

Douglas County School System

Parent and Family Engagement Plan

2023–2024

Revised June 1, 2023

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What is Family Engagement?

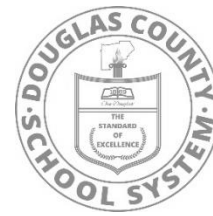
Family Engagement means the participation of parents and family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- (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 Plan

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Douglas County School System (DCSS) has developed this parent and family engagement plan that establishes our 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 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 plan and school policy, 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. 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 federal law and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact.



Jointly Developed

During the spring of 2022, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement plan for the 2022-2023 school year. The district posted an announcement on the school and district website and Facebook page. Parents also reviewed the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Additionally, each Title I school used its Parent Advisory Council to review the district parent and family engagement plan before the end of the school year. In cases where the students reside in a Neglected and Delinquent residential facility, a representative from that facility can serve as a proxy for the parent(s). The plan was also posted on school and district website soliciting comments and input from families and community members through an online form.

Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement plan was incorporated into the CLIP which was submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the plan at any time by submitting written comments to their child's school. All feedback received by May 26, 2023 was considered for revisions to this plan.

The district's plan to distribute this plan is to post it on district and school websites and in parent resource centers, disseminate to all Title I families, and email the link to all parents in a format and language they can understand in October.



Strengthening Our Schools

This year, the district Family Engagement Specialist (FES) will provide technical 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 FES to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and FES will meet throughout the school year with Title I Principals, the Family Engagement Contact (FEC) and other parent and family engagement staff 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 the 2023-2024 school year to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this plan and as described in federal law. School systems have to reserve 1% of its Title I Allocation for parent and family engagement. Of the 1%, 90% is allocated to the Title I Schools and the other 10% is retained at the system level. An exception may be made to this provision if participating Title I principals agree to pool all or part of their family-school partnership allocation for a district level family-school partnership activity/project. Districts with schools exercising this flexibility must provide supporting documentation on the Georgia Department of Education Districtwide Family-School Partnership Activity-Project Assurance Form. The DCSS uses this option to fund the FES. District staff and the FES 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 levels. Input forms 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. If you have suggestions, please contact the FES in the district office.

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. One of these activities is Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) is in place at Annette Winn Elementary School. 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 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 opportunities will be posted on school websites and shared through school messaging systems as well as in district and school newsletters.

The DCSS will also coordinate pages on the district and school websites that will contain resources and materials, including quarterly parent newsletters, 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 FES, FEC and Title I Principals 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 schools 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 Principals will provide parent and family engagement training to teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, other school leaders and other staff during each semester of the 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. The FES will also visit 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' preferred 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 automated phone call/text/email systems provided through School Messenger, district and school websites, social media, local news media, and other school communication systems to post and disseminate 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. In March of each year, parents are given the option to complete the survey electronically. The findings of this survey are used to develop strategies for school improvement and/or to revise the district plan and school-level policy. These findings are also used in planning future parent workshops and meetings. Areas evaluated include communication, district and school family engagement program(s), and school-home collaboration.

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 2024

CLIP Input Opportunity
May 2024
DCSS Central Office

For Schools

Title I Principal Meeting
Summer 2023

Parent and Family
Engagement Team Meetings
Throughout the school year
DCSS Central Office



Scan the code with your smartphone or tablet to access family engagement information on the DCSS website.

Adoption

This districtwide parent and family engagement plan 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 plan was adopted by the Douglas County School System on June 1, 2023 and will be in effect for the 2023-2024 academic school year. The school district will distribute this plan in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before November 1, 2023.

