

# Houston County School District

## District Parent and Family Engagement Plan 2020-2021

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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:

- That parents and families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- That parents and families are encouraged to be actively engaged in their child's education.
- That parents and families 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.
- The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA.

## About the Parent and Family Engagement Plan

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Houston County School System (HCSS) has developed this parent and family engagement plan that establishes the district's expectations for family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent/family partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe HCSS'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 more. Title I, Part A provides for substantive parental 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 the Every Child Succeeds Act (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. Consistent with Section 1116, the HCSS will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement plans meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116(d) of the ESSA.

# Jointly Developed

HCSS provides stakeholders e.g., parents, teachers, students, school officials, community agencies, and government representatives multiple opportunities to jointly develop, review and revise Title I documents including the Parent and Family Engagement Plan. The Federal Programs Director and District Parent Engagement Coordinator will host a Shared Decision Making (SDM) meeting annually. Stakeholders will be informed and invited to participate in the meetings via announcements posted on the district and school websites, media press release, social media, and flyers in Title I schools. Stakeholders attending the meeting will receive information and will be able to share in the discussion regarding Federal Programs, System Achievement Data, Federal Program Plans, Budgets and Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Stakeholders are welcome to complete feedback cards during the SDM meetings and/or at any time on the district website. All feedback received by June will be included in the plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

Upon final revision, the district Parent and Family Engagement Plan will be incorporated into the CLIP which is submitted to the state.

The District Parent and Family Engagement Plan will be made available on the district and Title I schools' websites, during the Annual Title I School Meetings and in the schools' Parent Resource Centers.

*“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.”*

## Strengthening Our Schools

The Federal Programs Director and/or District Family Engagement Coordinator will provide professional learning/technical assistance to principals and school-level Family Engagement Coordinators on a regular basis through planned meetings, on-site visits, webinars, emails and phone calls to ensure parental engagement requirements are being met. Assistance will be provided to Title I schools in the development and implementation of a 1-Year Action Plan that includes a minimum of seven capacity building, academically-focused parent events, as well as, activities that support a welcoming school environment. Throughout the year, Title I schools will be given guidance and timelines to follow. These notifications and resources will help them improve and strengthen family engagement. A Welcome Back Title I Meeting will be held in July for principals, coordinators and other staff members to officially kick-off the new school year and set the tone for family engagement. Additionally, a Mid-Year Meeting will take place early in the second semester and will provide Title I program updates, state of the program information, program evaluation documentation and steps for preparing for the upcoming school year.



## Reservation of Funds

The HCSS will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in FY21 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this plan and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. The HCSS will distribute 90 percent of the reserved amount to Title I schools unless all Title I principals agree for the reserved amount to remain at the district level to support district and school level family engagement programs and activities. The district will provide clear guidance and communication to assist each Title I school in developing an adequate parental engagement budget that addresses their needs assessment and parent recommendations.

Each Title I school will host an annual Share Decision Making Meeting and will conduct a parent survey in the spring to gather input and suggestions on how these parental engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-level. Feedback 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 parental engagement budget.

# Opportunities for Shared Decision Making

Input and suggestions from parents and family members 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 an input meeting 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 Shared Decision Making Meeting ~ Spring 2021**

All stakeholders are welcome to hear the latest updates from the Houston County School District as well as review and provide input into the district Parent and Family Engagement Plan and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will appear local newspapers, will be posted in Title I schools and on social media in advance of the meetings. The district will also communicate information regarding this meeting on the district and Title I schools' websites. The meeting takes place at a local library and is held at convenient time. A portion of the meeting will be dedicated to round table discussions. This strategy will allow stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and to collaborate with other parents and district personnel.

## **School-level Share Decision Making Meetings ~ Spring 2021**

Each Title I school will host a meeting for parents to participate in discussions to review the School Improvement Plan, the school's parent and family engagement plan, school-parent compacts, as well as, provide input on the parental engagement budget and parental engagement programs. Each Title I school will advertise the meeting notifying parents about the date and time through multiple means. These means include but are not limited to school website, social media, invitations, school messenger, flyers, newsletter, email, text message and Class Dojo. Schools will also hold a SDM meeting for their faculty.

## **Parent Action Team Meetings ~ On-going**

Each Title I school may have a Parent Action Team that meets at least twice a year. All families are invited and encouraged to participate.

## **Title I Parent Satisfaction Survey ~ Spring 2021**

Parent input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs will be provided through the annual district survey. The survey will contain questions related to the family engagement budget, welcoming climate, academic support and shared decision making.





# Building School and Parent Capacity

The HCSS will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental engagement, in order to ensure effective engagement of parents and families to support a partnership among the Title I schools, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following districtwide activities and programs.

- HCSS will work with its Title I schools to provide assistance to parents in understanding state and district academic information connected to their student's learning and progress, as well as information regarding the Title I program. The HCSS will establish, *Parent University*, an online resource for parents to gain knowledge about Georgia Standards of Excellence and the achievement standards, as well as, the required assessments for Georgia students including alternative forms of assessment. The online resource will be posted on the district website under the Federal Programs link.
- HCSS will provide a page on the district website that will contain resources and materials, including parent guides, study guides, and practice assessments, to help parents work with their children at home. Copies of these materials will be made available at all Title I schools for those families who may have limited internet access, including copies in Spanish.
- HCSS will assist parents with understanding Infinite Campus, the online student information system, and other digital educational resources, by working with Title I schools to host workshops and on-going drop-in opportunities for parents. Dates and times for these workshops and drop-in visits will be determined and announced by each individual school. Schools may request assistance from the district's technology support staff if needed.
- HCSS will coordinate and integrate the district's family engagement programs with the Head Start program and other state funded preschool programs in the district by inviting faculty and staff from those programs to attend planning meetings focused on family engagement activities. HCSS will ensure that its Title I schools coordinate efforts with Pre-K and Head Start programs to provide information and workshops on school readiness and the importance of family engagement. "Away to K", PACT time, and school tours are examples of coordinated events that may be provided for the parents of students participating in these early education programs. This effort will help families with the transition from these programs to Houston County School's kindergarten classrooms. Elementary level school personnel are encouraged to invite families to their parental engagement workshops throughout the year. The district will publish a Kindergarten Readiness Booklet that will be available on the district website and in all Parent Resource Centers.
- HCSS will take the following actions to ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents in an understandable and uniform format to the extent practicable, in language that parents can understand: The district will provide required documents and other pertinent information in an understandable format, and to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand. The district and Title I schools shall communicate regularly with parents through a variety of media, including but not limited to:  
Title I Parent Handbook, parent-teacher conferences, parent workshops/events, Parent Resource Centers, newsletters, flyers, emails, online group meeting platforms, websites, school messenger system, school marquees, and social media. All information will be presented in a parent-friendly language.  
The districts shall employ a translator to assist in this effort.  
Personnel at the Central Registration complex shall further assist families when culture and language may be barriers.  
The district will inform school personnel that all parents must be invited to parent and family engagement planning meetings, academic events, and shared decision making opportunities using multiple forms of advertisements.
- HCSS will conduct multiple trainings during the school year for principals and family engagement coordinators to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, use data to revise plans and compacts, use of the compact during conferencing, and build ties with parents and the community. These trainings will be redelivered to the faculty and staff of Title I schools. The district family engagement coordinator will visit each Title I school to review and discuss family engagement requirements and initiatives.

# Building School and Parent Capacity

- Title I schools with assistance from the District Family Engagement Coordinator will offer parent workshops/activities and a number of volunteer opportunities on a regular basis, at various times, and to the extent practicable provide services to eliminate parental engagement barriers. Each school will provide a minimum of seven (7) family-focused academic based activities a year. These capacity building events must provide families with useful strategies that are linked to learning and are aligned with the goals identified by the school.
- Title I schools must also provide print or digital materials in the form of brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, and make available website links that assist parents in understanding topics such as: Georgia Standards of Excellence, College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), Georgia Milestone Assessment (End-of-Course and End-of-Grade) Benchmark Tests, Record of Progress, Writing Assessments, How to Monitor their Child's Progress, Help with Homework, and How to Work with Educators. These strategies and topics are covered during events such as Open House, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Subject Area/Curriculum Nights, Open Classroom Time, Lunch & Learn, and Evening Advisement.
- Title schools will also offer events such as Meet and Greet, Holiday Lunch, Fall Festival, Family Fitness, Military Appreciation, Community Resource Fairs that help build a welcoming climate and a strong relationship between families and schools.
- HCSS shall notify families of the ESSA Designation of each Title I school.
- The district and schools will utilize resources provided through the Georgia Department of Education and through GaDOE Parent Engagement Program.
- All parents with student(s) in a Title I school will receive a Title I Parent Handbook. This handbook will contain the following notices: School-level Parent and Family Engagement Plan, School-Parent Compact, Parents' Rights to Know Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications letter, Complaint Procedure and Copyright Awareness Notification.
- All Title I schools shall hold an Annual Title I Meeting at a convenient time within the first six weeks of school. During the meeting, each school is to inform parents about the purpose, goals, guidelines and expectations of the Title I program.
- Title I schools shall maintain a Parent Resource Center that is strategically located within the school building. Schools shall be responsible for notifying parents about the center's location, hours of operation and available resources. Parent Resource Centers shall provide learning opportunities for parents that promote literacy, parental development, learning at home, information about Title I, communication and decision making.
- The district will recommend that Title I schools send representatives to workshops/conferences related to family engagement, as well as, participate in webinar series provided by the Georgia Department of Education.
- School-level family engagement coordinators will provide meaningful training to school staff that encourages a welcoming atmosphere and promotes the importance of family engagement at least four times a year.



# Parent and Family Engagement Evaluations



## Mark Your Calendars

### For Families

Parent University-Online  
September 2020

Parent-Teacher Conference Day  
October 2020

Parent & Family Engagement Month  
November 2020

Parent Satisfaction Survey  
February-March 2021

District Shared Decision Making Meetings  
Spring 2021, Local Public Library

School Shared Decision Making Meetings  
Spring 2021, Local School Site

Each year, the HCSS will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement plan and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent satisfaction survey and the Shared Decision Making Meetings.

In the spring, each Title I school will send home a survey for parents to provide valuable feedback regarding the parent and family engagement activities and programs. In addition to the annual survey, each Title I school will also use

the Shared Decision Making Meetings to facilitate group discussions to discuss the needs parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective parental engagement.

The HCSS will use the findings from the schools' SDM 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 plans.

## Accessibility

In carrying out the parental engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the district family engagement coordinator will communicate and collaborate with Student Support Services and Teaching and Learning 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.

## Plan Approval

This districtwide parent and family engagement plan 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 Shared Decision Making Meetings.

This plan will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The school district will make this plan available to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before September 30, 2020.

