



Clarke County
School District
Better Together

Local Educational Agency (LEA)/District Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Plan

Clarke County School District

2023-2024

Revised: June 27, 2023

The Clarke County School District recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school, family and community. To support the goal of the Clarke County School District to educate all students effectively, the schools, parents, and community must work as knowledgeable partners.

Parents are diverse in ethnicity, culture, language, and needs, and they share the district's commitment to the educational success of their children. The Clarke County School District, in collaboration with parents and the community, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent and family engagement and equity and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.

To this end, Clarke County School District supports the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of a family engagement and equity program in each school, which will involve parents and the community at all grade levels in a variety of roles.

Expectations for Family Engagement are established under Section 1116(a) (2) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Clarke County School District's Family Engagement plan describes how the Local Education Agency (LEA) will implement Family Engagement activities and programs that impact student academic achievement while engaging parents as partners.

Our Vision: *Building a culture of high expectations and equity in which all students grow academically and socially to improve our community and our world.*

Our Mission: *The Clarke County School District is an ambitious community of learners in a diverse and culturally rich county. We are committed to equity and excellence throughout the implementation of rigorous standards in a safe and supportive environment - one on every campus, in every classroom, and for every child.*

Our Core Beliefs: *Public education is central to our democracy. To fulfill the promise of public education, the Clarke County School District has a fundamental set of beliefs that serves as a lens through which every decision is made and every action is taken. These beliefs are the backbone of our organization. CCSD believes that:*

- *Equity, access, and progress towards excellence are basic rights that must be afforded to every individual in our system.*
- *Mission-driven, diverse and creative staff make a critical difference in student achievement, and they must be successfully recruited and retained.*
- *Students, families, staff and the broader community benefit mutually from active engagement with one another.*
- *Safe, nurturing and well-maintained schools/campuses are required for optimal learning.*

Clarke County School District agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA):

- **Clarke County School District will support schools with**
 - Implementing programs, activities, and procedures to parents and families in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs.
 - Consulting with parents of students in Title I programs to plan and operate the programs, activities, and procedures.
 - Ensuring that the required school-level **family engagement plans** and **school parent compacts** meet the requirements of ESSA, Section 1116(b) (d).
- **Clarke County School District will include this District-wide Family Engagement Plan into our District Strategic and Improvement Plans.**
- **Clarke County School District and Schools, whenever possible, will encourage and provide full opportunities for the participation of parents and families:**
 - With limited English proficiency
 - With limited literacy
 - With disabilities
 - Of migratory children
 - Who are economically disadvantaged
 - Of any racial or ethnic minority background
- **Clarke County School District, whenever possible will provide information and reports in a clear and consistent format in a language parents understand. Alternative formats will be provided upon request whenever possible. (ESSA, Section 1111.)**
- **If the Clarke County School District Plan for Title I, Part A is not satisfactory to parents or families, the district will include the comments with the plan when it is sent to the State Department of Education each year.(ESSA, Section 1112)**
- **Clarke County School District will involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for Family Engagement is spent.**
- **Clarke County School District will be governed by the following definition of Family Engagement and requires its Title I schools to carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition in Section 8101 of the ESSA:**

Parental involvement 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 1118 of the ESSA

JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Clarke County School District will do the following to involve family members in the development of our LEA plan under Section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of Section 1111(d) of the ESEA:

- Title I parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel will be invited to provide input on the district's Family Engagement Plan.
- Meeting notices to invite feedback to revise the plan will be advertised through the district and school websites.
- The district will hold community meetings for input on the Family Engagement Plan.
- Parents will be encouraged to complete the Georgia Parent Survey and the results will be used to revise the plan.
- Parents and community members may obtain a copy of the plan from the central office or the district's website and may submit input before the final revisions are posted for approval.
- Once approved, parents and community members will access the district's Family Engagement plan through the district website and from each of the Title I schools.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Clarke County School District will provide the coordination, technical assistance, professional learning and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all Title I, Part A schools to plan and implement effective parent and family involvement 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:

- On-going system-wide training, support, communication, and discussions with schools regarding effective development of school Family Engagement Plans, School-Parent Compacts, School-wide Plans, and School Improvement Plans
- On-going monitoring to ensure that schools are meeting Title I requirements
- Completion of Title I program reviews to provide guidance and action plans, as appropriate
- Easy and convenient access to district Title I personnel
- Support and assistance in building parental capacity in the school
- Assistance in the development and annual revision of school-level Family Engagement Plan and Home-School Compact

ANNUAL EVALUATION

Clarke County School District will complete an annual evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Plan. Parents will be meaningfully involved in this evaluation. The evaluation will examine the content and effectiveness of the plan to:

- improve the academic quality of its schools
- identify barriers to greater participation of all parents in activities (with specific 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).

- help parents and family members assist with the learning of their children
- help parents and families engage with school personnel and teachers
- identify and implement strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

The school district will use the evaluation results to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement and to make necessary revisions to Parent and Family Engagement Plan. The following strategies will be used to get parent and family input for the evaluation:

- Parent participation in the annual parent survey is promoted through district and school websites, parent conferences, the school Family Resource Centers, and school parent newsletters
- To ensure as many parents as possible complete the survey, it is held annually around conferences when most parents are in the schools
- For parents who may not have access to take surveys online, copies will be available in the school Family Resource Centers and school office area
- Parent program evaluations at the conclusion of workshops meetings, and other Family Engagement events
- Collection and summarization of system-wide data on Family Engagement at district and school meetings, events, and activities
- Provide a calendar of events for timely notification. These calendars will highlight events and activities that impact student academic achievement

RESERVATION OF FUNDS

Clarke County School District 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 at the school-level by consolidating these funds into our schools Fund 150 accounts.

- Each school is required to get parent and family input on how the parent involvement set aside will be used at their Title I Family Engagement and Title I School-wide Program Planning Meetings in the spring and fall.
- The district also gathers input on the parent involvement set aside at the district level parent input meetings in partnership with the Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships.

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Clarke County School District will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs whenever possible. These programs include Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Title I and these programs will partner to implement these strategies:

- Assist in coordinating transition opportunities for parents and students
- Provide parent resources, as appropriate, to nurture early learning, promote family literacy, and support parents as equal partners in education;
- Host parent meetings to foster confidence in parents as their child's first teacher and support home as an extension of the classroom
- Hold collaborative meetings between the coordinators of the District's Office of Early Learning and the School's Title I Family Engagement Specialist to inform them of eligibility requirements, registration procedures and program services so that this information may be disseminated to

parents of our Title I schools that may have pre-school age children.

- A representative from the district office will serve as an active member of the Early Learning Committee of the Whatever It Takes Initiative to ensure that each child in the Clarke County School District Title I attendance zone has access to a high-quality early learning environment.
- The Family Engagement Specialists and the Community School Organizers will participate in a needs analysis of each unique school community using local and state data and will collaborate to encourage student progress and family participation.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS

The Clarke County School District will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong Family Engagement, to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement.

A. The Clarke County School District will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, provide assistance to parents of children served by the school district or school, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:

- The State's academic content standards: Georgia Standards of Excellence and College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI))
- The State and local academic assessments
- Instructional Framework
- The requirements of Title I
- How to monitor their child's progress
- How to work with educators
- Build their capacity to support their child's social-emotional and academic growth and development

B. Clarke County School District will, with the assistance of its schools, provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training, and using technology, as appropriate, to foster Family Engagement.

- Training and brochures or newsletters to help parents understand their child's core content
- Guidelines, tips, and direct instruction on supporting student learning at home promoting family reading that support vocabulary development and reading comprehension, and understanding of mathematical concepts
- Training opportunities may include how to navigate/sign-up for the parent portal, navigate and understand school/teacher websites and teacher blogs, the use of iPad technology in the classroom and how to use computer resources available to students
- Training on the use of the Innovative Digital Learning Environments for students in grades 3-12
- Academic Parent and Teacher Teams (APTT) at Cleveland Road Elementary and Gaines Elementary where parents learn about their child's progress on essential academic skills and learn how to work at home with their child on those skills
- And take-home materials and other resources for parents to use with their children to promote further learning at home

C. Clarke County School District will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, train its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners by:

- Providing professional learning on Family Engagement for teachers and administrators to address topics such as Communicating with Parents, Including Parents in the Homework Process, Basics of Family Engagement/Engagement, and Promoting Cultural Competency

D. Clarke County School District will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate Family Engagement programs and activities with Head Start, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, public preschool, and the transitions to middle and high school, such as Family Resource Centers and 2st Century Community Learning Centers, that

encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children, by:

- Collaborating with early education programs that feed into our schools by training childcare leaders and parents on best practices to help children learn what they need to know before entering Pre-K or Kindergarten
- Collaborate with the Office of Early Learning so that children living in our schools' Title I attendance zones may enroll in the early learning programs available in our school system
- Advertise the schools' Family Resource Centers, giving their locations and hours so parents and families can access academic resources for their school-aged children as well as for their children not yet in school
- Provide workshops aligned to preparing their child(ren) for the transition to kindergarten, sixth, and ninth grade during school-based transition activities and the summer transition days.

E. Clarke County School District will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practical, in a language the parents can understand.

- Using jargon-free language
- Providing information in their native language when practical
- Utilizing "The Language Line", district interpreter(s), or school staff that may be fluent in multiple languages to verbally communicate with parents as needed

F. Clarke County School District will provide other reasonable support for Family Engagement activities as parents may request, by:

- Involving parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training
- Providing necessary literacy training for parents
- Paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with Family Engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions
- Training parents to enhance the involvement of other parents
- Arranging school meetings at a variety of times
- Conducting in-home conferences with parents who are unable to attend those conferences at school

- Adopting and implementing model approaches to improving Family Engagement
- As a district that believes that family engagement is a key to meeting the needs of our families and students, and in alignment with strategic objective 2.1 to increase opportunities for families and community engagement with student learning, Superintendent Thomas has approved the staffing of a full-time family engagement specialist at each CCSD school. Our goal with this is to ensure that all of our students have access to high-quality family engagement resources.