

**The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton, Inc**  
(A 2008 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence')

**Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

**Part I: General Expectations:**

The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton, a very small single school building 'district' with grades 6-8 (115 students), operating under the education laws of New Jersey, receives 1% of its total funding (less than \$30,000) from Title I (NCLB) sources. The Classical Academy agrees to implement to the best of its ability and to the greatest extent possible or feasible the following statutory requirements:

- The school will make, and has made in years past, every reasonable effort to involve parents, especially parents or guardians of Title I part A students consistent with Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- The Classical Academy encourages parent involvement and supports the strong and ongoing partnership between teachers-administration-parents, i.e. between home and school.
- The Classical Academy will put into operation activities and procedures for the involvement of parents of Title I Part A students consistent with section 1118 of ESEA and to the extent possible within the operational capability of a small charter school
- Part of its efforts for parent involvement includes developing and implementing a 'School-Parent Compact' consistent with section 1118(s) of the ESEA.
- The Classical Academy believes that 'parental involvement' means the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including:
  - A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's scholastic learning and skills acquisition
  - B) that parents are integral in assuring that their children become and are 'good and contributing members of the school community and respect and obey all provisions in the school's Code of Student Conduct
  - C) that parents' input, views, and suggestions are sought and where practical and appropriate, considered and carried out for the good of their child's learning and and scholastic achievement; and for their child's successful development in character

**Part II: How Classical Academy will Implement School-Wide Required Title I Part A Parental Involvement Policy Components:**

**1: The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton will take the following actions to involve parents [of Title I Part A students] in the joint development of the schools' parental involvement plan under section 1112 of the ESEA:**

- Parents of students Identified as Title I Part A eligibility are individually invited to meet with the school's principal and several of their child's teachers at the beginning of the school year to establish collaboratively goals for their child's school success, both academically and behaviorally.
- At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians of Title I students will be sent a copy of the 'School-Parent Compact' as well as the 'Parent Involvement Policies'
- The Classical Academy will continue to assess the effectiveness of its Title I 'parent involvement' policy and 'student outcome' results and to gather from these what parent involvement policies are valuable, which are not.
- Since universal and inflexible ways for parent involvement, and developing that policy, cannot be well accommodated or be suitable for all parents, especially in such a small school as the Classical Academy, the purpose of developing a 'parent involvement policy' is better served by meeting with parents separately and developing an 'IPIP' (an 'Individual Parent Involvement Plan').
- Personally at meetings or mailed home, each parent will receive a copy of the 'School-Parent Compact'
- Although 'IPIP' stresses the unique situation of each child, and the special approaches or modalities pertinent to each child, there are common elements which are included in the joint development of every Parent Involvement Policy. These are but not limited to:
  - a) Tips on how every child can succeed in the school's challenging academic program
  - b) Parental understanding of the Code of Student Conduct—including 'HIB', 'cell phone policies,' 'personal appearance policy,' 'school bus conduct.' When parents better understand the Code of Student Conduct and can give home-guidance to their student, we find that many behavioral problems not only for Title I students, but for students generally, are obviated or mitigated.
- When judged advantageous, the school will hold general meetings with all or selected groups of parents of Title I Part A students to discuss the common developmental elements of the school's current or proposed Parent Involvement Policy for Title I Part A students.
- Informational Notices are sent to parents, often with each student's grades (9 times a year, almost monthly); items in these notices often ask for parent involvement in some form or another.

## 2: Actions to Involve Parents in the Process of School Review and Improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA.

The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton has taken or will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA.

- **Annual Parental Satisfaction and Opinion Survey:** The Classical Academy for 14 years has conducted this detailed survey of all parents/clients. There are many questions, which are answered anonymously, about teacher quality, administrator effectiveness, academic program, etc. A portion of the survey is used for written suggestions and

opinions about any aspect of the school, its policies, academic program or other components. The tabulated survey results are published each year in the school's Annual Report and have been forces for changes when that change was merited.

- The school administration, who is very easily contacted and often answers the school phone oneself, is nearly always the direct recipient of parents suggestions and their involvement in shaping or adjusting school policies or practices. This ease with which parents, be they parents of Title I students or non-Title I students, may reach the highest school authorities is, from statements through the years of many who have come from 'district-wide schools,' a true blessing, lacking the feelings of frustration and despair they frequently have when attempting to reach a school authority of rank. This ease of contacting high authorities in the school will continue, as it is a virtue which most large schools and school districts cannot, or will not, duplicate.

3: The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton will provide the following necessary coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist parents of Title I, Part A students of Planning and implementing Effective Parental Involvement Activities to Improve Student Academic Achievement and School Performance.

- Title I Part A students are monitored as to their academic achievement reflected in subject grades and in standardized exams.
- Parents receive complete grade reports with teacher written assessments and comments every four to six weeks
- How to interpret and understand standardized test scores will be clearly explained to Title I parents
- Academic problems identified by both teachers and parents, as perhaps reflected in deficient grades or behavioral problems, are addressed collaboratively with such techniques as a) 'differential instruction,' b) providing in school scholastic support (supplemental math and language arts, for instance), c) home environment modifications; d) counseling and guidance provided to both students and parents
- Parental involvement in Child Study Team diagnosis and remediation strategies, if a student, with the permission of the parent, is to be evaluated with some form of learning disability—academic or emotional.

4: Not Relevant to The Classical Academy: The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton cannot integrate parental involvement strategies with parental involvement strategies associated with these other programs as the Classical Academy does not have or sponsor any of the following programs: a) Head Start; b) Reading First; c) Early Reading First; d) Even Start; e) Parents as Teachers; f) Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters; g) State-operated preschool programs.

5: The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton will take the following actions to conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parental involvement policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The

evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parental involvement activities. The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parental involvement policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary and with the involvement of parents, its parental involvement policies.

- a) responses to school's annual survey and opinion questionnaires
- b) opinions and experiences, written or oral, with parents of Title I students
- c) student academic results—school grades and standardized assessments
- d) difficulties with communicating with parents because of language barriers, economic disadvantage, dysfunction or stresses in family structure, deliberate non-responsiveness
- e) chronic misconduct of student and failure to respect the 'Code of Student Conduct'.

Any of the above situations may show that parents are lacking the degree of parent involvement desired or expected. Responses can be: a) creating or adjusting the parent's 'IPIP' ('Individual Parent's Involvement Plan'); b) general meetings with groups of Title I parents/guardians for suggestions on improving parental involvement; c) suggestions from teachers or counselors, or other family members concerned with the education of relatives; d) involvement of outside counselors or authorities, such as mental health or social welfare agencies.

6: The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton will build the school's and parent's capacity for strong parental involvement, in order to ensure the effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the Classical Academy, parents, and teachers as well as other stakeholders to improve student academic achievement through the following activities and policies:

- a) Provide parents of Title I Part A students with the necessary understanding, guidance, and knowledge vital to helping them assist their children in succeeding academically and behaviorally
- b) Understanding the state's academic content standards
- c) Understanding the nature of standardized testing and how to evaluate their children's scores and score trends over time
- d) How to monitor their children's progress using grades, teacher evaluations
- e) How and when to contact teachers directly
- f) Understanding how to access and how to use 'SchoolNotes' (the online homework posting system our school uses).
- g) Developing and implementing individualized methods and strategies both for students and parents productive for success in and out of school.

7: The Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principal, and other staff, both certificated and non-certificated, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to

implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and the school by:

- a) Holding 'Open House' events
- b) Encouraging after-school or evening meetings among parents, teachers, school administration
- c) Notices sent home of school policies, practices, procedures
- d) Important written school policies and rules sent to all Title I Part A parents/guardians; use of bi-lingual personnel To facilitate both written and oral communication with Title I parents whose English is restricted

8: The Classical Academy will take all necessary and useful actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent feasible, in a language the parents can understand.

**Adoption:**

This policy was developed and adopted by the Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton, Inc. on May 8, 2012 and will be in effect for the remainder of this school year and be fully implemented in September, 2012 for the duration of the 2012-2013 school year. This policy will be distributed to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before October 30, 2012.