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Keith Simmons, Superintendent

July 29, 2021

Dear Parents,

As a part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all Title I schools, as well as the district, are required to develop a District Parent and Family Engagement Policy and invite parents to be a part of its annual revision. School representatives, community members and parents met on April 20, 2021, April 30, 2021 and May 1, 2021 to revise the 2020-2021 District Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

Enclosed is a copy of the revised 2021-2022 District Parent and Family Engagement Policy for the Griffin-Spalding County School System. This policy details multiple ways for parents to be involved in educational processes. Research repeatedly shows that parent participation and engagement pays huge dividends in terms of a child's academic success.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to a great school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Melinda Owens'.

Melinda Owens

District Family and Community Engagement Specialist

(770) 229-3710 ext. 10363

melinda.owens@gscs.org

The Griffin-Spalding County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Stephanie Dobbins, Title II; 216 S. Sixth St., Griffin, GA 30224; 770-229-3710, ext 10365; stephanie.dobbins@gscs.org,

Larry Jones, Title VI; 216 S. Sixth St., Griffin, GA 30224; 770-229-3710, ext 10400; larry.jones@gscs.org,

Anthony Aikens, Title IX; 216 S. Sixth St., Griffin, GA 30224; 770-229-3710, ext 10460; anthony.aikens@gscs.org,

Charles Kelley, Section 504 and ADA; 216 S. Sixth St., Griffin, GA 30224; 770-229-3710, ext 10333; charles.kelly@gscs.org,

Laura Ergle, Perkins Act; 207 Spalding Dr., Griffin, GA 30223; 770-229-3710, ext 10394; laura.ergle@gscs.org

About GSCS

The Griffin-Spalding County School System (GSCS) is an award-winning, AdvancED accredited district that serves 10,000 students in 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools, one alternative high school and the Griffin Regional College and Career Academy. For more information about GSCS, visit www.spalding.k12.ga.us, follow us on Twitter at @GriffinSpalding, Instagram at @GriffinSpaldingSchools, visit www.facebook.com/GSCSS or download the GSCS app.

Griffin-Spalding County School System

District Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Plan for Shared Student Success

2021–2022 School Year

Revised 06/16/2021



216 S. 6th Street
Griffin, GA 30224
770-229-3700

<http://www.spalding.k12.ga.us>

What is Title I?

Griffin-Spalding is a Title I district under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Title I is designed to support state and local school reform efforts tied to the challenging state academic standards. The goal is to improve teaching and learning for students. Title I programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support parent and family engagement. The district must jointly develop with parents and family members a written Parent and Family Engagement Policy.



Strengthening Engagement

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Griffin-Spalding County School System (GSCS) receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement and describes how the district will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the district's plan submitted to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

The Griffin-Spalding County School System agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by ESSA:

- The school district will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents and family members in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents and family members of participating children.
- The school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of ESSA and each include as a component a school-parent compact.
- The school district will provide families with in person and/or online opportunities to sign the school-parent compact cover letter.
- If the district plan for Title I, Part A is not satisfactory to the parents and family members of participating children, the school district will submit any comments on the plan upon submission to the GaDOE.
- The school district will be governed by the following definition of parent engagement and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition in ESSA:
Parent engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication engaging in 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 engaged 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.*

Adoption

The District Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly and agreed on with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs. Feedback was provided at in person and online meetings held at a variety of times. Feedback was given through discussion, feedback forms, and an online feedback form.

This policy was adopted by the Griffin-Spalding County School System and will be in effect for the period of the 2021–2022 school year. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before July 29, 2021. New families will receive the policy in the New Student Orientation Packet.

Contact Information

Melinda Owens
District Family and Community
Engagement Specialist
melinda.owens@esscs.org
770-229-3710 ext. 10363



Jointly-Developed District Policy for Shared Student Achievement

What is it?

This is a policy that describes how the Griffin-Spalding County School System (GSCS) will provide opportunities to improve parent and family engagement to support student learning. GSCS values the contributions and engagement of parents and family members. The purpose is to establish an equal partnership for the common goal of improving student achievement. GSCS, in meaningful consultation with parents and family members, jointly developed with and agreed on with, a written policy that includes relevant activities and actions that support effective parent and family engagement to strengthen student achievement. This policy describes the district's expectations for parent and family engagement, ways that GSCS will implement and support specific parent and family engagement activities and how parents and family members can help plan and participate in activities and events to promote student learning in the district and at home.

How is it revised?

The policy is revised annually each spring. GSCS invited all stakeholders, including parents and family members, to attend, participate, and provide input on the Consolidated Local Education Agency (LEA) Improvement Plan (CLIP). The CLIP includes the District Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the District Improvement Plan, the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy, the Foster Care Transportation Plan, and the Title I, Part C ID&R Plan (when applicable). In addition to reviewing and revising the CLIP, stakeholders were asked to provide input on the reservation of funds and building staff capacity. Stakeholders were involved by:

- Providing multiple opportunities on varying days and times each school year for all parents and community members to review/revise the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
- Seeking input on the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy from members of the District's Parent Advisory Council during one of their meetings.
- Notifying parents and the public of all meetings to review and revise the CLIP in multiple ways including the school system website, flyers, automated phone/email messaging system, social media, newsletters, and/or press releases.
- Providing multiple opportunities on varying days and times, open to all parents and family members, for the purpose of reviewing the CLIP.
- Each Title I school invites all parents and family members to provide input on and jointly develop the School Improvement Plan and if applicable, the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) Plan annually. Invitations for the multiple meetings may be in the form of flyers, letters sent home, newsletters, automated phone/email messaging system, school website, and/or social media. An online feedback form is also available.
- Additionally, input and comments regarding the CLIP are welcome during the school year through an online form and in person or online meetings. The plan is posted on the district website for parents and family members to view and submit feedback throughout the year. All parent feedback received during the year will be used to revise the plan for the next school year. GSCS also distributes an annual survey online and provides paper copies of the survey to ask parents for their suggestions on the plan and the use of funds for parent and family engagement. Parents and family members can also give feedback during several parent in person or online meetings and activities over the course of the year. The District Parent and Family Engagement Policy is then updated and distributed to parents and the local community. If the District Improvement Plan is not satisfactory, GSCS will submit any unsatisfactory parent comments on the plan upon submission to the GaDOE.

Who is it for?

All students participating in the Title I, Part A program and their families are encouraged and invited to fully participate in the opportunities described in this policy. The Griffin-Spalding County School System will provide full opportunities and information, to the extent practicable in a language parents understand, for the participation of parents and family members with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children.

Where is it available?

At the beginning of the year, a copy of the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy will be distributed to all parents on/before July 29, 2021. New families will receive the policy in the New Student Orientation Packet. It is also distributed to parents and the local community at parent and family engagement events. A copy of the policy is also in the district's main office. Additionally, the policy is posted on the district website and on social media. Parents and family members can also retrieve a copy of the policy in the district Parent Resource Center which is located at 234 E. Taylor Street in Room B112.

Technical Assistance

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will provide the following coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build capacity of all Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement 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:

- Hold regular in person or online technical assistance meetings for school-level parent community engagement liaisons offered at varying dates and times to provide effective and engaging practices inclusive of all families. Ongoing guidance is provided for school parent and family engagement plans and school-parent compacts.
- Provide templates, samples, and other documents for schools to use in carrying out Title I parent and family engagement activities and to build parent capacity.
- Ensure schools meet Title I parent and family engagement requirements by providing ongoing technical support through phone, email, and in person or online meetings, and by providing feedback to parent community engagement liaisons for program improvement.

Coordination of Services

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies under Title I, Part A with parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant federal, state, and local laws and programs including Bright from the Start, children with limited English proficiency, children with disabilities, neglected and delinquent youth, public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Coordinating with program directors to host a Pre-Kindergarten informational session for incoming parents.
- Coordinating with the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Coordinator and Special Education Director to host events for parents and family members of English Learners (EL) and children with disabilities.
- Translating important parent correspondence into a language that a significant percent of the students and families speak. Documents which are not translated will contain a statement for identified languages indicating who to contact for translation assistance.
- Maintaining a district Parent Resource Center (PRC) housed in the Parent Services Center. The PRC will contain a variety of materials for parents and family members to utilize and check out including books, DVDs, CDs, pamphlets, and other resources. Many materials will be available in identified languages.
- Parents and family members who do not have access to a computer or the internet will be able to use the designated computers in the PRC.
- Communication, including district reports, letters, and information, will be sent out in a family-friendly language that all parents and family members can understand.

The school district will implement the following practices to meet the federal requirements under Title I, Part A to provide for the representation of Spalding County students residing in neglected and delinquent facilities:

- Parent and family engagement is recognized to be critical to the success of all students including those students residing in neglected and delinquent institutions in Spalding County. In the absence of a parent or guardian, the representative of the neglected and delinquent facility should act in place of the parent in regards to parent and family engagement activities. The engagement of the representative should be geared to increase student attendance and achievement and decrease delinquent behavior. If the representative of the facility is unable to act, instructional staff may act in the place of the facility representative.
- GSCS will collaborate with neglected and delinquent facility representatives for program ideas as well as invite them to participate in offered in person or online parent trainings and meetings regarding parent and family engagement. Various activities offered at the schools will be geared to assist the students after their release from the facility.
- GSCS will regularly communicate with neglected and delinquent institutions within the district. GSCS will provide appropriate school representatives, including the school-level parent community engagement liaisons, the Title I Director and the Director of Student Services, information on students residing in these facilities to promote enhanced communication and assistance. GSCS will provide the neglected and delinquent institutions with contact information for GSCS officials who may assist them throughout the year.

Building Capacity of School Staff

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, other school leaders, and other staff in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and schools, and as requested by parents by:

- Sending all correspondence to parents on GSCS letterhead or with the GSCS logo visible.
- Keeping the language simple, free of jargon, euphemisms, and slang. All acronyms and abbreviations will be defined.
- Including a statement in some documents in another language informing the parent that the document is important, should be translated if needed, and who to call for assistance. Important documents will be translated into identified languages and provided to parents as needed.
- Including contact information on all documents for parents who have questions or need help.
- Providing schools with materials and resources to conduct in person and/or online staff trainings. Each school will hold four staff trainings per year.
- Incorporating parents as co-presenters in staff trainings.
- Educating administrators and staff members on the most recent and relevant information regarding parent and family engagement in education including the benefits of parent and family engagement, parent-teacher conferences, effective and meaningful communication, and engaging parents in homework.
- Providing assistance regarding parent and family engagement to new principals.
- Providing other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities as parents may request.

Annual Evaluation

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will take the following actions to conduct, with the meaningful engagement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this Parent and Family Engagement Policy in improving the academic quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities with particular 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. The evaluation will also include identifying the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers regarding strategies to support successful school and family interactions. The school district will use the findings of the evaluation of its Parent and Family Engagement Policy to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement and to revise, if necessary, its parent and family engagement policies. GSCS will do the following:

- The District Family and Community Engagement Specialist will be responsible for the evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. This evaluation will take place in the spring of each school year to ensure a strong partnership between the school, parents, and community.
- Surveys will be made available to all parents of Title I students electronically and through paper copies. The survey will be translated into Spanish and provided to limited English proficient parents. Parents will be informed of the survey via a cover letter and paper copy sent home with students, at school events including Open House, on the school system website, in school and district parent newsletters, by paper copies in the district office, and on the district Facebook page.
- Parent input from the fall survey will be used to plan for the newly-started school year. Parent input from the spring survey will be used to determine if parents' needs based on the fall survey were met. Fall and spring survey responses will be compared and contrasted to determine strengths and weaknesses in the program.
- Parents will be made aware of the results of the survey via the district parent newsletter.
- The District Family and Community Engagement Specialist will conduct an annual review of the program based on surveys, multiple stakeholder feedback in person or online meetings, observations, and parent and family engagement data. Practices will be revised as needed. The review will include identification of trends, patterns, strengths, weaknesses, and needs.
- The District Family and Community Engagement Specialist and school-level parent community engagement liaisons will design evidence-based strategies based on needs for more effective parent and family engagement and will revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies.



Building Capacity for Parent and Family Engagement

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will also provide the following activities that have been chosen, in meaningful consultation with our parents, to be undertaken to build parents' capacity for engagement in the school to support their children's academic achievement:

- Engaging parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of that training.
- Providing necessary in person or online literacy training for parents from Title I, Part A funds, if the school district has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for that training.
- Paying reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent and family engagement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable participation in school-related in person meetings and training sessions.
- Training parents to enhance the engagement of other parents.
- Maximizing parent and family engagement and participation in their children's education by arranging in person or online school meetings at a variety of times or conducting alternative conferences between teachers or other educators who work directly with participating children whose parents are unable to attend those conferences at school.
- Adopting and implementing model approaches to improving parent and family engagement.
- Establishing a District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) to provide advice on all matters related to parent and family engagement in Title I, Part A programs.
- Developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses, including faith-based organizations, in parent and family engagement activities.



Reservation of Funds

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will engage the parents and family members of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the one percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the one percent reserved will be distributed directly to Title I schools with priority given to high needs schools.

- Families will be given the opportunity to complete a parent survey twice a year to give feedback on how Title I funds should be spent.
- Parents and family members will be given multiple opportunities to give feedback during in person or online workshops as well as how Title I funds should be spent.
- The District Family and Community Engagement Specialist will tier funds to schools from highest to lowest based on academic needs.
- Funds reserved by the district will be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, including not less than one of the following:
 - Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for district and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, parents and family members.
 - Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
 - Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
 - Collaborating or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
- The Title I Director will ensure through the budget process that not less than 90 percent of the one percent reserved goes to Title I schools. The director will ensure that an adequate budget is established for parent and family engagement activities and programs.
- The district will assist schools in developing parent and family engagement budgets through technical assistance and budget meetings.

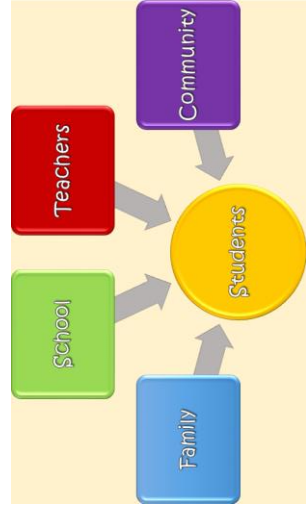


Accessibility

To the extent practicable, the district 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 ESSA in a format and, to the extent practicable, in an understandable language. The District Family and Community Engagement Specialist will communicate and collaborate with the ESOL Coordinator and Director of Student Services to ensure full opportunities for participation of parents and family members with limited English proficiency, with disabilities, and who are considered migrant.

District Parent Resource Center

Visit the district Parent Resource Center (PRC) located in Room B112 on 234 E. Taylor Street to check out books, pamphlets, study materials, and activities to use at home with your child. Materials in identified languages are also available as well as computer access. The PRC is open Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm and after hours by appointment.



Building Capacity of Parents

The Griffin-Spalding County School System will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, build parents' and family members' capacity for strong parent and family engagement by providing materials and training on such topics as literacy training and using technology (including education about digital citizenship and the harms of copyright piracy) to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement. Assistance through in person or online meetings, online information, and/or newsletters will also be provided to parents and family members in understanding the following topics:

- The Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Georgia Milestones.
- Title I, Part A requirements.
- How to monitor their child's progress.
- How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.

Title I schools will be provided with materials related to the listed topics to host in person or online workshops. All Title I schools will hold at least two online Annual Title I Meetings at a variety of times open to all parents and stakeholders for the purpose of reviewing the requirements of Title I, Part A. Student agendas will contain the current school year's Title I information sheet. Parents will be informed of the school district's student information system where they can create an account and monitor their student's grades, assignments, and absences. All parents will be provided with the opportunity to participate in parent-teacher conferences.

The school district will:

- Provide schools with the necessary resources to host in person or online parent workshops on enhancing parent and family engagement, literacy, using technology (including education about digital citizenship and the harms of copyright piracy), child development, understanding assessments, preparing for standardized tests, and other topics as requested by parents in Title I schools.
- Provide materials and training in person or online, with the assistance of schools, to help parents and family members work with their children to improve academic achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, and to foster parent and family engagement.
- Host Parent University events throughout the school year on varying topics.
- Establish a District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) to provide advice on all matters related to parent and family engagement in Title I, Part A programs and serve as parent leaders.

