

GUIDANCE

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: TITLE I, PART A



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INTRODUCTION

Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) under *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) guides Local Educational Agencies (LEA) to develop and distribute a written family engagement policy. The policy must be developed in consultation with parents and families of participating students. ESSA requires that LEAs promote collaboration between, schools, parents and families, in helping students achieve high academic standards.

Research indicates that parent and family involvement help children achieve high academic standards. When schools work together with parents in school activities, and both schools and families engage in shared decision-making regarding children's education, students are more likely to acquire literacy at faster rates. LEAs that foster frequent and effective communication, encouraging shared conversations among school staff, parents, and families, see higher school attendance rates and more parent and family participation. Students develop better social skills and behavior, all of which result in better academic achievement and test performance.

This document supplies an overview and summarizes LEA and school-level parent and family participation requirements under ESSA; it is not a comprehensive or all-inclusive guide. PFE policy that is developed, annually reviewed, and revised as needed with parents and families supports and builds capacity among involved participants.

ACCESSIBILITY

In carrying out the Title I parent and family engagement requirements, LEAs and schools, must provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including those who have limited English proficiency, those with disabilities, and those with 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.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) REQUIREMENTS

LEA Policy—Implementation Requirements

A LEA (district or charter school) may receive funds under Title I, Part A **only if**:

- It conducts outreach to **all** parents and family members;
- Implements programs, activities, and procedures to involve parents and family members in Title I programs;
- Plans and implements such programs, activities, and procedures by consulting with parents of participating children as equal partners; and
- Requesting and incorporating parental feedback on programs, activities and procedures.

The LEA must jointly develop, agree, and distribute a written parent and family engagement (PFE) policy *with* parents and family members of participating children. In addition, the policy must communicate the LEA’s expectations and goals for meaningful parent and family involvement, and describe how the LEA will:

- Involve parents and family members to develop the LEA support and improvement plans;
- Supply coordination, technical assistance and other support to
 - both aid and increase capacity of administration, staff, and parents and families;
 - plan and implement effective PFE activities that improve student academic achievement and overall school performance;
 - include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education;
- Embed and integrate district and school-level PFE strategies with engagement strategies within other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs;
- Annually conduct a joint evaluation, with parents and families, of the content and efficacy of the PFE policy to improve the academic quality of Title I schools. Specifically, the evaluation must **find**:
 - **Barriers** to greater participation by parents in Title I activities, especially for parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
 - **The needs** of parents and family members to help with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers;
 - **Strategies** to support successful school and family interactions;
- Use the evaluation findings from annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent involvement, and to revise the district PFE policies;
- Involve parents in the activities of Title I schools. These activities **may** include setting up a parent advisory board made up of a representative group of parents or family members of Title I students served by the LEA to join in developing, revising, and reviewing the PFE policy.

LEA Reserves and Allowable Use of Funds

Reserve funds for parent and family engagement

- If an LEA receives a Title I allocation greater than \$500,000, the LEA must reserve **at least 1** percent of its Title I allocation to help schools to carry out the PFE activities. This provision does not limit LEAs from reserving **more** than 1 percent.
- Parents and family members of children receiving Title I services must be involved meaningfully in the decisions about how these funds reserved are allotted for parent involvement activities.
- Not less than **90 percent** of the funds reserved must be distributed to schools served under Title I, Part A, with priority given to high-need schools.
- Funds reserved by the LEA must be used to implement the activities and strategies of the PFE policy by including **at least one** of the following:
 - a. **Professional development (PD)**: Support schools and nonprofit organizations to provide professional development for local educational agency and school personnel regarding PFE strategies. The PD may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, and other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, parents and family members.
 - b. **Home-based programs**: Support programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
 - c. **Disseminate information**: Widely share best practices focused on PFE, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
 - d. **Collaborate with community-based organizations**: Provide subgrants to schools so they can collaborate, with community-based or other organizations, or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
 - e. **Other activities**: Engage in any other activities and strategies that LEA determines are appropriate and consistent with the PFE policy;

SCHOOL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

School Parent Family and Engagement Policy

Each Title I school must consult and jointly develop a written PFE policy and distribute it to parents and family members of participating children. The PFE policy must:

- Be agreed on by parents,
- Describe the means for carrying out requirements,
- Notify parents of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to an extent that is practical, and written in language the parents can understand,
- Make the policy available to the local community, and
- Update periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

If the school has a parent engagement policy that applies to all parents and family members, the school **may** amend that policy to meet these requirements.

If the LEA has a school district-level PFE policy that applies to all parents and family members in all schools, the LEA **may** amend that policy to meet the requirements of this subsection.

If the LEA plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the LEA must send any parent comments along with the plan when submitting the plan to the State.

Parent and Family Policy—Involvement at the School

Each school served under Title I must:

- Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend. The purpose of this annual meeting is to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I and to explain the program requirements, and the right of the parents to be involved;
- Offer a number of flexible meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and **may** provide, with Title I funds, transportation, childcare, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;
- Involve parents, in a prompt, organized, and ongoing way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs. This includes the planning, review, and improvement of **both** the school PFE policy, and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan.
- If a school already has a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school **may** use that process, if that process includes an adequate representation of parents of Title I children;

The school must provide parents of participating children:

- Timely information about programs under Title I, Part A;
- A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement and performance levels of the school and students on New York State assessments; and
- Supply opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to take part in decisions relating to their children's education and respond to any such suggestions as soon as is realistically possible.

If the schoolwide program plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school must include any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the LEA.

Shared Responsibilities for Student Academic Success

As a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy developed under this section, each school served under Title I **must** develop jointly with parents for all Title I children a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

The compact shall:

- Describe the shared responsibility between schools and families for high academic achievement.
 - The school's responsibility is to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I to meet the challenging State academic standards.
 - The parents' responsibility is to support their children's learning; volunteer in their child's classroom; and take part in decisions about the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time;
- Describe parent-teacher communications to address the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and parents through, **at a minimum**:
 - Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement;
 - Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;
 - Reasonable parent access to staff,
 - Opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observe classroom activities; and
 - Regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and in a language that family members can understand.

BUILDING DUAL CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

Ensuring Effective Parent and Family Involvement—Shared Responsibility

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a school-parent-community partnership that improves student achievement, each LEA and Title I school must:

- Help parents of children served by the school or LEA understand topics such as New York State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, Title I requirements, and methods to check a child's progress and collaborate with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
- Provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy) to foster parent involvement;
- Educate, with the help of parents, the teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, other school leaders, and other staff to:

- Value and make use of parents' contributions,
- Reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners,
- Implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school;
- To the extent possible:
 - Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, **including public preschool programs**;
 - Conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents to take part more fully in their children's education.
- Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and in a language the parents can understand;
- Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may ask.

In addition, each LEA and Title I school may:

- Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;
- Supply literacy training from Title I funds received if the LEA has exhausted all other available sources of funding for such training;
- Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parent involvement activities, including transportation and childcare costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;
- Arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, to maximize parental involvement and participation;
- Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement;
- Establish a districtwide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in Title I programs supported under this section;
- Develop roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities;