



Title I Family and Community Engagement Plan

2017-2018

What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement means the participation of parents and families in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication. Generally, communication involves student academic learning and other school activities, which ensures that:

(A) Parents and families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.

(B) Parents and families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.

(C) 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) Other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA, are implemented.

About the Family and Community Engagement Plan

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) has developed this Family and Community Engagement Plan which establishes the district's expectations for meaningful and effective family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school, family, and community partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe GCPS's commitment to engage families in the education of their children and to build the capacity of its Title I schools to implement family engagement strategies and activities designed to reach the district's goals for increased student academic achievement.

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 parent and family engagement at every level of the program, such as in the development and implementation of the district and school plans, 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 district will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level Family and Community Engagement Plans meet the requirements of Section 1116 (b) and include, as a component, a School-Family Compact consistent with Section 1116 (d) of the ESSA.

◆ Jointly Developed! Opportunities for Input! ◆

Input and suggestions from parents and family members are essential components of district and school improvement plans that are developed jointly each year. All parents of eligible students are invited to attend meetings described in this section to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students reach academic achievement goals. Save the dates below to join us in planning and learning about the 2017-2018 Title I programs. Input from the April 2017 District Title I Parent Meeting is incorporated in the development of this 2017-2018 Family and Community Engagement Plan.

Stay tuned for other, more innovative ways, to engage with us in the near future!

District Title I Parent Meetings (DTIPM)

The district will host meetings for parents and family members to hear the latest Title I updates as well as review and provide input into the district's Family and Community Engagement Plan, Title I budget, and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) for the upcoming school year.

Notices regarding these meetings will be mailed in advance to all families of students in middle and high school and will be sent home with students in elementary school. Each school will also notify families of the meetings by posting information on the school's website as well as through an additional format. The district will also communicate information regarding these meetings on the GCPS website.

Save the Date!
September 12 or 14
March 27 or 29

Times and locations to be determined.

Local School Title I Meetings

At least one Title I Planning Meeting will be held between the months of May and August 2017. Each school will host a meeting for all parents and family members to participate in the review of the Title I program. Families and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on the Schoolwide Plan/Local School Plan for Improvement (LSPI) Goals, as well as the Title I budget and funding priorities for the upcoming school year. This is also an opportunity for families and community stakeholders to review and jointly-develop the school's Family and Community Engagement Plan, the School-Family Compact, and the Family Engagement Calendar of Events.

Each school will advertise the meeting or meetings in at least two ways in an effort to notify families and encourage participation. Information regarding the Title I Planning Meetings will also be made available on the school's website.

Check your school calendar for dates and times.

EDUCATOR

BUILDING CAPACITY

PARENT

TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOLS

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) will build parents' and schools' capacity for strong family engagement in order to support a partnership among the Title I schools, families, and the community to improve the academic achievement of students through districtwide and local school activities.

Building the capacity of families

GCPS supports parents in meeting their basic obligation as their child's first teacher. Each Title I school has a Title I contact who will support families in promoting the academic achievement of students. Workshops and schoolwide events are offered to build the capacity of families to support their children academically. The local school's Parent Center offers resources and materials for families to checkout for use at home.

The district staff works collaboratively with local Title I schools to provide assistance to parents and families in understanding challenging state and district academic standards, and both state and local assessments. Each school hosts an Annual Title I Parent Meeting in the fall where Title I requirements are shared as well as other helpful tools, such as technology resources like eCLASS and Parent Portal, to aide in the academic success of their child.

GCPS will coordinate and integrate the district's family and community engagement programs with federal, state and local, public and private preschool programs to fully support school readiness and a successful kindergarten transition. GCPS advertises kindergarten registration in local newspapers, GCPS and local school websites and other media platforms. All Title I schools offer a kindergarten transition meeting in the spring where they provide families of rising kindergarten students with the necessary information needed to prepare their children for the entry to elementary school. In these workshops, parents learn strategies to help their children acquire the necessary early numeracy and literacy skills to begin kindergarten in the fall. Additionally, many Title I schools offer Kinder-Camps over the summer to promote kindergarten readiness. Kinder-Camps provide students with a chance to meet the kindergarten teachers and experience a few days of kindergarten activities prior to the start of the school year. During Kinder-Camp, Title I schools offer a workshop to teach families skills and strategies to help support their rising kindergartener for their first year of school.

Several Title I schools will pilot a weekly Pre-K program where families and children work with the Parent Instructional Coordinator to further promote school readiness.

As students move from one school level to another level, all Title I elementary, middle and high schools work to support students and families with the appropriate entry level transition skills and strategies. These transition activities ensure a smooth academic shift as students become accustomed to the rigors of an advanced curriculum. In addition to a workshop for parents and families to learn how to help prepare their child for success in the core content areas, many Title I schools offer summer extended learning time programs where students can preview the upcoming academic knowledge and skills and become familiar with the routine and procedures for their new school.

GCPS and local Title I schools invite and encourage all parents and family members of children participating in Title I programs to attend local school and district level Title I meetings to receive important information and offer feedback about the Title I program in the district and in local schools. Meeting and workshop days, times, and locations vary to accommodate schedules and to maximize participation of families. Childcare and interpreters are provided for these events whenever possible. Each Title I school will share dates and times for these opportunities by sending home invitations, posting information on the school's website and by other means.

Title I schools will send home important information regarding essential dates and events in an understandable and uniform format, ensuring that information related to district, school and parent programs, meetings and activities is available to all families. All communications are provided in an easy-to-understand language. Translations and interpreters for Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Bosnian and other languages are available upon request, and to the extent possible.

GCPS maintains continuous communication with families through multiple media sources, including district and local school websites, local media, social media outlets, community and business partners, parent-teacher conferences, local school family workshops and events,

Parent Center calendars, newsletters, email, phone, text blasts, signs, posters, and the local school Family and Community Engagement documents including the Family and Community Engagement Plan, the School-Family Compact, and the Family Engagement Calendar of Events.

Several schools in the district implement innovative approaches to family engagement such as Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT). APTT is an evidenced-based model that builds partnerships with teachers and families focused on setting student academic goals to be addressed through at-home learning activities and strategies.

Building the capacity of schools

Throughout the school year, the district will conduct training related to increasing parent and family engagement, improving effective school-family communication, creating a welcoming environment, partnering with families to increase student academic achievement, and building relationships with community stakeholders. Local schools will identify additional staff and parental needs through formal and informal needs assessments. All faculty and staff of Title I schools will receive ongoing training on effective communication strategies with families to build parent capacity. Title I schools will consider parents' input in planning the training for effective communication practices.

Many Title I schools have a Parent Instructional Coordinator (PIC), a certified teacher who facilitates the operation of the Parent Center, conducts ongoing staff and parent training, and builds community-school partnerships.

District and school staff will participate in ongoing evidenced based professional development for promoting family engagement and building parent capacity. For schools implementing Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT), the Family Engagement Leadership Team (FELT) will coordinate the APTT training for the entire school staff. The purpose of the FELT is to coordinate the stability and growth of APTT in the district.

The district's Office of Federal and Special Programs' will provide technical assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure parental and family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that effective family and community engagement strategies and activities are being implemented. Each Title I school has an Assistant Principal contact for Title I who oversees Title I program implementation, including family engagement components. Title I schools receive timely communication, school visits for compliance monitoring, resources, and other technical assistance from the district to help improve and strengthen family engagement practices.

Evaluation of Family Engagement Plan and Programs

An annual districtwide parent survey is administered each spring either by paper or electronically through the Parent Portal. Results are posted on district and school websites. Survey results are used to identify and remove any barriers and to increase opportunities for participation of all parents and family members. Additionally, the results and conclusions from the Local School Plan for Improvement/Schoolwide Plan are shared with parents, family members and community stakeholders as part of the data review process.

Families and community stakeholders are given an opportunity to provide feedback on an ongoing basis. Each meeting incorporates feedback opportunities to ensure that families and community stakeholders have a voice in all Title I programs and plans at the district and local school levels. Local schools and the district will utilize the data from the feedback forms and meeting/workshop evaluations provided to families at each Title I meeting to make revisions to the Family and Community Engagement Plan and to make changes to the Title I programs to best meet the needs of families supporting the academic achievement of their children.

Opportunities for parents to express concerns, ask questions or voice complaints are outlined in the Gwinnett County Public Schools' Complaint Procedures, which are located in the Title I Parent Handbook and available on the GCPS website.



Reservation of Funds

To fund the family and community engagement programs at the district and school level, the Title I Office sets aside not less than one percent (1%) of the district FY18 allocation for family and community engagement. No less than 90% of this 1% set-aside is expended during the grant period on family and community engagement activities. The district ensures that this set-aside is used for family and community engagement by a) requiring Title I schools to employ at least a part-time Parent Instructional Coordinator (PIC) or Instructional Clerk, and/or b) monitoring the budget development process at each school to ensure that sufficient funds have been allocated for parent involvement activities. These funds are distributed equally to all of our Title I schools based on input from the April 2017 District Title I Parent Meeting.

In addition to the 1% set-aside, Title I schools within the district use Title I funds allocated to them to operate and maintain Title I Parent Centers and to print documents to support family and community engagement. Title I funds are also used to purchase supplies and materials for activities and to conduct workshops and schoolwide events which build the capacity of parent and family members to help maximize student academic achievement.

The district will provide clear guidance and communication to assist each Title I school in developing an adequate budget that a) supports family and community engagement, b) addresses their needs assessment, and c) honors recommendations from all stakeholders.

The district will host District Title I Parent Meetings in March for all parents, family members and community stakeholders to provide suggestions as to how family and community engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year. Input forms, evaluations, and minutes from these meetings will be reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and to consider changes to the family and community engagement budget.

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 other Federal Programs 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 LEA Title I Family and Community Engagement Plan was reviewed and revised with the input of GCPS staff, families and community members. This plan was adopted by the Gwinnett County Public School District on July 1, 2017 and will be in effect for the period of one year. The school district will distribute this plan to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before October 20, 2017. It will also be available to the community through the Parent Centers in all Title I schools and on the GCPS website.