

Decatur County School System

Parent and Family Engagement Plan

2025-2026

Revised: April 14, 2025

1417 Dothan Rd

Bainbridge, GA 39817

www.dcboe.com

229-248-2835



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 Plan

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Decatur County School System (DCSS) 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 DCSS'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 DCSS 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 CLIP Meeting in May 2025 (as well as throughout the 2025-2026 school year), all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the 2023-2024 school year. The district sent an email to all parents informing them about this meeting, mailed letters and posted an announcement on the district website as well as social media outlets. 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. Additionally, each Title I school used its Parent Advisory Council to review the district parent and family engagement policy before the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

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, throughout the year, was considered for revisions to this policy.

The district Parent and Family Engagement Plan is posted on the district website. A copy is made available in the District Parent Resource Center.

Strengthening Our Schools

This year, the district and the Parent & Family Engagement Coordinator (DPFEC) 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 DPFEC to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the DPFEC will hold quarterly meetings and trainings with its Title I schools' principals and school PFECs to review family engagement plans and activities throughout the school year.

Additionally, the district will convene a summit in March for PFECs to review parent and family engagement requirements and discuss opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year as well as the upcoming school year.

Reservation of Funds

The DCSS will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in 2025-2026 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in federal law. Furthermore, the DCSS 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 hosts an annual School Improvement Meeting for parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds could be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-level. Comments are recorded and minutes from these meetings are 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 DPFEC in the district office.



Building Capacity: Of Parents and Families

SUPPORTING STUDENT

SUCCESS. The DCSS 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 DCSS will implement a variety of family and community engagement initiatives. The DCSS 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 the State's challenging academic standards, and local and state assessments—including alternative assessments, such as; GAA 2.0, GKIDS, Writing, GA Milestone Assessment System and ACCESS.

The district also offers assistance to parents in understanding use of its online student information system, The Parent Portal, and other digital resources, including the harms of copyright piracy, through its technology specialists. Parent workshops, sessions & literature may be distributed on topics, such as; Literacy Awareness, Early Learning, How to Work with Educators, Positive Parenting, Financial Education and more.

The district coordinates and integrates parent and family engagement programs, activities, and strategies with early childhood programs, college-and career-ready resources or organizations, parent resource centers, or other programs to support students' entry and exit transitions. The district coordinates and integrates with federal and state programs, such as: a) ESOL and other Federal programs such as b) foster care provisions, c) the education of migratory children, d) neglected and delinquent children, e) language instruction for English learners, f) immigrant student, and g) homeless children/youth.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY.

Various modes of communication will be used to notify parents of workshop opportunities through school messaging systems (School Messenger, Thrillshare App) and social media (Instagram & Facebook) postings, district and school websites,

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 CLPT Meeting ~ April, 2025

All parents are welcome to hear the latest updates from the Decatur County School System as well as review and provide input into the district parent and family engagement policy and the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan for the 2025-2026 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will be emailed to all parents in advance of the meeting. The district will also communicate information regarding this meeting on the district website and posted on social media outlets.

Summer School Improvement Meetings ~ June, 2025

During this week, each Title I school will host a forum 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 send invitations home as well as email and text parents to notify them about the date and time of the forum. Information regarding the School Improvement Forum will also be made available on the school websites, newsletters, and posted social media outlets.

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

and newsletters. Progress Reports, Report Cards, school conferences, newspaper and radio may also be used to notify parents of upcoming opportunities

The district and school websites contain resources and materials such as parent guides, study guides, practice assessments, and DCSS materials for at-home learning. Hard copies of these materials are also available in the schools, including copies in Spanish.

The district and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children), including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD. To empower parents and community leaders to become advocates for their own and other children, The DCSS has a Comprehensive LEA Improvement Program Team, made up of parent representatives, from each Title I school. Parents, community leaders, and business partners are invited to serve on the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Program Team to share ideas on all matters related to school policies, procedures, programs, and family and community engagement. In addition, each school has an active council at the school-level. Community leaders and business partners are also invited to serve on each respective council.

SHARING POWER. The DCSS and schools are committed to encouraging opportunities for parents and family members to serve as parent leaders by organizing events, volunteering at school through the district's Volunteer Training Program, participating in PTO, and networking with each other and with the community.

COLLABORING WITH THE COMMUNITY. The DCSS will develop resources to expand learning, community service, and civic participation that enhance the school environment. Parent and Family Engagement information, workshops and training opportunities are also available via the Family, School and Community Engagement Bus. These "On the Road" opportunities are the result of Community Collaboration and support.

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES. To ensure a Parent, 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 Registration days, Middle and High School Transition Events, and STEM Night so parents may receive information to help prepare them and their children for the next life stage.

Of School Staff - The DCSS will conduct four 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. These trainings will be redelivered to the faculty and staff of Title I schools. The DCSS 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, school conferences, 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 conferences. Information posted on the district website will be translated to the extent practicable. The district will also utilize School Messenger Systems, district and school websites, local news media, and social media to post information for parents.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, the DCSS 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.

Beginning second semester, 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 and Community Conversations 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 DCSS 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.

Adoption

This district wide 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.

Although we encourage ongoing stakeholder feedback throughout the school year. This policy will be adopted by the Decatur County School System on July 1, 2025 and will be in effect for the 2025-2026 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before or during the first week of fall semester.