

Barrow County School System

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

2020-2021
Revised February 28, 2020
179 West Athens St Winder,
GA 30680
www.barrow.k12.ga.us
(770) 867-4527

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, advisory committees, and school governances to assist in the education of their child and school leadership.
- (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 Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Barrow County School System (BCSS) has developed this family engagement policy that establishes the system's expectations for family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the system's Title I schools. This plan will describe BCSS'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 system 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 BCSS 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 Comprehensive Needs Assessment meeting in spring 2020, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the 2020-2021 school year. The system obtained parent input through our Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey, feedback forms posted on the system website, as well as quarterly system parent advisory committee meetings. During this meeting, parents also reviewed and discussed the Streamlined Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (SCLIP). Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement policy was incorporated into the SCLIP which is submitted to the state. Parents and teachers did an additional survey regarding current parent engagement programs in order to improve implementation and ensure needs are met. 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 by February 2020 was considered for revisions to this policy. The system family engagement policy is posted on the system website, posted through Parent Link communications, disseminated at Title I meetings in the fall and made available in parent resource centers, all in a format and language all parents can understand.



Strengthening Our School

This year, the Director of Learning Supports (DLS) 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 Director of Learning Supports to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the DLS will hold scheduled meetings and trainings with its Title I schools' principals and school staff to review family engagement plans and activities.

Additionally, the district will convene a summit in June for principals, parents, and community partners to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year.

Reservation of Funds

The BCSS will reserve one percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in 2020-2021 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in federal law. Furthermore, the BCSS will distribute ninety 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 hosted an annual School Improvement Forum in spring for parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds could be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-level. Comment cards and minutes from these meetings were 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 Director of Learning Supports in the district office.



Opportunities for Meaningful 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 various 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.

State of the System Reception ~November 2020

Every fall, the Family Engagement Department hosts a parent reception where the Superintendent and other system leaders present to the community and families current and future plans for the system. This event is advertised in multiple ways to ensure everyone is invited. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and provide input.

Spring Planning Meetings ~ Spring 2021

All parents are welcome to hear the latest updates from the BCSS, as well as review and provide input into the system family engagement policy and the Streamlined Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (SCLIP) for the 2021-2022 school year. Notices regarding these meetings will be sent to parents in advance of the meeting. The system will also communicate information regarding these meetings on the school and system websites. Input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs will 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.

Summer Title Planning ~ June 2020

In June, the school system hosts a session with schools to finalize their improvement plans for the following school year. Parent representatives from each school are invited to participate in this process. School teams will work on finalizing family engagement policies, budgets, and programs.

Building Capacity

The BCSS 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, BCSS will implement a variety of family and community engagement initiatives. The Academic Parent-Teacher Team (APTT) model of family engagement is one such initiative. Training and support of APTT was provided for through the Georgia Department of Education. APTT is a program wherein teachers and families partner to address academic goals through at-home learning activities.

Of Parents - BCSS 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 APTT, the State's challenging academic standards, and local and state assessments—including alternative assessments, will also be provided. The district also offers assistance to parents in understanding use of its online student information system and other digital resources, including the harms of copyright piracy, through its technology specialists. Notifications about these opportunities will be posted on the district website and shared through school messaging systems, newsletters, and social media postings.

In addition, the district and school websites contain resources and materials such as parent guides, study guides, practice assessments, and APTT materials for at-home learning. Hard copies of these materials are also available at all Title I schools, including copies in Spanish. BCSS Parent Advisory Committee, made up of parent representatives from each Title I school, advises the district and schools on all matters related to family engagement. Parents, teachers and business partners participate in our School Governance Teams. The participation of all of our partners is encouraged through video conferencing and recording options to accommodate varying schedules.

BCSS 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 provides parent workshops at local preschool facilities each year to ease transition into elementary school. In the spring, schools host Kindergarten Sneak-a-Peek, Middle and High School Transition Nights, and College and Career Fair so parents may receive information to help prepare them and their children for the next life stage.

Of School Staff - BCSS will assist schools in four trainings during the school year for principals and staff to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. If the school is implementing APTT, the BCSS Family Engagement Leadership Team (FELT) will conduct district APTT trainings for the school core teams. The purpose of the FELT is to coordinate the sustainability and growth of APTT in the district. BCSS 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, APTT meetings, 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 APTT meetings. Information posted on the district website will be translated to the extent practicable. The district will also utilize school phone call systems, district and school websites, local news media, and social media to post information for parents.

Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, the BCSS will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this family engagement policy and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, feedback forms and the system Parent Advisory Committee. Beginning in February, each Title I school will send home a survey for parents to provide valuable feedback regarding the family engagement activities and programs. These surveys will also be posted on the system and school websites for

parents to complete. In addition to the annual survey, each Title I school will also use the Spring Comprehensive Needs Assessment 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 BCSS will use the findings from the school spring planning meetings and the survey results to design strategies to improve effective family engagement, to remove possible barriers to parent participation, and to revise its family engagement policies.

Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the director of learning support will communicate and collaborate with the Office for Student Support Services 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.

Mark Your Calendars

For Parents

Title I Annual Meetings
Fall 2020

Annual Parent Survey
February 2021

School Improvement Forum
June 2020

State of the District
November 2020

Adoption

This districtwide 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.

This policy was adopted by the BCSS on February 28, 2020 and will be in effect for the 2020-2021 academic school year.

The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before November 1.

