



# Keeping the Spirit of ESSA:

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TEXAS**

Marisa B. Perez-Diaz  
Texas State Board of Education Member  
District 3

# Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

## Title I- Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged Sec. 1116 – Parent and Family Engagement: LEA and School Title I Eligibility Requirements

- LEAs and families are to partner in co-creating district's family engagement policy establishing the agency's expectations and objectives for meaningful family involvement.
- Provide coordination and technical assistance to build capacity of schools in planning and implementing effective family involvement activities aimed at improving student academic achievement and school performance.
- Build capacity for parents to be involved by providing assistance with understanding challenging State academic standards, State and local assessments, and how to monitor progress and improve achievement
- With meaningful involvement of families, conduct an annual evaluation of policy effectiveness and impact in improving academic quality, identify and address barriers to family participation affecting diverse subpopulations, learn what families need to support their child's learning and increase school engagement. Collaborate with community-based organizations experienced in family engagement.
- Option to establish a parent advisory board that is representative of families served by the district so as to develop, revise and review the parent and family engagement policy.

### Requirements for Schools Receiving Title I Funds Include:

- Invite all parents to an annual meeting to explain requirements of the Title I, Part A Program and the right of parents to be involved.
- Jointly develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share responsibility for improved academic achievement.

Source: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. [As Amended Through P.L. 114-95, Enacted December 10, 2015]  
The full text can be found online at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1116>

# What is Meaningful Family Engagement?

- Intentional partnerships to support scholars, particularly as it pertains to learning, creating and implementing strategies to support student success.
- All are involved in meaningful discussions on program planning, policy development and innovative initiatives
- Targeted strategies are introduced and implemented
- **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-based goals are collaboratively established with student success in mind

# How is the Texas State Board of Education supporting statewide Family Engagement

In September of 2017, the SBOE convened a group of 18 individuals, representing different stakeholder groups, for the first of 5 planned meetings, to discuss plans for what public education should be working toward from now through 2030. This timeline was set to align to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's strategic plan for higher education.

This steering committee outlined 4 key focuses:

1. Educator preparation, recruitment, and retention
2. Equity and access
- 3. Family engagement and empowerment**
4. Student engagement and empowerment

<file:///C:/Users/marisa.diaz/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/San%20Antonio%20CC%20Summary-Final.pdf>

# The SBOE Long Range Plan Advisory Group defines family engagement and empowerment as:

“Engaging and integrating families and parents in the education of students. Supporting parent education to support their kids. Looking at how the system works or does not work to help parents and community members serve as advocates and partners in the success of the education system.”

# LRP: Family Engagement and Empowerment “Grows”

- Challenge to not make parents feel “dumb” or like they don’t know how to be involved.
- Engagement that caters to different families’ interests and needs.
- Global look at what’s going on, can’t be everything in classroom, or in the school. Partnership with people that can provide the resources.
- Helping all families of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Lack of an engaging environment – from the receptionist to the administration to the teacher.
- Need for consistent communication.
- Opening dialogue between district level leadership and parents.
- Providing education for parents so that they can help their children.
- Some engagement programs work for some districts and not in other districts.
- Stop assuming a deficit approach to our parents creating the proper vehicle.
- Time and staff to implement programs. Such as going out to the community to talk to parents.
- Too often the “one size fits all” approach is taken and simply doesn’t work.

# LRP: Family Engagement and Empowerment “Glow”

- Community organizations exist that can serve as a bridge between schools and families when schools lack the resources to address issues at home.
- NEISD Colonial Hills community garden fed 765 kids; kids want to be involved. Growth in 1 year: 23 kids to 96 kids.
- Parent communication through all avenues (social media, photo to apps, newsletters, etc.).
- Teachers are supported and have assistance with students.
- WATCHDOG opportunities, gets parents involved and brought in to see what’s going on.
- Worked around the language barrier by having students translate.

# LRP: Family Engagement and Empowerment “Goals”

- Afterschool programming enables students and parents opportunities.
- Educators can go to the community and have programs there, not just at the school campus (e.g., teachers go to community garden in the neighborhood).
- Educators could seek out needs/desires of parents. What would get you involved? What do you need? Family needs assessment. Individualizing communication, have a welcoming environment.
- Mandatory CIS, nurses, or family specialist on every campus.
- School leadership can give teachers flexibility and support to go out into the community. Visit parents at their homes. Partner with local businesses and faith spaces.
- Share ideas across districts.
- Teacher training preparation programs — increase courses on family engagement, social-emotional.



# Currently, in Texas...

- **Education Service Center, Region 16: Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Initiative**

<http://www.esc16.net/page/title1swi.home>

- **Annual statewide parental involvement conference:**  
“One Team One Dream” – December 6-8, 2018  
Frisco Embassy Suites and Convention Center  
[www.esc16.net/page/title1swi.2018conference](http://www.esc16.net/page/title1swi.2018conference)

- Additional supports include:

- A spring summit designed to provide opportunities for educators to receive updates and strategies in the areas of parent and family engagement and school support (<http://www.implanners.com/spring-summit/index.php>)
- Statewide electronic newsletter, published in English and Spanish, The Parent Involvement Connection (with over 800 schools using the newsletter)
- Compliance support with dedicated publications and trainings
- Toolkits on the Dual Capacity Framework, ESSA compliance, and Family and Parent Engagement
- A large library of resources and tools
- ESSA Institute that provides updates from TEA staff to the 20 regional Education Service Centers (ESCs)

# Currently, in Texas...

(continued)

- **Support for High Quality Pre-K Programs: HB4**

[https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early\\_Childhood\\_Education/HighQuality\\_Prekindergarten\\_Program/](https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/HighQuality_Prekindergarten_Program/)

- Family Engagement Plan, §102.1003. High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program. Section (f).

To be eligible to receive grant funding under this program, a school district or an open enrollment charter school shall develop, implement, and make available on the district, charter, or campus website a family engagement plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. An effective family engagement plan creates a foundation for the collaboration of mutual partners, embraces the individuality and uniqueness of families, and promotes a culture of learning that is child centered, age appropriate, and family driven.

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter102/ch102aa.html>

# Currently, in Texas...

(continued)

- **Support for High Quality Pre-K Programs: HB4**

[https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early\\_Childhood\\_Education/HighQuality\\_Prekindergarten\\_Program/](https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/HighQuality_Prekindergarten_Program/)

- **Family Engagement Plan, §102.1003. High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program. Section (f).**

To be eligible to receive grant funding under this program, a school district or an open enrollment charter school shall develop, implement, and make available on the district, charter, or campus website a family engagement plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. An effective family engagement plan creates a foundation for the collaboration of mutual partners, embraces the individuality and uniqueness of families, and promotes a culture of learning that is child centered, age appropriate, and family driven.

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter102/ch102aa.html>

- **Family Engagement and 21st Century Community Learning Centers - Texas ACE**

Texas administers the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) funded by Title IV, Part B. This program, branded in Texas as ACE (Afterschool Centers on Education), provides competitive grants to operate school- or community-based afterschool programs that provide access to academic enrichment and other activities designed to help students succeed and meet challenging state academic standards.

# Currently, in Texas...

(continued)

- Texas PBS Raising Readers provides statewide educational resources for children, caregivers, and families with research-based media tools and community engagement efforts proven to help build early literacy skills for young children. <http://texaspbs.org/education/early-education>
- Texas CASA works to achieve the vision of a safe and positive future for all Texas children and operates the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) partnership initiative. <https://texascasa.org/collaborative-family-engagement>
- Texas System of Care sees family voice as a crucial element of their vision. They work to ensure families are partners in their child's care because family voice is essential to the success of treatment and recovery for youth. They work in collaboration with the Texas Family Voice Network (TxFVN), a group of families that bring together the state's family voice leaders to support the values of system of care through increased family voice to inform policy and practice, including evidence-based, trauma informed best practices for children's mental wellness in Texas. <http://www.txsystemofcare.org/initiatives/family-engagement>

# Other State Models

- **Georgia Department of Education**

Georgia's robust support for family engagement and empowerment is funded by Title I, Part A. Their Family-School Partnership Program at the SEA is staffed by a director and three family engagement specialists. The size of this team is notable because few states have a team of staff dedicated to family engagement. Georgia hosts a State School Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council with 31 members. Parents are nominated by their school district or principal to serve on the council. The Georgia Department of Education adopted the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships that are used to guide and frame family engagement work in the state. Georgia's Family-School Partnership Program holds a statewide family engagement conference every other year and their work includes several capacity building initiatives.

- **Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)**

Illinois' family engagement initiative is grounded in the statewide family engagement framework that they developed. The framework is focused on 4 principles:

- 1) Develop a family engagement system
- 2) Enhance communication
- 3) Build a welcoming and supportive environment
- 4) Include parents in decision making.

Family engagement in Illinois is also supported by a cross-agency system through their P-20 Council. This council, established in 2009, was designed to foster collaboration among state agencies, education institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families. The council works to collectively identify needs and develop a coordinated and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support.

# Other State Models

- **Georgia Department of Education**

Georgia's robust support for family engagement and empowerment is funded by Title I, Part A. Their Family-School Partnership Program at the SEA is staffed by a director and three family engagement specialists. The size of this team is notable because few states have a team of staff dedicated to family engagement. Georgia hosts a State School Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council with 31 members. Parents are nominated by their school district or principal to serve on the council. The Georgia Department of Education adopted the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships that are used to guide and frame family engagement work in the state. Georgia's Family-School Partnership Program holds a statewide family engagement conference every other year and their work includes several capacity building initiatives.

- **Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)**

Illinois' family engagement initiative is grounded in the statewide family engagement framework that they developed. The framework is focused on 4 principles:

- 1) Develop a family engagement system
- 2) Enhance communication
- 3) Build a welcoming and supportive environment
- 4) Include parents in decision making.

Family engagement in Illinois is also supported by a cross-agency system through their P-20 Council. This council, established in 2009, was designed to foster collaboration among state agencies, education institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families. The council works to collectively identify needs and develop a coordinated and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support.

What can we do better as a state?



# Thank You!

For more information, please contact:  
[marisa.perez@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:marisa.perez@tea.state.tx.us)