

Cook County School District

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

202-2023
Revised June 15, 2022
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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 Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Cook County School District (CCSD) has developed this parent and family engagement policy 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 CCSD'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. The CCSD 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 annual review meeting in May 2022, parents, school and district personnel, and community members were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the 2022-2023 school year. The district sent an email to stakeholders informing them about this meeting. During the meeting, participants also reviewed and discussed the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP).

Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement policy was incorporated into the CLIP which was submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy at any time on the school district website or by submitting written comments to your child's school. All feedback received by May 2023 will be considered for revisions to this policy for the 2023-2024 school year.

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

Strengthening Our School

This year, the district social services coordinator (SSC) will provide technical assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that family engagement strategies and activities are being implemented. Parent and family engagement coordinators (PFECs) in Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the SSC to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the SSC will hold meetings and trainings with its Title I schools' principals and PFECs to review family engagement plans and activities.

Additionally, the district will convene a summit in September for principals and PFECs to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year.

Reservation of Funds

The CCSD will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in 2022-2023 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in federal law. Title I schools will use these funds to support their building-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 host an annual School Improvement Forum in May for parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds could be used in the upcoming year at the 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 the SSC 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 the meeting described in this section to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students reach our student academic achievement goals.

School Improvement Forums ~ May, 2023

During this month, each Title I school will host a forum for parents and family members to hear the latest updates from the Cook County School District. Those in attendance will have an opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions to review and provide input into the district's parent and family engagement policy, the schoolwide plan, and the family engagement budget, as well as topics for school staff training and the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan for the 2023-2024 school year.

Each Title I school will send invitations home as well as email and text parents to notify them about the date and time of the forum in advance of the meeting. Information regarding the School Improvement Forum will also be made available on the district and school websites.

Input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs may also be provided through the annual district survey. The survey will contain questions related to the family engagement budget and school staff training for parents to provide their comments.

Unable to attend these meetings?

Please visit www.cook.k12.ga.us/TitleIA
to review meeting documents and leave your input.



Scan the code with your smartphone or tablet to access information from the Cook County Schools Title I, Part A website.

Building Capacity

The CCSD 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, the CCSD will implement a variety of family and community engagement initiatives. The Academic Parent-Teacher Team (APTT) model of family engagement is one such initiative. Training and support of APTT was provided for through the Georgia Department of Education. APTT is a program wherein teachers and families partner to address academic goals through at-home learning activities.

Of Parents –

The CCSD 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 APTT, 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 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, practice assessments, and APTT materials for at-home learning. Hard copies of these materials are also available at all Title I schools, including copies in Spanish.

The CCSD 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, schools will host Kindergarten Readiness sessions, Middle and High School Transition opportunities, and College and Career sessions so parents may receive information to help prepare them and their children for the next life stage.

Of School Staff –

The CCSD will conduct trainings during the school year for principals and school PFECs to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. The district Family Engagement Leadership Team (FELT) will conduct APTT training for the entire school staff. The purpose of the FELT is to coordinate the sustainability and growth of APTT in the district. Appropriate school staff and faculty will also be provided training focused on creating welcoming environments.

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 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, the CCSD 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 and the School Improvement Forums.

In the spring, 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 the School Improvement Forum to facilitate group discussions regarding the needs of parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective family engagement.

The CCSD will use the findings from the school forums 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, the district family engagement coordinator will communicate and collaborate with the Office for Student Support Services 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.

Mark Your Calendars

For Parents

Annual Parent Survey
March, 2023

School Improvement Forum
May, 2023
Local School Site

For Schools

Welcoming Schools Training
September 14, 2023
County Board Office

Building Administrator
and PFEC Meetings
November 17, 2023
January 11, 2024
March 15, 2024

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 through the district improvement process.

This policy was adopted by the Cook County School District on June 29, 2023 and will be in effect for the 2022-2023 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before or during the first week of fall semester.

