

Ben Hill County School District

Parent and Family Engagement Policy

2023-2024
Revised May 3, 2023
509 W. Palm St.
Fitzgerald, GA 31750

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 and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- (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 Ben Hill County School District (BHCS D) has developed this parent and family engagement policy that establishes the district's expectations and objectives for meaningful family engagement and guides the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the district's Title I schools. This plan will describe BHCS D'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 district 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. Consistent with Section 1116, the BHCS D will work with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116(d) of the ESSA.

Jointly Developed

During the annual State of the District meeting in the spring of each school year, all parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy/plan. The district will send an email, text, and an automatic phone call, to all parents informing them about this meeting. An announcement will be posted on the school district website and the district Facebook page. During this meeting, parents also reviewed and discuss the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), the district's and schools' improvement plans. Additionally, each Title I school, in a break-out session, will use all parents and stakeholders present to review the district parent and family engagement policy, improvement plans, and school-home compact to provide input and suggestions for the upcoming school term before the end of the school year.

By the end of the school year all comments and suggestions will have been gathered and taken into consideration for drafting for the new fiscal year's plans. Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement policy will be incorporated into CLIP which will be submitted to the state. 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 the child's school. All feedback received by May will be included with the policy in the current school year.

The district's parent and family engagement policy will be posted on district and school websites, distributed during annual Title I school meetings early in the school year, and made available in the district's board office, as well as each school's parent corner.

Strengthening Our School

For the 2023-2024 school year, the district family engagement coordinator (FEC) will provide assistance and support to all Title I school 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 district and the FEC to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the FEC will hold monthly meetings and trainings with its Title I schools' principals and school FECs to review family engagement plans and activities.

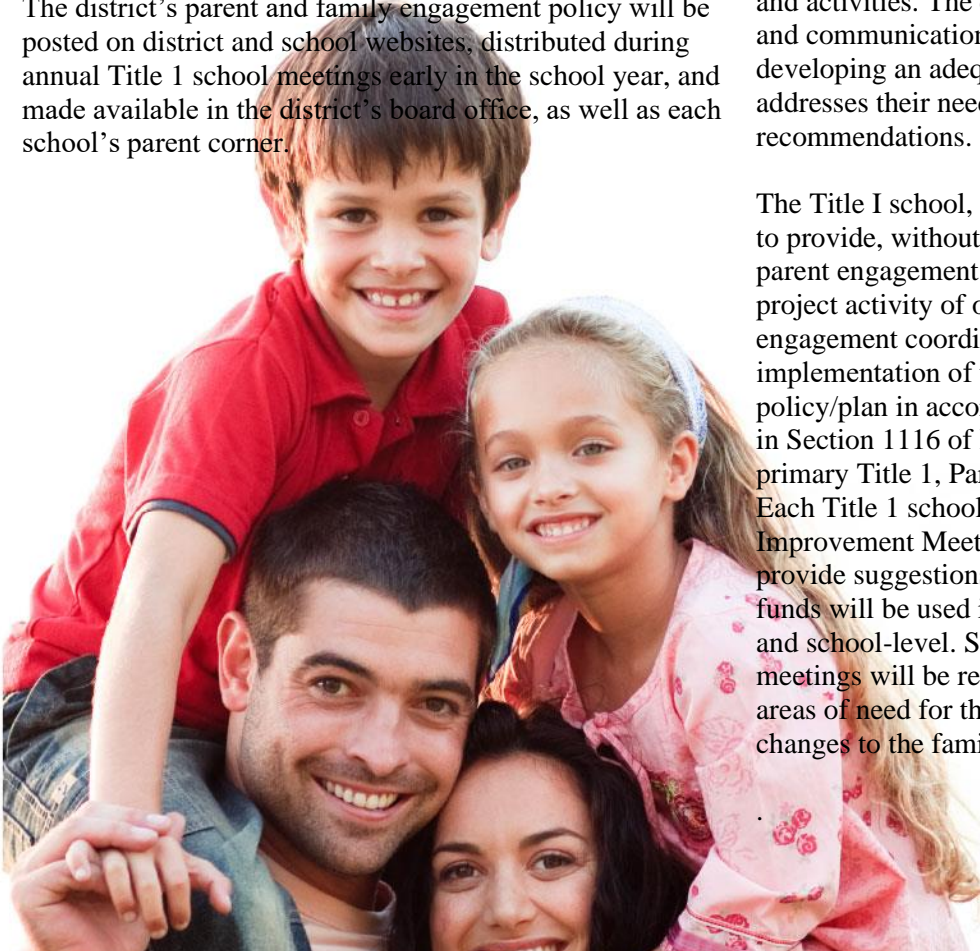
Additionally, the district will convene a summit in March for principals and FECs to review parent and family engagement requirements and plan opportunities for family engagement activities and meetings for the remainder of the school year.

Reservation of Funds

The BHCSO will reserve 1 percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives in FY24 to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this policy and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. Furthermore, the BHCSO will distribute 90 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.

The Title I school, individually or collectively, may opt to provide, without coercion, all or part of their reserved parent engagement allocation towards the districtwide project activity of obtaining a district level parent engagement coordinator that will oversee the implementation of the district's parent engagement policy/plan in accordance with the provisions contained in Section 1116 of ESSA and consistent with the primary Title 1, Part A requirements.

Each Title I school will host an annual School Improvement Meeting in the Spring for parents to provide suggestions on how these family engagement funds will be used in the upcoming year at the district and school-level. Survey data and comments from these meetings will be reviewed by the district to determine areas of need for the upcoming school year and consider changes to the family engagement budget.





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 two 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 District Meeting ~ May 2024

All parents are welcome to hear the latest updates from the Ben Hill County School District as well as review and provide input into the district parent and family engagement policy and the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan for the 2023-2024 school year. Notices regarding this meeting will be emailed to all parents in advance of the meeting. We will provide information and gather input through virtual means. The district will also communicate information regarding this meeting on the school district website and Facebook page. An automatic phone call will be sent as a reminder.

School Improvement Forums ~ May 2024

During this month, each Title I school will host a forum for parents and family members to participate in roundtable discussions to review the schoolwide plan, the school's parent and family engagement policies as well as provide input on the family engagement budget and topics for school staff training. Each Title I school will send out phone calls, emails, and text parents to notify them about the date and time of the forum. Information regarding the School Improvement Forum will also be made available on the school websites.

Parent input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs may also be provided through the annual district survey. The survey will contain questions related to the family engagement budget as well as section for parents to provide their comments and suggestions.

Unable to attend these meetings? Please visit www.benhillschools.org>Resources>For Parents>Parent Involvement to review the meeting documents and minutes and leave your input.

Building Capacity

The BHCSO will build school and parent capacity for strong family engagement. This capacity will ensure effective engagement of parents and family members in supporting partnerships between its Title I Schools, parents, and community with the goal of developing mutual support for student achievement. To develop capacity for this support, the BHCSO will implement district-wide activities and programs.

Of Parents - The BHCSO will work through its Title 1 schools to help parents in understanding state and district academic information connected to student learning and progress. The district will also provide parents with information regarding Title 1 program. Classes with parents to gain knowledge about the challenging state academic standards, local academic assessments, as well as the required assessments for Georgia students, including alternative forms of assessment, will be also be provided. The dates and locations of these classes will be posted on the district website and Facebook page and shared through each Title 1 school's mass communication platform.

In addition, the BHCSO will coordinate pages on the district and school websites contain resources and materials such as parent guides, study guides, and practice assessments, to help parents work with their children at home. Copies of these materials will be made available at all Title 1 schools for those families who may have limited internet access, including copies in a language and format understandable. To assist parents with understanding the online student information system and other digital educational resources (including education about the harms of copyright policy), the BHCSO technology coordinator will partner with Title I schools to provide training opportunities and workshops for parents. The dates and times of these workshops will be determined and announced by each individual school and made available for parents.

The BHCSO has established School Governance Teams, made up of parent representatives from each Title I school. The Governance Teams purpose is to provide advice on all matters related to individual school needs, and family engagement in Title 1, Part A programs. Community leaders and business partners are also invited to serve on the team. The participation of all our partners is encouraged through surveys and feedback during different times during the school year.

The BHCSO will coordinate and integrate the district's family engagement programs with local preschool program and other federal and state funded preschool programs in the district. The district will invite faculty and staff from those programs to attend planning meetings focused on family engagement activities and school readiness skills. In the spring, Ben Hill Primary School will host Kindergarten Orientation so parents may tour the schools and receive information to help prepare them and their children for Kindergarten. Ben Hill Preschool will host a 4-weeks summer school to prepare developmentally delayed, academically lagging preschoolers for kindergarten transition.

Of School Staff - The BHCSO will conduct trainings during the school year for principals and school personnel to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. These trainings will be redelivered to the faculty and staff of Title I schools. The BHCSO will also conduct a training for appropriate school staff and faculty that will focus on creating welcoming environments and improving two-way communication with families.

To ensure that information related to district, school, parent programs, 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 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 BHCS D will conduct an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy and the family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through frequent parent surveys and through annual School Improvement forum when discussions of effectiveness are conducted.

In the spring of each year, we will have our end of the year Title 1 meeting. At that time, we will provide stakeholders the opportunity to provide input on our District Parent Engagement Plan Policy. We understand that all parents may not be able to attend meetings, we provide updates to our parents to ask for input utilizing

our social media and all call systems. In addition to the annual survey, each Title I school will also use the School Improvement Forum 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 BHCS D will use the findings from the school forums and the survey results to design strategies to improve effective family engagement, to remove possible barriers to parent participation, and to revise its parent and family engagement policies.

Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the district family engagement coordinator 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

Annual Parent Survey

Website, Facebook, and all call will be sent out for this to be done by parents and community.

School Improvement Forum
May 2024

End of the Year Title 1 Meeting/State of District Report-
held in May 2024

For Schools

Open House at our Schools
July 2023 – at school locations

Annual Title 1 Meeting
Will be held in August 2023

Principals/Director Meetings
Will be held as needed by Superintendent

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 Ben Hill County School District on May 3, 2023, and will be in effect for the 2023-2024 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children before or during the first week of fall semester.

