

Mr. Wes Taylor, Superintendent



– District Family Engagement Coordinator

Herb Hamilton – Federal Programs Director

2017-2018- Title I District Family and Community Engagement Policy for Lowndes County Schools (LCS)

Schools are eligible for Title I funding if 40% of their students qualify for free or reduced meals



1. The Lowndes County School System recognizes the need of a quality education for all children. The district also recognizes the legal and moral responsibility to put in place such programs, and the involvement of parents/guardians of Title I students in the process. Family and community engagement will include, but not be limited to establishing partnerships with schools, parents and community members while encouraging their participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Local Educational Agency's (LEA) Title I Family and Community Engagement Policy.

2. Lowndes County Schools (LCS) will develop jointly a District Family and Community Engagement Policy for all Title I Schools in our district. The following schools in Lowndes County School System are School-Wide Title I Schools: Lowndes Middle School, Clyattville, Lake Park, Moulton Branch and Pine Grove Elementary School. We will invite and encourage parents/families and community stakeholders to participate and give their input in revising and updating this document. Families and community stakeholders will also be invited and encouraged to give input on the update and or revision of the Continuous LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), the Parent-Student-School Compact, the School-Wide Improvement Plan, the School Family and Community Engagement Policy and the One-Year Action Plan. These documents will be annually updated and or revised in the spring of each school year.

3. LCS will offer programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of **ALL** parents/families in all of its Title I schools. The goal of family and community engagement activities is to encourage and support the shared efforts of home, school, and community in improving the educational opportunities of all Title I students and to help them master demanding academic standards across the curriculum; Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). We want parents and families to understand their joint responsibility of educating their child. Parents can help support their child's learning by monitoring attendance, homework completion and by limiting television viewing. Parents/families should encourage daily reading and study time, volunteer at their child's school, when suitable and within school guidelines. When appropriate, parents, families, and community stakeholders should also participate in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time.

4. All Title I schools will hold an **Annual Title I Parent-Family Meeting** in the fall of each school year. During the meeting, each school is to inform parents/families about the guidelines, purpose, goals, budget and the expectations of the Title I program. Parents, families, and community stakeholders will be given the components of a Targeted Assisted and a School-Wide Title I School. Parents, families, and community stakeholders will be informed of their school's academic performance, professional qualification of teachers and paraprofessionals and their right to be involved. Parents/families will be made aware of their right to give input on the District and School Family and Community Engagement Policies, the One-year Action Plan, Parent-Student-School Compact, School-Wide Improvement Plan, and the Continuous LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Sign-in sheets, meeting agendas and advertisements are submitted to the district office. A written copy of information discussed at the Annual Title I Meeting will be sent home with every parent in attendance. Copies will also be made available to those who were

not able to attend. When possible, special arrangements will be made for parents with disabilities, language barriers, and other special needs.



5. In the fall of each school year, the Title I District Family and Community Engagement Policy will be distributed to all parents: hard copies sent home with every student, by posting on the school and district website, copies available in the Parent/Family Information Resource Center (PIRC) of each Title I School and copies available at the Lowndes County Board of Education.

Additionally, parents, families, and community stakeholders may request an electronic copy.

Parents/Families will sign and return a checklist acknowledging they received a copy of the 2017-2018 District Family and Community Engagement Policy and other Title I documents. Spanish copies of the District Family and Community Engagement Policy are available.

6. In accordance with ESSA guidelines and the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), schools are categorized based on student achievement and performance. GaDOE will use this achievement data to determine and provide consistently low-achieving schools with additional direction and support. The state must identify (no less than) the lowest performing 5-percent of all Title I schools in the State. Currently, none of the Title I schools in the Lowndes County School System fall within the lowest performing Title I schools in Georgia. Parents will also receive notification of Parents' Rights to Request Teacher Qualifications. General information about Title I will be made available on the LCS website as well as, each Title I School's website.

7. In addition to working with all Title I Schools to ensure that all parents, families and community stakeholders are invited and encouraged to participate annually in the process of developing, updating and or revising the District Family and Community Engagement Policy, the Title I office and District Family and Community Engagement Coordinator will provide technical assistance and make sure all stakeholders are involved in the development, updating and/or revising of the School Family and Community Engagement Policy, Parent-Student-School Compact, the one-year Action Plan, and parent and family engagement workshops and event opportunities. Further, we will solicit input from parents, families, and community stakeholders on how the reserved 1% of the Title I budget should be used for family and community engagement. A copy of the School Family and Community Engagement Policy will be available in the School's Parent-Family Information Resource Center (PIRC), hard copies will be sent home with students and it will be placed on the school's website. The district will ensure that Family and Community Engagement meetings and workshops are offered at flexible times on a regular basis. We will make these opportunities available mornings, during lunch, evenings and weekends. We will use results from the district survey for optimal scheduling. The goal of these workshops and family engagement classes is to raise and improve student achievement.

8. In carrying out the Title I Part A Family and Community Engagement requirements, to the best of our abilities, the district and its schools will provide numerous opportunities for the participation of parents, families with Limited English Proficiency, parents of Title I students with disabilities, and parents of migratory children. LCS will provide required documents and important information in an understandable format, and, in a language parents/families understand. When feasible, the district will translate documents in multiple languages. The district will use the TransAct system in order to provide parent notices in multiple languages.

9. A district-wide, annual parent survey will be sent home for all parents/families of children attending a Title I school, to fill out and return to their child's teacher each school year; electronic option available. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the effectiveness of family and community engagement programs. The results of the parent/family survey will be used in determining the effectiveness for increasing family and community participation and identifying barriers to parent/family participation. All data collected will be kept on file at the District Title I office. The data will also be used to help with the update and revision of policies and practices at all of the Title I schools in the Lowndes County School System. Timely responses to parent/family suggestions shall be provided

and unsatisfactory parent comments shall be submitted to the Title I office. Parent suggestions and unsatisfactory parent comments will be turned in to the Title I office so they can prepare timely changes to provide positive changes to our services and programs. Each survey will be tallied and results will be shared at Family and Community Engagement Team Meetings. Any individual, organization or agency may file a complaint with Local Education Agency (LEA) if they believe and allege that the LEA is violating a Federal statute or regulation. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior the date the complaint is received unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systematic or ongoing. A written complaint must be addressed to: Federal Programs Director - 1592 Norman Drive - Valdosta, GA 31601.

10. Title I Schools will communicate regularly with parents, families and community stakeholders through a variety of media/methods, including but not limited to: parent-teacher conferences, parent/family workshops/events, family nights, newsletters (which will include homework, study and test-taking tips), weekly folders, flyers, email, Educational Access channels/websites, Public Service Announcements on local radio stations, the local newspaper (Valdosta Daily Times), Parent-Family Information Resource Centers (PIRC) in each Title I School, district and school websites and blogs, call-out messenger system, schools' marquee and Infinite Campus Website. Schedules of community and Technical College Literacy classes will be made available in the Parent-Family Information Resource Center. Parents/families may request the mode of communication more suitable to them, i.e. websites, hard copies sent home with students, emails or mailed through the US Postal Service.

11. The Lowndes County District office will also maintain ongoing communication with parents, families, and community stakeholders using multiple media, as listed above. Whenever possible, all communication will be in an easy-to-understand language and format.

12. LCS will follow the statutory definition of family and community engagement and expects that the Title I schools will carry out programs, activities and procedures according to this definition: *Family and Community Engagement means the participation of parent, families, and community stakeholders in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that (A) parent/families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (B) parent/families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (C) parents/families 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 ESSA.*

13. In order to build a strong basis for family and community engagement and to build stronger ties between home, school and the community, the system has employed the following positions: a designated person for family and community engagement at each Title I school (Academic Coach and Parent Liaison), a Federal Programs Director, and a District Family and Community Engagement Coordinator. These individuals will educate all faculty and staff members of the vital role parents play in increasing student achievement. The staff and faculty of Title I Schools will receive at least three Professional Development opportunities on the importance of Building Capacity to increase family and community engagement and the value and utility of contributions of parents. These Professional Development opportunities will be face to face and or electronic delivery.

14. All Title I Schools in Lowndes County uses the framework for family and community engagement as prescribed by the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)-*School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002*. The Lowndes County District Office and all Title I schools are members of NNPS. Lowndes County Board of Education and its Title I schools are building capacity for family and community engagement by implementing Family and Community Engagement Teams and developing one-year Action Plans that outline opportunities designed to increase and expand family and community engagement activities. The Family and Community Engagement Team will adequately represent parents of participating children. Title I

schools will involve parents in an ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, budget and implementation of programs under Title I. The one-year Action Plan is based on the NNPS six keys of involvement (6 Components to building capacity). The NNPS six keys of involvement are:

1. **Parenting**- Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
2. **Communicating** – Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children’s progress.
3. **Volunteering** – Recruit and organize parent help and support.
4. **Learning at Home** – Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with planning.
5. **Decision Making** – Include in school decisions, develop parent leaders and representatives.
6. **Collaborating with Community** – Identify and integrate programs, family practices, and student learning and development.



****Every Activity listed on the One-Year Action Plan will fall into one of these six types of involvement****

15. Title I schools, with assistance from the District Family and Community Engagement Coordinator and two Parent Liaisons, will plan parent/family workshops and activities, along with volunteer opportunities on a regular basis and at various times (morning, noon, evening and weekend meetings will be scheduled). When practical, we will strive to provide services to eliminate family and community engagement barriers. We require each Title I School to offer numerous parent/family-focused academic based activities during the school year. These events will help parents/families in understanding topics such as the State’s academic content standards, the State’s student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, how to monitor their child’s progress, and how to work with teachers. Title I schools will also offer events that help build a welcoming climate and partnership between families, schools and community.

16. LCS will provide technical assistance and other support to each Title I school as needed. This ensures the effective planning, implementation and evaluation of Family and Community Engagement activities. LCS will provide other reasonable support for family and community engagement activities as parents may request.

17. When practical, we will coordinate and integrate Family and Community Engagement with other programs such as: the Georgia Lottery Funded Pre-K Program, Migrant and Homeless. Services are provided for Neglected and Delinquent Students, housed at the Georgia Sheriff’s Boy Ranch and Raintree Village. At this time, Lowndes County School System does not have the following programs: Head Start, Even Start, and Reading Recovery.

18. Lowndes County’s five Title I schools embrace its students, parents/families, and community. Administrators, faculty and staff will partner with businesses and community-based organizations to provide resources and networks for parents, students and teachers. We will maintain a strong partnership with all of our Community Partners in Education.

19. LCS will reserve at least one percent of our district’s Title I allocation, for family and community engagement. At every Family and Community Engagement Team Meeting, we will solicit parent, family, and community stakeholder input on how these funds should be used to further enhance our Family and Community Engagement efforts of student achievement, thus staying within Title I guidelines. Funds are used to employ a District Family and Community Engagement Coordinator, to pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with family and community engagement activities, including providing minimal snacks, parent communication, such as monthly newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, etc.