

**GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY
2011-2012**

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) of 2001.

(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 No Child Left Behind Act.

GCPS involves parents in the development, review, and revision of the district 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 Title I Plan and Parent Involvement Policy.

(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 and strategies for teaching adult learners 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 the ESEA Act of 2001. 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 2011 -2012 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. These funds also support the Parent Leadership Academy, which provides professional learning for parents on becoming parent leaders for GCPS to support the parents of students in our Title I schools. All parents of Title I students are invited to participate in the Parent Leadership Academy (PLA).

Additionally, there are district-wide parent events in which Title schools may participate such as the “Be There” initiative to promote parent education and involvement. These events include presentations on promoting parent involvement to support student achievement, vendors who provide educational support materials, and local school business partners. These events also showcase educational support opportunities available for students and parents.

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

Gwinnett County Public Schools embraces its 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. 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 Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), and the parents’ educational rights and responsibilities under the ESEA 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, and test taking skills and to monitor their children’s academic progress; 3) oral and written English literacy, effective communication with educators, and the use of technology; and 4) decision-making skills, goal setting and tracking goal progress.

To maximize parent participation, parent meeting and workshop days, times, times, and locations vary to accommodate parents’ schedules. Childcare, transportation 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.

The GCPS Title I Office, the Title I schools, and parents of Title I students use resources and training provided by the following:

*Georgia Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC),
600 West Peachtree Street, Suite 1200
Atlanta, GA, 30308*

Additionally, the Title I Office sponsors an LEA Parent Leadership Academy (PLA). This academy is available to all parents of Title I students district wide to provide opportunities for training on the GCPS and Title I perspective, to facilitate parent input in planning at the district and school level and to develop parent leadership skills.

Furthermore, 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. Written and oral translations in 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, when possible. 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 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status of Title I schools. Parents of students attending Title I Schools identified as Needs Improvement (NI) receive a written explanation regarding the school's status and are advised of their parent rights under ESEA, which may include Supplemental Educational Services (SES) or Public School Choice. Parents of students attending Title I schools identified as Needs Improvement have the right to provide input regarding the development of the school's plan for improvement. School district personnel assist each local school's administration and faculty in defining and attaining academic goals. Information about Public School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services (SES) is made available on each NI school's website and the GCPS website. Information is also available at each school.

The GCPS Title I Parent Involvement Advisory Council (PAC) represents all Title I parents in matters concerning the district Title I Program. The council includes parents from each Title I school, Parent Instructional Support Coordinators, and Title I and other district level personnel. The PAC meetings are held three times throughout the year to discuss 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 welcome 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), Public School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services (SES), 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 college and career. Some elementary schools also facilitate the Parents as Teachers Program (PAT) to train parents to use 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 perception 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, is 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, and multiple forms of invitations and advertisements of the meetings. 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. Parents are also encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for parent involvement activities at the local school and district level as stipulated under section 1112, section 1116, and section 1118 of the ESEA of 2001.

The Title I Annual Orientation meetings are held at each school to inform parents about 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 manages the Parent Center and offers flexible and extended hours for the Parent Center to ensure availability to parents.

During the Title I Annual Orientation meetings, the student selection process, district 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. Furthermore, 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. They 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 fall and spring conferences. Both the parent and the school maintain copies of the compacts. 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 may be 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 Committee, Local School Councils, and the LEA Parent Advisory Committee.

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 questionnaires, personal interviews, and focus groups.

Each school's Title I 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 Instructional and Parent Involvement funds through the Title I Committee meetings and at school wide parent meetings. Proposed budgets are available to all members of the Title I Committee for their review. Additionally, parents who are not members of the Title I Committee have the right to request a copy of the proposed budgets and provide feedback, prior to approval by the Title I Committee.

This LEA Title I Parent Involvement Policy was reviewed and revised with the input of GCPS staff, parents, and community members, and finalized July 11, 2011. 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.