

District Name: Arkansas Connections Academy
Coordinator Name: Nicole Stephens
Plan Review/Revision Date: 3/26/2024
District Level Reviewer, Title: Nicole Stephens, School Leader

Committee Members

Nicole Stephens, School Leader
Paige McKee, Parent and Family Outreach
Daniel Cisar- Assistant Principal
Russell Powell- Elementary Teacher
Emily Colston- Secondary Teacher
Jeremy Hoback- Manager of Counseling Services
Jonathon Irvin- Parent
Beth Lee- Director of Special Education
Meagan Hurt- School Counselor
Michelle Houser- Secondary Teacher
Paige Hurd- Assistant Principal
Leah Laramore- Secondary Teacher
Melissa Cruise, Parent and Board Member

1: Jointly Developed Expectations and Objectives

Describe how the LEA works with parents and families to develop and review relevant plans, policies, and strategies related to engagement, including establishing expectations and objectives.

At least one Title I Parent meeting is held annually, with the option to participate via telephone or LiveLesson session, to discuss evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Parent School-Parent Compact, schoolwide program plan and support and improvement plans (as applicable), expectations and objectives for meaningful parent involvement, and federal funding and related parent set-asides. All parents are invited to attend, including military service members to determine specific needs of military families. This meeting will be conducted by Nicole Stephens, School Leader.

Further feedback regarding school plans, the parent plan, and overall parent needs is solicited through multiple avenues, including feedback in EMS, phone, email, monthly school newsletters, field trips and back to school activities, and other parent-oriented activities. The Board intends to maintain at least one parent representative among its members. The school also conducts a parent satisfaction survey each year to evaluate the school on a number of criteria, including student progress, teacher support, and the quality of curriculum. Families and students can provide feedback on each lesson and course via the EMS. Teachers and staff have constant contact via phone and email with parents/guardians.

The Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact are submitted to the Department of Education as required, incorporated into the school's schoolwide program plan, and are posted on the school's public website and included in the school's Handbook in EMS available 24/7. Families must certify review and understanding of the school Handbook (including parent policy) upon enrollment. Should any parent submit comments deeming the schoolwide plan as unsatisfactory, this information is submitted to the state as required. The School leader and Parent/Family Engagement outreach coordinator are both included on the school's school improvement team in order to incorporate parent engagement activities into the school improvement plan.

Measurable objectives: There will be an increase of 4% participation from prior year of families who participate/attend at least one family educational event (2022-2023 SY participation is baseline for growth measurement); 90% of families will note satisfaction in family/student events and parent engagement program per the annual parent satisfaction survey.

2: Building Staff Capacity through Training and Technical Assistance

Describe how the district will support all its Title I schools in planning and implementing effective engagement practices.

Note that ARCA is a single building district so training and technical support from district to school is not applicable. ARCA does receive training and access to tools and resources to improve parent engagement and implement effective parent involvement activities through Pearson, including best practices from other Connections Academy schools across the country.

Arkansas Connections Academy is committed to providing high-quality and ongoing professional development for both parents and staff to improve instruction and drive toward proficiency on academic standards. Each year, at the start of the school year, Arkansas Connections Academy provides teacher training and professional development programs to equip teachers which includes training on parent-centered practices such as how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; how to build ties between parents and the school; how to include parents in development of student personalized learning plan; how staff and families can work collaboratively in the best interest of each student. These trainings include how to work closely with families to support the needs of the student for success. The School will invite military service members or their spouses to attend staff meetings to educate faculty members about the needs of the military community and the challenges that military children face. Parents who volunteer as community coordinators work closely with appropriate staff at the school and are provided training each year on how to implement and coordinate parent programs and events.

At least one parent meeting is held annually during which staff and parents discuss the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact. The Policy and Compact are included as a link to the school's Handbook which parents must acknowledge that they have received and read. The policy and compact are also sent to all families via webmail with a read receipt request to track that families have read the plan. All information is sent in a language that families can understand and plans can be translated to multiple different languages as needed. Staff can note family language preferences and assist in obtaining the policy in those languages. ARCA has access to a variety of tools to use to communicate with families in regards to parent programs, meetings and other activities, including Message Boards on the EMS, email, newsletters, direct phone contact with staff, and social media platforms. The family/parent outreach coordinator works very closely with the parent community coordinators to plan activities and provide information about those activities to all parents in a language and manner in which they can understand.

As a virtual learning school, Arkansas Connections Academy is able to use technology and the working partnership between parents and the school staff to facilitate the full participation of parents who might otherwise face barriers to involvement. For example, parents with disabilities who might otherwise find it difficult to participate in their child's brick-and-mortar classroom can readily interact through our online tools and resources. Arkansas Connections Academy makes every effort to provide information in an understandable language and format so that parents can actively participate in their student's schooling. Nicole Stephens is responsible for assisting with parent engagement groups, conducting ongoing site visits to observe parental involvement practices, and for developing and disseminating an annual parent activity report to share with parents, staff, and the community.

3: Building Parent Capacity

Describe how the LEA Supports parents in helping with their student's academic success.

- At the start of the school year, each family receives a Welcome call by a teacher who provides the families and students with any information and expectations for a successful start and allows the family to ask any questions they have. In addition, parents/guardians and Learning Coaches (designated parent/guardian/family member) are provided an in-depth orientation and training on how to use the school's EMS, access curriculum, view and understand student progress and proficiency including state and local/formative assessments and academic standards, and how to monitor a child's progress and improve achievement.
- Parents have the opportunity to be intimately familiar with their students' progress on a day-to-day basis. The school's EMS platform ensures that all parents have access to complete data about their children's learning on a 24/7 basis. In EMS, parents view, in real time whether their student is on track and making adequate progress. Students who are not on track are identified if and when certain thresholds are reached related to completion of lessons, attendance, contact with the teacher, and/or submission of required assessments or portfolio assignments. The school contacts the parent of any student identified as needing support to discuss issues impeding the student's progress and to discuss strategies for getting back "on track." Parents are also provided with frequent reports on their student's progress. For students who are struggling, school staff meet weekly at staff meetings to develop an intervention plan that directly involves the student's parent.
- During the school year, teachers and parents communicate regularly via email, telephone, and LiveLesson™ sessions. Teachers formally conference with parents regularly. In addition, parents are directly involved in checking daily student work for completeness and may view student grades and other progress indicators in real time.
- Materials to encourage parent involvement are provided (with no cost to the family) including online training, a handbook, and school newsletters. Daily lesson plans are accessible 24/7 and enable parents to review and understand the objectives of each lesson so that they can support their student's learning effectively. The teaching and administrative staff and curriculum and technical support staff are also available via email or telephone to provide required assistance and advising support.
- Arkansas Connections Academy provides ongoing training and support to help parents carry out their important role while making optimum use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support. Parents also have access to a Learning Coach Central and Family 411 Website that includes tutorials, training, and tips and tricks for helping their student succeed. These include math and literacy training tips, technology training and safe practices, curriculum support, etc.
- Arkansas Connections Academy holds parent-teacher conferences during which the School-Parent Compact is discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement. If there are performance concerns, or if students are falling behind and in escalation, the student's teacher contacts parents via phone and/or email and includes other teaching or administrative staff as needed. The call focuses on the student's performance and what actions need to occur to get the student back "on-track". Teachers may also set up an in-person meeting to discuss any student or parent concerns and to work collaboratively to set goals and identify a timeline for improvement.
- Parents have multiple opportunities to shape the overall school experience. They can attend student field trips, serve as community coordinators, assist with student activities, serve on the school's Board of Directors as well as participate in Title I planning meetings. Parents, Caretakers, and families may volunteer at the school, however volunteering is not required. The parent and family outreach coordinator gets to know families and works with them to ensure that all parents/families have access to the tools they need to help their child be successful.
- Arkansas Connections Academy will coordinate with leadership at the Department of the Airforce to invite military services members and their families to participate in workshops and special events for

parents.

4: Coordination

Describe how the LEA will coordinate with other organizations, businesses, and community partners to provide additional supports and resources to families that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.

Currently Arkansas Connections Academy coordinates with many postsecondary schools in the state to provide information for our students in addition to college visits for our students. We offer a wide variety of career field trips and events across the state for all of our students. We also have an MOU with Southern Arkansas University where our students can take college courses. In grade 8, we offer transition Live Lessons to prepare students for the transition to high school. We have students all over the state. All families complete an orientation to assist them with transitioning into the virtual setting. Teachers complete Welcome Calls to all families, across all grades, within first week or so of school starting and/or of enrollment date to ensure that families and students are prepared for the start of school and to answer any questions or concerns.

For all grades, our counseling department reaches out to resources and coordinates with other organizations in specific areas local to the student when our students or families have a need or challenge. The specific organization or community resource depends on the unique needs of the family and their location in the state. The school's Counseling team has website and assists students with FAFSA, college and career counseling, and coordinates services from community organizations, etc. for all students (in all grade levels). Counselors work directly with a family in need to reach out to services in their particular location to meet their needs. This could include the local County's Human Services Department to start.

When entering Kindergartners are seeking enrollment at Arkansas Connections Academy, the Enrollment team and school staff work closely with those families to ensure a smooth and successful transition. This begins during enrollment when, as part of the process, enrollment and school staff work with parents of incoming students to determine the appropriate grade level placement for each child. Students identified as potentially working significantly above or below grade take placement tests. Staff are also able to counsel parents on transitioning to an online environment and answer questions about the school. When it is determined that a student came from a Head start or Pre-K program, the school will work with that program to gather as much appropriate information as needed to ensure the student's learning plan is appropriate and the student is set up for a successful transition into the school.

5. Evaluation and Reservation

Describe how the LEA evaluates the content and effectiveness of its Engagement Program in improving the academic quality of all schools. Describe how the LEA reserves and uses Title I funds for parent and family engagement programs and activities.

Arkansas Connections Academy is a single building school district and uses the Arkansas Indistar platform to help ensure full compliance with applicable codes.

ARCA conducts an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this Parent and Family Engagement Policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A plan. Nicole Stephens is responsible for providing an opportunity, to parents of students receiving Title I services, for those parents to assist in the development of the evaluation procedures, to provide feedback on how parent engagement funds should be spent, and analysis of data collected. The evaluation includes identifying barriers to greater

- Hold at least one annual meeting, with the option to participate via telephone or LiveLesson, typically in the fall/beginning of the school year.
- Administer an annual parent satisfaction survey which includes questions about academic interventions, typically in the spring of the school year.
- Solicit feedback through multiple avenues, including feedback in EMS, telephone, newsletters, and email throughout the entire school year.

6: Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of Arkansas Connections Academy on to be approved
at 8/20/2024 Board Meeting (date) and will be reviewed annually.

(Signature of Authorized Official)
(Date)