

Parent and Family Engagement

ESSA SECTIONS 1112(b)(3) and 1112(b)(7)

Describe how the LEA will carry out its responsibility under Section 1111(d).

Describe the strategy the LEA will use to implement effective parent and family engagement under Section 1116.

THIS ESSA PROVISION IS ADDRESSED BELOW:

The Los Angeles Unified School District's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy outlines how the District is addressing the federal mandates for Title I family engagement. The Policy was developed with parents during the 2016-2018 school years. Six meetings and over 22 hours of collaborative effort led the parents to agree on the Policy.

Annually, the Policy is reviewed by parents through Local District Title I Study Groups, which consist of 36 meetings held across the District. The Study Group participants provide feedback on the Policy while they review its content and effectiveness. Schools are required to distribute a summary of the District's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy to all parents each year. This Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy contains many of the strategies outlined in this section of the Federal Addendum below.

The Los Angeles Unified School District is comprised of various student culture groups, with 73.4% of the District's students of Latino background, 10.5% are White, 8.2% are African-American, 4.2% are Asian, less than 1% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2.1% are Filipina, and 1% are not reported. In all, 94 languages other than English are spoken in L.A. Unified schools. In addition, the District has 157,619 students who are learning to speak English proficiently. Their primary languages are Spanish (92.5% of English learners), Armenian (1.1%), Korean (1%) Tagalog, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Russian, each accounting for less than 1% of total.

The District also has more than 7,000 foster care students. In order to implement effective parent and family engagement as described under Section 1116, supporting the rich diversity of the District's students, LAUSD employs multiple strategies. Research has shown that authentic parent and family engagement and support must occur closest to the school for the strongest impact on student achievement. (Jeynes, William; *The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Urban Secondary School Academic Achievement*, 2007) Therefore,

the District will make sure that all family engagement focuses on students and their academic and social-emotional growth needs. The family engagement activities must have the goal of supporting the District's goal of obtaining 100% Graduation for all students.

Collaboration

The first strategy will involve collaborating with parents as leaders, encouraging them to participate in various forms of governance both in schools and in the District. Parent leaders are those who assume important roles in schools as volunteers supporting school programs or on various governance structures.

At schools, parents will be given opportunities to participate on the School Site Council, the English Learner Advisory Committee and the Local School Leadership Council, as appropriate.

The first two of these school groups will provide input into the School Plan for Student Achievement, containing programs and expenses related to federal categorical funding.

The third group will review various general school programs and expenses. Parents' consistent and informed participation will enable meaningful consultation with them as stakeholders. Efforts should be made to encourage the parents of underrepresented and underserved families, like the families of special needs students and homeless students, on the governance councils and committee.

In partnerships with school staff, parent leaders will develop and approve each school's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact. The evidence demonstrating that schools address these requirements for parent participation will be uploaded onto an online District portal. This evidence is often verified when Local District Parent and Community Engagement staff and the District's Office of Parent and Community Services visit the schools onsite and speak with stakeholders.

The District's Office of Parent and Community Services will monitor this evidence monthly and work with the six Local District Parent and Community Engagement units, as well as the Federal and State Education Programs Office and the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Division, to provide coordinated training and targeted support to schools.

Schools that do not meet these requirements are provided additional support by their Local District Directors. In addition, the District has a robust parent volunteer program which provides parents opportunities to be involved in their child's school by providing a variety of volunteer activities.

Collaboration (Continued)

Efforts will be made to have Local Districts support Parent and Family Center staff in engaging underrepresented and underserved parent groups as volunteers, disseminating information regarding free clinics for the volunteers' required medical exams, in cases where medical clearance serves as a barrier. In addition, the District will continue to identify ways of helping parents pay for the mandated fingerprinting fees through private donations, corporate support and grants.

At the Local Districts, Title I parents will be selected by Title I parents from each school to participate in Title I Parent Study Groups, which will meet monthly to review the content and effectiveness of the Local Educational Agency's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy annually.

Also, the Title I Parent Study Groups will provide input into the Local Educational Agency Plan, now known as the Local Control and Accountability Plan Federal Addendum, while reviewing the coordination of the District's programs that have family engagement components and other Title I topics. A minimum of three hundred Title I parents will commit to the Title I Parent Study Groups each year, with each school sending two Title I parents to participate in Study Groups.

Participants will learn about the two new school identification criteria, Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI), as identified in the California Dashboard, and what schools are doing to address identified needs. As a result, they will be empowered to support their schools in strengthening the strategies used to improve student achievement and attendance.

Interested parents will participate on the District Title I Focus Group, in addition to serving on the Title I Parent Study Groups, to learn more about and provide feedback on all Title I programs and budgets, not only on those related to parent and family engagement.

Along with Title I Parent Study Groups and the District Title I Focus Group, the parents of African-American students will have the opportunity to participate in African-American Parent Study Groups offered in various Local Districts. The African-American Parent Study Groups will convene to learn more about the achievement of African-American students and how to support closing the achievement gap for them in the District.

Collaboration (Continued)

In addition, approximately 150 parents will participate on parent and community leadership committees at the District, including the Parent Advisory Committee, the District English Learner Advisory Committee and the Community Advisory Committee.

These parent and community leaders will be provided with extensive training and multiple opportunities to provide input on a variety of District initiatives so that they can be provided with meaningful consultation on the quality and content of family engagement supports in the District. They will also receive information that can be shared with their Local District leadership and other parents at the Local District level. Parents will learn about the available opportunities for participating in school and District leadership in May for the following year, so that they can have time to plan for increasing their engagement with school staff.

Various policies provide guidance to school sites and District offices to strengthen their parent and family engagement programs, and these policies will be reviewed annually by the Office of Parent and Community Services in partnership with parents to ensure that there is stakeholder input and consistency in establishing the policies. One of the policies will include a summary of the Local Control and Accountability Plan Federal Addendum for dissemination to all families.

Communication

A second strategy will involve establishing multiple modes of communication between the District, families and schools to address families' diverse needs and interests. Special attention is provided to support parents and family members with disabilities, homeless and foster families, migratory families and families with limited English proficiency.

To facilitate communication from schools to families, information will be provided through online postings and newsletters, with notices mailed home in a timely fashion and translated into languages parents can understand. Families will receive text messages, if they opt in, and phone calls providing them with critical school information. When possible, communication will be provided in parent-friendly language and in graphic form for parents with low literacy levels. In particular, for the English Learner parents of students with special needs, each school is required to identify and provide bilingual staff who can assist with oral interpretation at Individualized Education Plan meetings.

Communication (Continued)

In addition, schools will communicate with their families regarding their CSI or ATSI identification under the California School Dashboard. To support this effort, parents will have access to an online Parent Portal through which they can learn about their students' daily attendance, grades, test scores, Individualized Education Plan, English Learner status, graduation requirements, discipline records, transportation schedule, lunch application, health records and contact information. Gaining access to their children's school information through the Portal will allow for families and school staff to have the same foundational information about their students so that they can better focus on coordinating strategies for targeted support.

The Office of Parent and Community Services will share research and promising practices on parent engagement, along with District initiatives for communication with families to the six Local District Parent and Community Engagement units, which communicate regularly and meet monthly with Parent and Family Center staff from each school.

Principals are encouraged to select Parent and Family Center staff that meet the language needs of their communities. Parent and Family Center staff will be provided with opportunities to increase their learning around various District initiatives, including learning about trainings provided to teachers and how to support families of students with special needs.

Local District Parent and Community Engagement units will teach Parent and Family Center staff about how to move through the career ladder, if they are interested, also. At these meetings, Parent and Family Center staff are provided with information and training to welcome, communicate and partner with parents effectively and frequently.

They focus particular attention to efforts centered on supporting families with disabilities, foster and homeless families, migratory families and those with limited English proficiency to consider how to differentiate their outreach to provide access. This training includes communicating with parents about their rights and responsibilities, supporting parents as volunteers and how schools can get support for their volunteer programs.

Clear metrics will be established and communicated to determine what effective parent and family engagement in each Local District and school looks like, with feedback being provided to District staff on meeting these metrics. It is strongly recommended that parents partner with administrators in evaluating this effective parent and family engagement in each Local District and school.

Communication (Continued)

Facilitating the communication from parents to schools, parents will be provided with various opportunities for communicating with school and District staff. Through the online platform of Schoology, accessed through the Parent Portal, parents can communicate with their children's teachers over email, while reviewing specific assignments for each class online. The District is exploring ways to create a technology help desk for families so that they can get assistance with Schoology and the Parent Portal.

Families can also use traditional means of communicating with school and District staff by calling, visiting and writing. Appointments to confer with school teachers and other staff will be made directly with each school through email, phone calls or in person.

Special accommodations will be made for communicating with families that have accessibility needs to facilitate their informed participation in programs at the school and District level, with the Translations Unit providing material in multiple languages at schools upon request, and with the needs of disabled, homeless and migrant families being considered and addressed at each school site in coordination with the Division of Special Education, the Homeless Education Program and the Migrant Education Program staff.

Access to programs will be provided to the parents and family members with disabilities through the provision of reasonable accommodations. For foster, homeless and migrant parents and family members, additional engagement will be provided to ensure that children are receiving the support that they need to succeed before and after any extended absences.

Parents who do not have access to information digitally can request paper copies from the school office. Parents will be invited to complete an annual School Experience Survey for schools to be better informed about the needs of their families and the effectiveness of their family engagement programs.

The results from this Survey are required to increase and will be published annually for all stakeholders to review by school site. It is strongly recommended by the District that every school offer parents a means to provide feedback to school personnel informally through the use of a suggestion box.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that schools purchase Parent and Family Center staff positions to support and strengthen the communication with families.

Communication (Continued)

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Capacity Building

A third strategy will involve building the capacity of both parents and school and District staff to partner with one another. To address this strategy, schools will offer training to parents to understand parents' rights, identifying resources for navigating the District, utilizing Smarter Balanced Assessment and Parent Portal resources, social-emotional support on physical, emotional and online safety and gang awareness, how to get support for students with special needs, District academic initiatives and to provide parents with opportunities to learn how to support learning in the home for specific grade levels, exposing them to specific strategies that are used in the classroom, when appropriate.

Parents serving on a committee or council will be trained to understand and provide feedback on the specific content pertaining to the committee or council. When parents are informed about what is being discussed and taught in schools, they can make connections and reinforce the learning at home.

Two pre-selected trainings will be held for parents, one on the California School Dashboard and another on LAUSD graduation requirements. Schools will choose from a variety of other academic topics, depending on school goals and needs, to teach their parents, many of which address California State Standards and assessments.

When possible, school staff will partner with parent leaders to co-present to other parents, using curriculum that is co-developed by knowledgeable parents. A Title I Meeting will be held annually to share detailed information about the Title I programs with families. Workshops will be posted online in multiple languages for parents who cannot attend meetings at school, so that families have various opportunities to learn.

The Local District Parent and Community Engagement units, in partnership with parent leaders and other District staff, will hold symposiums for families in each region to learn more about specific topics, like art and STEM, through workshops and resource tables. Workshops on technology will be offered to parents in Local Districts as well.

At selected schools in each Local District, enriched English as a Second Language classes will be offered through the Family Success Initiative to help English Learner parents learn more about supporting their children's transitioning through school levels and navigating the District.

Capacity Building (Continued)

The Office of Parent and Community Services will partner with the Early Childhood Education Division on developing a training to be offered to parents transitioning their children from pre-school to elementary school, with information about available leadership opportunities, so that they can better understand how to engage in District programs and opportunities.

In order to build the capacity of school and District staff, all levels of school personnel will be trained, paying particular attention to the training of staff working with parents, like Parent and Family Center staff.

In addition to providing workshops for parents to learn more about school matters, school administrators will be required to train either certificated or classified staff twice each year in how to partner effectively with parents, focusing on the value and utility of contributions of parents and their assets.

When possible, this training will occur with parents as partners. The Office of Parent and Community Services will create presentations for schools and District staff to use for these trainings, to build the capacity of both parents and school and District staff.

Workshop topics include teaching parents about how to develop questions and engage with school staff, how to use technology, how to analyze data, how to understand school budgets and the funding of the community representatives, how to identify school and District budgets online, and how data should be used to determine funding priorities leading to improved student achievement.

The six Local District Parent and Community Engagement units also will provide direct service to schools, by providing specific workshops and forums for supporting parent education and input. The workshops presented will enable parents to support their schools around the area of budget development, instructional strategies and social emotional support including the building of self-esteem and improving school attendance.

Local District Parent and Community Engagement staff will co-teach workshops with school staff, and parents when appropriate, to build capacity and will work with Parent and Family Center staff to ensure that the Parent and Family Center is developed into a parent classroom. Bond-renovated Parent and Family Centers have laptops for use with parents, and the Office of Parent and Community Services, in partnership with Local District Parent and Community Engagement units, will monitor the availability of this resource for parents.

Capacity Building (Continued)

Local District staff will work with Parent and Family Center staff to survey their school communities, identifying what hours are best for holding workshops, how to identify technology needs and deliver technology courses, and how to incentivize parent learning. Workshops and training at the school and District levels should be held at varied times, not only during the day but also in the evenings and on Saturdays to meet the needs of various parent stakeholders.

Evidence demonstrating completion of the training of parents and school staff will be uploaded into an online portal which is monitored by the Office of Parent and Community Services. Quarterly, various District staff will train aspiring and new principals and assistant principals on supporting family engagement; and these administrators, along with teachers, will be evaluated during their evaluation cycle on their family engagement goals, as determined by their supervisors.

The District will strongly recommend that principals select Standard 5: Family and Community Engagement from the School Leadership Framework during their evaluation process, and that parent response rate for School Experience Survey be considered as a measure in the evaluative process.

Evaluation metrics will be provided for principals to use to evaluate the effectiveness of staff responsible for parent and family engagement, including using stakeholder surveys to gather feedback on the job performance of employees on family engagement.

Bi-Annually, a professional development summit is held in each Local District for teams of school personnel, including the principal and three other staff supporting family engagement, to learn about how to welcome families, how to assess their welcoming environments and how to share promising practices with one another which move from involvement to empowerment.