



# School District of Pickens County

*Building success beyond the classroom*

## **DISTRICT PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2016-2017**

**Parents:** *Please read below an overview of how the District's and your Title I school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy (-ies) are developed jointly and agreed upon with parents and are distributed to all Title I parents of participating children. The District Parent and Family Engagement Policy should establish the expectations and provide a description of parent involvement. Please contact the Coordinator of Federal and Special Programs at 864-397-1006 for more information related to state and federal guidelines on this policy or on Title I law.*

Each spring the local newspapers and the district website announce the Title I Annual Public Planning Meeting to discuss the required LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy and to make specific or general recommendations for its revision for the upcoming year. This meeting occurred on May 5, 2016. Parent and educator groups at the school level represent general parent populations, Parent Advisory Boards, School Improvement Councils (SIC), and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) groups, along with educators, support staff, and community members. All Title I school communities had opportunities for representation. Comments were considered in the final revision of the District's Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

Each Title I school calls upon a respective and representative parent and staff committee to develop collaboratively a required school-based Parent and Family Engagement Policy, beginning in the fall of each year. Although work is done through a representative committee on each respective school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy, all school parents have opportunities to participate in the committee's work and/or to offer written or oral opinions about the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

After each Title I school committee meets in the early fall to update its school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy, the principal sends the draft policy to all parents to solicit their timely suggestions and recommendations about the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. After receiving these parental recommendations about the draft Parent and Family Engagement Policy, the principal makes all comments available to the planning committee to consider in the final Parent and Family Engagement Policy. The committee does not have to include all parental input in the final Parent and Family Engagement Policy; however, the committee must review and consider all input. Once the committee finalizes work on the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy, the principal sends the school's final Parent and Family Engagement Policy

and the District's final Parent and Family Engagement Policy to all of the school parents as part of their Title I rights. These documents are given to parents no later than October 31 of each year. The principal maintains a file of all parental comments received as part of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy planning process. This documentation is available for public review, and these comments are also available through the Coordinator of Federal and Special Programs. Also, the principal will file the school's final Parent and Family Engagement Policy by October 31 of each year with the Coordinator of Federal and Special Programs. Finally, the principal or designee will review the two documents at a public school meeting each fall and will periodically publicly address components of each document as appropriate. Attendance sheets, agendas, and minutes are available of all public meetings related to the development of the District and school Parent and Family Engagement Policies. The following are required components and core elements of the Title I District Parent and Family Engagement Policy for 2016-2017:

### **Core Elements**

To implement an effective Parent and Family Engagement Policy and plan to support students' academic success, the District will do the following:

#### **A. Involve parents in the joint development of the LEA plan, Parent and Family Engagement Policy, and process of school review and improvement:**

- review the purposes and major strategies of the Title I program and parent/family engagement;
- provide parents with the district parental involvement policy in the Back to School Book received at registration;
- assist parents in understanding topics such as the State's academic content and achievement standards, State and local assessments, annual yearly progress, and effective monitoring of their child's academic work and achievement;
- provide opportunity for parents of Title I children to participate in the LEA plan process and that of school review and improvement by serving on planning committees and providing input by survey response; and
- review results of parent surveys, program evaluations, and achievement data for the annual school review and use these data as needed to modify Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

#### **B. Provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:**

- provide materials and training to enable parents to work with children to support their academic achievement, such as through literacy training and instructional technology;
- provide training to school staffs and principals to strengthen parent/family engagement efforts, including outreach activities;
- provide parents information about Title I programs, services, parent/family engagement opportunities, parental rights, plan review process, and school improvement levels; and
- provide appropriate support services for students to assist with the home-school connection and students' academic achievement.

#### **C. Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental/family engagement:**

- train educators and support services staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of parent contributions to the academic process and in how to work with parents as equal

partners to implement and coordinate parent programs to strengthen ties between parents and schools;

- collaborate with PTAs, SICs, community agencies, and businesses to provide activities that build capacity for parents to assist learning and participation in school processes, such as classroom volunteering, mentoring, academic content assistance, career explorations, or parenting and family activities;
- distribute to schools the comments and recommendations from all district parent involvement council meetings; and
- collaborate with district and community resources, such as Adult Education and Early Childhood, to provide parents flexible schedules and varieties of parenting skills classes, early childhood development activities, literacy, and homework assistance.

**D. Coordinate and integrate parent/family engagement strategies with parent/family engagement strategies under other programs:**

- include such programs as Head Start, Even Start, Home Instruction Programs, and State-run preschool programs in parent/family engagement activities to support academic transition and success;
- establish parent resources among coordinated programs to promote literacy and participation in the education of children; and
- assist students and parents through coordinated services among school, family, and support services as needed for initial school entry and ongoing academic success.

**E. Conduct, with the involvement of all parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent/family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized (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); use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement; and revise, if necessary, the parent/family engagement policies described. Procedures will include the following:**

- solicit parental input in annual districtwide Title I meetings and through respective schoolwide planning teams;
- evaluate parental activities related to literacy and academic assistance;
- provide evaluative data and any other parental input to stakeholders in order to revise and to improve Parent/Family Engagement Policy; and
- surveys of parents at all Title I schools (How Does Our Garden Grow).

**F. Involve parents in the activities of all Title I schools and forward all information to parents related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand:**

- host an annual meeting of parents, school staff members, and appropriate support staff members to share effective activities for increasing parent/family engagement;
- maintain participation records for all district-wide parent/family engagement activities;
- review data from schools on frequency and type of events and parent attendance;
- draw input from a sample of school-site parent program evaluations and suggestions for improvement; and
- publicize annually the results of evaluations and parent/family engagement programs.

**G. Make accommodations to support parent/family engagement at the district and school levels through the following:**

- arrange school and parent meetings at a variety of times or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children in order to maximize parental involvement and participation;
- encourage parent involvement by paying reasonable and necessary expenses such as childcare costs to enable participation in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- provide training of parents, if needed, to train other parents to enhance the involvement;
- provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request; and
- provide full opportunity for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Title I law, section 1111, in an easy-to-read format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents understand.

**H. Provide all parents of participating Title I students access to this LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy by October 31 of each year.**

**I. Provide all parents of students in Title I schools information about their right to know the qualifications of their children's teachers, paraprofessionals, or substitute teachers. Notice of this right and of any person who does not meet the highly qualified criteria required by No Child Left Behind will be forwarded to parents by October 31 of each year.**

**J. Use data gathered in the above activities in parent/family engagement council meetings or from other data-gathering formats to complete the following tasks:**

- revise the Title I district and school Parent and Family Engagement Policies;
- design strategies to expand successful activities;
- address inadequacies of existing programs;
- remove barriers to participation; and
- encourage volunteering in the classroom or other forms of involvement in the school.