

Newton County School System

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

2019–2020

Revised July 31, 2019
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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 ESSA.

About the Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Newton County School System (NCSS) has developed this parent and family engagement policy that establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful 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 NCSS'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 NCSS 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 each Title I School's Annual Revision and Development meeting, all parents are invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve the LEA's Parent and Family Engagement Policy for the 2019-2020 school year. The school sent a letter to all parents informing them about the meeting and posted an announcement on their school's website. During the meeting, parents also reviewed and discussed, the development of the School Parent and Family Engagement Policy in addition to the CLIP, the School-Parent Compact, the 1% Parent Allocation, Building Staff Capacity, and the Title I Schoolwide Plan.

Upon final revision, the district parental involvement 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 on the district's website or by submitting written comments to their child's school. All feedback received was considered when revising policy for this school year.

The district's parental involvement policy was posted on the district websites, distributed as part of the Title I Parent Involvement Handbooks at the beginning of the school year and made available in the school's resource centers.

Strengthening Our School

This year, the district Parent Involvement Coordinator (PIC) will provide assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that family engagement strategies and activities are being implemented. Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the PIC to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the PIC will hold meetings and trainings with its Title I Parent Contacts to provide technical assistance and review family engagement plans and activities.

The meetings and trainings include:

- Title I Parent Contact Orientation
- Title I Parent Contact Building Capacity Meeting
- Title I Parent Contacts Year-End Meeting

Reservation of Funds

The NCSS will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in FY20 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. Furthermore, the district will distribute 90 percent of the amount reserved to Title I schools to support their local-level family engagement programs and activities. 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.

Each Title I school will host an annual Revision and Development Meeting for parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the district and school level. Comments 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.





Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation

Input and suggestions from parents and family members and the community are an essential component of the district and school improvement plans that are developed each year. All parents of students attending a Title I school are invited to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students to reach our student academic achievement goals.

Parent and Student Title I Handbooks

All Title I Parents receive a copy of the LEAs Parent and Family Engagement Policy at the beginning of each school year as part of the Parent and Student Title I Handbook. Parents are invited to complete the input form attached to the policy to provide input and return it to their child's school. The Title I Parent Contact at each school collects the input forms and will submit them to the District's PIC.

District Website

The LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) will be posted on the district's website so that parents and the community can provide input on the family engagement budget and family engagement programs throughout the year. The PIC will send a district school messenger to encourage parents and the community to provide input.

School-Level Revision and Development Meetings

All parents and the community are welcome to review and provide input into the district parent and family engagement policy and the CLIP for the 2019-20 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will be sent home to all parents in advance of the meeting.

Parent input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs may also be provided through the annual district survey. The survey will contain questions related to the family engagement budget as well as a section for parents to provide their comments.



Building Capacity

The NCSS 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 by building the capacity for effective family-school partnerships through meaningful parent meetings that are:

- Linked to Learning,
- Relational,
- Developmental,
- Collaborative, and
- Interactive

NCSS 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. The NCSS will provide classes for parents to gain knowledge about the challenging state academic standards, local academic assessments, as well as the required assessments for Georgia students including alternative forms of assessment.

NCSS will provide materials and trainings in English and Spanish, including Parents Make a Difference, Parents Still Make a Difference, and, Elementary, Middle and High School Monthly Activity Calendars and Parent Pointers. Each Title I school will provide information to assist parents with understanding the online student information system and other digital educational resources (including education about the harms of copyright piracy) during the Annual Title I Parent Orientation. Dates and times for the orientations will be determined and announced by each individual school.

NCSS's District PIC will provide tools, resources, and materials to assist each Title I school to provide meaningful trainings to educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff. The trainings will assist schools to reflect on current practices to recognize strengths and opportunities for improvements and implement a parent and family engagement program that cultivates effective family-school partnerships.

NCSS will coordinate and integrate the district's family engagement programs with the local preschool program and other federal funded preschool programs in the district by inviting faculty and staff from those programs to attend planning meetings focused on family engagement activities. In the spring, the elementary schools will host Kindergarten Round-Up days so parents may tour the schools and receive information to help prepare them and their children for kindergarten. The district will also coordinate with these programs to ensure that parents are informed about available resources. In addition, Newton County School System works with multiple agencies to ensure efforts are coordinated on behalf of meeting the needs of migrant, homeless, immigrant, ELL, neglected and delinquent, at risk, early childhood students and military related families.

NCSS's District PIC will conduct a **Title I Contacts Building Parent Capacity Meeting** for Title I Parent Contacts to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. These trainings and/or best practices will be redelivered to the faculty and staff of Title I schools.

NCSS ensures that information related to district, school, parent 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. Title I Parent Contacts will be trained to assist their schools on parent notifications and resources to be sent home in parents' native language, where applicable, and providing interpreters at parent meetings. Information posted on the district website will be translated to the extent practicable. The district will also utilize school phone call systems, district and school websites, local news media, and other school message systems to post information for parents.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, the NCSS will conduct an evaluation of the content effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy and the parent engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey and Annual Parent Revision and Development Stakeholders Input Meeting.

Beginning each April, each Title I school will send home a survey flyer to inform parents of the district's online Parent Involvement Survey that starts in the spring. All parents are invited to participate in the

survey made available on the district and school's websites.

In addition to the online survey, a hard copy of the survey is provided to parents who have limited or no technology to access the survey. Copies of the survey are provided in Spanish. Copies of the survey will be made available in other languages upon parent request.

NCSS will use the information from the school-level stakeholders meetings and the survey results to design strategies to improve effective 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 district parent involvement 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 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 annual school-level revision and development meetings.

This policy was adopted by the Newton County School System on July 31, 2019 and will be in effect for the 2019-2020 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 30, 2019.



