

Whitfield County School System

Parent & Family Engagement Policy

2020-2021

Revised: May 21st, 2019
Approved: June 13th, 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 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

About the Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Whitfield County School District (WCS) 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 WCS'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 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. WCS will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of federal law and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact.

Jointly Developed

In May, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the **2020-2021** school year. The district posted a notice in the local newspaper to all parents informing them about this meeting and posted an announcement on the school district website. During this meeting, parents also reviewed and discussed the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) and the district's strategic plan. Each school will review and revise its parent and family engagement policy in during the first six weeks of school. This will be when each school revises their individual school compact(s).

Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement policy was incorporated into the CLIP that was submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy at any time on the school district website or by submitting written comments to your child's school. All feedback received by June was considered for revisions to this policy.

The district parent and family engagement policy was posted on district and school websites, distributed during the annual Title I school meetings early this school year, and made available in the schools' parent resource centers.

Strengthening Our School

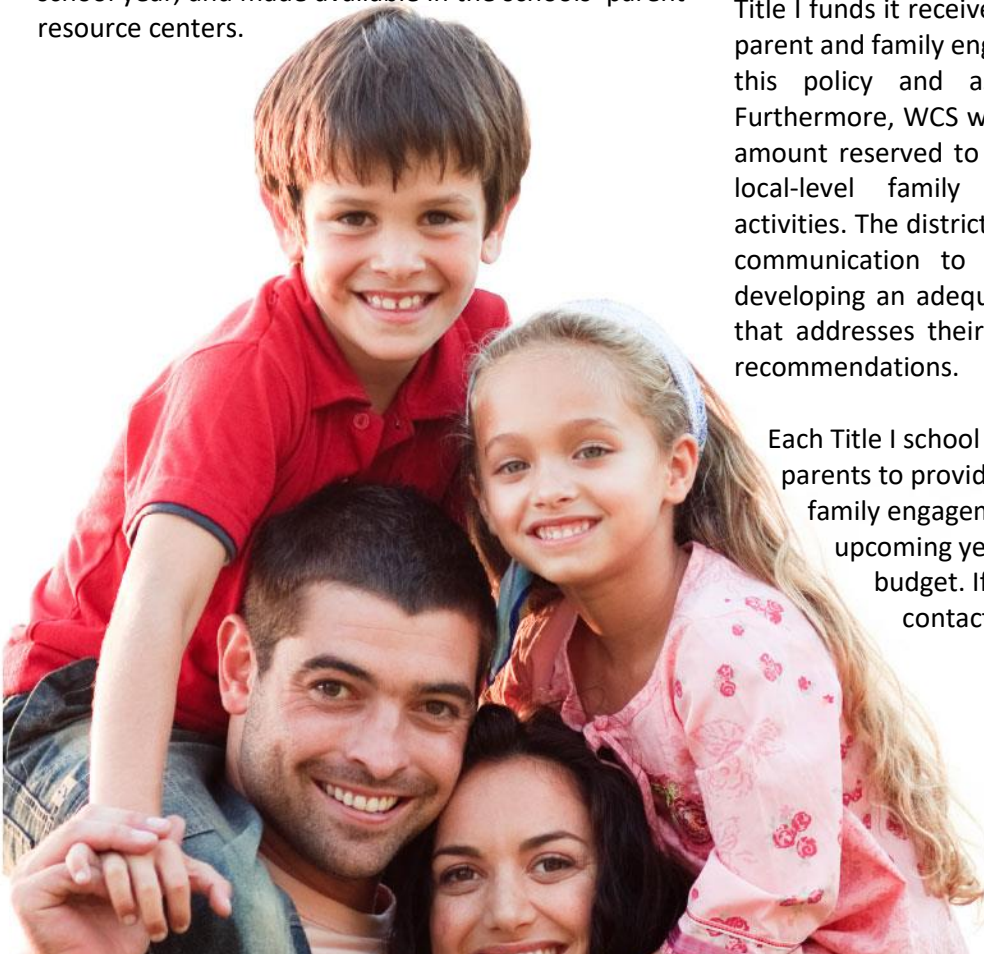
This year, the district's family engagement coordinator (FEC) will provide technical assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that family engagement strategies and activities are being implemented. Title I schools will receive notifications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

Additionally, the district will convene an annual training in the fall for principals and school contacts to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year. School compact and family engagement plan checklists will be sent to all Title I school contacts to ensure compliance.

Reservation of Funds

WCS will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in 2020-2021 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in federal law. Furthermore, WCS will distribute 100 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 request feedback from parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds could be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-budget. If you have suggestions, please contact the FEC at the district office.





Opportunities for Meaningful Consultation

Input and suggestions from parents, family members, and community partners are an essential component of the district and school improvement plans that are developed each year. All parents of students eligible to receive Title I services are invited to attend two meeting opportunities described in this section to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students to reach our student academic achievement goals.

- **Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan/Strategic Goal Plan Progress Quarterly Updates**
- **Annual Summary on Strategic Plan Progress**
- **Parent & Family Engagement Plan Annual Review**

All parents are welcome to hear the latest updates from the Whitfield County School District as well as review and provide input into the district's parent & family engagement policy and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan for 2020-2021 that are published and presented quarterly to the board of education throughout the school year. Parent notification will be sent through our automated calling system.

District Strategic Plan/Parent & Family Engagement Policy on May 19, 2020

On this date, WCS will share information regarding their District Improvement Plan & Parent & Family Engagement Policy for the 2019-2020 school year. Since 100% of the district's one percent family engagement set-aside goes directly to all Title I Schools, parent input should be given to their individual school.

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.

If you need to contact the WCS Director of Title I or the Title I Specialist, you may reach them at scott.houston@wcs.ga.net or freida.talley@wcs.ga.net or call (706) 217-6733.

Building Capacity

WCS will build partnerships between its Title I Schools, families, and community with the goal of developing mutual support for student achievement. To develop capacity for this support, WCS will implement a variety of family and community engagement initiatives.

Parents

WCS will work as a district and through its Title I schools to assist 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. WCS will provide workshops 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. The dates and locations for these workshops will be posted on the district website, shared through each Title I school's newsletter and use of each school's social media.

WCS will also coordinate pages on the district and school websites that will contain resources and materials, including parent guides, study guides, practice assessments, and 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 WCS technology specialists will collaborate with Title I schools to host workshops for parents. Dates and times for these workshops will be determined and announced by each individual school.

WCS will coordinate and integrate the district's family engagement programs with the local preschool program and other federal and state 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 Ready days so parents may tour the schools and receive information to help prepare them and their children for kindergarten. WCS will also coordinate with these programs to ensure that parents are informed about available resources.

School Staff

WCS will conduct four trainings during the school year for principals and school staff to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. At least two of these trainings will be in the first semester of school. These trainings will focus upon the National Standards of the PTA as adopted by the Georgia Department of Education. These trainings will occur in preplanning, January and the spring of each year. Each fall, the FEC will meet with a parent focus group. From that group, she will gather information to which she will develop a power point that will be used to train each Title I school on specific feedback from their parent focus group on their January professional learning day.

To ensure that information related to district, school, parent programs, 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. 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, WCS will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this Parent & Family Engagement Policy and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey and receiving feedback from parents/guardians.

Beginning in January, each Title I school will send home a survey and email a link to the survey for parents to provide valuable feedback regarding the parent and family engagement activities and programs. These surveys will also be posted on the district and school

websites for parents to complete. In addition to the annual survey, each Title I school will also seek parent/staff input to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective family engagement.

WCS will use the findings from the feedback 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 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.

Mark Your Calendars

First Day of School
August 31, 2020

Parent/Family Surveys for Input
TBD

WCS Accountability Reports
TBD

Annual District Strategic/
Improvement Plan and Parent
& Family Engagement Review

WCS Annual Accountability
Report to the Board of
Education
June 2021

May 2021
June 2021

Adoption

This districtwide Parent & 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 review meeting.

This policy was posted on the WCS website & social media for comments. This policy was adopted by the Whitfield County School District on June 13, 2019 and will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before or during the first week of fall semester.

