

**GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY
2012-2013**

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), also referred to as the Local Educational Agency (LEA) or the district, is committed to establishing partnerships with parents and community members, and encourages their participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of its Title I Parent Involvement Policy and activities as stipulated under section 1112, section 1116, and section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act.

(A) GCPS involves parents in the joint development of the plan under Section 1112, Local Educational Agency Plans, and the process of school review and improvement under section 1116, Academic Assessment and Local Educational Agency and School Improvement, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

GCPS involves parents in the development, review, and revision of the district's Title I Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) and Parent Involvement Policy. All parents of students attending Title I Schools and parents of homeless, migrant, neglected, and at risk private school children are invited to participate in the process either at the local school or at the LEA Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Meetings. The PAC is open to all parents of students participating in the Title I Program. Parent input from the local school review meetings, the PAC meetings, and the annual parent survey are used to revise the GCPS CLIP and Parent Involvement Policy. Local school planning meetings may be held in April or May. All parents will have the opportunity to review all documents and provide feedback at the local school's Document Review held during the month of August. A morning and evening Parent Advisory Council meeting is held during the months of September, January and April. All meetings are advertised to all parents in at least three different ways, such as: sending flyers home with students, using the local school phone message system, and posting the information on the school's website and marquee.

(B) GCPS provides the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.

The Title I Office staff provides the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist each Title I school in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic performance. Title I Program Specialists assist the Parent Instructional Support Coordinators (PISC) at each Title I school to ensure the effective planning and implementation of the parent involvement program. The Title I Office also provides professional development for each PISC on research-based parent involvement strategies to help parents support their children's academic success.

To fund the parent involvement programs at the district and school level, the Title I Office allocates funds for parent involvement based on the mandate contained in ESEA. Not less than one percent (1%) of the GCPS Title I allocation is set aside for parent involvement. The total allocation for parent involvement for the 2012 -2013 school year supports the employment of Parent Instructional Support Coordinators, Title I Parent Centers, and supplies and materials for parent activities for each Title I school. Local schools may also offer a Parent Leadership Academy which provides professional learning for parents on becoming parent leaders in the schools.

Gwinnett County Public Schools support the "Be There" initiative that promotes parent education and involvement. This initiative encourages parental involvement and emphasizes to parents the impact that their participation in school activities has on student achievement.

(C) GCPS will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement.

Gwinnett County Public Schools embraces students, parents, and community. Administrators, faculty, and staff collaborate with businesses and community-based organizations to provide resources and networks for parents and students.

GCPS supports parents in meeting their basic obligation as their child's first teacher. This is accomplished in part through parent centers at each Title I school, facilitated by certified personnel, where materials for check-out are available to parents. Local school and community resources are also available to parents through the parent centers. Parents are provided at least 10 meetings and workshops to assist them in understanding national, state, and district education goals, content standards, the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS), the GCPS curriculum, which is aligned with the Common Core Curriculum (CCC), and the parents' educational rights and responsibilities under the Elementary and Secondary Act and Title I, Part A.

Parents are also trained on: 1) school, district and state assessments; 2) strategies to help their children acquire reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and test taking skills; 3) monitoring their children's academic progress; 4) oral and written English literacy, effective communication with educators, and the use of technology; and 5) decision-making skills, goal setting and tracking goal progress.

Parent meeting and workshop days, times and locations vary to accommodate parents' schedules and maximize parent participation. Childcare and interpreters may be provided for Title I meetings when feasible.

All learning opportunities provided for parents are based on:

The Six Strategies for Building Capacity for Parent Involvement

- i. Program Information for Parents: Each school shall provide assistance to parents of participating Title I children in understanding such topics as the state's academic content and achievement standards, the assessments being used, the requirements of Title I, Part A, and how to monitor their children's progress work with educators to improve their achievement.**
- ii. Materials and Training: Each school shall provide materials and training, such as literacy and trainings on how to use technology, to help parents work with their children to improve achievement.**
- iii. Educate Educators: Each school shall educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff with the assistance of parents, 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 the school.**
- iv. Preschool Coordination: Each school shall "to the extent feasible and appropriate," coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs with Head Start, Even Start, and other preschool programs, and conduct other**

activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.

- v. Understandable Communication: Each school shall ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.**
- vi. Other Requested Activities: Each school shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request.**

Administrators, faculty, and staff collaborate with businesses and community-based organizations to provide resources and networks for parents and students.

All parent communications are provided in an easy-to-understand language. Translations and interpreters for Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Bosnian are available through the GCPS Title III Office, local school personnel, or other contracted individuals. Translations for other languages may be provided upon request, and to the extent practicable. GCPS maintains continuous communication with parents via multiple media, including GCPS and local school websites, local media, community and business partners, parent-teacher conferences, parent workshops, parent centers, newsletters, emails, signs and posters, telephone, and automated calling systems.

Annually, parents are notified of the academic status of Title I schools. Parents of students attending Title I schools identified as Priority and Focus schools receive a written explanation regarding the school's status and are advised of their parent rights under ESEA. These parents have the right to provide input regarding the development of the school's Flexible Learning Program (FLP). In addition to each school's parents, administration and faculty, other school district personnel assist the school in defining and attaining academic goals. Information about Flexible Learning Programs is made available on each Priority and Focus School's website and the GCPS website. Information is also available at each school's Parent Center.

The GCPS Title I Parent Advisory Council (PAC) represents all Title I parents in matters concerning the district's Title I Program. All parents from each Title I school, Parent Instructional Support Coordinators, and Title I and other district level personnel are invited to attend. PAC meetings are held three times throughout the year. Topics of discussion for these meetings include: Title I updates, the LEA Comprehensive Improvement Plan (CLIP) and the Consolidated Application, plan for the upcoming year, and provide parent feedback through discussion sessions and surveys. Suggestions are always welcomed and considered.

(D) GCPS will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as the Head Start program, Reading First program, Early Reading First program, Even Start program, Parents as Teachers program, and Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs.

The GCPS Title I Program coordinates and integrates parent involvement strategies with other programs such as Special Education, Early Intervention Program (EIP), Flexible Learning Programs (FLP), Reading Recovery, English Language Learners (ELL), and transition programs to support students and their parents as they transition from pre-K to Kindergarten, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to post secondary institutions and the workplace. Some elementary schools also facilitate the Parents as Teachers Program (PAT) to train parents with strategies to prepare their pre-school children with skills needed for entry into Kindergarten.

(E) GCPS will conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of Title I schools including 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), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies.

The Title I Parent Involvement Policy for GCPS and each Title I school is reviewed and revised annually. A district-wide, annual survey is administered for parent input. Parent meetings are held at various sites and times, to maximize parent participation so that parents have the opportunity to provide input regarding the Policy. In addition, parents can provide input through the Title I Parent Advisory Council and document reviews at each school to discuss the effectiveness of the Title I Program. Parent input, along with survey results from local schools, are used to determine the effectiveness of the program; to identify barriers to parent participation; and to increase opportunities for parent participation.

All Title I meetings are documented with a printed agenda, attendance sign-in sheets, copies of multiple invitations such as flyers announcing the meeting, phone logs and school website postings. Minutes of all Title I meetings are recorded and all parents' written comments and suggestions are collected and submitted to the Title I Office. The Title I Office maintains its records for five years and is subject to monitoring by the Georgia Department of Education and the United States Department of Education.

(F) GCPS will involve parents in the activities of the Title I schools.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to establishing partnerships with parents and community members, and encourages their participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of its Title I Parent Involvement Policy and opportunities for parent involvement activities at the local school and district level as stipulated under section 1112, section 1116, and section 1118 of ESEA.

Title I Annual Orientation meetings are held at each school in August or September to inform parents of the guidelines, purpose, and goals of the Title I Program. Parents are also informed about the school's Parent Center and the supportive role the Parent Instructional Support Coordinator (PISC) plays in supporting parents to provide them with strategies and materials to help their children be academically successful. The PISC is a certified teacher, who maintains the Parent Center and offers flexible and extended hours for the Parent Center to ensure availability to parents.

During Title I Annual Orientation meetings, the district's Title I Plan and Parent Involvement Policy, School – Parent Compact, Local School Parent Involvement Policy and Action Plan, and the Title I Complaint Procedure are shared with parents. Also, parents are informed of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA) and the Student Directory Information Disclosure to military/institutions of higher learning (high schools). These required Title I documents and parent notifications are distributed by each local Title I school, and are included in the Title I Parent Handbook, the GCPS Student Handbook, local school handbooks, and district and local school websites.

The School-Parent Compact is explained, discussed, and signed with parents and students during the Title I Annual Orientation Meetings and Curriculum Nights, and may be discussed again during parent-teacher conferences. Parents and the schools keep copies of the compacts. If a parent is unable to attend the orientation or curriculum night, a compact is sent home with the student. Teachers are asked to make three attempts to collect the Compact from each student. Newly enrolling students and parents discuss and

sign the School-Parent Compact and are given a copy, along with the other required Title I documents at registration. During the school year, parents and teachers may elect to review and revise an individual student's School-Parent Compact to accommodate that student's individual needs.

Each Title I school provides its faculty and staff members with training to help them work with parents as equal partners in the educational process and to increase effective communication between the home and school. Parents' input is considered in planning such training.

Additional opportunities to involve parents include: volunteer programs and membership on school leadership teams such as the PTA, Title I Planning Committee, Local School Councils, local school Parent Leadership Academies and the LEA Parent Advisory Council.

Each Title I School surveys its parent population, at least annually, to evaluate the effectiveness of its parent involvement program. Parents are given at least two opportunities to participate in the survey, through written and online questionnaire, personal interviews, or focus groups.

Each school's Title I Planning Committee, which consists of parents, community members, school administrators, and staff meets to review and revise the School Parent Involvement Policy and Action Plan, and the School-Parent Compact. All parents have the opportunity to provide input about spending Title I funds through the Title I Planning Committee meetings and at school wide parent meetings. Proposed budgets are available to all parents for their review. Additionally, parents who are unable to attend the planning meeting will have access to a copy of the proposed budgets and will be given the opportunity to provide feedback, prior to final approval of documents.

This LEA Title I Parent Involvement Policy was reviewed and revised with the input of GCPS staff, parents, and community members, and finalized August 3, 2012. It will be distributed to all parents of students attending Title I Schools. It will also be available to the community through the Parent Centers and on the GCPS website.