

Title I LEA-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Lemon Grove School District

[4/7/2022, 2021-22]

1.0 The local governing board of each local educational agency (LEA), or agency, receiving Title I, Part A funding shall establish and implement a written parent and family engagement policy and program. (California *Education Code [EC]* sections [§§] 11500-11504, 51101[b]; 20 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 6318[a][1], 6318[a][2])

1.1 **Lemon Grove School District (LGSD)** has developed jointly with, agreed on with, and distributed to, parents and family members of participating children, an LEA-level written parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2].)

In order to address this requirement, LGSD conducted site-level and district-level family focus groups where parents and families gave feedback on the various ways in which they would like to be more involved. This included having access to various volunteer opportunities on site, providing more training for parents and families to be able to support students at home, being more involved in parent committees, among others.

This parent and family engagement policy will be presented to the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) and the District Advisory Committee (DAC) for further parent and family feedback and approval.

The LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy will be distributed to parents and families electronically via Class Dojo, Infinite Campus, and physically in the sites' Parent Handbook at the beginning of the school year.

The LEA incorporates the parent and family engagement policy into the LEA level plan. (20 U.S.C. § 6312, 6318[a][2])

[The LGSD Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) will include the policies and activities described in the LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy.]

To involve parents and family members in the Title I program at **Lemon Grove School District**, the following practices have been established:

a) The LEA involves parents and family members in the joint development of the agency's plan, and in the development of support and improvement plans. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][A])

[LGSD involved parents and family members in the joint development of the district's strategic plan and LCAP by presenting both at site School Site Councils, English Learner Advisory Committees (ELAC), DELAC, and DAC. Furthermore, parents and family members have the opportunity to provide feedback at these

meetings as well as through various surveys that are sent home, family focus groups, and district-wide town halls.]

b) The LEA provides coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the LEA in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][B])

[LGSD has allocated Title I funds to hire a district Parent and Family Engagement Specialist TOSA. Furthermore, each school in the district created the position of Parent Volunteer Coordinator (PVC, part-time) and Parent Engagement Lead (PEL, teacher stipend). The assistant principal at each site also oversees parent and family engagement.

Each of the LGSD schools, with the exception of Virtual Academy, has committed to open a Parent and Family Center that is equipped with smart boards, furniture, computers, a printer, a kids' area, children's library, and parent library. The PVC at each school will be staffing the parent center. Once COVID restrictions are revised and families can come on campus again, volunteers will also work out of the parent centers. Additionally, the centers will be used to provide in person workshops for parents that focus on parenting skills, supporting their children's academics, how to use technology, community circles, parent committee meetings (ELAC, SSC, PTA, etc.), and more.

Parent and Family Engagement Specialist TOSA helps to oversee the PVC and PEL roles. She schedules meetings with PVCs and PELs to meet in small groups for updates, share ideas around engagement, implement marketing and outreach efforts, and leads trainings to build the capacity of PVCs and PELs with parent and family engagement. She also connects with local and national nonprofit organizations to provide engagement events and workshops for students and families. The TOSA also meets with assistant principals to collaborate on how to improve parent and family engagement at their site. The TOSA also communicates, and send event/program invitations, with families via the parent and family engagement website, Infinite Campus, text messages, emails, fliers, and Class Dojo.

The PVC role is designed to coordinate and manage any parents and community volunteers who choose to volunteer in our school. They also attend School Site Council and PTA meetings at their school. PVCs help staff the parent centers and also create a welcoming environment for families. The PVC works with AP, PAFE Specialist, PELs, and teachers to build relationships and make connections with families, other school sites, and community partner agencies to improve student academic performance and parent involvement. PVCs engage in direct contact with parents for outreach and recruitment via informal interactions during morning drop off and afternoon pick up, phone calls, fliers, and Class Dojo.

The PEL role is designed to support parent and family engagement between teachers and parents. The PELs work with AP, PAFE Specialist, PVC, and fellow teachers to build relationships and make connections with families, other school sites, and community partner agencies to improve student academic performance and parent involvement. They also serve as a liaison between classrooms and families, coordinate, design, and/or facilitate parent education activities and strategies to promote understanding of parental roles in education and to build functioning and lasting relationships within the school site, provide assistance to schools to foster a family-friendly school climate and to increase parent and family participation in school activities, and attend PTA meetings.

The LGSD Parent and Family Engagement department assists and builds the capacity of all Title I participating schools by being actively involved in:

- *Conducting site visits to have one on one meetings with PVCs and PELs to observe and support parent and family engagement practices.*
- *Ensuring that information is sent to parents and families both in English and Spanish to it can be accessible to families, as required.*
- *Building capacity of principals, assistant principals, PVCs, PELs, and staff to communicate with and work with parents as equal partners to create an equitable environment for students.*
- *Outreach and recruitment for parent committees including, School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Committee, and PTA.*
- *Gives parents opportunities to co-facilitate workshops.*
- *Joe Smith LineBacker DAD: consultant hired by the district to assist with parent and family engagement, with a focus on our African-American Families.*
- *Creating parent education workshops and reaching out to local nonprofit organizations to bring other workshops to parents.*
- *Providing a monthly Lemon Grove Family Connections, a newsletter that lists workshops and services provided by the district and local nonprofit organizations that families can take advantage of.*
- *Scheduling phone calls, Zoom meetings, and home visits with parents and families to provide one on one assistance with questions they may have about their child's education or to address barriers with technology.*
- *Monitoring each site to ensure that their Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact meet requirements and are sent home via Parent and Family Handbooks.*
- *Ensure that sites develop their PFE Policy and Compact jointly with families by offering flexible meeting times that include an interpreter, and that they provide relevant information to parents about the school's program.*

- *Provide flexible meeting times and interpreters in order for parents to give feedback and approve PFE Policy and Compact at each site.*
- *Monitors sites to ensure they provide parent trainings and workshops to help them build capacity to support their students' academics and school performance. This includes providing parents with techniques and strategies that they may utilize to improve their children's learning academic success to assist their children in learning at home.*
- *Building two-way communication with families and schools to support families on how they can assist their children in support of classroom activities. This is done with both pre-recorded trainings that families can watch at their convenience and live trainings that happen throughout the year.*
- *Providing opportunities during DELAC/ELAC and School Site Council meetings for parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services to be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for parental involvement activities.]*

c) To the extent feasible and appropriate, the LEA coordinates and integrates Title I, Part A parent and family engagement strategies with parent and family engagement strategies of other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][C])

[LGSD integrates parent and family engagement strategies through programs and activities from State Preschool, English Learners (DELAC/ELAC), Extended Learning Program (afters chool program, ASES), and Special Education.

Workshops and training have also been provided to families through partnerships with various nonprofit organizations that have covered:

- *Parenting Classes*
- *Nutrition Classes*
- *Literacy program for Spanish-speaking families (Literacy Partners' La Fuerza de Familias Latinas)*
- *Community Safety events to discuss underage drinking, drunk and drugged driving, parent resources, self-care, mindfulness, and services provided by the sheriff's department.*
- *Meal distributions*
- *Workshop to educate parents about the public school system in California and English Learner policy through a California Association for Bilingual Education/Multilingual California Project (CABE/MCAP) partnership]*

d) The LEA conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under Title I, Part A. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D])

[With the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, LGSD will conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all district schools by presenting the engagement policy in the DELAC and DAC. At this meeting, parents and family members will be able to review, evaluate, and approve the policy annually.]

The LEA identifies the following:

1. Barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D][i])

[Parents and families at LGSD face various barriers to greater participation in activities provided by the district. Some are created by limited resources, others by the COVID pandemic, others due to school environments, miscommunication, and by parent, family, and staff beliefs and perceptions.

The following barriers to parent communication have been identified:

- *Language*
- *Limited family resources (food, transportation, childcare)*
- *Families not fully understanding how the school system works*
- *Parents former negative experience with education*
- *Parents and families believing that their voices are not being heard*
- *Parents and families having difficulty using technology*
- *Teachers and staff not fully understanding families' communication styles or cultures*
- *Teachers' and staff assumption that parents and families aren't fully involved or don't want to be involved in their child's education]*

2. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D][ii])

[In order to support student learning and achievement, it is imperative that parents and family members have positive interactions and two-way communication with school personnel and teachers. Some of the actions LGSD has taken to address this need include:

- *Train Parent Volunteer Coordinators to create a friendly and welcoming environment at each site's Parent and Family Center to encourage parents to use its resources. This includes getting trained on how to use computers, email, Class Dojo, Google Classroom, Infinite Campus, etc.*

- *Parent Volunteer Coordinators (PVCs) and Parent Engagement Leads (PELs) are required to plan at least two parent and family events per school year, each, at their site. These can be live or pre-recorded events that build parents' and family members' capacity to support their child's learning and achievement.*
- *Each school site uses Class Dojo. Through Class Dojo, parents and family members can view updates, events, and news posted by principals and administrators. Moreover, parents and family members can also access their child's teacher's Class Dojo, which allows to get class updates directly from the teacher. Moreover, parents and family members can message the teacher directly to ask questions, request a conference, and get updates from their child's teacher.*
- *There is an Instructional Coach at each school who supports the development and implementation of academic curriculum. They also coach and support classroom teachers to incorporate culturally and historically responsive teaching in their class. Furthermore, instructional coaches plan academic nights (ex. Literacy night, math night) in which they teach parents and family members strategies on how to support their students in those academic areas at home.*
- *Communicating with parents in various languages through the following means: district and school websites, parent and family engagement websites, Infinite Campus, Class Dojo, email, texts, letter, and fliers to reach families at home, in the community, and at school.*
- *Having interpretation available at parent committee meetings (SSC, ELAC/DELAC) and trainings/workshops to eliminate language barriers.*
- *Conducting a district equity audit that includes separate students, family, and staff focus groups. Through these groups, stakeholders will give positive and constructive feedback that will inform the district about changes that need to be made to become more equitable.*
- *Using site and district Ed Learn Days (PD) and will invite keynote speakers to train teachers, school administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff to communicate effectively with parents as equal partners.*
- *Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members. This will be done in partnership with nonprofit organizations that can provide parenting classes and other relevant workshops to families.*
- *Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the LEA determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's parent and family*

engagement policy. This includes working with Gholdy Muhammad to implement culturally and historically responsive teaching (CHRT) in all of the district's schools. Moreover, a town hall will be provided to parents and families, at a time that is convenient for them, where Gholdy Muhammad will explain what CHRT is and how it is being implemented in the district. This will also help in supporting two-way communication with families and creating an environment where they feel seen and heard.

- *Continue to work with schools to increase outreach and recruitment of parents into parent committees (SSC, ELAC/DELAC, PTA) to see parents as equal partners, allow their voices to be heard, and change the misconception that they aren't fully involved or don't want to be involved in their child's education.*
- *Continue to work with local nonprofit organizations to connect families with local programs and resources to address families having limited resources.*
- *The Parent and Family Engagement Department (including the Engagement TOSA) will engage parents and family members positively in their children's education by providing assistance and training on topics such as state academic standards and assessments to develop knowledge and skills to use at home to support their children's academic efforts at school and their children's development as responsible future members of our society.]*

3. Strategies to support successful school and family interactions. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][D][iii])

LGSD's Human Resources department provides customer service training to our administrators, teachers and classified staff to support positive and caring interactions between our families and all levels of school site staff.

LGSD has also contracted with an outside agency to provide training to our Parent and Family engagement teams around cultural competency to ensure that our parent teams are able to interact with the diverse family groups represented in our district. In addition, this same provider conducts focus groups to gather in-depth feedback on students' and families' experiences at Lemon Grove, in order to provide key information to the district on how to continuously improve their experiences.

Lastly, LGSD utilizes a responsive and timely system to respond to any possible complaints or concerns on a negative interaction, and implements restorative conversations and practices to ensure a continued positive relationship.

e) The LEA uses the findings of such evaluation in section 1.1(d) of the CE program instrument to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][E])

LGSD utilizes the CE program instrument to develop the parent and family engagement policy, as well as revise the policy as needed. The district utilizes feedback from parents and guardians and the CE program instrument to develop policies that are based on evidence-based strategies.

f) The LEA involves parents in activities of schools served under Title I, Part A to adequately represent the needs of the population served by such agency for the purposes of developing, revising, and reviewing the parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][2][F])

Lemon Grove School district is composed of 8 sites, including a Virtual Academy, that receive Title I, Part A funding. Each of the schools follows and abides to the guidelines given by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), as such, each site has a School Site Council.

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Each site also has an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) which designates a member to serve in the District Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). Parents can also become members of the Local Control and Accountability Plan/District Budget Advisory Committee (District Advisory Committee).

In addition to these committees, the district has also formed the following committees to further engage parents from underserved families.

Committee for African-American Student Achievement and Success: members include the superintendent, administrators, board members, teachers, staff, and parents/families.

Black and Pan-African Student Excellence: members include parents/caregivers of students who identify as Black, African-American or Pan-African.

Special Education (SPED) Board Advisory Committee: members include SPED administrators, teachers, staff, and parents/caregivers of students in SPED

1.2 The LEA policy on parent and family engagement for all schools (including Title I and non-Title I) in the LEA shall be consistent with the following goals and purposes: (EC §§ 11502, 11504, 11506)

a) Engage parents and family members positively in their children's education by providing assistance and training on topics such as state academic standards and assessments to develop knowledge and skills to use at home to support their children's academic efforts at school and their children's development as responsible future members of our society. (EC § 11502[a])

LGSD develops and publishes the annual Parent Event Calendar at the start of the school year, and the Parent Event Calendar topics are chosen based on Parent/Guardian feedback from the previous school year. The Parent Event Calendar includes topics for parents/guardians such as Positive Parenting Program, Program for Development of Literacy for Students & Parents (for Spanish-speaking families), Understanding State Assessments, Why Attendance Matters, How to Help your Child's Academic Success, Drug Prevention, and other topics.

Principals host regular events for their parents to have an open door discussion around upcoming events, tests and academic programs. These events are to both provide information, support with questions, receive feedback, and ultimately to support families with preparing their children for success in the academic curriculum & state tests.

LGSD schools also send out a weekly parent newsletter to all of their families that includes resources and strategies that will help their children at home, as well provide school updates and information.

b) Inform parents that they can directly affect the success of their children's learning, by providing parents with techniques and strategies that they may utilize to improve their children's academic success and to assist their children in learning at home. (EC § 11502[b])

The district strongly believes in hosting parent workshops throughout the year that will directly support parents with techniques and strategies to improve their child's success and learning at home. LGSD has hosted multiple events from various experts that lead with the message that parents have the most important impact on their child's success at school, and provide key strategies on how to do so. For example, LGSD partnered with La Fuerza de las Familias who hosted a multiple-week Literacy Program for Spanish-Speaking families on how to develop their child's literacy skills at home in Spanish, and that this will support their child's development in English literacy as well as Spanish literacy. Other events have emphasized and trained on the power of restorative practices and positive behavior interventions in the home, how to create a learning space at home for studying and homework, supporting strong attendance, understanding your child's IEP, and more. The district believes that by developing parent workshop topics with parent input, that the district will engage with a wide range of parents to support their skills to support their child's success. Ultimately, the goal is to create educational partners with our families to collaboratively support each child's development and learning.

c) Build consistent and effective two-way communication between family members and the school so that parents and family members may know when and how to assist their children in support of classroom learning activities. (EC § 11502[c])

Each school site has a dedicated Parent Engagement team to support with ongoing collaboration and two-way communication across their school site. In addition, each school site has a Parent & Family Engagement Center that is dedicated to bring in parent/guardians and community members to actively participate and collaborate with the school. LGSD has also conducted focus groups with families and students to better understand the experience and perspectives of our stakeholders, and to use these focus groups as a way to support better practices for the school district.

Each school site has a weekly newsletter for parents and guardians to be kept updated on school events, to receive key resources and strategies to implement in the home that will support their child's success, and to provide contact information for school team members if parents or guardians have questions or needs.

Class Dojo is used by each school site to have two-way communication between all classroom teachers and their families. The teachers use Class Dojo to provide daily, weekly or monthly communications to families, and parents/guardians use Class Dojo to send teacher messages and questions. Teachers use Class Dojo to inform parents if their child has an academic or behavioral need, and also if their child had an exemplary day. Teachers will also call parents to discuss any academic or behavior needs that require attention.

Each trimester, TK-6 grade parents/guardians receive their child's progress report with updates on their academic scores, and each quarter 7-8 grade parents receive their child's progress report. Parent conferences are held twice a year.

If a student requires additional academic assistance, the school SST team will have a meeting scheduled with the parents/guardians to discuss the child's academic performance and the proposed interventions.

d) Train teachers, school administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff to communicate effectively with parents as equal partners. (EC § 11502[d])

The Parent Engagement Specialist TOSA provides ongoing training to the Parent Engagement teams at school sites through monthly role-alike meetings in addition to one-to-one meetings. In addition, the Parent Engagement Specialist provides school administrators with training on how to effectively collaborate with parents, and treating families as equal partners in their child's education.

The district also partners with outside organizations to come and present to teachers and administrators on the importance of engaging with Families as Partners.

Lastly, our Human Resources department provides ongoing training to school administrators, teachers and classified staff (secretaries, supervision staff, etc.) around customer service to our parents and families to ensure our families are treated with care and respect at all levels of the school site.

e) Integrate and coordinate parent and family engagement activities with the local control and accountability plan (LCAP), as applicable, with other programs. (EC § 11502[e])

The Lemon Grove LCAP clearly outlines activities and goals around parent and family engagement activities that align with the parent engagement policy.

1.3 Parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for parental involvement activities. (20 U.S.C. Section 6318[a][3][B])

Lemon Grove School district is composed of 8 sites, including a Virtual Academy, that receive Title I, Part A funding. Each of the schools follows and abides to the guidelines given by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), as such, each site has a School Site Council. SSC involved parents and families in the decisions regarding how funds reserved are allotted for parental involvement activities. Moreover, funds are used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the site's Parent and Family Engagement Policy.

Each site also has an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) which designates a member to serve in the District Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). Parents can also become members of the District Advisory Committee.

In addition to these committees, the district has also formed the following committees to further engage parents from underserved families.

Committee for African-American Student Achievement and Success: members include the superintendent, administrators, board members, teachers, staff, and parents/families.

Black and Pan-African Student Excellence: members include parents/caregivers of students who identify as Black, African-American or Pan-African.

Special Education (SPED) Board Advisory Committee: members include SPED administrators, teachers, staff, and parents/caregivers of students in SPED.

1.4 Funds reserved by an LEA shall be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the LEA's parent and family engagement policy, including not less than one of the following: (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D])

- a) Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for LEA and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][i])
- b) Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][ii])
- c) Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][iii])
- d) Collaborating, or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate, with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][iv])
- e) Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the LEA determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's parent and family engagement policy. (20 U.S.C. § 6318[a][3][D][v])

Lemon Grove School District is proud to partner with multiple agencies and nonprofits to provide high quality parent workshops, training and resources to our parents and guardians, as well as to train and coach our staff on best practices for parent engagement.

LGSD's parent engagement teams, teachers, social workers and school administrators host events that are conducted online, in person both at schools and community areas, as well as send out information through digital and hard copy formats. If only digital resources or events are available, the district arranges for sites to provide technology devices to families so that they are also able to access the information or event. This directly supports our families who are economically disadvantaged and housing insecure. The school district also has established a Family Resource Store at each school site that provides free school supplies, clothes, shelf-stable food, cleaning supplies and other basic need items in order to ensure that our families are able to meet their basic needs.

The school district provides ongoing training and professional development on best practices for parent and family engagement through our Parent and Family Engagement Specialist TOSA, as well as through outside vendors and nonprofits.

The district provides opportunities for schools to receive funding to support their individual school site's efforts to reach parents and families of their community and improve their parent engagement.

**It may be helpful to include the parent and family engagement policy review in the annual review of the Local Control and Accountability Plan Federal Addendum.*

***The policy must be updated periodically to meet changing needs of parents and family members and the LEA. If the LEA has a process in place for involving parents and family members in planning and designing the school's programs, the LEA may use that process if it includes adequate representation of parents and family members of children receiving Title I, Part A services.*