



Downey Unified School District

PARENT AND FAMILY

Engagement Policy

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PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY



What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement is the participation of parents and family members in authentic, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student learning and related school activities. The Downey Unified School District (DUSD) commits to the following:

1. Parents play an integral role in supporting their child's learning.
2. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education. Examples of this involvement can include regularly communicating with classroom teachers, attending conferences and school events, participating in School Site Council (SSC), English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), or PTA, and attending district and school parent workshops.
3. 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.
4. The carrying out of activities, such as those described federal law, Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to encourage parent engagement.

Section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains the primary Title I, Part A requirements for schools and districts to involve families in their children's education. Title I is a federal program that provides funding to help meet the educational needs of students. This funding is allocated based on the number of students who qualify for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) program.

Parent and Family Engagement Plan

Consistent with Section 1116, DUSD will work with all schools (Title I and non-Title I schools) to ensure that the required school-level family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116 (b), and each includes, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116 (d) of ESSA.



To strengthen student achievement, learning, and success, the Downey Unified School District has jointly developed with parents and family members and mutually agreed upon, this parent and family engagement policy that establishes the district's objectives for meaningful family engagement. This policy guides the strategies that schools implement to strengthen school and parent partnerships in all of the district's Title I and non-Title I schools. When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children and adolescents do better in school, stay in school longer, and better engage in their learning. 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 plans, and in carrying out the district and school improvement programs.



Jointly Developed

The Downey Unified School District takes the following actions to involve parents and family members in jointly developing the District Parent and Family Engagement Plan under Section 1116, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of Section 1111 (d) of the ESSA:

- Distribute yearly parent surveys to all parents of students enrolled in all schools to involve parents in the development of this plan and provide input on the use of parent and family engagement funds.
- Provide parents access to the information in the district's parent and family engagement plan, the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), and the School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs), through the district website. Copies of these documents are available for parents upon request at the individual school sites.
- Engage parents in dialogue about parent engagement during the following meetings:
 - Annual Title I Public Meetings
 - District Parent Advisory Committee Meetings
 - Open Houses
 - Parent Workshops
 - Coffee Chat with Principals

Upon final revision, the District parent and family engagement plan will be included in the District website, and portions will be incorporated into the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) that is annually submitted to the state.

Parents are welcome to submit comments and feedback regarding the plan at any time on the District's website.



This plan is annually distributed to all parents and family members through the following: posted on the District website; distributed during Parent Advisory Committee Meetings; referenced in the parent-student handbook; and disseminated electronically at the beginning of the year enrollment period. Specific school parent engagement policies are developed during the annual Title I school meetings, distributed at the beginning of the school year, and are available in the schools.



Strengthening Our Schools

DUSD will provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools in fostering authentic parent and family engagement. The District will support all schools to ensure family engagement strategies and requirements are implemented and satisfied. All schools will receive notifications and resources to help them strengthen family engagement. In addition to resources, DUSD will have consistent contact with its schools to discuss and support family engagement activities.

Reservation of Funds

DUSD will reserve, a minimum of, 1% from the total amount of Title I funds it receives to carry out the parent and family engagement requirements listed in this plan and as described in Section 1116 of the ESSA. 90% of the family engagement amount is reserved and allocated to all Title I schools to support their local-level family engagement programs and activities. The District will provide technical support to each Title I school in developing a family engagement budget that addresses their assessed needs. Each Title I school will gather input from parents on how the family engagement funds can be used. Parent feedback from the schools will be reviewed to assess areas of need and will be considered when developing the District family engagement budget.



Opportunities for Meaningful Parent Consultation

Input from parents and family members is an essential component in the annual development of the District and School plans. All parents of eligible Title I students are invited to participate in the annual school Title I Meetings. During these meetings, families share their ideas for supporting students in meeting state academic proficiency requirements and reaching their academic achievement goals. Additionally, parents have opportunities to provide input during school-level parent meetings such as School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Committee, and other meetings.

Parent input on the use of Title I funds to support family engagement programs may also be provided through the annual district survey. The survey contains questions related to family engagement topics as well as a section for parents to provide their comments.

Building Capacity

Downey Unified commits to building the schools' staff and parent capacity for cultivating strong family engagement in the schools. Through planned workshops and training, we will ensure there is authentic engagement of parents and family members. This authentic engagement will cultivate the necessary partnerships among schools, families, and their communities needed to improve student engagement and academic achievement.



Parents

Downey Unified will work through its schools to help parents understand California and District academic standards and metrics connected to student learning and progress. The District will provide parents with information regarding how the Title I program supports student achievement. Programs for parents to gain knowledge about the challenging State academic standards and local academic assessments, including alternative forms of assessment, will be provided. Additionally, parents will be provided with opportunities to participate in activities and workshops supporting social-emotional learning, mental health, wellness, and other topics related to student success.



DUSD has established a District-wide Parent Advisory Committee comprised of parent representatives from each school (including Title I schools). The Committee's purpose is to provide advice on all matters related to the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and family engagement in Title I, Part A programs. The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities.





School Staff

Downey Unified will provide support to schools and staff in developing and maintaining family engagement in the schools. Information and resources on strengthening family engagement and improving school-family communication strategies will be regularly disseminated to increase family participation, improve school-family connections, and strengthen ties within the school community.

To ensure that information related to district, school, parent programs, and activities are available to all families, each school is required to regularly communicate through multiple platforms. All schools provide written notices, phone calls, emails, and posted information on digital platforms in a comprehensible language and easy-to-read format. School staff receives support and direction from their site administrators on the importance of timely parent and family communication and notifications. Resources are sent home in the parents' native language and providing interpreters at district and parent events are necessary. Key information posted on the district website is translated. The District also utilizes school phone call systems, the district website, and social media platforms to send information to parents and families.



Parent and Family Engagement Evaluation

Each year, Downey Unified will include an evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement plan and family engagement activities to improve the academic quality of all schools (including Title I schools) through the LCAP Annual Parent Survey. This survey link is distributed to parents through the schools' digital platforms and posted on the district website for parents to complete. In addition to the annual survey, each Title I school will also use the annual Title I Meeting to facilitate group discussions on the needs of parents of eligible Title I children with the purpose of designing strategies for authentic family engagement. DUSD will utilize this input to design strategies to strengthen family engagement, remove possible barriers to parent participation, and revise its parent and family engagement plan.

Accessibility

To comply with the requirements of the parent and family engagement established by Section 1116 of the ESSA, the DUSD will ensure there are full opportunities for meaningful parent participation, including parents with limited English proficiency, and parents with disabilities. Information and resources will be provided in a language and format parents can understand.



It is the vision of **DOWNEY UNIFIED**

to have all students
graduate with a
21st-Century education
that ensures they are
college and career ready,
globally competitive and
citizens of strong character.



Downey Unified
SCHOOL DISTRICT