinated calendar, receive information about Title I programs and student achievement data, and review and comment on this Policy before it is presented to the Board.

10. VCPS engages parents and family members positively in their children's education by providing assistance and training on topics such as state academic standards and assessments to develop knowledge and skills to use at home to support their children's academic efforts at school and their children's development as responsible future members of our society.

VCPS offers families sessions on the state academic standards their children are expected to meet and on the state and local assessments used at the Charter School, including how to read California School Dashboard results, report cards, and progress reports and what the results mean for their child. Staff walk families through this information again individually at parent-teacher conferences. Alongside the academic sessions, the family workshop series addresses students' growth outside the classroom, for example, through Discipline with Love workshops on positive parenting and behavior support, English Language Development workshops, cooking classes, and driver's education. Workshops are held at each school site at varied times and are offered in a format and language families understand.

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11. VCPS informs parents that they can directly affect the success of their children's learning, by providing parents with techniques and strategies that they may utilize to improve their children's academic success and to assist their children in learning at home.

VCPS gives families concrete strategies they can use at home rather than general encouragement. Teachers review a child's progress with parents at parent-teacher conferences and, where a student is behind, identify specific things the family can do at home, such as daily reading, practicing skills the class is working on, and setting a consistent homework routine. The family workshop series covers the same ground, including sessions on supporting student homework, literacy at home, and English language development. Principals reinforce these strategies at coffee with the principal, and site staff follow up individually with families by phone, text, or conversation at drop-off and pick-up. Information about how families can support learning at home is provided in a format and language families understand.

12. Parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for parental involvement activities.

Parent and family input shapes how the funds reserved for parent and family engagement are spent. Requests that families raise during the year (through the annual family survey, at the PAC, ELAC, DELAC, and Community Schools Steering Committee meetings, at coffee with the principal, and in conversations with site staff) are considered by site Principals and VCPS leadership when engagement activities and the related spending are planned for the coming year. Reserved funds may be spent on professional development for school personnel on parent and family engagement, programs reaching parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school, dissemination of best practices for engaging parents, particularly economically disadvantaged families, or other activities consistent with this Policy.

Involvement of Parents in the Title I Program

To involve parents in the Title I program at VCPS, the following practices have been established:

1. VCPS convenes an annual meeting to inform parents of Title I students about Title I requirements and about the right of parents to be involved in the Title I program.

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VCPS will hold an annual Title I parent meeting at a convenient time near the beginning of each school year. All parents of participating students will be invited and encouraged to attend through advance written and electronic notices. The meeting will explain the school's Title I participation, program requirements, available services, and parents' rights and opportunities for involvement. Staff will provide time for questions and make meeting materials available to families unable to attend.

2. VCPS offers a flexible number of meetings for Title I parents, such as meetings in the morning or evening.

VCPS will offer parent meetings on different days and at varying times, including morning and evening options, based on family needs. Virtual participation will be offered when feasible. VCPS will seek parent input about scheduling and barriers to attendance and consider transportation, child care, or other allowable supports to facilitate participation.

3. VCPS involves parents of Title I students in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the Charter School's Title I programs and the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

VCPS will invite parents of participating students to help plan, review, and improve Title I programs, jointly develop the schoolwide program plan, and review and revise the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Opportunities will include scheduled parent input meetings, surveys, and written feedback throughout the year. Draft materials will be shared before decisions are finalized, with sufficient time for review. VCPS will document parent recommendations and communicate how feedback informed program and policy decisions.

4. VCPS provides parents of Title I students with timely information about Title I programs.

VCPS will provide Title I information at the beginning of the school year and communicate updates as services or opportunities change. Information will be shared through direct family communications, school notices, and the school website, with printed copies available upon request. Communications will explain available services, upcoming meetings, opportunities for involvement, and whom parents may contact with questions. Information will be provided in understandable formats and, to the extent practicable, languages families understand.

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5. VCPS provides parents of Title I students with a description and explanation of the curriculum used at the Charter School, the assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

VCPS will explain its curriculum, academic standards, assessment methods, and expected achievement levels through parent meetings, curriculum information, and parent-teacher conferences. Staff will help families understand classroom and state assessments, interpret their children's results, and identify areas of progress and needed support. Families will receive information about grade-level expectations and ways to support learning at home.

6. If requested by parents of Title I students, VCPS provides opportunities for regular meetings that allow the parents to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

Parents may request meetings by contacting their child's teacher or the school office by telephone, email, or written request. VCPS will arrange opportunities for regular meetings with appropriate staff at mutually convenient times so parents can offer suggestions, discuss academic needs, and participate, as appropriate, in decisions about their children's education.

7. If the schoolwide program plan is not satisfactory to the parents, VCPS provides a means by which parents may make comments on the plan when it is made available.

VCPS will make the schoolwide program plan available for parent review through the school office and school website and explain how to submit comments. Parents who find the plan unsatisfactory may provide comments in writing, electronically, or during a parent meeting; staff will assist with documenting oral comments when needed. VCPS will retain these comments and consider them during the plan review.

The Policy must be updated periodically to meet changing needs of parents and the Charter School. If VCPS has a process in place for involving parents in planning and designing the Charter School's programs, the school may use that process if it includes adequate representation of parents of Title I children.

School-Parent Compact

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VCPS distributes to parents of Title I students a School-Parent Compact (the “Compact”). The Compact, which has been jointly developed with parents, outlines how parents, the entire Charter School staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. It describes specific ways the Charter School and families will partner to help children achieve the State’s high academic standards. It addresses the following legally required items, as well as other items suggested by parents of Title I students:

1. VCPS’s responsibility is to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment to meet the challenging State academic standards.
2. The ways parents will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning, volunteering in the classroom, and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time.
3. The importance of ongoing communication between parents and teachers through, at a minimum, annual parent-teacher conferences during which the compact will be discussed as it relates to the child’s achievement; frequent reports on student progress; access to staff; opportunities for parents to volunteer and participate in their child’s class; and opportunities to observe classroom activities and 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.

VCPS developed the Compact jointly with Title I parents and family members. Input was gathered across the Charter School’s parent bodies (the PAC, ELAC, DELAC, and the Community Schools Steering Committee) and through the annual family survey, which uses both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, together with notes taken informally at parent meetings. That input was compiled and used to draft the Compact, which was brought back to parents for comment before being finalized. VCPS distributes the Compact to parents of Title I students in the parent-student handbook, keeps copies available in the school office, and reviews it with families at coffee with the principal, in a format and language families understand. Following Board approval, the Compact is posted on the Charter School’s website. A copy of the Compact is attached to this Policy.

Building Capacity for Involvement

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VCPS engages Title I parents in meaningful interactions with the Charter School. The Charter School supports a partnership among staff, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement. To help reach these goals, VCPS has established the following practices.

1. VCPS provides Title I parents with assistance in understanding challenging state academic standards, state and local assessments, and how to monitor and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.

VCPS will provide assistance through parent workshops, Back-to-School Night, and individual parent-teacher conferences. Staff will explain state academic standards, state and local assessments, and student performance reports in understandable terms. Parents will receive guidance on monitoring assignments and academic progress, communicating with teachers, and identifying strategies to support their children's learning.

2. VCPS provides Title I parents with materials and training, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, to help them work with their children to improve their children's achievement.

VCPS will provide families with learning resources and training based on student needs and parent input. Topics will include literacy development, mathematics support, and the use of school learning platforms and digital resources. Technology guidance will address responsible use. Resources will be available in print or electronically, with individual assistance for families who need help accessing or using them.

3. With the assistance of Title I parents, VCPS educates teachers, principals, and staff members about the value of parent contributions, and in how to reach out, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and the Charter School.

VCPS will use parent surveys, meeting feedback, and parent contributions to help plan staff professional learning on effective family engagement. Training will address the value of parent knowledge and contributions, respectful two-way communication, culturally responsive outreach, and working with parents as equal partners. Staff will also review strategies for coordinating parent programs,

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addressing participation barriers, and building positive relationships between families and the Charter School.

4. VCPS coordinates and integrates the Title I parental involvement program with other programs, and conducts other activities, such as parent resource centers, to encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.

To the extent feasible and appropriate, VCPS will coordinate family engagement activities with other federal, state, and local programs. Coordination will include sharing resources, aligning family workshops, and supporting transitions into school and between grade levels. VCPS will make parent resources available through the school office and school website and help families connect with educational and community services.

5. VCPS distributes information related to Charter School and parent programs, meetings, and other activities to Title I parents in a format and language that the parents understand.

VCPS will share information about school programs, parent meetings, and activities through written notices, electronic communications, telephone calls, and the school website. Staff will ask families about their preferred language and communication method. Information will use clear, understandable language, with translation and interpretation provided to the extent practicable. Printed copies and accessible formats will be available to support families who cannot readily use electronic communications.

6. VCPS provides support for parental involvement activities requested by Title I parents.

VCPS will invite parents to request family engagement activities and support through surveys, parent meetings, or direct contact with the school office. School leadership will review requests with parents and provide reasonable support responsive to identified needs. Support may include workshops, learning materials, flexible scheduling, interpretation, or assistance accessing school resources. Staff will communicate the response to requests and seek feedback on the usefulness of the support provided.

Accessibility

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VCPS provides opportunities for the participation of all Title I parents and family members, including parents/family with limited English proficiency, parents/family with disabilities, and parents/family of migratory students. Information and school reports are provided in a format and language that parents/family understand, including by:

- Identifying families' language, communication, and accessibility needs during enrollment and updating this information as needed.
- Providing understandable notices and school reports, with translated materials and interpretation to the extent practicable.
- Providing accessible meeting locations, reasonable accommodations, and communication aids or alternative formats based on individual needs.
- Offering flexible meeting times and virtual participation options when feasible.
- Providing printed materials and individual assistance to families with limited access to technology.
- Helping families of migratory students access school information, participate in meetings, and maintain communication during school transitions.