

Douglas County School System

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

2018–2019
Revised July xx, 2018
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What is 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 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 ESEA.

About the Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Douglas County School System (DCSS) has developed this Parent and Family Engagement policy that establishes our district's expectations for 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 DCSS'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 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, the DCSS 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

During the annual DCSS Stakeholder Meetings, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district Parent and Family Engagement policy for the 2018-2019 school year. The district posted an announcement on the school district website, Facebook page, Twitter feed, advertised in local publications and on local TV channels. During this meeting, parents also reviewed and discussed the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Additionally, each Title I school used its Parent Advisory Council to review the district Parent and Family Engagement policy before the end of the school year. The policy was also posted on the district website soliciting comments and input from families and community members through an online form.

Upon final revision, the district Parent and Family Engagement policy was incorporated into the CLIP which was submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy at any time by submitting written comments to your child's school. All feedback received by July was included with the policy for this school year.

The district Parent and Family Engagement policy was posted on district and school websites, distributed to all Title I families in October, and made available in the schools' parent resource centers.



Strengthening Our Schools

This year, the district Parent Outreach Specialist will provide assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure Parent and Family Engagement requirements are being satisfied and that parent engagement strategies and activities are being implemented. Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the Parent Outreach Specialist to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the Parent Outreach Specialist will hold quarterly meetings with Title I Principals and monthly meetings and trainings with parent and family engagement staff, Instructional Lead Teachers (ILTs) and Parent Outreach Facilitators (POFs) to review family engagement requirements, plans and activities.

Reservation of Funds

The DCSS will reserve one percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in FY19 to carry out the Parent and Family Engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. Furthermore, the DCSS will distribute 90 percent of the amount reserved to all Title I schools to support their local-level Parent and Family Engagement programs and activities. The district will provide 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 parent recommendations.

Each Title I school will host Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings throughout the school year for parents to provide suggestions how these family engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-level. Comment cards and minutes from these meetings will be reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and consider changes to the family engagement budget.

Building Capacity

The DCSS will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement 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 activities and programs such as Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT). APTT is an evidence-based family engagement model that builds partnerships with parents. With the teacher, families set student academic goals to be addressed through at-home learning activities and strategies.

Of Parents The DCSS 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 and APTT. The DCSS will provide meetings, workshops and resources for parents to gain knowledge about the state-adopted standards and the achievement standards, as well as the required assessments for Georgia students including alternative forms of assessment. The dates and locations for these will be posted on school websites and shared through district and school Title I newsletters.

The DCSS will also coordinate pages on the district and school websites that will contain resources and materials, including parent guides, study guides, practice assessments, and APTT activities, to help parents work with their children at home. Copies of these materials will be made available at all Title I schools for those families who may have limited internet access, including copies in Spanish. To assist parents with understanding the online student information system and other digital educational resources (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), the DCSS technology staff will partner with Title I schools to host workshops for parents. Dates and times for these workshops will be determined and announced by each individual school.

The Parent Outreach Specialist, the POFs and the ILTs will work with local early education programs and other federal and state funded preschool programs to coordinate parent involvement efforts to have a greater impact on the community. Yearly parent orientations, facilitated by DCSS Title I staff will be held at Douglas County Head Start to help pre-K parents make the transition to Kindergarten. DCSS and all Title I schools will promote the Parent Resource Centers in the district and local community. Working collaboratively with outside agencies, Title I staff will promote Kindergarten registration through various communication strategies, such as flyers, public notices, and phone calls. Transition assistance and resources will be offered at all transitional levels.

Of School Staff Title I staff will provide two trainings to teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff during each school year. Parent Leaders may help plan and or facilitate these trainings. The trainings will focus on learning and discussing strategies to increase parent engagement, improving school-family communication, creating welcoming environments and building ties with parents and the community. If the school is implementing APTT, the DCSS Family Engagement Leadership Team (FELT) will conduct an APTT training for the entire school staff. The purpose of the FELT is to coordinate the sustainability and growth of APTT in the district. The Parent Outreach Specialist will also provide opportunities for visits to each Title I school to review and discuss Parent and Family Engagement requirements and initiatives.

To ensure that information related to district, school, parent programs, APTT meetings, and activities is available to all parents, each Title I school is required to send home and post online information for parents and family members in an understandable language and uniform format. At the beginning of the year, school staff will be trained on parent notifications and resources to be sent home in parents' native language, where applicable, and providing interpreters at parent events and APTT meetings. Information posted on the district website will be translated to the extent practicable. The district will also utilize school phone call systems (Parent Link and NotifyMe), district and school websites, social media, local news media, and other school message systems to post information for parents.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Parents are surveyed annually to determine whether parent engagement needs are being met effectively and appropriately through the implementation of the parent engagement programs. Parents are given the option to complete the survey via paper copy or electronically (Survey Monkey). The findings of this survey are used to develop strategies for school improvement and/or to revise the LEA and school-level policies. These findings are also used in planning future parent workshops and meetings. Areas evaluated include academics and school leadership, parent involvement, Title I, school environment, and the school Parent Engagement Program.

During the school level PAC meetings, the DCSS will use findings from the survey results to design strategies to improve effective Parent and Family Engagement, to remove possible barriers to parent participation, and to revise its Parent and Family Engagement policies.

Accessibility

In carrying out the Parent and Family Engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the DCSS will 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.

Schools can use contracted services of an interpreter and/or translator when needed, if allocated and applicable. Translating and interpreting services and devices may also be used.

Mark Your Calendars

For Parents

Annual Parent Survey
March 4-15, 2019

CLIP Feedback Meeting
May 2019 –
DCSS Central Office

CLIP Planning Meeting
July 2019 –
DCSS Central Office

For Schools

Title I Principal Meetings
Bi-Annually
DCSS Central Office

Parent and Family
Engagement Team Meetings
Monthly
DCSS Central Office

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.

This policy was adopted by the Douglas County School System on July xx, 2017 and will be in effect for the 2018-2019 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 October 1, 2018.

