

SY 2023--2024
Revised June 21, 2023

Ware County School District Parent and Family Engagement Plan

What is Family Engagement?

Ware County School District (WCSD) believes that family engagement involves the participation of parents and family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. We believe in the following statements.

- Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education.
- 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.
- Other Activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116.

About the Parent and Family Engagement Plan

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the WCSD developed this parent involvement plan to establish the district's expectations for parent involvement and guide the strategies and resources that strengthen school and parent partnerships in the district's Title I schools. All schools in WCSD are Title I. This plan describes WCSD's commitment to engage families in their children's education and build the capacity of schools to implement family engagement strategies and activities designed to achieve the district and student academic achievement goals.

When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. Title I, Part A, provides for substantive family engagement at every level of the program, such as developing and implementing the district and school plan and carrying out the district and school improvement provisions. Section 1116 of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains the main Title I, Part A requirements for schools and school systems to involve parents and family members in their children's education. WCSD works with its Title I schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement plans meet federal law requirements, and each includes, as a component, a school-parent compact.



Jointly Developed and Revised

All stakeholders are invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement plan. Using Thrillshare, all parents are informed and invited to the face-to-face meeting. Also, a meeting notice is shared on the Ware County Schools Facebook page. The WCSD Parent and Family Engagement Plan and Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP) are reviewed during the meeting. Stakeholders give input on current practices and provide suggestions or ideas to improve the district parent and family engagement plan for the 2023-2024 school year and recommendations for meeting the district student achievement goal. Input is also gathered from an annual district-wide survey conducted in the spring. Information and comments collected from the survey are considered when updating this plan.

Mr. Bert Smith, Superintendent

After the final revision, the plan becomes part of the CLIP. Parents are welcome to offer comments, ideas, and feedback at any time by submitting written comments to their child's school or the district office by emailing mshields@ware.k12.ga.us or calling Melissa Shields at 912-283-8656. All input received by June 20, 2023, is considered when revising this plan.

The district shares the plan by posting on the district and school websites, sending it home with all students at the beginning of the school year, disseminating during the annual Title I meetings, and emailing or texting the link to all parents in a format and language they can understand. (Our website has built-in language translation so parents can view it in the language of their choosing. Documents and information posted on the school and district websites are translated to the extent practicable if the website does not automatically translate the information.)

Strengthening Our Schools



This year, the district Federal Programs Coordinator (FPC) will provide assistance and support to all Title I schools to ensure family engagement requirements are being satisfied and that family engagement strategies and activities are implemented. Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the FPC to help improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district FPC will provide periodic training to representatives from the Title I schools.

Additionally, the FPC meets with principals or school representatives to review parent and family engagement requirements, discuss opportunities for family engagement activities and plans to end the school year.

Reservation of Funds

The WCSD reserves one percent from the total amount of Title I funds it receives to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this plan and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. Furthermore, the WCSD will distribute 90 percent of the amount reserved for 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 individual school needs and parent recommendations.

Each Title I school hosts a Stakeholder Input Meeting in the spring for parents to provide input on using family engagement funds in the upcoming year. Input is also gathered from an annual survey that is shared during the spring. Information and comments collected during the input process are considered when determining needs for the next school year and how to best use family engagement set aside funds.

Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation

Input and suggestions from parents and family members are an essential component of the district and school improvement plans developed each year. All parents are invited to attend a school-level meeting, district-level meeting and participate in a survey to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students to reach our student academic achievement goals.

Stakeholder Input Meetings

Parents and families are invited to the annual LEA Stakeholder Input Meeting to hear the latest updates from the WCSD, provide input for the CLIP and LEA parent and family engagement plan. Parents receive invitations by text using Thrillshare, and the meeting notice is posted on the Ware County Schools Facebook page.

Each Title I school hosts a spring meeting for parents, families, and stakeholders to participate in revising and developing Title I required documents. Attendees review the schoolwide plan, the school's parent and family engagement plans and provide input on the family engagement budget and topics for school staff training. Each Title I school invites parents and families using the methods identified in the previous year's input meetings. Some of the ways invitations are shared are emails, phone calls, and text messages using Thrillshare, school website, school marquee, flyers, and newsletters.

Unable to attend these meetings? Email comments and suggestions to your school principal or Melissa Shields at mshields@ware.k12.ga.us

Stakeholder Surveys

Each school shares a survey as another method to gain parent and family input. Survey questions include using Title I set aside funds to support family engagement programs, ideas to build staff capacity, training to build parent capacity, and ways to support student learning. Some questions have selections with the option to add a choice and other questions are open-ended.

Building Capacity

The WCSD assists schools in building partnerships between its Title I Schools, families, and community to develop mutual support for student achievement.



Of Parents – WCSD works through its Title I schools to provide families with information about the overall Title I program and its requirements. The district works with its schools to help families understand the academic expectations for student learning and progress. Specific information related to the State's challenging academic standards and local and state assessments – including alternative assessments and Access testing, is provided. The district also offers assistance to parents in understanding and using the online student information system (Parent Portal) to monitor their child's progress.

The LEA also supports schools in providing materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve achievement. Some examples are literacy and math training, technology use (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent and family engagement. Notifications about these opportunities are shared using various media such as school websites, school messaging systems, newsletters, and social media postings.

The district website has a Virtual Parent Resource Room that contains grade-level resources for at-home use, information on the school and district Title I program, Parent Institute Connection handouts, and resources for EL students. School websites provide study guides, practice assessments, software programs for at-home learning, directions for accessing school technology, and a link to the Virtual Parent Resource Room. Hard copies of these materials, including translations, are available at all Title I schools.

The WCSD supports Title I schools in coordinating and integrating 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 programs regardless of funding. Schools host transition events for rising kindergarten students, sixth-grade students, and ninth-grade students. Transition events help prepare families and students for the next life state.

Of School Staff - The WCSD conducts training during the school year for principals and school staff to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, improve school-family communication, and build ties with parents and the community. Attendees redeliver this information to the faculty and staff at all schools.

Mr. Bert Smith, Superintendent

At the beginning of the year, each school trains staff on the capacities for parent engagement, including translating documents and translation services. The Ware County School System follows recommended guidelines to enhance communication with the public. School and district websites are ADA compliant to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Our website has built-in language translation so parents can view it in the language of their choosing. Documents and information posted on the school and district websites are translated to the extent practicable if the website does not automatically translate the information.

To ensure that the district and school parent engagement programs and activities are available to all parents, each school invites parents using various media such as flyers, newsletters, electronic notifications, social media, and notices sent home with students. The information is in an understandable language and uniform format.

Parent and Family Engagement Plan Evaluation

Annually, the WCSD conducts an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement plan and the activities with meaningful engagement of parents and family members to improve the academic quality of the Title I schools through an annual parent survey and Stakeholder Input Meeting. The WCSD uses the findings from the input meetings and the survey results to choose strategies that improve family engagement, remove possible barriers to parent participation, and revise the parent and family engagement plans.

Each Title I school sends a Thrillshare message with a survey link, students take home invitations to participate, QR codes and information about the survey are posted at the schools, and reminders are on the school marquee. In addition to the annual survey, each Title I school holds a Stakeholder Input Meeting to gather information on the needs of parents to design strategies for more effective family engagement.

Accessibility

In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the district Federal Programs Coordinator (FPC) communicates and collaborates with the Student Services Department. The district is committed to ensuring 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.



Adoption

This district-wide parent and family engagement plan has been developed jointly and agreed upon with parents and family members of students participating in Title I Part A programs, as evidenced by the collaboration of parents, stakeholders, and school and district personnel at the Stakeholder Input meeting. This plan was revised on June 21, 2023, adopted by the WCSD on June 22, 2023, and is in effect for the 2023 – 2024 school year. The school district will distribute this plan in multiple ways on or before October 1, 2023.