

Districtwide Title I Family Engagement Policy

Suffolk Public Schools believes that the education of each student is a responsibility shared by the school and families. Suffolk Public Schools recognizes that a constructive partnership provides for two-way communication and fosters educational support for students and families. It is important to recognize that the term “parent” can also include guardians, grandparents, and other members of a student’s family who are involved in the student’s education.

In keeping with these beliefs, it is the intention of Suffolk Public Schools to cultivate and support active family engagement and to set realistic goals for parent-supported student learning.

The implementation of this policy is achieved through the following Family Engagement Plan:

PART I. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

Suffolk Public Schools agree to implement the following requirements that are consistent with Sections 1111, 1112, and 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary ACT (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.

- Suffolk Public Schools will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of families in all of its schools with Title I programs. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with input from the families of participating children.
- Suffolk Public Schools will work with schools to ensure that school-based Family Engagement Policies include, as a component, a School-Parent Compact.
- Suffolk Public Schools will incorporate components of the Title I Family Engagement Policy in the district’s school improvement plan.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A Family Engagement Requirements, Suffolk Public Schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of families with children who are English Language Learners, disabled, and migratory. This includes providing the required information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, when possible, in a language parents understand.
- If the Suffolk Public Schools plan for Title I, is not satisfactory to families, their comments will be included along with the plan for federal review when the plan is submitted to the Virginia Department of Education.
- Suffolk Public Schools will ensure that Title I Schools receive funds reserved for family engagement and that families are involved in decisions about how these funds are spent. Suffolk Public Schools will be governed by the following definition of family engagement and expects Title I Schools to operate using this definition:

Family engagement means the participation of families in meaningful communication involving student academic learning (academic achievement) and other school activities. Avenues for parent participation include:

- 1) *active involvement in their child's learning;*
- 2) *partnership, decision making, and collaboration with school staff and the community;*
- 3) *participation in parent training/workshops*
- 4) *the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1118 of the ESEA.*

PART II. IMPLEMENTATION OF REQUIRED DISTRICTWIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

1. Suffolk Public Schools will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development of the Districtwide Family Engagement Plan under *Sections 1112 and 1116* of the *ESEA*:
 - A Districtwide Title I Parent Advisory Council will meet quarterly to establish a framework to assist parents in the education of their children.
 - The district will encourage the selection of at least two parent representatives from each Title I school to serve on the Districtwide Title I Parent Advisory Council.
 - The Districtwide Title I Parent Advisory Council when possible will be representative of the following stakeholders: economically disadvantaged, disabled, English Language Learner (ELL) and/or limited literacy or any racial or ethnic minority background.
 - Agendas and minutes from the quarterly meetings will be available for parents to review at the Parent Resource Center at Booker T. Washington Elementary School or Suffolk Public Schools Office of Instructional Services.
 - The District will use multiple sources to communicate with parents, i.e. School Messenger, website, Suffolk Public Schools E-flyer, and Peach Jar.
 - Each Title I school will establish a Parent Advisory Council and hold an annual meeting in the fall so that parents can learn about their school's participation in the Title I program.
 - Based on each School's Family Engagement Policy, a follow-up session will be offered in the spring to inform parents about progress. (School policy)
 - Multiple opportunities will be offered for parents to attend Title I Parent Advisory Council meetings at the District and school levels to involve them in the school review and improvement process.
 - Curriculum and assessment measures and the school report card will be made available to parents at the annual meeting.

2. Suffolk Public Schools will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under *Section 1116* of the *ESEA*:
 - The Districtwide Title I and School-Based Parent Advisory Councils' meetings will be open to all parents through a zoom meeting link or in-person meetings, based on the Virginia Department of Health metrics for Suffolk.
 - Opportunities will be available for Title I Parent Advisory Council members to review data with school staff and provide input to assist schools in modifying School Improvement Plans.

- The Title I Parent Advisory Council will provide communication to families concerning the progress of the goals and objectives outlined in the Districtwide and the School's Title I Improvement Plans.

3. Suffolk Public Schools will provide the following support to assist Title I schools in planning and implementing effective family engagement activities to improve student achievement:

- The district will allocate funds for family engagement activities at each Title I school to include the promotion of family literacy, parenting skills, and technology.
- Title I schools will receive a budget for family engagement activities.
- Suffolk Public Schools will operate a Parent Resource Center, which is centrally located at Booker T. Washington Elementary School and accessible to families.
- The Parent Resource Center will be open year-round with flexible hours to accommodate families.
- The Parent Resource Center will provide training, technical assistance, and outreach materials to schools and parents to promote family engagement and improve student achievement. These resources may include literacy and math activities, homework assistance, and technology training.

4. Suffolk Public Schools will coordinate family engagement with the following programs: Early Start, Suffolk Literacy Council, Suffolk Department of Social Services, Suffolk's Early Childhood Commission, First Step-Sentara Obici Hospital, EVMS Minus 9 to 5, Suffolk Public Library, McKinney-Vento Homeless Program, Suffolk Redevelopment, and Housing Authority, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Sentara Obici Grant Foundation by providing face to face training, online academic reading and math resources, and preschool initiatives.

5. Suffolk Public Schools will involve families in an annual evaluation of the Title I family engagement policy.

- Suffolk Public Schools will conduct a survey in the spring of each year to determine the needs of families.
- Family surveys will be school-based and printed in a language for ELL students and families. The results will be used to determine the goals of the School-wide Improvement Plan for the next school year.
- The District Title I Parent Advisory Council will work collaboratively with Title I schools to develop and implement their School Performance Plans.
- As part of the School Performance Plan, each school will implement strategies to increase family engagement.

6. Suffolk Public Schools, with the assistance of Title I Schools, will strengthen family engagement by building partnerships with families and the community to improve student achievement through these activities.

A. Suffolk Public Schools will provide assistance to help families understand these topics:

- the State’s Standards of Learning,
- the State and local assessments,
- the requirements of Title I, Part A,
 1. Family Engagement Policies – Districtwide and School-based
 2. Teacher-Student-Parent Compact
 3. Complaint Procedures
 4. Parents’ Right To Know
- how to monitor the child’s progress
- how to work with educators
- online grade viewing system

B. Suffolk Public Schools will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate family engagement programs and activities with the Children’s Center, Healthy Families, Nurse-Family Partnership of Suffolk, and public preschool and other programs by:

- Collaboration of services with the preschool program for at-risk four-year-old children - Early Start.
- Offering workshops at schools and community facilities at various times to accommodate parents’ schedules.
- Providing support in planning and implementing family engagement meetings.
- Post a link to the school website with this information.

Suffolk Public Schools’ Districtwide Title I Parent Advisory Council has been established to provide advice on all matters related to family engagement in the Title I program. All Title I schools will arrange workshops and Title I meetings at various times to provide for families’ needs.

PART III. ADOPTION

Suffolk Public Schools Districtwide Title I Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with and agreed upon with, parents of children participating in Title I programs, as evidenced by the minutes of the Districtwide Parent Advisory Council meeting and attendance roster.

*This policy was adopted by the Suffolk Public Schools Districtwide Title I Parent Advisory Council on (May 5, 2022) and will be in effect for the period of one year.

Melvin Bradshaw
(Signature of Authorized Official)

May 5, 2022
(Date)

*Last Policy Adoption: January 21, 2021