

# Sumter County School District

## Parent and Family Engagement Policy

2020-2021  
Revised 9/30/2020  
100 Learning Lane  
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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 Sumter County School District (SCSD) 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 SCSD'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 SCSD 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 District's Stakeholder meeting in September 2020, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the 2020-2021 school year. The district invited all parents to the virtual parent input meeting through announcements posted on school and school district websites. During this meeting, parents also reviewed and discussed the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), the Comprehensive Support and Improvement School's Plan, and the Targeted Support and Improvement School's Plan.

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 October 5, 2020 was considered for revisions to this policy.

The district parent and family engagement policy will be posted on the district and school websites, distributed during the annual Title I meetings held in the fall, and made available in the schools' parent resource centers.

## Strengthening Our School

This year, the district family engagement coordinator (FEC) 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. Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the FEC to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the FEC will hold parent meetings and staff trainings with its Title I schools' principals and school FECs to review family engagement plans and activities.

Additionally, the district will convene a conference in April for principals and FECs 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 SCSD will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in 2020-2021 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in federal law. Furthermore, the SCSD 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 hosted an annual School Input Forum for parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds could be used in the 2020-2021 school year at the district and school-level. Survey Results and minutes from these meetings were reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and considered changes to the family engagement budget. If you have suggestions, please contact the FEC in the district office.



# Opportunities for Meaningful Parent 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 two 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.

## **District Input Meeting ~ March, 2021**

All parents are welcome to hear the latest updates from the Sumter County School District as well as review and provide input into the district parent and family engagement policy and the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will be advertised in multiple ways in advance of the meeting. The district will also communicate information regarding this meeting on the school district website.

## **School Input Meetings ~ January-February, 2021**

During this time, each Title I school will host a meeting for parents and family members to participate in roundtable discussions to review the schoolwide plan, the school's parent and family engagement policies as well as provide input on the family engagement budget and topics for school staff training. Each Title I school will provide notifications in multiple ways. Invitations will be sent home as well as email and text parents to notify them about the date and time of the forum. Information regarding the School Input meeting will also be made available on the 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? Provide your input using the QR codes provided.**

Title I District Parent Survey (English)



Elementary School Parent Survey (English)



6th-8th Grade Middle School Parent Survey (English)



9th-12th Grade High School Parent Survey (English)



How to access your survey using your mobile device

### **Directions:**

1. Download and open the QR code reader on your mobile device
2. Hold your device over a QR code so that it is clearly visible
3. Survey should open once code is in focus.

\*\*Google account users will be asked to enter your email and password. Non Google users will go directly into the survey.

# Building Capacity

The SCSD 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 SCSD will implement a variety of family and community engagement initiatives.

***Of Parents*** - The SCSD 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. 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 other materials for at-home learning. Hard copies of these materials are also available at all Title I schools, including copies in Spanish.

The SCSD Parent Advisory Council, made up of parent representatives from each Title I school, advises the district and schools on all matters related to family engagement. Community leaders and business partners are also invited to serve on the council. The participation of all our partners is encouraged through video conferencing and recording options to accommodate varying schedules.

The SCSD 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 Ready for Kindergarten tours in collaboration with HeadStart, Middle and High School Transition Nights, and College and Career Fair so parents may receive information to help prepare them and their children for the next life stage.

***Of School Staff*** - The SCSD will conduct four trainings during the school year for principals and school FECs 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. The SCSD will also host a training 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' native language, where applicable, and interpreters will be available at parent events and meetings. Information posted on the district website will be translated to the extent practicable. The district will also utilize school telephone systems, school websites, local news media, and other school message systems to post information for parents.

# Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, the SCSD 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 Input Meetings.

Beginning in January, 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 Input Meeting to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective family engagement.

The SCSD 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

January 11-22, 2021

School Input Meetings

January 1- February 26, 2021  
All Schools

District Input Meeting

March 18, 2021 –  
County Board Office

### *For Schools*

PIC Meetings

November 11, 2020  
January 13, 2021  
February 3, 2021  
March 3, 2021

Staff Trainings

Quarterly

## 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 at the annual State of the District meeting.

This policy was adopted by the Sumter County School District on September 30, 2020 and will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children during the fall semester.

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