



# Cook County Schools

## District Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

### 2021-2022

*Revised **June 1, 2021***

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Cook County Schools receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore 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 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the LEA's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement and describes how the LEA will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the LEA's plan submitted to the Georgia Department of Education.

#### **The Cook 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 of 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 policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include as a component a school-parent compact consistent with federal law.
- 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 LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under Section 1112 of the ESSA, 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 state Department of Education.

- The school district will be governed by the following definition of parental involvement/family engagement and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition in Section 8101 of the ESSA:

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

- (A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- (B) Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
- (C) 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) Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA

### **DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE DISTRICT WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED LEA PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS**

#### **JOINTLY DEVELOPED**

Cook County Schools will take the following actions to involve parents and family members in jointly developing its LEA plan under Section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of Section 1111(d) of the ESSA:

- The development and review of a Districtwide Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), and individual School Improvement Plans will be announced in local newspapers, on the district and school websites, and through text messages to parents.
- Parent meetings will be held to allow parents the opportunity to provide input into the development of the Districtwide Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), and individual School Improvement Plans.
- The Districtwide Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), and individual School Improvement Plans will be posted on the district and school websites for public feedback.

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Cook County Schools will provide the following coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build capacity of all Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement 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 Title I Director will provide updates and engage in on-going collaboration with Principals and other district leaders at monthly meetings.

- The district will provide Family Engagement Coordinators to effectively work between parents and schools.
- The Title I Director, System Social Worker, and School Counselors will meet quarterly with Parent and Family Engagement Coordinators.
- The Title I Director will provide schools with the GaDOE Title I Parent and Family Engagement Handbook.
- The Title I Director will provide schools with GaDOE webinars designed to increase parent and family engagement and improve student academic achievement and school performance.
- The district will review school level Parent and Family Engagement Policies and School-Parent Compacts and provide feedback and assistance as needed.
- The Title I Director will provide technical assistance for all Title I parent and family engagement requirements through on-site visits, meetings with school personnel, email messages, and phone conferences.

## **ANNUAL EVALUATION**

Cook County Schools will take the following actions to conduct, with the meaningful engagement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation 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 about its parent and family engagement policy to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental engagement, and to revise, if necessary, its parent and family engagement policies.

- An annual survey for parents and family members will be distributed to seek input into the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy content and effectiveness.
- The Title I Director, Principals, and Family Engagement Coordinators will distribute the surveys during the second semester of each school year.
- Surveys will be made available online through the district and school websites, and printed copies will be available through school offices upon request.
- Surveys will be provided to parents and family members in languages other than English to the extent feasible.
- Survey data will be compiled by the Title I Director.
- Survey results will be shared with the Cook County Board of Education, District Administrative Team, individual School Councils, School Improvement Teams, and school faculties and staffs.
- Feedback from these meetings will be collected and taken into consideration along with the survey data.
- Survey results will be posted to the district and school websites and available upon request from the district office and individual schools.

## **RESERVATION OF FUNDS**

Cook County Schools 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.

- A Title I survey will be conducted in the spring for parents and family members to provide suggestions of how family engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the district and school level.
- Comments and suggestions from these surveys will be reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year. Changes to the family engagement budget will be considered based on parent and family feedback.
- The district will provide guidance to assist schools in developing an adequate family engagement budget to address parent recommendations and needs identified in their annual needs assessment.
- Funds reserved by the district shall be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, including:
  - Supporting schools in providing professional development for district and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies;
  - Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school; and
  - Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
  - The budget for parent and family engagement activities and programs will be shared with parents and family members at school level meetings in the fall.

## **COORDINATION OF SERVICES**

Cook County Schools will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs including Babies Can't Wait, Head Start, Boys and Girls Club, Family Connections, Bright From the Start, and local public and private preschool programs that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Providing specialized services in conjunction with Babies Can't Wait by serving Significantly Developmentally Delayed and Speech students in the home. Parents are provided training in understanding the evaluation, placement, and support services available for their children.
- Providing a Speech Pathologist to meet the needs of students at Cook County Head Start. Head Start provides parent and family engagement activities and parent conferences. Cook County staff members are available for parent activities.
- Collaborating with Cook County Boys and Girls Club through Cook County Family Connection to provide additional support for children after school and through the summer.
- Partnering with Bright From the Start to provide Pre-K services to Cook County students in eight classrooms. An on-site orientation for families is provided prior to the beginning

of the school year. Families receive written information concerning eligibility requirements, the school calendar, transportation, nutrition, instructional program, and developing a home/school partnership. Teachers provide monthly classroom newsletters to families. Parents and family members are encouraged to volunteer their time, talents, and experiences in the classroom. Parent meetings are conducted throughout the school year to keep parents informed. Pre-K teachers conduct a minimum of two required conferences with parents/guardians during the school year to inform them of their child's progress and readiness for transition to kindergarten.

- All Cook County Parent and Family Engagement Coordinators collaborate with local public and private preschool programs and with one another to include parents in activities to prepare students for transition to kindergarten, elementary, middle, high, and postsecondary schools or careers.

## **BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS**

Cook County Schools will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, build parents' capacity for strong family engagement by providing materials and training on such topics as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy) 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
- How to help prepare students for testing
- How to interpret test results
- How to work with educators to improve their child's academic achievement
- Community-based agencies and organizations to obtain additional support
- Events hosted by Parent and Family Engagement Coordinators and School Counselors
- SOCK (Saving Our Cook Kids) activities and projects carried out by Parent and Family Engagement Coordinators and School Counselors
- Parent and family newsletters with a focus on academic standards, assessments, student recognition, and school activities
- Open Houses, PTO meetings, and specialized parent and family engagement meetings

## **BUILDING CAPACITY OF SCHOOL STAFF**

Cook County Schools, with the assistance of its schools and parents, will educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff 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 schools by:

- Providing opportunities to attend parent and family engagement conferences, workshops, and training sessions to build their capacity to work with parents as equal partners;
- Providing parent and family engagement webinars;

- Adopting building level Parent and Family Engagement Policies and School-Parent Compacts; and
- Implementing activities found in the GaDOE Title I Parent and Family Engagement Handbook.
- Schools will provide information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities to parents in a format, to the extent practicable, and in a language that parents can understand.

## **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT**

Cook County Schools, with the assistance of its Title I schools and in meaningful consultation with parents, will build parents' capacity for strong family engagement in the schools and district to support their children's academic achievement, such as the following discretionary activities listed under Section 1116(e) of the ESSA:

- Involving parents and other community organizations, as feasible and appropriate, in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training; and
- Maximize family engagement and participation in their children's education, arranging school meetings at a variety of times or conducting phone conferences between teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend those conferences at school.

### **ADOPTION**

This LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly and agreed on with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes.

This policy was adopted by the Cook County School District on mm/dd/yy and will be in effect for the period of the 2021-2022 school year. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before November 1, 2021.