

WHAT DOES ESSA SAY ABOUT PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

CONDUCT OUTREACH

Section 1116 (a)(1) IN GENERAL: A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency conducts outreach to all parents and family members and implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents and family members in programs assisted under this part consistent with this section. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

Takeaway: LEAs must actively conduct outreach to ALL parents and families. The overall family engagement program needs to be inclusive of all families. LEAs need to connect to all families, reaching beyond barriers of culture, language, disabilities, and poverty.

PRACTICE MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

Section 1116 (a)(2)(D): Conduct, 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 all schools served under this part.

Section 1116 (a)(3) (B) PARENTAL AND FAMILY MEMBER INPUT: Parents and family members of children receiving services under this part shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved under subparagraph (A) are allotted for parental involvement activities.

Takeaway: The evaluation is an annual requirement, but ESSA now requires LEAs to include parents in a “meaningful” manner. In addition to surveys, consider using focus groups and open group discussions for evaluations. Parents and families have a voice - listen!

ADDRESS BARRIERS

Section 1116 (a)(2)(D): Identifying 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).

Takeaway: The evaluation tools and methods to identify the type and frequency of school-home interactions and the needs of parents and families have to better support and assist their children in learning. Evaluations need to target at least three key areas: barriers, ability to assist learning, and successful interactions.

PRACTICE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Section 1116 (d)(2)(D): Ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

Takeaway: Home and school must maintain regular, meaningful communication, AND in a language family members can understand.

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BUILD CAPACITY

Section 1116 (a)(2)(B): Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the local educational agency in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education.

Takeaway: LEAs must first build the capacity of school personnel. Then they are better equipped to build the capacity of families. LEAs must be proactive in order to elevate the social capital of families. LEAs may choose to partner with community groups as a means to engage families more creatively and successfully.

COORDINATE & INTEGRATE SERVICES

Section 1116 (a)(2)(C): Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies under this part with parent and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs.

Takeaway: Get out of the “silo” and find ways to work cooperatively with other programs. Title I-A needs to find ways to work with Title I-C and Title III and IDEA and Head Start and other preschool programs.

PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY

Section 1116 (f) ACCESSIBILITY: In carrying out the parent and family engagement requirements of this part, local educational agencies and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children), including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

Takeaway: Family engagement is inclusive of all parents, and family members need to be adequately informed and trained.

DEVELOP EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Section 1116 (a)(2)(E): Use the findings of such evaluation in subparagraph (D) to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies described in this section.

Takeaway: Use the findings from the evaluation to implement “evidence-based” strategies. Uncover best practices that are working and adapt those ideas to your LEA needs.

Adapted from: <http://bit.ly/2FQrJ2K>