

HOUSE No. 345

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Willie Mae Allen

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act Establishing a Parent Participation Plan in Public Schools.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Willie Mae Allen	6th Suffolk
Bruce E. Tarr	First Essex and Middlesex
Paul McMurtry	11th Norfolk
Martin J. Walsh	13th Suffolk
Thomas P. Conroy	13th Middlesex

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 385 OF 2007-2008.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PARENT PARTICIPATION PLAN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Parent Participation.

2 Each school council shall develop a parent participation plan (herein “plan”) in consultation with
3 other parent councils, parent advisory committees and other parent organizations. The plan shall
4 be directed at eliminating barriers to parent participation and creating opportunities for
5 involvement. This plan shall be filed with the Department of Education. It shall be written in
6 clearly understandable language and distributed in the language of the home of each household
7 with a child attending that school.

8 A. Information Provided to Parents. Each plan shall contain information pertinent to informed
9 participation by parents. At a minimum it shall contain:

- 10 1. A description of the curriculum of the school, the manner in which it was developed and the
11 goals it seeks to accomplish;
- 12 2. A description of the manner in which the school will address issues of cultural and ethnic
13 diversity through the curriculum and other school activities;
- 14 3. A description of the school budget, how allocation decisions were made, and the rationale for
15 those decisions;

16 4. A description of how staff are assigned;

17 5. A description of how students are assigned;

18 6. A description of school discipline practices and classroom management. This description shall

19 especially set out alternatives to suspension or expulsion;

20 7. A description indicating school dropout rates, grade retentions, and suspensions.

21 B. Opportunities for Participation. Each plan shall specifically address the manner in which

22 participation opportunities will be maximized. It shall describe how:

23 1. The school will develop programs including training and direct instruction to help families

24 develop skills to support their children's developmental needs;

25 2. The school will meet the goal of building effective and consistent communication between the

26 school and home;

27 3. The school will provide opportunities for families to assist the school in pursuit of the

28 educational objectives;

29 4. The school will provide guidance and assistance to families to provide learning activities in

30 the home that support the work of their children at school, including strategies parents can use to

31 improve academic success;

32 5. The school will create joint decision-making opportunities and participation in the

33 development of school policy;

34 6. The school will create opportunities for parents to raise new issues relevant to the educational

35 needs of students.

36 C. Parent Conferences. Each participation plan shall guarantee an opportunity for a minimum of

37 two individual and confidential parent teacher conferences a year. The purpose of these

38 conferences will be to discuss the mutual expectations of the parents and the school concerning

39 the educational progress of the child, to review whether those expectations are being met and to

40 discuss improvements which should be considered and implemented.

41 Nothing in this section shall be construed to mean that parents or the school may not request

42 additional conferences as needed and said conferences shall not be unreasonably denied.

43 D. School Visitation. Notwithstanding any other provision of the participation plan, the school

44 shall guarantee reasonable access to the school for the parent or the parent's designee for the

45 purposes of classroom observation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to deny or limit

46 access to the school for other reasons.

47 E. Compliance with Parent Participation Plan. Upon petition of five percent or more of the
48 households in any school, except that for schools of less than 200 students the number shall be
49 10 households, the Department of Education shall hold a hearing if the petition asserts that a) the
50 school has not developed a parent participation plan which meets the minimum requirements of
51 this law or b) the school has failed to implement the provisions of the plan as adopted.

52 If the Department finds that the conditions described in “a” or “b” of this section exist, it shall
53 have the authority to order remedial actions to insure compliance.

54 If a school fails to comply with remedial orders of the Department, the Department may apply
55 such sanctions as it deems appropriate, including a withholding of state funds or some portion
56 thereof. Upon compliance, such funds shall be restored.

57 F. Exceptional Parent Participation Plans. The Department of Education may from time to time
58 issue certificates and awards of excellence to schools which have complied with this law and
59 have maximized opportunities for parent participation.

60 G. Additional Provisions. Any school may include in its parent participation plans additional
61 provisions which exceed the minimum requirements of this law. However, in no event may a
62 school develop plans that result in negative consequences to a student if parents fail or are unable
63 to pursue the opportunities provided in this law.