

# Benton County Schools

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## District Parent and Family Engagement Policy

**Mission: Rising To Excellence**

## **District Parent and Family Engagement Policy Benton County School District 2024-2025**

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Benton County School District receives Title I, Part A funds and must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by Section 1116(a)(2) of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement and describes how the district will implement several specific parent and family engagement activities.

### **Benton County School District agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:**

- The school district will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents and family members in all its schools with Title I, Part A programs. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents and family members of participating children.
- The school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement plans meet the Title I, Part A requirements, and include as a component, a school-parent compact.
- The school district will incorporate this district-wide parent and family engagement policy into its district plan.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, limited literacy, disabilities, of migratory children, who are economically disadvantaged, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If the district plan for Title I, Part A is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).
- The school district will be governed by the following definition of parental involvement and expects that its Title I, Part A schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:

*Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:*

- *Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning,*
- *Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school,*

- *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, and*
- *Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of ESSA.*

The district parent and family engagement policy include a description of how the district will implement or accomplish each of the following components:

- **Jointly Developed Policy and Plans**

The Benton County School District will take the following actions to involve parents and family members in jointly developing its district plan, and in the development and review of support and improvement plans:

- Ensure that each School Wide Planning Committee includes parent representation.
- Involve parent representatives in the planning process for creating the School Wide Plans and the Consolidated Federal Programs Application

- **Technical Assistance**

The Benton County School District will provide the following coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all Title I, Part A schools 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:

- Require each Title I school to develop an annual school-level parent and family engagement plan, based on input from parents, which describes specific activities or strategies to be conducted throughout the current school year to assist parents in improving their child’s/children’s academic achievement
- At the beginning of each school year, allocate federal funds to each Title I school for activities and /or publications related to parent engagement activities
- On an annual basis, plan and provide professional development related to effective parent engagement strategies for administrators, faculty, and staff

- **Annual Evaluation**

The Benton County School District will take the following actions to conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation (needs assessment) of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities (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). The evaluation will also include identifying the needs of parents and family

members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. The school district will use the findings of the evaluation of its parent and family engagement policy to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise, if necessary, its parent and family engagement policies.

- Solicit school and parent feedback through a meeting, survey or some other method to review and, if necessary, revise the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy through the local School Wide Planning Committee.
- Ensure schools conduct an evaluation process to review the effectiveness of the district's Parent and Family Engagement Policy as well as the local school's Parent and Family Engagement Plan.
- Provide parents with the opportunity to assist in the development/revision of the School Compact, an agreement between parents and the school in which all parties agree to take an active role in improving student achievement.

- **Reservation of Funds (only applicable to districts with Title I allocations of \$500,000 or more)**

If applicable, Benton County School District will involve the parents and family members of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to Title I schools.

- Conduct an annual Title I Parent Meeting at the beginning of each school year to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I, Part A programs and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements, and the rights of parents to be involved in Title I, Part A programs.
- Hold Planning Meetings where parents can give input into how the funds are used.

- **Coordination of Services**

The Benton County School District will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs such as Head Start, etc., that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Collaborate with other organizations and community partners to provide additional support and resources to families.
- Host open houses, and college and career fairs to help students transition from grade to grade, school to school, and from school to career.

- **Building Capacity of Parents**

The Benton County School District will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, build parents' capacity for strong parental involvement by providing materials and training on such topics as literacy training and using technology to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement. Assistance will also be provided to parents in understanding the following topics:

- The challenging State academic standards,
- The State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments,
- The requirements of Title I, Part A,
- How to monitor their child’s progress, and
- How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child.
  - Assist schools in determining, planning, and promoting parent engagement activities for each school year based on the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
  - Provide public notice to parents of district-wide events.
  - Actively promote school-level events and activities through district-level communication strategies.
  - Hold parent teacher conference days district wide.
  - Make available resources through the Family Resource Center for parents to help their student’s academic success.

- **Building Capacity of School Staff**

The Benton County School District will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other school leaders, and other staff on the value and utility of contributions of parents, and on 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 schools by:

- Hold parent-teacher conference days district-wide
- Provide professional development opportunities in Parent and Family Engagement
- Publicize information related to school and parent programs on the district website, social media, and in the local newspaper.

- **Building Capacity for Involvement**

The Benton County School District will, in meaningful consultation with its parents, choose to undertake to build parents’ capacity for involvement in the school and school district to support their children’s academic achievement, such as the following discretionary activities listed under Section 1116(e) of ESSA. The district will implement improve family-school partnerships:

- Establish a district parent advisory board to provide input on matters related to parent and family engagement in Title I, Part A programs.
- Maximize parent and family engagement and participation in their child’s education and arrange school meetings and events at a variety of times at the schools and at the district level.