

# **Gordon County Schools Parental Involvement Policy 2016-2017**



## **What is Parental Involvement?**

Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- That parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
- That parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1118 of the ESEA.

## **About the Parental Involvement Policy**

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Gordon County Schools has developed this parental involvement policy that establishes the district's expectations for parental involvement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe commitment of the district to engage families in the education of their children and to build the capacity in its Title I schools to implement family engagement strategies and activities designed to achieve the district and student academic achievement goals.

When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and enjoy school more. Title I, Part A provides for substantive parental involvement at every level of the program, such as in the development and implementation of the district and school plan, and in carrying out the district and school improvement provisions. Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) contains the primary Title I, Part A requirements for schools and school systems to involve parents in their children's education. Consistent with Section 1118, the district will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parental involvement policies meet the requirements of Section 1118 (b) and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1118 (d) of the ESEA.

## Jointly Developed

All parents of children in Title I schools were invited to give input and feedback on the district parental involvement policy as well as review and discuss the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan. Parents are given opportunities to review and provide input at multiple meetings held at the schools. A district-wide meeting was held in April for the purpose of reviewing and revising the district parental involvement policy for the upcoming school year and Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan. Parents were informed of the meeting by phone calls and/or text messages from the Infinite Campus messenger system and posted announcements on the system website and Facebook. Each Title I school hosted a Spring Parent Input Meeting to review and provide input on the revisions of the district parent involvement policy and other Title I documents.

Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy at any time on the district website or by submitting written comments at the schools or district office. All feedback received is used for policy revisions.

The district parental involvement policy is posted on the district website, available in print format at each school's office, and in the parent resource rooms at the schools.

## Strengthening Our School

The district's two Family Engagement Specialists will provide assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure parental involvement requirements are being satisfied and that parent engagement activities are being implemented. This district will provide assistance to Title I schools in the following ways:

- Provide notifications and resources to help improve and strengthen family engagement
- Monthly technical assistance to Title I school principals to review family engagement plans, activities, and compliance requirements.
- Provide ongoing guidance and support during school visits on parental involvement practices.
- Hold parental involvement meeting for principals and family engagement specialists in June to review parental involvement requirements and plan opportunities for parental involvement activities and meetings for the upcoming school year.



## Reservation of Funds

Gordon County Schools will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in FY17 to carry out the parental involvement requirements listed in this policy and as described in Section 1118 of ESEA. Furthermore, Gordon County Schools will distribute 95 percent of the amount reserved to all Title I schools to support their local-level parental involvement programs and activities. Gordon County Schools will provide clear guidance and communication to assist each Title I school in developing an adequate budget that addresses their needs assessment and parental recommendations.

Each school will gather input on how these parental involvement funds will be used at the school-level by inviting input on a letter from the principal, surveying parents, meetings throughout the school year, and/or providing input forms specific to the budget. Comments and minutes from meetings along with survey responses will be reviewed to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and changes to the parental involvement budget.

# Building School and Parent Capacity

Gordon County Schools will, with the assistance of its Title I, Part A schools take the following measures in order to build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement through the following activities and strategies:

Sharing important information with Title I schools and parents on the understanding of Title I, Part A requirements, Georgia Standards of Excellence, Georgia Performance Standards, and state and local assessments including Georgia Milestones, Student Growth Assessments, and system benchmarks as well as required assessments for students taking alternative forms of assessments.

Parent trainings, materials, and resources will be offered throughout the school year to support parents in understanding the academic standards, strategies to help their children with the academic standards, and assessments including performance levels. The district's Parent Engagement webpage will contain additional information such as parent guides and effective strategies that will assist parents with helping their children at home and with how to utilize Infinite Campus. Copies of related materials are available for parents at the Title I schools. Dates and locations of these trainings will be posted on the website, in newsletters or flyers, and announced through Infinite Campus messenger.

Collaborating with Bright from the Start Pre-Kindergarten program and other state funded preschool programs in the district to share information about parent engagement activities that will help parents and their child prepare for kindergarten and improve school transition. Gordon County Schools provides pre-K services in all elementary schools. This allows the child and the parent to become familiar with the elementary setting and begin to build relationships with school staff to increase parent engagement. Pre-Kindergarten teachers and staff are invited to help plan transition activities and parent engagement activities. District Family Engagement Specialists participate in the Gordon County Family Connection to work with other organizations to encourage and support parents participating in their children's education.

Gordon County Schools supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective parent involvement strategies. The District Family Engagement Specialists will participate in professional development to continue to develop strategies to build a strong parent engagement program. The District Family Engagement Specialists will train school staff and faculty on improving school-parent communication including how to reach out to parents and work with parents as equal partners. Principals will meet monthly with the Title I Director and/or District Family Engagement Specialist to review parental involvement requirements, evaluate the current parent involvement program, and discuss strategies to improve the parent involvement program.

To ensure that information related to district, school, and parent programs, meetings, and activities is available to all parents in an understandable and uniform format, each Title I school will send home Parent notifications and resources in the parent's native language where applicable, and the district employs a translator to provide oral and written translations. The district will utilize Infinite Campus messenger system for phone calls and text messages, school and district websites, local news media, and other school social media to post information for parents about activities.

As a charter school system, each school and the district has a governance team consisting of parents and community members. These members are involved in decisions that affect children and families, as they are involved in joint planning and program design. All parents are welcome to attend these meetings to become more involved in the schools.

A District Title I Advisory Team has been established to provide advice on all matters related to parent involvement in Title I, Part A programs. The advisory team consists of parent representatives from all Title I schools.

Providing other reasonable support of parental involvement activities as parents may requests. Principals, District Family Engagement Specialists, and other system employees will respond in a timely manner to the needs and requests of parents as they relate to the parent involvement policy. Feasible requests are incorporated into the existing plan for the year or are considered for implementation the following year.

## **Opportunities for Parental Consultation**

Input and suggestions from parents are an essential component of the district and school improvement plans that are developed each year. All parents of students eligible to receive Title I services are invited and encouraged to share input and suggestions throughout the year in the following ways:

- Feedback forms available at the schools, district office, and online
- School parent input meetings and by contacting the school principal or the District Family Engagement Specialists
- Annual district survey
- District meetings

Parents will be notified via school and district websites, Infinite Campus messenger, social media, school newsletters or flyers as these events are scheduled. Feedback forms are provided online as well as in the schools giving parents the opportunity to share input and suggestions on use of Title I funds, their school's Title I parental involvement program, their school's school-parent compact, their school's parental involvement policy, and the district parental involvement policy. District website information is posted at [www.gcbe.org](http://www.gcbe.org). Select the **Parents** tab and select **Parent Engagement**.

## **Accessibility**

In carrying out the parental involvement requirements established by Section 1118 of the ESEA, the District Family Engagement Specialists and Title I Director will communicate and collaborate with other school district departments including Student Support Services and Exceptional Student Services to ensure full opportunities for participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children including providing information and school reports in a language parents can understand.

## **Parental Involvement Evaluation**

Each year, Gordon County Schools will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parental involvement policy and the parental involvement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey, information collected on input forms, and parent input meetings. Surveys will be sent home with students and posted on the school and district websites for parents to complete. District parent input meetings will be designed to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective parental involvement.

The findings from the parent input meetings, input forms, and the survey results will be used to design strategies to improve effective parental involvement, to remove possible barriers to parent participation, and to revise its parental involvement policies.

## **Adoption**

This districtwide parental involvement policy has been developed jointly and agreed upon with parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by the collaboration of parents, school and district personnel at the Spring Parent Input Meeting.

This policy was adopted on September 26, 2016 and will be in effect for the 2016-2017 academic school year. The school district will make this policy available to all parents by placing copies at every Title I school front office, parent resource rooms, and Title I events. In addition, the policy will be included on school and district websites.