

Bear River Charter School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

The parents, families, faculty, administration and board of directors at Bear River Charter School believe that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and the family. Parental engagement is key to academic achievement. At Bear River Charter School, we strive to provide opportunities for parents to be engaged during the school day by helping in their child's classroom, the library and the lunchroom. We recognize that some parents may not be able to be involved during the school day, so our School Community Association provides opportunities on weekends for parents to help with school activities.

Three principles guide our support of parent engagement: (1) provide specific opportunities for meaningful participation, (2) be flexible and responsive to unanticipated kinds of participation and input (parents do not have to fit into our pre-conceived ideas), (3) honor parent participation by making sure that their activities are meaningful and their input is taken seriously. Our view is that the strongest encouragement for parent participation in activities is to provide meaningful and important activities and to assure that volunteers understand how important they are to a successful school. Similarly, the strongest encouragement to parent input in decision-making and governance is to take parental input seriously and to assure that parents understand that their input has made an impact on the governance of the school.

Involvement in school activities is coordinated at both school and classroom levels.

Opportunities for engagement in on-going activities and one-time projects are explained at the beginning of each new school year during back-to-school night. Parents have the right to be involved in the annual Title I meeting as well. Opportunities to participate will be updated each trimester at parent conferences. At the classroom level, each teacher will include a plan for parent engagement in their annual plan. This will include specific volunteer opportunities and how parents will be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

Parental engagement in school governance is facilitated through both formal and informal channels. The governing board will include at least two current parents who, in addition to representing their own perspectives, will be designated as parent liaisons. These parent liaisons are responsible for soliciting and monitoring parent opinions on all aspects of the school's functioning, and presenting these perspectives to the board. In addition, parents are invited to attend and participate in board meetings. Each board meeting includes a standing agenda item for the consideration of parental input. Under this agenda item, any parent may raise issues and make suggestions for changes. In addition, parents will be surveyed annually on their perception of school functioning and their suggestions for changes. Survey results will be summarized and presented to the board. Beyond these formal mechanisms, each faculty members' job description includes the responsibility to solicit parental input on school functioning and to pass this input on to the director.