

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOLS
Parent and Family Engagement Plan
2023-2024



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Superintendent

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PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Purpose

DeKalb County Schools believes that a partnership must exist between our parents, our communities, and our school. We recognize that a child's education is the responsibility shared by parents, families, schools, and the community during the entire period the child is enrolled in school. We promote positive communication between the school and our students' homes. Creating positive, home, school, and community partnerships is essential to carrying out the shared responsibility necessary to improve the schools and reinforce the importance of student academic achievement.

Sec. 1116(a)(2)(A)

A. Describe how the Local Education Agency will involve parents and family members in jointly developing the local educational agency plan under section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1111(d).

DeKalb County Schools will involve parents and family members in jointly developing the local education agency plan. The Parental Engagement Specialist will draft the plan and then it will be sent to the Federal Programs Advisory Committee to review. The Advisory Committee is made up of at least two parents from each school and plans are reviewed in the spring semester each year. The committee will consider any feedback or suggestions received throughout the year.

Sec. 1116(a)(2)(B)

B. Describe how the Local Education Agency will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the local educational agency in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement 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.

The District Parent Involvement Committee meets annually to discuss, review, and assess the District Parent Involvement Plan and each school's ACIP, Parent/Teacher/Student Compact, and the ACIP. The members of the district committee are also members of the local school parent committee. These members are the liaison for the district back to the schools and from the schools back to the district. This has been instrumental in recommendations to improve the safety and academic success of our schools. This committee will meet to discuss the needs,

assess the progress of programs, and plan for the future of the students of DeKalb County Schools.

Sec. 1116(a)(2)(C)

C. Describe how the Local Education Agency will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies under this part with parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs.

Each Title I school will begin each school year by participating in an Open House Event—schools will be open one night during the week before school begins or the first week of school to allow parents to come with their child to meet with teachers and staff, visit classrooms, and tour the school. Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled throughout the school year. Student presentation activities (Science Fair, Art Fair, PTO programs) will be held in the fall and spring. Parents will also participate in the annual Parent Involvement Survey/Evaluation of the current year program. Parent/teacher conferences will be held as needed concerning each individual child.

Sec. 1116(a)(2)(D)

D. Describe how the Local Education Agency will conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under this part, including identifying:

(i) barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background)

Each year, all parents in Title I school-wide schools participate in a parent survey. This survey was created to address and include all items required by federal guidelines. Surveys are translated into the primary language of limited English proficient parents, and parent volunteers and translators will also assist with gathering responses. Survey results will be analyzed at the school level and then an analysis will be provided to the district Federal Programs Director and Parent Engagement Specialist. The district Federal Programs Director and the Parent Engagement Specialist will then analyze data for the entire system to guide revisions to the district Title I Plan and Parental Involvement Plan. Schools will use their data in revisions to their school plans. Survey results will be shared with advisory councils at the district and school levels and through the annual required parent meeting at each school. The school district will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent-programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents 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:

- Documents are translated by translators employed by the school system
- Forms, newsletters and schedules are sent out to keep parents informed in their primary language
- Meeting announcements are posted on district and school websites and social media
- Information is communicated through email, school marquees, and local newspaper
- School messenger phone system and text messaging service is used to notify parents of meetings, upcoming events, and announcements. Messages are delivered in parents' primary language.

(ii) the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers

The school district will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement, by:

- Recruiting Read Across America parent and community volunteers for reading day
- Parent Workshops held at each school to foster engagement
- Encouraging School Parenting Organization (if established) to offer workshops
- Budgeting funds at the school level to purchase materials

(iii) strategies to support successful school and family interactions

The school district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities. These programs include: Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, public preschool, and other programs. Other activities, such as parent resource centers, will encourage and support parents to better participate in the education of their children, by:

- Kindergarten orientation
- Migrant Home Liaison will provide in-home preschool/school readiness instruction and family literacy
- Parent Engagement Specialist will coordinate parent workshops at local schools
- Parent Engagement Specialist will offer a mobile resource unit to all communities
- Parent Engagement Specialist will offer family literacy activities at each school campus during the summer.
- Coordinating community educational family nights to support learning
- Modeling effective strategies for working with young children academically

- Providing locations for Adult ESL classes to be taught on school campuses or town libraries
- Hosting EL parent meetings in conjunction with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Center to provide instruction in parenting skills and family literacy.

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

- During the first semester of each school year, the school district will provide all teachers and administrators with an overview of Title I and Parental Involvement.
- Following an initial overview, bulletins outlining more in-depth Title I and parental involvement components will be provided to all teachers and administrators.
- The Parental Engagement Specialist will work with school principals to co-facilitate Title I Parent Meetings.

Schools will host and provide THREE parent trainings per year. Trainings will be planned and developed in conjunction with parent needs determined by parent surveys and parent committee members.

Sec. 1116(a)(2)(E))

E. Describe how the Local Education Agency will use the findings of such evaluation described in the section above (Sec. 1116(2)(D)) to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary the parent and family engagement policies described in this section.

The Federal Programs Advisory Council and the Continuous Improvement Plan Committees utilize Title I parent survey data results to revise and update the Parent & Family Engagement Plan as needed. The committees review Title I parent survey results.

Sec. 1116(a)(2)(F))

F. Describe how the Local Education Agency will involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the local educational agency to adequately represent the needs of the population served by such agency for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the parent and family engagement policy.

The Federal Programs Advisory Council develops, revises, and reviews the Parent & Family Engagement Plan annually. Parents are also involved in the development of the school-parent

compact each spring. A needs assessment is conducted annually and the data results drive the development and revision of the Parent and Family Engagement Plan.

In order to build capacity for Parent and Family Engagement, the Local Education Agency will ensure effective involvement of parents and will support a partnership among the schools involved, the parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, the LEA shall:

G. Describe how it will provide assistance to parents of children served by the school or local educational agency, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the challenging State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.

All students receive a Student-Parent Compact outlining school-parent-student responsibilities. These compacts are used as a contract between the home and school. Parents are advised in changes in local academic assessments. Home reports for State Assessments are provided for parents. School counselors provide parent training to explain the results and student academic achievement.

Grade reports are sent home every 4 ½ weeks. Reporting periods are posted on the school and district website. Schools also use the School Messenger System to notify parents when grade reports are being sent home. Parent conferences are held as needed to discuss academic and behavior issues.

Dekalb County Schools also provides assistance to parents of children served by the school district in understanding topics such as the following:

- the State's academic content standards
- the State's student academic achievement standards
- the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments
- how to monitor their child's progress
- how to work with educators
- provide workshops for parents and family members
- ensure and maintain two-way communication between home and school

H. Describe how it will provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement.

The Parent & Family Engagement Specialist provides assistance when requested. The specialist provides 2-3 training sessions per year at each of the local schools. The Parent and Family

Engagement Specialist assists families in finding supportive access opportunities to school and community services, adult ESL classes, and support for parents in regards to homework help, skills development, and understanding student performance measures. Student/Parent Handbooks are located on the DeKalb County Schools website. A printed copy is available upon request in both Spanish and English. This handbook serves as a guidebook for families to understand the uses of technology in the classroom. It outlines both appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology according to the district technology plan.

I. Describe how it will educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, 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 the school.

The District Family and Engagement Plan is disseminated to all families. School personnel receive training, at the district and local level, on the importance of fostering strong parent and family engagement programs. Multiple opportunities are provided for parents to become equal partners on federal planning committees at each school and at the district level.

J. Describe how it will 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 in more fully participating in the education of their children.

DeKalb County has 16 Office of School Readiness First Class Pre-K classrooms serving students on ten campuses and one special needs Pre-K. Parent engagement is a requirement of OSD Pre-K programs. Parent and family engagement logs are kept for documenting workshops and training sessions. Head Start is also provided by Community Action Head Start Services. Certified early childhood teachers teach these programs. These programs help children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. In addition, the school system employs a Speech Language Pathologist to provide language and speech instruction to preschool students. A home-school liaison visits the homes of Migrant families to provide additional pre-school services.

K. Describe how it will 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.

The district website provides an option to change the content to multiple languages. DeKalb County employs five translators to translate documents, parent conferences, etc for families. Staff also use TransAct for specific documents. The district employs three migrant home-school liaisons to provide assistance for migrant families. All written communication is provided in a language parents can understand.

L. Describe how it will ensure and provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request.

The LEA Parent and Family Engagement Specialist provides resources as requested by families. The specialist conducts, facilitates, and coordinates parent training sessions on each DeKalb County School campus. Training topics are dependent on parent requests and needs.

M. Describe how the LEA may involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training.

Parents serve on committees at the school and district level to develop all LEA plans. Results of survey, formal and informal interviews, and meetings are used to assist in the creation of professional development activities. The committee convenes annually to discuss the development and implementation of the LEA Consolidated Plan.

N. Describe how the LEA may provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the local educational agency has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training.

The district sets aside funds for a district-wide Parents and Partners initiative. This initiative funds a district Parent and Family Engagement Specialist. The specialist is able to coordinate, facilitate, and conduct parent training sessions at each local school. By having a designated person to specialize in parent and family engagement, parents are able to receive specific resources tailored to their needs.

O. Describe how the LEA may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.

All parent meetings are held in each community on a flexible schedule for the convenience of participating parents. Morning and evening times are provided for working families. Meetings may be held virtually during the current school year to accommodate all parents. DeKalb County Schools will work with local schools to provide necessary funding for parent involvement activities, including but not limited to, transportation and child care costs to enable parents and family members to participate in school-related activities.

P. Describe how the LEA may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.

Parents are encouraged to become leaders in both their schools and communities through the county "Be. There." initiative. DeKalb County recognizes the importance of parent and family engagement. Parents are encouraged to share information, invite other parents and families to participate in local parent related activities, and to serve on committees. The district utilizes social media to promote family engagement.

Q. Describe how the LEA may 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.

The Parent and Family Engagement Specialist conducts 2-3 parent trainings per school year on each local school campus. Meetings are scheduled at flexible times- including both morning and evening times. The PFE specialist assists school administrators in conducting the Annual Title I Parent Meetings. Each teacher will be available during planning time to meet with parents. Administrators will also make sure teachers are available on parent/conference nights and nights where Title I school related events take place. The LEA and local schools host morning and evening meetings with parents. School principals, resource officers, and classroom teachers make in-home visits based on needs. Translators are available at all parent activities and meetings.

R. Describe how the LEA may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement.

The LEA, working with local schools, will work to develop a comprehensive model for parental involvement. Parent communication tools include: an all call system, text messaging system, school websites, open house, parent/teacher conferences, social media, parent workshops, monthly parent newsletters, and face-to-face communication.

S. Describe how the LEA may establish a districtwide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section.

The advisory council meets annually. Each school is contacted annually to submit names of parents to serve on the advisory council. Community leaders and business partners are invited to serve on the advisory council, as well.

T. Describe how the LEA may develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities.

The LEA will work with local businesses and community organizations to develop partnerships to assist Title I schools. Community and business partnerships are visible throughout the district. Local businesses and community organizations serve on the district advisory committee.

Sec. 1116(f)

U. Describe how the Local Education Agency will use the findings of such evaluation described in the section above (Sec. 1116(2)(D)) to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies described in this section.

Parent and family engagement opportunities will continually change and evolve based on the needs of students, parents, the community, and each local school. These changes will be guided

by parent survey opportunities and various parent meeting programs. Data is gathered through the continuous improvement process. Stakeholders provide feedback through surveys conducted each spring. Data is used to establish goals and implement strategies within the continuous improvement plans.

This LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs as evidenced by the Federal Advisory Council Meeting. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before September 30, 2023.

July 13, 2023

PLAN APPROVED BY

DATE OF APPROVAL

Mr. Wayne Lyles
Superintendent