Stephens County School System Joint District/School Parent and Family Engagement Plan

2025-2026
Revised May 29, 2025
191 Big A School Road
Toccoa, GA 30577
stephenscountyschools.org
(706) 886-9415

Schools Committed to Student Success

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, Stephens County School System (SCSS) has developed this parent and family engagement plan 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 SCSS'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. SCSS 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.

Parent and Family Engagement Plan

JOINTLY DEVELOPED DISTRICT/SCHOOL PLANS AND SCHOOL COMPACTS

Each school plans a series of meetings and activities, including the Annual Title I, Part A Meeting, to engage parents, family members, teachers, administrators, and community members in the review of the district/school plan and school compacts. Parents are invited to attend and participate in these meetings. The district and schools also invite parents to participate in an annual survey for the purpose of evaluating and providing input regarding school improvement, this district/school plan, and school-parent compacts. All invitations to participate, review district/school plan, and review school compacts are communicated in multiple ways, including being posted on each school's website. This year, results from a Spring Comprehensive Needs Assessment will be analyzed to identify student needs, parent needs, and family member needs, as well as barriers to participation. Results from surveys and feedback from meetings will be used in the revision process of this engagement plan. All stakeholders are provided the opportunity to give input in the revision process of this district/school parent and family engagement plan, as well as school-parent compacts. After reviewing feedback, and upon completion of the revision process, these documents are distributed in multiple ways to parents and families (e.g., electronic messaging, paper copies to parents at meetings, paper copies sent home in student agendas, and posted electronically on the district and school website). This district/school plan is also included as a part of the district's Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) for the upcoming school year. Each year, the revised plan is posted to the district's website to ensure the plan is available to the local community. Parents are welcome to provide input to school principals and the district's Federal Programs Director throughout the year.

COMMUNICATIONS

SCSS will communicate with all families and the community on a regular basis regarding school-wide events and activities, through phone and text messages, emails, social media, school newsletters, and flyers. The district and school will share information in English and other languages to the extent possible through written communications, meetings, conferences, and family engagement events in order for families to understand the school's academic standards and assessments as well as ways parents can monitor their child's progress.

STRENGTHENING OUR SCHOOL

The district Federal Programs Director will provide technical assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that family engagement and strategies and activities are being implemented. Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the Federal Programs Director to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the Federal Programs Director will hold scheduled meetings and trainings with its Title I schools' staff to review family engagement plans and activities.

Additionally, district and school administration will meet in June to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the upcoming school year.

RESERVATION OF FUNDS

SCSS will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in 2025-2026 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this plan and as described in federal law. Furthermore, SCSS will distribute 90 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 share survey results in Spring for parents to review and provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds could be used in the upcoming year at the district and school level. Comment cards 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 Federal Programs Director in 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 various 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.

Annual Title I Meeting

At the beginning of the school year, all Title I schools will host a meeting to inform all parents of the Title I requirements and the school's participation in and parent's rights under Title I.

School-Parent Compacts

As part of this plan, all Title I schools, along with our families, will jointly develop school-parent compacts in order to build and develop a partnership to help our students with the challenging state academic standards. These compacts serve as agreements that parents, teachers, and students will work together to make sure all students reach grade-level standards by following and accomplishing goals set forth by parents, teachers, and students. The compacts will be revised annually, distributed to all families, and reviewed at parent/teacher conferences.

Save the Dates

(Please see school websites for specific dates)

JULY/AUGUST 2025

- Open House

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2025

- SGT (School Governance Team) Meeting: adoption of School Improvement Plan, District/School Plan, and School-Parent Compacts

OCTOBER 2025

- Annual Title I Meeting

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

- Family Night #1

DECEMBER 2025

- Engagement Surveys

DECEMBER/JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025-2026

- Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences

MARCH 2026

- (Survey) Annual Title Evaluation Survey

FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL 2026

- Family Night #2
- Family Night #3

MAY 2026

- Annual State of the District Celebration

Building Capacity

SCSS 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, SCSS will implement a variety of family and community engagement initiatives.

Of Parents

SCSS will provide families with information about the overall Title I program and its requirements. The district works with its Title I schools to help families understand academic expectations for student learning and progress. Specific information related to building parent capacity, the State's challenging academic standards, and local and state assessments—including alternative assessments, will also be provided. The district also offers assistance to parents in understanding the use of its online student information system and other digital resources, including the harms of copyright piracy, through its technology specialists. Notifications about these opportunities will be posted on the district website and shared through school messaging systems, newsletters, and social media postings.

In addition, the district and school websites contain resources and materials such as parent guides, study guides, and practice assessments for at-home learning. Hard copies of these materials are also available at all Title I schools, including copies in Spanish.

School Governance Teams, including parent representatives from each Title I school, advise the district and schools on all matters related to family engagement. Community leaders and business partners are also invited to serve on the SGT. The participation of all our partners is encouraged through video conferencing and recording options, as needed, to accommodate varying schedules.

SCSS will coordinate and integrate the district's family engagement programs 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 such as the local preschool program and other federal and state-funded preschool programs in the district. The district will invite faculty and staff from those programs to attend planning meetings focused on family engagement activities. In the spring, our Title I schools host a variety of transitional aids to help prepare students for their next life stage. Schools have ambassador days, student-shadow days, Level-up events, facility tours, and transitional videos that are designed to help students as they move from one grade and campus to another.

Of School Staff

SCSS will assist schools in trainings during the school year for principals and staff to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. These trainings will be redelivered to the faculty and staff of Title I schools. SCSS will also provide guidance for appropriate school staff and faculty that will focus on creating welcoming environments.

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' preferred 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 social media to post information for parents.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, SCSS will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey, comprehensive needs assessment, and School Governance Teams.

In March, 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 use spring planning meetings and spring School Governance Team meetings to facilitate group discussions concerning the needs of parents of children eligible to receive Title I services and to design strategies for more effective family engagement.

SCSS will use the findings from the meetings 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, each school's family engagement coordinator will communicate and collaborate with the Federal Programs Department 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.

Adoption

This districtwide parent and 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 during multiple meetings held throughout the school year.

This policy was adopted by the Stephens County School System on May 29, 2025, and will be in effect for the 2025-2026 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before November 1.