

# Gordon County Schools Parent and Family Engagement Policy 2017-2018



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www.gcbe.org

706/629-7366



## What is Parent and Family Engagement?

Parent and Family Engagement means the participation of parents and family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- (A) That parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- (B) That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education.
- (C) 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.
- (D) The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA.

## About the Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Gordon County Schools has developed this parent and family engagement policy that establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe Gordon County Schools commitment to engage families in the education of their children and to build the capacity in its Title I schools to implement parent and 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 parent and family engagement 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 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains the primary Title I, Part A requirements for schools and school systems to involve parents and family members in their children's education. Consistent with Section 1116, Gordon County Schools will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116(d) of the ESSA.

## Jointly Developed

All parents of children in Title I schools were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the 2017-2018 school year during parent input meetings held in March at the schools. These meetings provided opportunity to review and revise the policy. Parents were informed of the meetings by newsletters, social media, website postings, and Infinite Campus callouts or text messages.

During April and June, multiple meetings were held for all parents and families to review and discuss the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan including participating in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. All parents were invited to attend a meeting by posting announcements on the system website, social media, or email invites.

Parents and families are given opportunities to review and provide input on the School Improvement/Title I Schoolwide Plans at multiple meetings held at the schools including the spring parent input meeting. Additionally, each school uses its Local School Governance Team (LSGT) to review the plans and policy for input.

Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy and school improvement/schoolwide plans 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 parent and family engagement 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 and Title I Director will provide assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure parent and family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that parent engagement activities are being implemented. The 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 parent and family engagement practices; and
- hold a parent and family engagement meeting for principals and family engagement specialists in June to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement 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 FY18 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy including disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. Furthermore, Gordon County Schools will distribute 90 percent of the amount reserved to Title I schools to support their local-level family engagement programs and activities with the priority given to high-need schools. The district will provide clear guidance and communication to assist each Title I school in developing an adequate family engagement budget that addresses their needs assessment and parent recommendations.

Input will be gathered on how these parent and family engagement funds will be used by inviting input on a letter from the principal, surveying parents, meetings throughout the school year, and providing input forms online with items specific to the budget. Comments and minutes from meetings along with survey responses will be reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and consider changes to the parent and family engagement budget.

# Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation

Input and suggestions from parents and family members 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 to attend two meeting opportunities described in this section to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students to reach our student academic achievement goals.

## **Spring Parent and Family Input Meetings**

**~ March 26 – 30, 2018**

Each Title I school will host a forum for parents and family members to participate in roundtable discussions to review the school improvement plan/schoolwide plan, the district and school's parent and family engagement policies, the school-parent compacts, as well as provide input on building staff capacity to engage families, the family engagement budget and programs. Each Title I school will invite parents and family members on the newsletter sent home to all students and send a callout or text message in advance of the meeting. Information regarding the Spring Parent and Family Input Meetings will also be made available on the school websites.

## **District Stakeholder Input Meeting**

**~ June 12 – 13, 2018**

All parents are welcome to hear the latest updates from Gordon County Schools as well as review and provide input into the district parent and family engagement policy and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan for the 2018-19 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will be included in the summer Title I newsletter, posted on the district website, and on social media in advance of the meeting.

**Unable to attend our input meetings? Please visit the Parent and Family Engagement tab under 'Parents' at [www.gcbe.org](http://www.gcbe.org) to review these documents and leave your input any time throughout the year.**



*Scan the code with your smartphone or tablet to access family engagement information from the Gordon County School website.*





## Building Capacity

Gordon County Schools will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong family engagement in order to ensure effective engagement of parents and family members and to support a partnership among the Title I schools, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following districtwide activities and programs.

***Of Parents*** – Gordon County Schools will work as a district and through its Title I schools to provide assistance to parents in understanding state and district academic information connected to their student's learning and progress, as well as information regarding the Title I program. Gordon County Schools will share important information with Title I schools and parents on the understanding of Title I, Part A requirements, Georgia Standards of Excellence, local assessments and required assessments for Georgia students including alternative forms of assessments.

Parent trainings, materials, and resources will be offered throughout the school year specifically focused on literacy and mathematics aligned to the district improvement goals to support parents in understanding the challenging state academic standards, strategies to help work with their children at home with the academic standards, using technology, monitoring progress, and state and local assessment. The district's Parent and Family Engagement webpage will contain additional information such as parent guides, study guides, practice assessments, and effective strategies that will assist parents with helping their children at home, and how to utilize Infinite Campus to monitor student progress. Copies of related materials are available for parents at the Title I schools that may have limited internet access, including copies in Spanish. Dates and locations of these trainings will be posted on the website, in newsletters or flyers, and announced through Infinite Campus messenger.

As a charter school system, each school and the district has a local school 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 open meetings to become more involved in the schools. Dates and times of meetings are posted on the website and in the newspaper.

Collaborating with Bright from the Start Pre-Kindergarten program and other state funded preschool programs in the district to share information about parent and family 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.

***Of School Staff*** – Gordon County School supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective parent engagement 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 faculty and school staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, on improving school-parent communication including how to reach out to parents and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school as requested by parents. Principals will meet monthly with the Title I Director and/or District Family Engagement Specialist to review parent and family engagement requirements, evaluate the current parent and family program, and discuss strategies to improve the parent and family engagement program.

To ensure that information related to the district and schools, 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. 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, and other school social media to post information for parents about activities.

The District will provide other reasonable support of parent and family engagement 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 and family engagement policy. Feasible requests are incorporated into the existing plan for the year or are considered for implementation the following year.

# Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, Gordon County Schools will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey, collection of information on input forms, and parent input meetings. In addition, district parent and family input meetings will be designed to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs of parents and family members and to design strategies for more effective parent and family engagement.

Beginning in April, each Title I school will send home a survey and post an online link to the survey for parents to provide valuable feedback regarding the parent and family engagement activities and programs.

Gordon County Schools will use the findings from the school input meetings, input forms, and the survey results to improve the academic quality of all schools. Analysis and use of results will focus on identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities; needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. Evidence-based strategies will be utilized to address the needs identified in the annual evaluation to improve effective family engagement, to remove possible barriers to parent participation, and to revise its parent and family engagement policies at the school and district level.

## Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the District Family Engagement Specialists and the Title I Director will communicate and collaborate with other district departments including Student Support Services and Exceptional Student Services to ensure full opportunities for participation of parents and family members with limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children including providing information and school reports in a language parents can understand.

## Adoption

This districtwide parent and family engagement policy has been developed jointly and agreed upon with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by the collaboration of parents, school, and district personnel at the Spring Parent and Family Input Meetings.

This policy was adopted by Gordon County Schools on July 24, 2017 and will be in effect for the 2017-2018 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before September 1, 2017.

