

# Thomaston-Upson School District Parent and Family Engagement Policy



**2018-2019**  
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## 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 ESSA.

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## About the Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, the Thomaston-Upson School District 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 the district'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. The priority focus is on Literacy at all grade levels with a secondary focus aimed at improving math with a specific target of numeracy at the K-3 level.

*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 Every Student Succeeds Act (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 ACSD 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**

*All parents are invited to be part of the collaboration*

During the annual District Parent Advisory meeting the end of March, **all** parents were invited to participate and provide suggestions and ideas to improve this district parent and family engagement policy for the 2018-2019 school year. The district sent out flyers and made call outs to all parents as well as advertised in the newspaper, through the school newsletters, and on the school marquees informing them about this meeting. An announcement was posted on the school district website and Face Book. Letters were sent out to parents who were recommended by teachers and administrators. During this meeting, parents also reviewed data and discussed the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Additionally, the schools used their Parent Advisory Council to review the district parent and family engagement policy before the end of the school year. (March - May)

Upon final revision, the district parent and family engagement policy was incorporated into the CLIP which was submitted to the state. Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the policy at any time on the school district website by clicking on Federal Programs and clicking the input section or by submitting written comments to your child's school.

The district parent and family engagement policy will be posted on the district and school websites, distributed during the annual Title I school meetings early this school year, and made available in the Parent Resource Center. It will also be distributed to school councils and school Partners in Education.

## **Strengthening Our School**

This year, the district Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator 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 being implemented. Title I schools will receive notifications and resources from the district and the Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator to help them improve and strengthen family engagement. In addition to frequent communication and school visits, the district and the Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator 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 Thomaston-Upson School System will reserve 1% from the total amount of Title I funds it receives to carry out the parental engagement requirements listed in this policy and described in Section 1118 of the ESEA. Parents have the opportunity to give input into how this money is used through the annual surveys given and questionnaires answered and recorded at parent input meetings in the spring. At the annual Title I Meeting, each school will share the budget and how it is used with the parents and families. Principals at each school have to sign off as to what the budget supports.

*Excellence in Education...Every Individual, Every Day*

## **Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation**

Input and suggestions from parents and families 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 meetings, fill out surveys, join school advisory councils, run for school council and other opportunities to share their ideas and suggestions to help the district, schools, and students to reach our student academic achievement goals.

### **District Parent Advisory Council**

All parents are invited to be a part of the **District Parent Advisory Council** that meets twice a school year. They are welcome to hear the latest updates from the Thomaston-Upson District as well as review and provide input into the district parent and family engagement policy, the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan, and the Parent Involvement budget. Notices regarding these meetings will be sent through flyers, phone outs, and newsletters to all parents in advance of the meetings. The district will also communicate information regarding these meetings on the school district website.

### **Spring Parent Surveys**

Each school and the district conduct annual parent surveys where parents have the opportunity to give input/feedback on the district and school parent engagement plans and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan. Schools also ask for parents/families to comment on the school compacts, school policies, and the use of the Title I funds used to support family engagement programs. The Parent Engagement Program is guided by these surveys. Parents can request a paper copy of each survey.

### **Input Meetings**

Each school holds at least two input meetings in the spring and one in the fall for parents and family members to participate in 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 programs. These meetings are held at different times to meet the needs of the parents/families. At these meetings, parents also have the opportunity to make comments and suggestions on any of the schools' programs and policies. These meetings also encourage parents to make comments and suggestions about any of the other schools' programs and policies. Each school will send multiple invitations home notifying families about the date and time of the meetings.

### **District Improvement Planning Retreat**

Parents are invited to attend the District Leadership Retreat in June where they can give input and approval of the District Improvement Plan and the District Parent and Family Engagement Plan.

### **School Council**

Parents are encouraged to run for school council. If they are not on the council, they are invited to attend any of the meetings. The council is presented the District Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the school Parent Engagement Policy for input and review.

### **School Improvement Retreats**

Beginning in the spring, all of the schools host a school improvement retreat where parents are invited to participate. During the retreat, the school will have roundtable discussions to review the school wide plan, the school improvement plan, and the school –parent compact.

### **Partners in Education**

Community stakeholders and parents who represent business are part of this supportive group. The District Parent and Family Engagement Policy is presented to this group for review every year.

### **School Parent Advisories**

All parents are invited to join to help guide school and district decisions in better ensuring that our schools/district student academic goals are met.

## **Building Parent and School Capacity**

The Thomaston Upson School System will build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong family engagement, in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and family members and to support a partnership among the Title I schools, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following district wide activities and programs:

***Of Parents-*** The Thomaston Upson School system will work as a district and through its Title I schools to provide assistance to parents in understanding state and district academic information connected to their student's learning and progress, as well as information regarding the Title I program. The Thomaston-Upson School System will provide classes for 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. The district collaborates with the Thomaston Housing Authority to offer parent workshops on site and free tutoring for the children. The dates and locations for all the classes and meetings will be posted on the district website, on notices sent home with students, on school websites, in school newsletters, on parent call outs, in the newspaper, and shared on social media. Meetings will be held at several different times.

Our system will also provide a page on the district websites that will contain resources and materials, including parent guides, study guides, practice assessments, and activities to help parents work with their children at home. Copies will be given out at parent workshops and made available at schools for those families who may have limited internet access, including copies in Spanish. To assist parents with understanding the online student information system and other digital educational resources, the Thomaston-Upson School system, will provide technology workshops for the parents. Dates and times for these workshops will be determined by each school.

To ensure that information related to school, parent programs, meetings, and activities is available to all parents in an understandable language and format, the district will post a monthly schedule on the district website homepage and under Federal Programs. Each school website has a calendar of events. Parent notifications will be sent home in the native language if applicable. ESOL has two – three parent meetings per year where an interpreter goes over school information and answers questions. Thomaston-Upson has established a district wide Parent Advisory Council comprised of parent representatives from all the schools to provide advice on all matters related to family engagement in Title I, Part A programs. Community leaders and business partners are invited to serve on this council. The district will also encourage collaboration and participation with community partners by sharing information from the meetings. Letters with information are sent out to churches upon their request to share with their members.

Thomaston-Upson will coordinate and integrate the district's family engagement programs with the local preschool program and other state funded preschool programs in the district and with Upson County Head Start. Kindergarten Readiness Workshops are provided on site, and materials and resources are given out. Each spring, the primary school will host a Pre-K visitation for the children during the day and a parent/family tour of the school and information session in the evening to help the transition to kindergarten for both the children and the parents. Thomaston-Upson School System offers annual tours of all the schools where parents and community members are bused to each school where they can actually visit classrooms to better understand the learning going on and the school resources available to the students. Thomaston-Upson collaborates with community services and businesses to host a Back to School Bash at the Civic Center where families can attend to gain information, ask questions, and receive school supplies.

**Of School Staff-** The Thomaston-Upson School System will conduct three trainings during the school year for principals and faculty to learn and discuss strategies to increase family engagement, to improve school-family communication, and to build ties with parents and the community. The Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator will visit the schools to review and discuss parent involvement requirements and initiatives and give other needed technical assistance. A training for appropriate school staff and faculty that will focus on creating welcoming environments will be given at the beginning of school.

## **Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation**

Each year, the Thomaston-Upson School system 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. This will be done through parent surveys, at school improvement meetings, and at multiple input meetings. Parents will also fill out input sheets in the fall and in the spring at meetings and evening school events. A one question budget survey on the 1% with a checklist is distributed at parent workshops and evening school events. Parents are sent many notices in different forms about the surveys and meetings.

Surveys will go out in March and in April and will be posted on the district and school websites. Parents are encouraged to complete a survey when visiting the schools, and paper copies are given out to those who may not have access to computers. In addition to the surveys, parents are invited to the district meeting at the end of March and the school input opportunities in March and April. to facilitate group discussion on the needs parents of children eligible to receive Title I services to design strategies for more effective family engagement. Thomaston-Upson will use the findings from the school meetings 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 ESOL teacher, the Federal Programs Director, and student 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**

Annual Parent Surveys – March/April 2019  
School Improvement/Input Meetings – March/May 2019

*\*Please check with your child's school for specific dates*

## **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 District Stakeholder Annual Meeting and school input meetings.

This policy was adopted by the Thomaston-Upson School District on September 1, 2018 and will be in effect for the 2018-2019 academic school year. The school district will distribute this policy in multiple ways to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before October 1, 2018.