

Coffee County Schools

Parent & Family Engagement Policy

2020-2021

2020-2021
Revised June 16, 2020
1311 S. Peterson Avenue
Douglas, GA 31533
www.coffee.k12.ga.us



What is Parent & Family Engagement?

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 and families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- (B) That parents and families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education.
- (C) That parents and families 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 & Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Coffee County School System 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 partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This policy describes Coffee County School System's commitment 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 parent and family engagement at every level of the program, such as in the development and implementation of the district and school policy, 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, the Coffee 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

Throughout the school year, each school gathers feedback from parents and families on the system and school Parent and Family Engagement Policies. The system conducts a spring parent survey and solicits input/feedback on the System Parent and Family Engagement Policy. During the annual parent meeting in April 2019, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve the system parental involvement plan for the upcoming school year. The system sent the information to the local newspaper, notified on the system marquee and system website, and had each school send an automated phone message to all parents to inform them about the meeting. During this meeting, parents reviewed and discussed the District Improvement Plan. Upon final revision, the System Parent and Family Engagement Policy was submitted to the state. Parents and families are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the plan at any time to the Federal Programs Director or by submitting written comments to their child's school. All feedback received is reviewed and included in the school policy.

The System Parent and Family Engagement Policy is posted on system and school websites, distributed during the annual Title I school parent meetings early in the school year, and made available in the schools' parent resource centers.

Strengthening Our School

The System Family Engagement Coordinator (FEC) provides technical assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure parental and family requirements are satisfied and that strategies and activities are being implemented. Title I schools receive notifications and resources from the System FEC to help improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the System FEC holds meetings and trainings with Title I schools' FECs review parent and family engagement policies and activities. Additionally, the System FEC works with principals and School FECs in the spring to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year and begin planning for the upcoming year.

Reservation of Funds

The Coffee County School System will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in FY21 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. The schools' leadership has opted to use the reserved funds for a district-wide project by providing family engagement coordinators at each of the schools. The system provides clear guidance and communication to assist each Title I school in developing an adequate parent and family engagement budget that addresses their needs assessment and recommendations. Title I schools hold a School Improvement Planning Meeting in the spring for parents, families and faculty to provide suggestions on how these parent and family engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the system and school level. Comments and minutes from these meetings are reviewed by the system to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and consider changes



Opportunities for Parent and Family Consultation

Input and suggestions from parents and families are an essential component of the district and school improvement plans that are developed each year. All parents and families of students eligible to receive Title I services are invited to attend various meeting opportunities to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students reach academic achievement goals established for the school year.

Spring Parent and Family Engagement Surveys

An annual survey is conducted in March/April in which all parents and families are asked for feedback/input on the district and school parent and family engagement policies, the District Improvement Plan/CNA and the use of Title I funds. Major effort is put forth during the spring parent-teacher conference day to obtain as many completed surveys as possible. Flyers telling about the surveys are posted at each school and district front office. Links to access the electronic versions of the surveys are available on the school and district websites. The surveys are also available in Spanish for our growing Hispanic population. Parents can also request a hard copy of the survey instead of taking it online.

District and School Parent and Family Engagement Meetings – Spring

During the spring of each year, the district holds a meeting at which time all parents and families can review and provide input into the System Parent and Family Engagement Policy, the Strategic Plan/District Improvement Plan/CNA and use of funds for the upcoming school year. Also, during this meeting, an analysis of the spring parent and family engagement survey results are presented. The schools likewise convene a parent meeting at the school to discuss/review the Schoolwide Plan, Parent and Family Engagement Policy, and Parent-School Compact. Schools also ask for parents/families to comment on the School-Parent Compacts, the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, and the use of Title I funds, in particular the 1% parental engagement set aside money. Schools use the information solicited from all parents and families in developing plans for the upcoming school year. Notices regarding the district and school meetings are distributed in various ways: websites, Facebook pages, automated phone calls, newspaper articles, and flyers. If someone is unable to attend any of these meetings, they can visit the district website at www.coffee.k12.ga.us to review the documents. Comments/input may be sent to Dr. Christina Tucker, the district Family Engagement Coordinator.

Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the district family engagement coordinator will communicate and collaborate with the Office for Student Support 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.

Adoption

This system wide parent and family engagement policy has been developed jointly and agreed upon with parents and families of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by the collaboration of parents, families and school and system personnel at the annual policy revision meeting. This policy was reviewed and revised by the Coffee County School System on June 16, 2020 and will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The school system will make this policy available to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before August 17, 2020.

Building Staff and Parent/Family Capacity

The Coffee County School System builds the staff and parent/family capacity for strong engagement. The following activities and programs are provided in order to ensure effective engagement of parents and families and to support a partnership among the Title I schools, parents, families and the community to improve student academic achievement.

The Coffee County School System works with its Title I schools to provide assistance to parents and families in understanding state and system academic information connected to their student's learning and progress, as well as information regarding the Title I program. The SystemFEC works with each school to provide training for parents and families to gain knowledge about the Georgia Standards of Excellence and the achievement standards, as well as the required assessments for Georgia students, including alternative forms of assessment. The dates and locations for these classes are communicated via the school Website, flyers posted at the school, newspaper articles, notices sent home, as well as shared in each school's newsletter. The Coffee County School System also provides a page on the system website that contains Title I information and resources.

The Coffee County School System coordinates and integrates the System's Parental and Family Programs with the Head Start program and the Early Learning program within the system. While neither program receives Title I funds, the parents and families of these students are invited to attend parent engagement activities/programs. A Pre-K Transition Camp is provided each year prior to the start of school. Parents receiving training and students experience activities that will take place in school (eating lunch, riding the bus, etc.) The system also coordinates with these programs to ensure that parents are informed about available resources.

To ensure that information related to system, school, and parent programs, meetings, and activities is available to all parents and families in an understandable and uniform format, each Title I school posts meeting days/times in their front office as well as send home information about upcoming programs/activities. Parent notifications and resources are sent home in parents'/family's native language, mostly Spanish, and interpreters are available at events and meetings, as needed. Information posted on the system website will be translated to the extent practicable. The system also utilizes the automated phone system, school websites, local newspaper, and the Parent Portal to post information for parents and families. An employee of the system assists with all translations.

The Coffee County School System Family Engagement Coordinator provides technical assistance to principals, assistant principals and school family coordinators at the beginning and throughout the school year to learn and discuss strategies to build staff capacity in creating a welcoming environment, increasing family engagement, improving school-family communication and building ties with parents and community. The continuous focus is on improving parent and family engagement. Articles and videos are shared with each school FEC to share ideas and strategies with all staff to build the capacity to engage families and communities in their child(ren)'s education. The System FEC also provides technical assistance opportunities by visiting each Title I school to review and discuss parental involvement requirements and initiatives.

The Coffee County School System has established a System Wide Parent/Family Advisory Council comprised of parent and family representatives from each Title I school to provide advice on all matters related to parent and family engagement in Title I, Part A programs. The system invites community and business partners to serve on this council each year. Their collaboration and participation is most valuable in building school and parent/family capacity.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, the Coffee County School System conducts an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy and engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent and family needs survey. This survey is conducted in March of each year.

In addition, during March, April & May, each Title I school sends home information for parents and families to provide valuable feedback regarding the parent and family engagement activities and programs, the School-Parent Compacts and the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. These policies are posted on the System and school

websites for parents and families to review and provide feedback.

Title I schools also conduct a School Improvement Planning meeting to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs parents and families of children eligible to receive Title I services and to design strategies for more effective parental and family engagement.

The Coffee County School System uses the findings from the system and school meetings and feedback throughout the year to design strategies to improve effective parental and family engagement, to remove possible barriers to participation, and to revise its parent and family engagement policies.