

This district policy has been jointly developed, in agreement with, parents and families of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by surveys, attendance sheets and agendas for the Title I Gilmer County School System parent input meetings.

District Parent and Family Engagement Plan

2023-2024

Gilmer County School System

Revised May 3, 2023

GILMER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM DISTRICT-WIDE PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2023-2024

REVISED MAY 3, 2023

Part I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Gilmer County School System (GCSS) receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by Section 1116(a)(2) of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the LEA's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement and describes how the LEA will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the LEA's plan submitted to the Georgia Department of Education.

The Gilmer County School District (GCSS) agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:

- The school district will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents and family members in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents and family members of participating children.
- The school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include as a component a school-parent compact consistent with federal law.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, limited literacy, disabilities, and of migratory children, who are economically disadvantaged, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under Section 1112 of the ESSA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the state Department of Education.
- The school district will be governed by the following definition of parental involvement/family engagement and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition in Section 8101 of the ESSA:

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

- (A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning
- (B) Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school
- (C) 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) Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA

Part II. DESCRIPTION OF HOW DISTRICT WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED LEA PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS
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JOINTLY DEVELOPED

The GCSS will take the following actions to involve parents and family members in jointly developing its LEA plan under Section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of Section 1111(d) of the ESSA:

- Parents and family members will be given multiple opportunities to be involved and provide input in the creation of a district parent and family engagement policy and the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP).
- All parents and family members will be invited to a district-wide meeting to revise or draft a district parent and family engagement policy each spring. Parents, family members and community stakeholders, along with the district parent and family engagement coordinator, will oversee the implementation of the policy. The revised parent and family engagement plans will be available to all parents and families, be posted on the district website, and will be presented to the school governance teams.
- Opportunities to attend and provide feedback at open sessions for review of Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) each year;
- Opportunities for parents and family members to review the district plan on the GCSS website;
- Opportunities for all parents and family members to review the plan at the school-level and provide feedback;
- Opportunities for parents and family members to provide feedback at school governance team meetings;
- Opportunities for parents and family members to provide feedback through spring parent surveys and other survey data collected throughout the academic year;
- The district parent and family engagement coordinator will conduct quarterly reviews of parent and family engagement documentation across the district;
- The district parent and family engagement coordinator will work with the family engagement partners as they work with the school governance teams to develop and analyze a district parent and family survey regarding parent and family engagement each spring;
- The building level family engagement partners, along with the schools’ governance teams, will develop and analyze parent and family surveys;
- Provide opportunities for parents and family members to draft, revise or review school improvement plans at the school-level and provide feedback to the schools;

- Provide opportunities for parents and family members to review school improvement plans through the websites at the Title I schools;
- Provide opportunities for all parents and family members to participate on school wide planning committees and to meet with Title I principals and staff to review plans and provide feedback during the academic year;
- Provide opportunities for Title I staff members to make presentations at Local School Governance Team meetings and to respond to questions;
- Provide opportunities for parents and family members to complete both formal and informal needs assessments;
- Provide opportunities for parents and family members to express concerns, ask questions, or voice complaints by following the steps outlined in the school-level Complaint/Concern/Question procedure and to receive timely responses from school staff members.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The GCSS will provide the following coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build capacity of all Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education:

- Assist schools in communication via all-calls, the county website, on-line school calendars, newsletters, agendas, social networking media, text messaging, e-newsletters, emails, and other resources.
- Assist schools in data analysis of assessments for learning to redeliver to parents and families.
- Provide materials and training not otherwise available to assist parents in supporting their child's academic achievement through interactive school-family activities.
- Monitor each Title I, Part A school to ensure that each school performs the following tasks:
 - A. Develops a parent and family engagement policy.
 - B. Provides information to parents and families about the school's program.
 - C. Develops and uses a School-Parent Compact.
 - D. Offers multiple, flexible meeting times.
- Provide training for parents and family members in working with their child to improve academic achievement, to include training on the Infinite Campus system in order to have real-time access to their child's attendance and achievement.
- Provide opportunities for Title I teachers, academic coaches and administrators to attend Title I Technical Assistance meetings that include training on programs, activities, and strategies aligned to academic progress, student achievement, and engaging Title I parents;
- Provide opportunities for district and school Title I staff to share resources and documents that support Title I parent and family engagement;
- Provide opportunities for district Title I staff to make regular site visits to Title I schools to review documentation and provide technical assistance to Title I staff;
- Provide opportunities for school and district staff to participate in professional learning at the district, state, and national level through webinars, workshops and conferences;
- Provide opportunities for school-level Family Engagement Partners to meet at least quarterly to share resources and strategies and offer technical assistance;

- Provide updated community resources to assist schools in meeting the needs of Title I parents;
- Provide interpretive services at Title I schools to non-English speaking parents, including Title I parent events and Title I parent conferences;
- Provide support for the identification/selection of quality resources for the district Parent-Teacher Resource centers at Title I schools

ANNUAL EVALUATION

The GCSS will take the following actions to conduct, with the meaningful engagement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities (with particular attention to parents of students who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The evaluation will also include identifying the 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. The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parent and family engagement policy and activities to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise, if necessary, its parent and family engagement policies.

- Each spring, school-level Family Engagement Partners, Academic Coaches, Title I lead teachers and the School Governance Team members will meet with district personnel to review the previous year's Parent and Staff Needs Assessments and to discuss the goals for the new school year's surveys. The committee will draft new surveys and publish them for review before they are finalized. Upon approval, district Title I staff will work to prepare the surveys for administration, teachers and parents. Two of the purposes of the surveys are to identify needs of parents and to identify areas in which teachers require support for working with parents. The surveys are available online and on paper upon request.
- Throughout the year, district personnel will provide members of the School Governance Team with numerous opportunities to provide feedback. Schools will provide opportunities for all parents to provide feedback throughout the year.
- Throughout the year, school-level Title I staff will provide parents and families with both formal and informal opportunities to discuss their needs and to evaluate programs.
- At both the district and school levels, parents and families will have opportunities to participate in focus groups.

RESERVATION OF FUNDS

The GCSS will involve the parents and family members of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to the schools.

- Each spring, schools will provide meetings for parent and families to allow for input on the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent.
- Each fall, schools will share with parents and families information on how parent and family engagement funds will be used based on input provided by stakeholders.
- Information will be provided at parent and family activity nights, newsletters, and Title I Nights.

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

The GCSS will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs: Such as, Head Start, state-operated preschool programs, transitioning to middle, high, postsecondary schools, or careers; and other programs that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Solicit suggestions regarding transition activities for children and parents
- Describe programs offered by Title I
- Provide support for school readiness for Title I- eligible preschool students enrolled through Ninth District through programs including: Parent-Teacher Resource centers outreach events and distribution of learning-at-home resources, Kindergarten orientation for students entering a Title I elementary school, and training sessions aligned to Kindergarten curriculum standards;
- Provide classroom space on the Ellijay Elementary School campus for Georgia Pre-K and separate Head Start classrooms through Ninth District Opportunity;
- Continue to provide support for family literacy through a partnership with community stakeholders.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS

The GCSS will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, build parents' capacity for strong family engagement by providing materials and training on such topics as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy) to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement. Assistance will also be provided to parents in understanding the following topics:

➤ **Georgia's Standards of Excellence:**

- Provide links on the Gilmer County School System website and the schools websites to the Georgia Department of Education and guides to Georgia Standards of Excellence;
- Provide presentations at Curriculum Nights, Math and Reading Nights, and Local School Governance Team meetings;
- Provide information at Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- Provide trainings throughout the year for school level Family Engagement Partners to redeliver to faculty and parents
- Provide trainings throughout the year for School Governance Team members
- Coordinate literacy services through the *Sequoyah Regional Library System*,
- Collaborate through the district Title I programs with Ninth District Opportunity Head Start, Early Head Start, and Georgia Pre-K programs in Gilmer County to support school readiness and successful Kindergarten transition.

➤ **Georgia Milestones and Local Assessments:**

- Provide links to state assessment information on the district website;
- Provide links to district assessment calendars, study guides for assessments, and guidance concerning testing environments through the district website;
- Provide links to the district's Infinite Campus Parent Portal for student profiles and student achievement;
- Provide links to practice tests for assessments (GMAS-EOG/EOC);

- Provide a Parent Guide explaining scoring;
- Provide information at Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- Provide presentations at Family Nights

Requirements of Title I, Part A:

- Provide an overview of the requirements of Title I, Part A on the district and school websites and in school newsletters and at Annual Title I Parent Meetings: (1) their child’s school’s participation in Title I, (2) the requirements of Title I, (3) their rights to be involved;
 - Provide an explanation of the requirements at the schools’ Title I Annual Parent/Family Meetings, at other meetings scheduled throughout the year and at Local School Governance Team meetings.
- **How to Monitor their Child’s Progress:**
- Provide interim reports and report cards on their child’s progress. Dates are posted on the district’s calendar.
 - Conduct Parent-Teacher Conferences: Parents may request a conference at any time;
 - Provide opportunities at family nights for parents to learn how to access information in Infinite Campus Parent Portal;
- **How to Work with Educators:**
- Provide opportunities for all parents and family members to participate in the development of the school’s School-Parent Compact and Parent and Family Engagement Policy;
 - Provide opportunities for parents to provide feedback in the district’s and school’s surveys;
 - Provide Title I workshop and meetings with school staff;

Assistance and information will be provided through group meetings, newsletters, newspapers, text alerts, social media, videos, parent tutorials and the district website.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF SCHOOL STAFF

The GCSS will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other school leaders and other staff in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, by:

- Identify staff and parent needs in formal and informal needs assessments
- Provide training to school level Family Engagement Partners, district leaders, and principals on effective parent and family engagement strategies to redeliver to faculties.
- Provide opportunities for Title I staff, family engagement partners, district leaders and administrators to attend GADOE Family Engagement conferences.
- Provide opportunities for family nights to build relationships, trust and open dialogue.

The GCSS will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and family engagement programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents and family members of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand:

- Provide interpretive services at Title I schools to non-English speaking parents, including Title I parent events and Title I parent conferences;

- Provide resources for translation of documents needed for parent communication;
- Provide support of interpreters for non-English speaking parents (phone conferences);
- Provide a means for translation of all documents on the district website, to the extent practicable.

Part III. DISCRETIONARY DISTRICT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

GCSS is committed to establishing partnerships with parents and community members, and encourages their participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of its Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Gilmer County Schools will take the following actions to involve parents and family members in the joint development of its district wide parent and family engagement plan under section 1116 of the ESSA:

- Involvement of parents and family members in various workshops and trainings to assist teachers, principals, and other educators in improving the effectiveness of future trainings.
- Provide necessary literacy training for parents from Title I, Part A funds, if the school district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for that training.
- Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent and family engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents and family members to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions (where applicable and necessary).
- In order to maximize parent and family engagement and participation in their children’s education, arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend those conferences at school.
- Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parent and family engagement.
- Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parent and family engagement activities.
- Provide other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities under section 1118 as parents may request.
- Based on stakeholder feedback, the GCSS district will make additional efforts to improve communications at all grade levels and update the district communication plan.

Part IV. ADOPTION

This district-wide parent and family engagement policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs.

This policy was revised by the Gilmer County School System on May 3, 2023, and will be in effect for a period of the 2023-2024 school year. The school district will make this policy available to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before May 31, 2023.

Dr. Brian Ridley,
Superintendent of Schools

May 3, 2023
Date