



# FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2018 -2019



## Let's Partner Together

While your student may receive instruction during the school day, we know that a child's first and most important teachers are parents and family members. We know you play an integral role in the education of your child, and we want to encourage and support you to be actively involved in your child's school. We need your input, your suggestions, and your perspective to make decisions about your child's school experience. Our district receives Title I, Part A funds to help us meet the needs of your children. We use these funds to hire additional teachers in our Title I schools, purchase technology and resources, and to hire parent liaisons to serve as ambassadors for the school community. Our goals, as we partner with you are to:

- establish expectations for meaningful and effective family engagement
- strengthen the academic achievement of our students by engaging and supporting our families in the education of their children



## Meaningful and Effective Family Engagement

Family engagement means parents, families, and school personnel will participate in two-way, meaningful communication for the common goal of the student. Parents and families of **all** students are invited to attend meetings to share ideas and suggestions about the district's and schools' improvement plans. Please look for the following opportunities to engage with us:

Area Board Meetings –Every year in the spring, the Gwinnett County Board of Education holds a meeting in each Board member's district. The meetings are a time for the School Board and CEO/Superintendent J. Alvin Wilbanks to share information with the public through an annual state-of-the-school district address, to focus on the strategic direction of the district, and to communicate recent successes and new initiatives. (These meetings are also designed for you to share your ideas and concerns as well as provide opportunities for input.)

Local School Councils – The primary goal of local school councils is to bring communities and schools closer together to make recommendations to solve education problems, to improve academic achievement, to provide support for teachers and administrators, and to bring parents into the decision-making process. Please check with your local school for opportunities to become involved in your local school council.


Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) – All parents are invited to participate in the PAC which meets several times each year to: a) establish how the district should use funds set aside for family engagement activities, b) gather input on the District Improvement Plan, and c) develop the GCPS Family and Community Engagement Plan. Please contact your local school for information, upcoming dates, times and meeting locations.

Local School Planning Meetings – Between March and August of each year, Title I schools host meetings for all family and community members to provide input on Title I programs for both the district and the local school. Families and other interested community members jointly develop the following documents during this meeting:

- Local School Plan for Improvement Goals
- Title I Budget and Wish List
- Family and Community Engagement Plan
- School-Family Compact (*Please be sure you and your child have reviewed this document together.*)
- Family Engagement Calendar of Events

We encourage all families to participate in the planning meetings at your local schools. We promise to remove as many barriers as possible. In order to maximize the participation of all families in our planning meetings, we will offer the following whenever possible:

- Childcare
- Interpreters and translations of documents
- Communications in a variety of family-friendly language and formats
- Varied meeting formats, times, dates and locations



## **Working Together to Strengthen the Academic Achievement of our Students**

Our goal is to grow partnerships and collaboration among other federal programs, Title I schools, families, and the community to improve the academic achievement of students.

The Office of Federal and Special Programs will provide ongoing support, guidance, and monitoring to ensure that our Title I schools are fully partnering with families. To assist parents and families in supporting their children's learning, we will provide:

- a parent support person to assist families
- a Parent Center at each school with resources that can be used at home
- information about the curriculum, assessments, promotion and graduation requirements, and progress monitoring
- opportunities for families to learn how to use technology and academic strategies at home and the harms of copyright piracy
- schoolwide events aligned to school goals
- opportunities for shared decision-making
- assistance to families in transitioning from one school level to the next
- ongoing training for faculty and staff based on suggestions and input from the community, families, and other stakeholders on topics such as:
  - a) working with parents as equal partners, building relationships, and effectively communicating with our families
  - b) the value and contributions of parents
  - c) implementing the family engagement program at each school

Several schools in the district implement Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) which is an evidenced-based model that builds partnerships between families and teachers. Families set student academic goals and learn activities/strategies to reinforce skills at home with their children. To coordinate the stability and growth of this model, a core group of school leaders, called the Family Engagement Leadership Team, coordinates training for the entire staff.

Play to Learn is a weekly Pre-K program offered in several of the elementary schools in the district to promote school readiness for our future students. In this program, parents attend classes twice a week with their child (ages birth – kindergarten) to learn how to help their child reach developmental milestones through play.



## Evaluation of Family Engagement Plan and Programs

To determine the effectiveness of the Family and Community Engagement Plan and Title I programs, we ask that all of our stakeholders complete a survey either electronically or on paper. Your feedback helps us to better understand the needs of the school community, how we can improve our partnership with families, and how we can remove barriers that may prevent you from participating in the school process. The results of the survey are posted on both the district and school websites.


During the annual needs assessment process, we review the data from the survey, as well as other input we have received throughout the year, to update and revise this document, our Family and Community Engagement Plan.

We encourage you to ask questions, provide suggestions, and share your concerns. Each of the local schools has pledged to work with our communities to grow partnerships. If you have a concern that is not addressed at the local school, you may file a complaint using the complaint procedures outlined on the GCPS website.



## Reservation of Funds

Title I funds are available to engage our families. We reserve at least one percent of the district's total allocation to fund family and community engagement programs. No less than 90% of these reserved funds are used directly by schools to promote family and community engagement activities. The use of these funds is based on suggestions gathered at our spring input meeting from families and community members. Currently, we use these funds to help offset the cost of ensuring that each Title I school has a Parent Center and a designated person to support parents.



Thank you for partnering with us to improve student achievement. Remember your participation is vital. We will continue to engage with you by ensuring we provide information in a format and language (whenever possible) so that all of our families can understand and be involved with each of our schools.

*The Gwinnett County Public Schools' Family and Community Engagement Plan was reviewed and revised with the input of GCPS staff, families and community members. This plan was adopted for July 1, 2018 and will be in effect for the period of one year. All students received this plan prior to October 26, 2018 as part of the Student Handbook, where this document is located. New students will receive this plan upon enrollment. The plan is available to the community through the Parent Center in each Title I school, on the school's website, and on the GCPS website.*

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