

## Parent and Family Engagement

### *The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015*

### Updates

**Title I Parent and Family Engagement** - formally called “parent involvement”  
(Items highlighted in yellow are new with ESSA)

### District – Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

(1) ***In general*** -- A school district may receive funds under this part ***only if*** the following criteria are met:

- It conducts outreach to **all parents and family members**;
- Implements programs, activities, and procedures to involve parents and family members in Title I programs;
- Plans and implements such programs, activities, and procedures with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

(2) ***Written policy***: Each school district that receives Title I funds ***shall*** develop jointly with, come to consensus with, and distribute to, parents **and family members** of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy. In addition, the policy ***will*** be incorporated into the district’s plan, will establish the agency’s expectations, will develop objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement, and will describe how the agency will complete the following activities:

- ***Jointly develop district plan***: Involve parents and family members in jointly developing the district plan under section 1112, and in developing support and improvement plans under section 1111(d);
- ***Build school capacity***: Provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support to assist with building the capacity of all participating schools within the district into planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities for improving student academic achievement and school performance. **Building school capacity may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or with individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education;**
- ***Link to family engagement in other programs***: Coordinate and integrate these parent and family engagement strategies with engagement strategies within other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs (to the extent feasible and appropriate);
- ***Jointly evaluate***: Conduct, with meaningful parent and family involvement, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of Title I schools, including identifying the following:
  - ✓ ***Barriers*** to greater participation by parents in Title I activities (with focus on parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited

- English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
- ✓ *The needs* of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers;
- ✓ *Strategies* to support successful school and family interactions.
- **Improve the programs based on evaluation findings:** Use the evaluation findings to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent involvement, and to revise the parent and family engagement policies;
- **Involve parents in the activities of Title I schools:** These activities **may** include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the district to adequately represent the needs of the population served by the district for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the parent and family engagement policy.

### (3) Reservation of funds for parent and family engagement

- **Minimum 1 percent:** Each district **shall** reserve **at least** 1 percent of its Title I allocation to assist schools with carrying out the parent and family engagement activities (except for districts where 1 percent of the district grant is \$5,000 or less). This provision shall not limit districts from reserving more than 1 percent.
- **Parent and family input:** Parents and family members of children receiving Title I services **shall** be involved in the decisions regarding how these funds reserved are allotted for parent involvement activities.
- **Distribution of funds:** Not less than 90 percent of the funds reserved **shall** be distributed to schools served under this part, with priority given to high-need schools.
- **Use of funds:** Funds reserved by the district **shall** be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the district's parent and family engagement policy, including **at least** one of the following:
  - a. *Professional development:* Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for local educational agency and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, and other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.
  - b. *Home-based programs:* Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
  - c. *Disseminating information:* Informing stakeholders on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
  - d. *Collaborating with community-based organizations:* Providing subgrants to schools so that they can collaborate with community-based organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.

- e. *Other activities:* Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the local educational agency determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's parent and family engagement policy.

### **School- Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy**

- (1) ***In general:*** Each Title I school ***shall*** jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children a written **parent and family engagement** policy that shall meet these requirements:
  - Agreed upon by parents,
  - Describes the means for carrying out the requirements that follow,
  - Notifies parents of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand,
  - Is made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.
- (2) ***Special rule:*** If the school has a parent involvement policy that applies to all parents **and family members**, such school ***may*** amend that policy to meet these requirements.
- (3) ***Amendment of existing policy:*** If the district has a school district-level parent and family engagement policy that applies to all parents and family members in all district schools, the district ***may*** amend that policy to meet the requirements of this subsection.
- (4) ***Parent comments:*** If the school district plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the district ***shall*** submit any parent comments along with the plan when submitting the plan to the State.

### **Parent and Family Policy Involvement at the School**

Each school served under this part ***shall engage in the following activities:***

- (1) ***Annual meeting:*** Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I and to explain the program requirements, and the right of the parents to be involved;
- (2) ***Additional meetings:*** Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and ***may*** provide, with Title I funds, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;
- (3) ***Review and improvement of the program:*** Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs to include the planning, review, and improvement of ***both*** the school parent and family engagement policy,

and the joint development of the **schoolwide program plan**. Exception: if a school already has a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of Title I children;

(4) **Required information for parents:** The school *must* provide the following to parents of participating children:

- Timely information about programs under this part;
- A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the **achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards**; and
- **If requested by parents**, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to their children's education, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

(5) **Parent Comments:** If the **schoolwide program plan** is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school shall include any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the district.

### **Shared Responsibility for High student Academic Achievement: School-Parent Compact**

As a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy developed under this section, each school served under Title I **shall** jointly develop with parents for all Title I children a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

The compact shall meet the following criteria:

(1) **Describe shared responsibility:** The school's responsibility is to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I to meet the challenging State academic standards. The parents' responsibility is to support their children's learning; volunteer in their child's classroom; and participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time;

(2) **Describe parent-teacher communications:** Address the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and parents through the following - at a minimum:

- Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement;
- Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;
- Reasonable parent access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their children's classes, and observation of classroom activities; and
- Regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

### **Building Dual Capacity for Involvement**

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a school-parent-community partnership to improve student achievement, each Title I school and district **SHALL** engage in the following:

- (1) Provide assistance to parents of children served by the school or district, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the challenging State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
- (2) Provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, including literacy training and using technology (**including education about the harms of copyright piracy**), as appropriate, to foster parent involvement;
- (3) Educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents in the following:
  - In the value and utility of parents' contributions,
  - In how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners,
  - In how to implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school;
- (4) To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with **other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs**, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents to participate more fully in their children's education.
- (5) Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand;
- (6) Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request.

In addition, each Title I school and district **MAY**:

- (1) Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;
- (2) Provide literacy training from Title I funds received if the district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training;
- (3) Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parent involvement activities, including transportation and childcare costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- (4) Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;
- (5) 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 such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation;
- (6) Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement;
- (7) Establish a district wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in Title I programs supported under this section;
- (8) Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities.

### **Accessibility**

In carrying out the Title I parent and family engagement requirements, districts and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including those who have limited English proficiency, those with disabilities, and those with migratory children), including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 in a format, and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

### **Family Engagement in Education Programs**

#### **State Education Agency Review**

The State educational agency *shall* review the local educational agency's **parent and family engagement** policies and practices to determine if the policies and practices meet the requirements of this section.