



TN

Department of
Education

Make the Connection: Creating an Effective School-Parent Compact

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Introduction

A school-parent compact is a written agreement between school staff and families, which when done well, provides an opportunity to strengthen partnerships within the school community. It explains how families and schools can work together to help students reach high academic standards. Each school receiving Title I, Part A funds is required to jointly develop a school-parent compact with parents and family members. The compact serves as a clear reminder of all stakeholders' responsibility to take specific actions at school and at home, enabling students to successfully learn and meet [Tennessee's academic standards](#). It is a written commitment indicating how all members of the school community—families, teachers, school leaders, and students—agree to share responsibility for improved student achievement.

Over 40 years of research shows that programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to improved student achievement.¹ If the school-parent compact is implemented with fidelity, it assures support for the academic success of students by enhancing effective communication between school and home. When developed with the input of all stakeholders, the compact can serve as a valuable tool to effectively and meaningfully engage the school and the home in supporting the academic development and needs of students.

The school-parent compact, along with the parent and family engagement policy, is a key document schools should utilize as they plan and provide effective family engagement programming. The school-parent compact is more than just a yearly obligation or piece of paper. It is a powerful tool that can actually make a difference in student achievement. The five-step process outlined in this toolkit will enable your school to design and develop a meaningful and practical compact, allowing you to build stronger partnerships between families, school staff, and students and in turn, improve student performance.



¹Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. [Web](#)

ESSA Statute

[Public Law 114-95, Section 1116\(d\)](#)

(d) SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HIGH STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - As a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

Such compact **shall-**

(1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging State academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and

(2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, **at a minimum-**

(A) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement;

(B) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; and

(C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and

(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.

Key Stakeholders in a Successful Family Engagement Program

An effective parent and family engagement program requires a partnership among key stakeholders. Healthy partnerships exist when all parties support one another in the achievement or attainment of a common goal. Successful partnerships build upon and enhance the capacity of *both* staff and families.

While collaborative partnerships are required by the statute, more importantly, research shows that successful partnerships increase student achievement². It is crucial that the school establishes a team composed of key stakeholders prior to the development of a school-parent compact. For more information on how to build strong partnerships with families and other stakeholders, see [A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships](#).



Tips for documenting your work with key stakeholders:

- Create a standard [sign-in sheet](#) for all meetings and events that includes space for participant names, positions, and roles.
- Save all meeting and event invitations (e.g., flyers, emails, website blurbs, etc.).
- Create and save detailed agendas for all meetings and events.
- Keep minutes of meetings and events to document discussions, ideas, and suggestions.
- Remember, school/district employees who are also parents at the school cannot be counted as true parent representatives on any school team or committee.

² Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. [Web](#)

Engaging English Learner Families

According to the report, *The Power of Parents*, “Research indicates a strong association between parent involvement with a child’s education both at home and at school and student performance in school. Engaging parents is particularly important for English learners (EL) and students from low-income families. In fact, greater parent involvement is correlated with higher student test scores and better grades for the school as a whole³”.

It’s never too late to start engaging your ELL families, no matter how limited or ineffective efforts have been in the past. When you find what works for your EL families (which may or may not be the same as what works for the EL families at a neighboring school), you will be amazed at all they have to offer. Engaged EL families possess depths of dedication and wisdom regarding their children that can be immensely helpful to teachers and schools. They have so much to offer – if the community is ready to embrace them and listen to what they have to say. This is where schools can make important strides in changing the conversation from “What can they learn from us?” to “What can we learn from each other?”

The development of the school-home compact provides a great opportunity to get families involved. Use the compact development process as a way to build stronger relationships with EL families. Include several EL family representatives on your compact development team and be sure to gather feedback from other EL families throughout the process.

When working with linguistically diverse families, the following guiding questions can help focus a school’s efforts:

- Do we understand the families’ and students’ educational background and the educational system of the families’ country of origin?
- Do our parent committees/groups reflect our EL population? Do we encourage EL families to be leaders at the school? How can we provide leadership training to families?
- Are we providing information to families about the U.S. educational system? Do they understand the educational process and their role? Are we providing time and opportunity for answering their questions?
- Are we making it clear to families why we want them to be involved?
- Do we offer EL families frequent and convenient opportunities to share input, ideas, and concerns with school leaders and teachers in a variety of venues?
- Are we helping families feel comfortable at meetings?
- Are we communicating in a language they understand and in a culturally- responsive manner by valuing their diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds?

³ Thigpen & Freedberg (2014). *The power of parents: Research underscores the impact of parent involvement in schools*. Oakland, CA: EdSource. <https://edsource.org/wp-content/publications/Power-of-Parents-Feb-2014.pdf>

- Are we aware of families' cultural practices and traditions?
- Are bilingual personnel available for those families who do not speak English?
- Are we providing childcare, transportation, or alternate meeting days and times, if needed?
- What forms of communication will be most effective for the family? Are we providing documents, or oral translations of documents, in a language they understand?
- Are we helping families understand and access available community resources?

School Improvement Plan Needs Assessment

Each year, schools must evaluate and review their progress toward attaining state academic standards. A comprehensive needs assessment is a systematic effort to identify the strengths of a school that can be used in response to identified academic needs of students. A comprehensive needs assessment is central to the school planning process and provides the data the planning team will utilize as it develops a vision for the school.

Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment is not a one-time occurrence. To be truly effective, the comprehensive needs assessment:

- is an ongoing process;
- begins with a thorough examination of multiple, relevant data sources, including:
 - academic, data broken down by racial/ethnic group and other subgroups,
 - college- and career-ready data (e.g., ACT, graduation rate),
 - school climate data (e.g., enrollment, attendance, chronic absenteeism, discipline),
 - human capital data (e.g., staff years of experience, teacher levels of effectiveness, teacher attendance rate),
 - additional areas (e.g., RTI² implementation, technology use, professional development, family and community engagement);
- identifies areas of progress and challenge, and the underlying causes for each;
- provides vital information when defining priorities and setting goals;
- identifies possible strategies or solutions to make improvements; and
- is reviewed and revised annually, with stakeholder involvement.

Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment is a necessary and critical starting point when developing a school-parent compact. The data and information gathered through the needs assessment will guide the planning team as they review and create a school-specific, meaningful school-parent compact.

For more information on the comprehensive needs assessment, see [ESSA, Public Law 114-95 Section 1114\(b\)](#).



School Improvement Plan

A school improvement plan (SIP) is a like road map that outlines the changes a school needs to make to improve the level of student achievement, and shows how and when these changes will be made. Each school district is required to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision making occurs at each school to support the improvement of student performance. The principal of each school must establish a school planning team to lead the development of a SIP that addresses student achievement needs. In addition, this team must monitor the implementation of the plan and revise it as needed. School planning team members should include:

- school leaders,
- teachers,
- school support staff (teaching assistants, school counselors, academic coaches, etc.),
- parent/family representatives,
- community members (not required, but best practice), and
- students (as appropriate).

Utilizing data from the SIP needs assessment, the team must develop a plan to improve teaching and learning in the school, particularly for those students not demonstrating proficiency on Tennessee's academic standards. The ultimate objective of the process is to improve student achievement levels by enhancing the way curriculum is delivered, by creating a positive environment for learning, and by increasing the degree to which families are engaged in their children's learning at school and in the home.

For each school receiving Title I, Part A funds, the SIP must:

- assess the academic achievement and school climate for each student in the school;
- identify progress and challenges for all students, including subgroup populations;
- discuss how teachers are supported and provided opportunities for growth;
- prioritize school performance goals and strategies based on student achievement and other data;
- identify how school goals will be met for all students through the creation of action steps;
- set timelines for reaching goals;
- determine what measures will be used to periodically gauge progress toward prioritized goals and ensure that the plan is resulting in academic improvement;
- provide a program to encourage parent and family engagement;
- include a description of how the school will use Title I funds and other resources to implement the school improvement plan and list the federal, state, and local programs that will be consolidated (if applicable);
- address the program plan requirements and activities on a school-wide campus, or address the program requirements on a targeted assistance campus.

For maximum effectiveness, the goals and strategies included in your school-parent compact should be directly linked to the goals and strategies listed in the SIP. Information on how to translate these goals into more family-friendly language can be found in Compact Step 2: Gather and Align.

What must a school-parent compact include?

According to federal law, all school-parent compacts shall:

- describe the school's responsibilities to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive, effective environment. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116, (d)(1)]
- include ways parents and families can support their child's learning. Some examples of this are volunteering in their children's classroom, participating in decisions about the education of their children, and positive use of after-school time. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116, (d)(1)]
- address the importance of on-going communication, including:
 - annual parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, during which the compact shall be discussed as it relates to the individual student's achievement. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116, (d)(2)(A)]
 - frequent reports to families on their child's progress. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116, (d)(2)(B)]
 - reasonable access to school staff, including opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observe their child's classroom activities. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116 (d)(2)(C)]
 - ensuring regular, two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and to the extent practicable, in a language family members can understand. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116 (d)(2)(D)]
- be written and communicated in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116, (b)(1)]
- be evaluated annually for effectiveness in improving the academic quality of the school and to meet the changing needs of families, students, and the school. [P.L. 114-95, Section 1116 (a)(2)(E) and (b)(1)]



Compact Tips

As you begin the process of developing your school-parent compact, keep these six ideas in mind⁴:

1. Compacts are both a requirement *and* an opportunity.

Compacts are required for all Title I schools, but a good idea for *all* schools. They keep the focus on high standards and academic success for every child. They provide a way for school policies, family beliefs, and district goals to work together.

2. Compacts define responsibilities.

Compacts help to ensure that everyone takes responsibility for helping children achieve high academic standards. Compacts specify roles that schools and families play in helping children learn. They also set expectations for others throughout the community who have a stake in children's academic success.

3. Compacts share a vision for teaching and learning.

A meaningful compact links responsibilities to a consistent philosophy of what children need to learn and how they spend their learning time at school and at home.

4. A compact depends on many people believing in it.

A compact represents the ideas of the whole school community. Compacts become powerful documents when many individuals and stakeholders agree on educational goals and fulfill their personal commitment to children's learning.

5. A compact is more than a piece of paper.

To be truly effective, a compact needs ongoing school-family-community interactions. The compact isn't the end goal. Rather, it is a practical tool for better communication and meaningful, productive partnerships between schools and families.

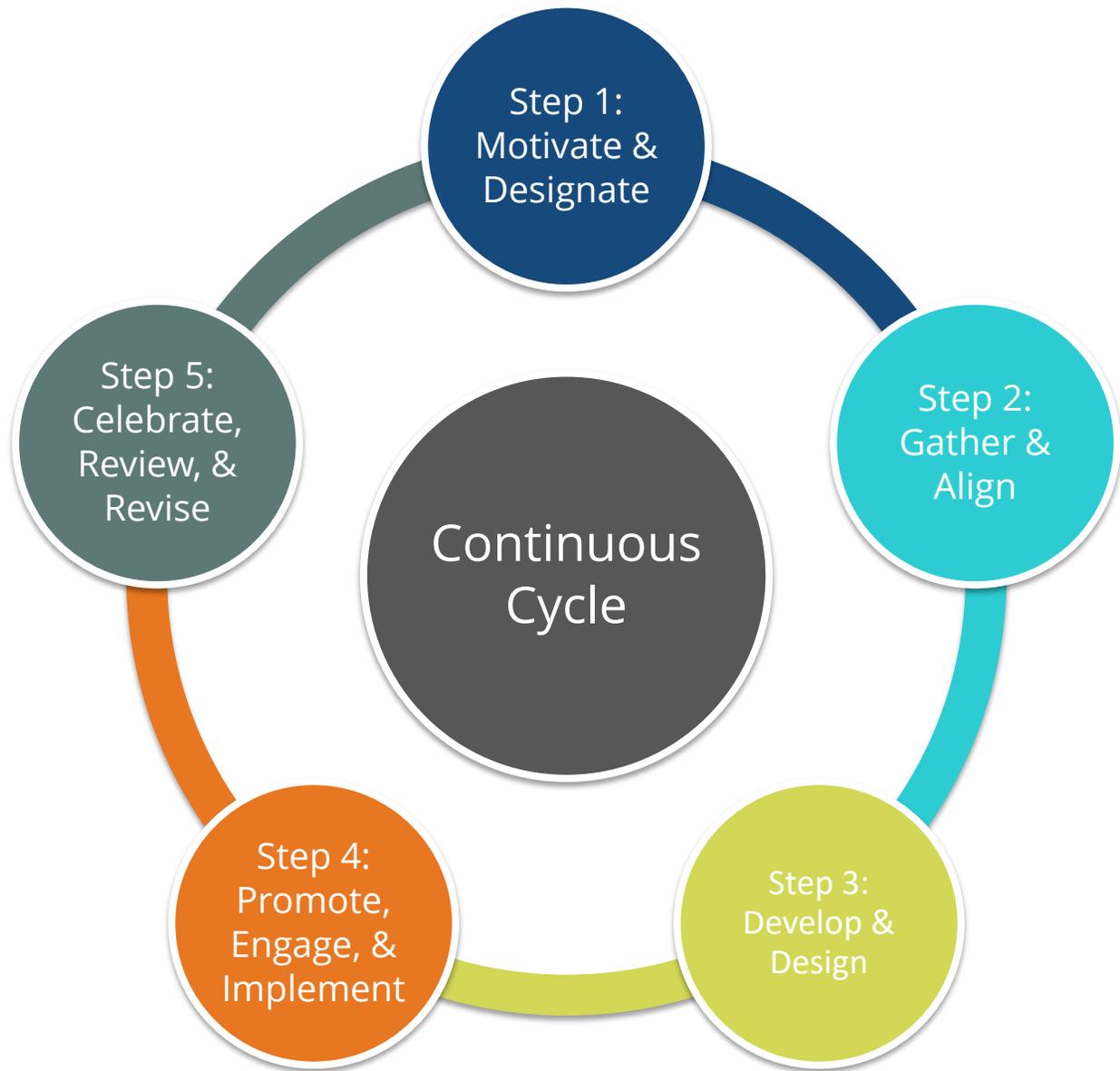
6. A compact needs to be used.

A compact is a "tool" that should be used to clarify expectations; solve problems; keep the focus on teaching and learning; and help clarify choices about how teachers, families, and students spend their time. One of the compact's most important functions is to continually expand the circle of people who become invested in education. Ultimately, the compact and school's success depends on a broad-based commitment to children's learning.

⁴From the upcoming handbook, *Joining Together to Help Our Children Achieve*, US Department of Education

Compact Cycle

Designating a committee, gathering data, and developing a compact is not a one-time activity. It is paramount to promote the compact and maintain an up-to-date document through annual reviews and revisions. Celebrate your success, but remember that it is a continuous cycle that repeats from one academic year to the next.



Compact Step 1: Motivate & Designate

Overview

Description: A school-parent compact that builds capacity starts with motivating staff and designating a planning team. This section explains how to build an effective planning team that includes families and students in the process. In addition, sample surveys and questionnaires are provided to help collect supplemental data from stakeholders.

Legal Reference: P.L. 114-95 Section 1116 (d), (e), and (f)

Tools:

- **Tool 1-A: Tips for the Compact Project Leader:** Five sets of tips, one for each major task: recruiting a team, developing a timeline, coordinating resources, assessing families' interests and strengths, and documenting your work.
- **Tool 1-B: Project Timeline:** A timeline that lays out when to start and finish each step across the calendar school year. It is just a guideline; the compact committee may move faster or slower in any area.
- **Tool 1-C: Tips for Designing Effective Surveys and Questionnaires:** A set of practical suggestions to utilize when designing a survey or questionnaire.
- **Tool 1-D: The Power of Partnerships Family Survey:** An easy-to-use survey that will help a school identify, from the family perspective, what is going well and what improvements may be needed. This survey is designed around the National PTA's [Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#).
- **Tool 1-E: Getting to Know Our Students and Their Families Survey:** A survey to better know the needs and interests of families, especially useful at the beginning of the school year.
- **Tool 1-F: Gathering Input from Students:** A method to receive and record input from students about their learning, and how families and teachers can help.

Additional Resources:

- [Motivate and Get Buy-In from Staff \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)
- [Designate a Leader to Build a Team \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)
- [Don't Forget the Students \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)

Compact Tool 1-A: Tips for the Compact Project Leader

The responsibility of the project leader is to develop a new school-parent compact that:

- is linked to the goals of the school improvement plan;
- uses grade level data to develop strategies for engaging families in improving learning; and
- is written in family-friendly language with meaningful input from families and students.

This is a big job! Don't expect that one person can do all this work. You will need help.

Tip 1: Recruit a team to help carry out the remaining four steps.

Consider: Who are your natural allies? Who might be interested in working with families? Approach people individually; just asking a group to reach out if they're interested probably won't get you the response you need.

- Look for school staff who are already working to support teachers and/or families, such as a reading/math coach, a school social worker, a counselor, or family liaison.
- If school leaders aren't directly involved in gathering information for the compact, make sure they are being kept informed during each step of the process. Their input and support is vital to the success of the compact.
- Include family leaders and community partners (business and faith based sponsors, afterschool staff, family resource center staff, etc.).
- Invite one or two novice teachers, who are often eager to work more closely with their students' families.
- Search for staff who might be working towards an advanced degree as this would be a great example of proving leadership and engagement.



Tip 2: Develop a timeline and use it to assign tasks.

Tool 1-B includes a sample timeline. Use this to get started. Adapt it to make it work for your school and build upon the strengths of your team. For example:

- A data team leader might be good at charting data in ways that families (and the other team members) can understand.
- The art teacher could help design an attractive final compact.
- The afterschool coordinator can help with recruiting families.
- The family liaison can help organize teacher-parent conversations.

- The reading/math coach could work with teachers to develop workshops and home learning strategies.

Tip 3: Coordinate resources to implement the compact.

Implementing and promoting the compact may require some funds and other resources. The school should be using some of its Title I budget for family engagement programming, so check that budget to see how it's being utilized and tap it for actual costs, such as paper, printing, materials, and supplies. Teachers may want some professional development in designing effective home learning strategies – what does the district already offer? The school volunteer program may be able to help with phone calls to recruit families or tally survey results. Find creative ways to utilize the resources, programs, and partners you already have in place to help minimize costs.

Tip 4: Assess your families' interests and strengths.

Use surveys and questionnaires to find out more about the overall school climate, the interests of your families, and how they are able to contribute to the improvement of student learning. This information can also be helpful in finding potential family leaders and identifying how they may be able to assist in the compact development process. Always remember, however, that surveys and questionnaires can be powerful and useful research tools, but should never be your main method of interacting with families. Conversations and face to face interactions are key in building strong, trusting relationships. Tools include:

- Tool 1-C: Tips for Designing Effective Surveys and Questionnaires
- Tool 1-D: Power of Partnership Family Survey
- Tool 1-E: Getting to Know Our Students and Their Families Questionnaire.
- Tool 1-F: Gathering Input from Students

Tip 5: Document your work.

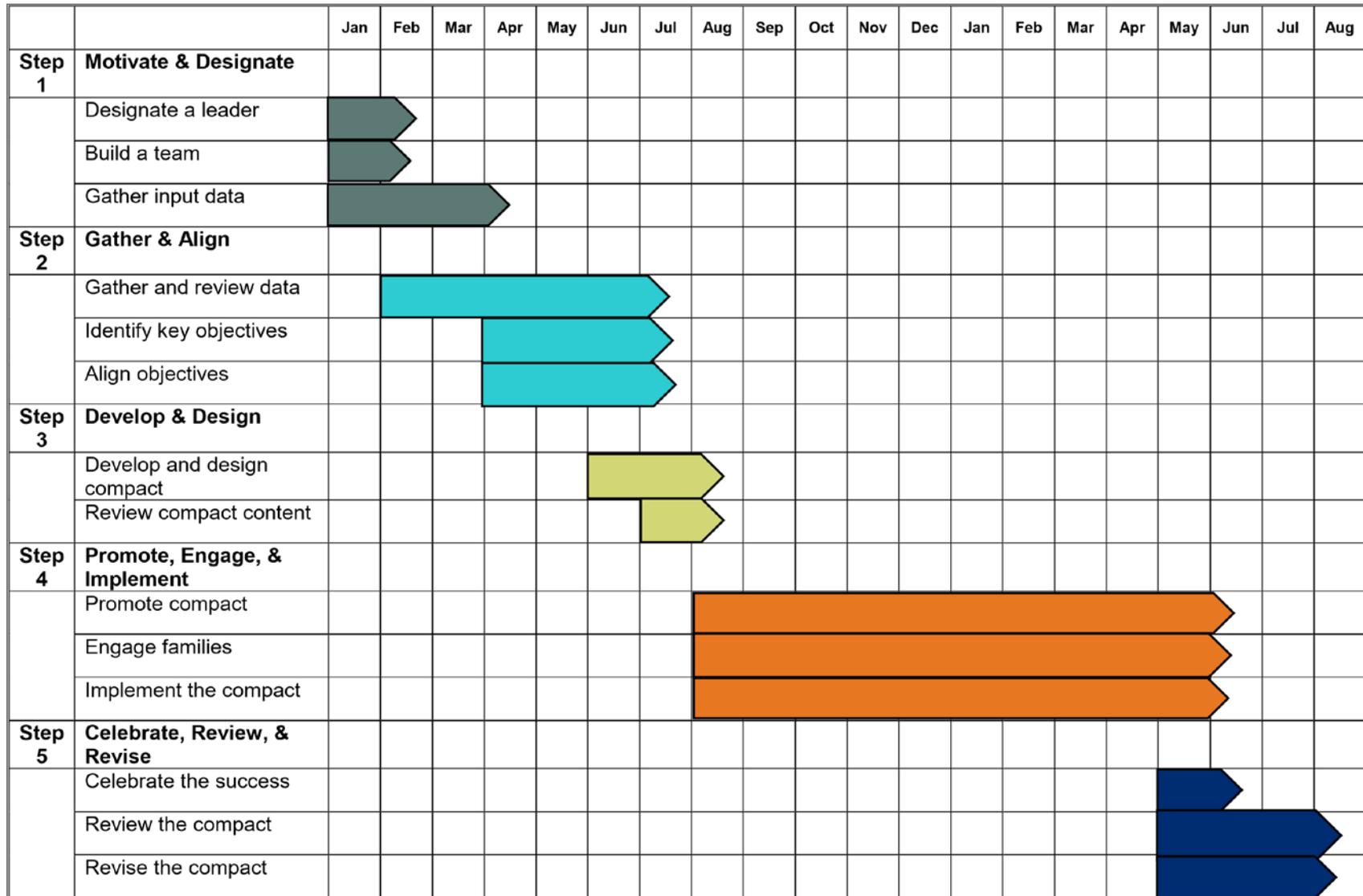
Keep a record of families' ideas that come up in meetings and discussions about student performance and what should go into the compact. Maintain a record of meeting agendas, minutes, and sign-in sheets. In the event a state or federal monitoring occurs, the school must have documentation that establishes the process used to develop and disseminate the compact.

Note:

While some schools previously utilized compacts that required signatures from families, teachers, and students; this is not required in the federal law. Signing compacts is optional. A compact is most useful as a communication tool to strengthen home-school relationships, not a contract to be used for corrective purposes.

Compact Tool 1-B: Project Timeline

Note: An editable version of this timeline can be downloaded [here](#).



Compact Tool 1-C: Tips for Designing Effective Surveys

Surveys can be utilized to help school staff learn more about their students' families and to identify strengths and areas where improvement may be needed. The best way to make sure every student in a school succeeds is to build a strong partnership between families, the school, and the community. With this information, schools can plan better programming to improve student achievement and create sustaining home-school partnerships.

Surveys can be very powerful and useful research tools. However, if badly constructed, they can cause confusion, quickly consume resources, and yield useless data. Good design will increase the willingness of respondents to complete the survey, while also improving the accuracy of data collected. Please consider the following tips when designing a survey:

- Keep surveys short and manageable.
- Keep the questions simple and straightforward.
- Avoid technical language and educational jargon.
- Surveys should be completed individually and anonymously.
- Have completed surveys returned within 48 hours of distribution.
- Tabulate the return rate for each survey.
- Be sure each question focuses on a single topic.
- Balance the number of multiple-choice and opinion-based questions. The person responding should be able to answer quickly, but still have an opportunity to share his or her opinion.
- Do not make the list of response choices too long, and be sure that they don't overlap.
- Do not use "emotional language" or leading questions.
- Keep open-ended responses to a minimum.
- Avoid negatives, especially double negatives.
- Make no assumptions. If the questions are objective, the responses will be more reliable.
- Avoid difficult recall questions.
- Put difficult or personal questions toward the end of the survey.
- Consider ahead of time how to handle missing data.
- Conduct surveys annually to record changes and set priorities.
- Share the results with all stakeholders.

Please keep in mind that while surveys can be useful tools, they should never be your primary method of gathering input from parents and families. Face-to-face discussions are far more effective when working to learn about each other and build strong relationships. Utilize surveys as a tool to learn more about your students and families, but make sure that the majority of your interactions are more personal.

Compact Tool 1-D: The Power of Partnerships Family Survey⁵

Note: An editable version of this survey can be downloaded [here](#).

Dear Families,

The best way to make sure every student in our school succeeds is to build a strong partnership between families, the school, and the community. The survey below gives you the opportunity to tell us what our school is doing well to support this partnership and what we can do better.

If you would like to help tally and analyze the results, please let us know.

Welcoming all Families into the School Community	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
1. When I walk into the school, I feel the school is inviting and that this is a place where parents and family members “belong”.			
2. The school’s policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community.			
3. Students at the school are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.			
4. I feel welcome at PTA/PTO or other parent group meetings.			
Communicating Effectively	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
5. The school keeps all families informed about important issues and events.			
6. The school makes it easy for families to communicate with teachers.			
7. The school communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., email, phone, newsletters, website, etc.).			
8. I can talk to the school principal when I need to.			
9. My child’s teacher communicates with me on a regular basis.			
10. It’s easy to get a translator if I need one.			

⁵ The National PTA. *Power of Partnerships Family Survey*. [Web](#).

Supporting Student Success	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
11. My child's teacher keeps me well informed about how my child is doing in school.			
12. I understand the academic standards my child is supposed to meet and how the curriculum is linked to those standards.			
13. My child's teacher and the school give me useful information about how to improve my child's progress.			
14. All students are challenged to do their best.			
Speaking Up for Every Child	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
15. If the school can't help me, they will connect me to someone who can.			
16. I understand the rules and requirements for student dress, and student conduct.			
17. The school keeps me informed of my rights under federal and state law and helps me exercise those rights as needed.			
18. I feel empowered to advocate for my own child's and other children's success in school.			
Sharing Power	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
19. The school consults with me and other families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, school policies, dress code).			
20. The school provides opportunities for families to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders.			
Collaborating with the Community	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
21. The school connects students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and community improvement initiatives.			

Comments: _____

Thank you for your participation!

Compact Tool 1-E: Getting to Know Our Students and Their Families Survey

Note: An editable version of this survey can be downloaded [here](#).

Dear Parents and Families,

Our school wants to know more about our students and their families. Please complete the following questionnaire. Thank you for your time.

Cultural Background:

1. What is the primary language spoken in your home? What other languages are spoken?

2. What does your family do to help your children learn?

3. What are some ways you would like the school to recognize and teach about your child's culture?

Involved at Home and School:

4. What are some ways you would like to be more involved in your child's learning?

5. What could the school do to help you be more involved?

6. When are the most convenient times for you to attend activities and meetings at school?

7. What are your transportation and/or child care needs for school activities and meetings?

Concerns, Perspectives, and Ideas:

8. What else would you like us to know about your child? What are his/her interests?

9. What is working well for your child at school? What isn't working?

10. How could you help the school reach out to other families in your community?

Thank you for your participation!

Compact Tool 1-F: Gathering Input from Students

Note: An editable version of this tool and samples can be downloaded [here](#).

Overview

In developing compacts, schools need to hear what students have to say. What responsibility do they need to take to become successful students? What support do they think will be helpful from their teachers and families?

This tool has three parts:

1. A sample 5th grade student survey, which can be modified according to the skills students are developing in each grade. This can be filled out in class or at home, so students can reflect on their strengths and challenges, as well as what help would be useful for them.
2. A sample high school student survey, which can be modified according to the content area. This can be filled out in class or at home, so students can reflect on their strengths and challenges, as well as what help would be useful for them.
3. A short guide (below) for classroom discussion of these same points. Information gathered from these discussions can be utilized to develop the student section of your grade level or content specific compact.

Class Discussion Questions

After students have filled out the survey and thought about their responses, ask the whole class this series of questions:

5th Grade

- What do you need to do this year to make sure you learn what you need to know and do your best work?
- What would you like your teacher(s) to do to help you do your best work?
- What would you like your family to do to help you do your best work?

High School

- What do you need to do this year to learn what you need to and be successful in this class?
- What would you like your teacher(s) to do to help you learn and be successful?
- What would you like your parent(s) to do to help you learn and be successful?

Chart ideas as students speak, so they can see their responses are being recorded. If students know their ideas will be included in the school-parent compact, they will take these questions seriously and show some real insight.

Sample 5th Grade Survey on Student Learning

Your name: _____

Reading Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing to read independently • Reading for a variety of purposes • Using different strategies to gain meaning • Writing open ended responses • Learning new vocabulary • Figuring out words I don't know • Answering questions well 	
I have worked hard at:	
Areas I need to work on:	
My plan is:	
How my teacher can help:	
How my family can help:	
Writing Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing short answer responses • Focusing on the topic • Elaborating • Using near handwriting • Learning new vocabulary • Figuring out words I don't know • Answering questions well 	
I have worked hard at:	
Areas I need to work on:	
My plan is:	
How my teacher can help:	
How my family can help:	
Math Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic math facts • Place value • Estimation and rounding • Measurement • Elapsed time • Graphing 	
I have worked hard at:	
Areas I need to work on:	
My plan is:	
How my teacher can help:	
How my family can help:	

Social Studies and Science Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship in school • Using good decision-making skills • Map skills • Comparing and contrasting cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation and recording observations • Analyzing and communicating findings • Researching further information • Designing an investigation
I have worked hard at:	
Areas I need to work on:	
My plan is:	
How my teacher can help:	
How my family can help:	
Personal and Social Development Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting well with others • Assuming responsibility • Demonstrating self-confidence • Speaking clearly and effectively • Listening and paying attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using self-control • Participating • Accepting constructive criticism • Setting appropriate goals
I have worked hard at:	
Areas I need to work on:	
My plan is:	
How my teacher can help:	
How my family can help:	
Work Habits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following directions the first time • Being organized • Working well independently • Working well cooperatively • Completing assignments on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using reference materials • Using class time constructively • Checking work for neatness and accuracy
I have worked hard at:	
Areas I need to work on:	
My plan is:	
How my teacher can help:	
How my family can help:	

Sample High School Survey on Student Learning

Your name: _____

Algebra 1

- Study linear, quadratic, and exponential functions and their related transformations, equations, and associated solutions.
- Connect functions and their associated solutions in both mathematical and real-world situations
- Use technology to collect and explore data and analyze statistical relationships
- Study polynomials of degree one and two, radical expressions, sequences and laws of exponents
- Generate and solve linear systems with two equations and two variables and create new functions through transformations

Knowledge and skills I'm comfortable with:

Areas I need to work on:

My responsibilities in being successful:

Ways my teacher can help:

Ways my family can help:

Compact Step 2: Gather & Align

Overview

Description: Aligning the compact to school-wide data, identified needs of students, and the goals of the SIP for each grade level or content area makes the compact a meaningful tool for all stakeholders. In this step of the compact development process, each grade level or content area identifies priority goals and drafts some ideas for home learning strategies to share with families and students for their input.

Legal Reference: P.L. 114-95 Section 1116 (d), Section 1112 (b)(1)

Tools:

- **Tool 2-A: The Aligning Process** - A step-by-step process for translating goals, linking them to high priority areas of challenge, and then identifying specific home learning strategies to address those priorities.
- **Tool 2-B: Aligning Process Template and Samples** – A template be utilized in the aligning process and two sample templates. These samples have been provided as a visual to help start the conversation in your school.

Additional Resources:

- [Making the Most of School-Parent Compacts \(ASCD Publication\)](#)
- [Linking the School-Parent Compact to School Improvement Goals](#)
- [Align Goals \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)
- [Get Input from Each Grade Level \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)

Compact Tool 2-A: The Aligning Process

Overview

When developing a new school-parent compact, you always want to consider: *do families, students, and teachers really understand the goals of the SIP?* The school-parent compact offers a unique opportunity to explain those goals and decide what students, families, and teachers can do together to help reach them.

Yet, there's one hitch: many school improvement goals are overly general and hard to understand. To fix this, the compact development team will need to rewrite school goals into more family-friendly language and then link those goals to specific strategies that can be implemented to help reach them. These goals and strategies will form the basis of the school-parent compact.

This tool lays out a step-by-step process for translating goals, linking them to students' areas of challenge, and then identifying specific home learning strategies to help improve student achievement. A template and examples have also been provided.

Step one: What should the school or grade level instructional focus be? Pick one or two high priority goals from the SIP to focus on. What do the goals say? How can they be better explained to families?

Step two: Revise the wording so that it's family friendly and clearly explains what should happen. Also consider using this wording for newsletters, flyers, and other communications about the school-parent compact.

Step three: As a grade level or content area, use data to identify the greatest challenges linked to your high priority goals. What skills does the data show that students need to strengthen most? Prioritize these by degree of need. What will help develop these skills in the long run? Which skills are building blocks for other skills? Select no more than two of these for the compact.

Step four: Identify and develop two or three "bang-for-your-buck" home learning strategies that are linked to the high priority goals and help address students' greatest challenges. Remember, these are draft strategies to help start the conversation with families. Families should play an important role in finalizing the strategies that are ultimately put into the compact. When families have a voice in these strategies, they are much more likely to use them.

Before including any strategies in your new compact, be sure to share them with families and students for their feedback. After explaining what skills and knowledge students should be focusing on, give them time to ask questions and come up with ideas about what they can do. Be sure to ask families what information and support they will need from teachers to put the home learning strategies into action. How can we help you use these strategies? What information and materials do you need to use them effectively? Use this feedback to fine tune your suggested strategies.

Compact Tool 2-B: Aligning Process Template and Samples

Note: An editable version of this tool and template can be downloaded [here](#).

ACTION	Step one: Select 1-2 high priority goals from the school improvement plan	Step two: Revise the wording to make the goals family friendly	Step three: Link the goals to students' areas of challenge	Step four: Identify strategies teachers and families can use to reach the high priority goals by addressing areas of challenge
WHO?	School-parent compact committee		School-parent compact committee and teachers in grade level or content area groups	
SUGGESTED RESOURCES	School improvement plan		School improvement plan & student achievement data	Teacher experience, family and student feedback, education websites, supporting information in adopted instructional materials

Step one: Select 1-2 high priority goals from the school improvement plan	Step two: Revise the wording to make the goals family friendly	Step three: Link the goals to students' areas of challenge	Step four: Identify strategies teachers and families can use to reach the high priority goals by addressing areas of challenge

Example 1: Elementary Reading Goal

<p>Step one: Select 1-2 high priority goals from the school improvement plan</p>	<p>Step two: Revise the wording to make the goals family friendly</p>	<p>Step three: Link the goals to students' areas of challenge</p>	<p>Step four: Identify strategies teachers and families can use to reach the high priority goals by addressing areas of challenge</p>
<p>Student proficiency in ELA on TNReady will increase by 10%.</p> <p>Not clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will all students improve by 10% or will 10% more students reach proficiency? • Where are students currently performing? 	<p>1st Grade Example:</p> <p>The percentage of first graders who score at benchmark on the reading portion of AimsWeb will move from ___% to ___%.</p> <p>5th Grade Example:</p> <p>The percentage of fifth graders who are proficient in English language arts on TNReady will move from ___% to ___%.</p>	<p>1st Grade Example:</p> <p>1st grade data show a weakness in <u>sight word vocabulary and application of sight words to text passages.</u></p> <p>5th Grade Example:</p> <p>5th grade data show that students are having difficulty <u>making connections from non-fiction passages to situations in real life.</u></p>	<p>1st Grade Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will focus on vocabulary development -- sight words and phonetic pronunciations. • Monthly word lists will be sent to each family. • The school web page/parent section will include the words of the month. • The literacy coach will hold three parent workshops per year on extending vocabulary development. <p>5th Grade Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will focus on strengthening students' ability to make text-to-self connections in non-fiction reading. • At back to school night, each classroom teacher will conduct a short lesson to explain text connecting and how families can continue this learning at home. • Samples of text connecting will be included in the monthly newsletter and on the website. • Two workshops per year will be provided to assist families in strengthening text connecting, with examples from TNReady as a foundation for each lesson.

Example 2: High School English Goal

<p>Step one: Select 1-2 high priority goals from the school improvement plan</p>	<p>Step two: Revise the wording to make the goals family friendly</p>	<p>Step three: Link the goals to students' areas of challenge</p>	<p>Step four: Identify strategies teachers and families can use to reach the high priority goals by addressing areas of challenge</p>
<p>On the English I EOC, the grade level gain at or above proficiency will increase by 10% points in 2017-18.</p> <p>Not clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is grade level gain? • Will all students' scores improve 10% or will the percent of students who are proficient increase by 10%? • What percent of our students are at grade level now? 	<p>On the English I EOC, the number of students who score at Level 2 Satisfactory will increase by 15% over the next three years.</p> <p>For example, the percent of students taking the English I EOC will increase from ___% to ___%.</p>	<p>The data shows a weakness in <u>idea development in expository writing</u>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will provide examples of strong idea development and provide families with probing questions to use to support idea development when students are working on content related writing assignments at home. • The campus will host one Writing Workshop per semester for families and students to engage in writing activities, highlight effective writing techniques, and showcase writing. • Teachers will feature writing tips on the school website.

Compact Step 3: Develop & Design

Overview

Description: This section contains three parts to help the compact development team translate data, goals, and priorities into a meaningful school-parent compact. The tools in this section will assist the team in developing an attractive compact with information that is relevant and practical, while also meeting all requirements under Title I.

Legal Reference: P.L. 114-95 Section 1116 (d), (e) and (f)

Tools:

- **Tool 3-A: School-Parent Compact Guide to Quality** – A rubric that can be used to assess the quality and completeness of a compact. This guide is numbered (1A-7) to align with the numbers on the compact templates and samples included in this toolkit.
- **Tool 3-B: School-Parent Compact Template:** Two easy to use templates that can be utilized to ensure all required components are included in a school-parent compact. Brochure and newsletter style templates are available. Each template is numbered to align with the numbers (1A-7) on the Guide to Quality.
- **Tool 3-C: Sample School-Parent Compacts:** Example compacts, designed around the templates. Each sample compact is numbered to align with the numbers (1A-7) on the Guide to Quality.
- **Tool 3-D: Questions to Review the Compact Development Process:** A set of questions compact development teams can utilize to reflect upon the effectiveness of their compact and the develop and design process.

Additional Resources:

- [School-Parent Compact Checklist](#)
- [Pull It All Together \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)

Compact Tool 3-A: Compact Guide to Quality

Note: A copy of this guide can be downloaded [here](#).

School teams can use this guide to ensure their compact meets all requirements under Title I, Part A. It also includes best practices to make compacts even more effective and powerful. This guide is numbered (1A-7) to align with the compact templates and samples included in this toolkit.

	Does the home-school compact:	Section of Title I law:	To make the compact most effective:
The Role of the School	1-A Clearly explain district and school goals to meet student academic standards? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link actions in the compact to goals in the school improvement plan. Use achievement data to set specific goals.
	1-B Describe ways that teachers are responsible for supporting students' learning and providing high-quality curriculum and instruction? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d) 1116(d)(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how teachers help parents understand what children are learning and doing in class. Specify how teachers support family participation in learning activities.
	Provide information and actions specific to each grade level, tied to the school improvement plan? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	This is best practice and not required under Title I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include high-impact strategies for each grade level, designed by grade-level teams with families, after asking students for input. Design strategies to address high priority areas of challenge for each grade level.
The Role of the Parent	2 Describe specific ways families will be responsible for supporting their children's learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d) 1116(d)(1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect strategies for families to what students are doing in class.
	Provide information and actions specific to each grade level, tied to the school improvement plan? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	This is best practice and not required under Title I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include high-impact strategies for each grade level, designed by grade-level teams with families, after asking students for input. Design strategies to address high priority areas of challenge for each grade level.
The Role of the Student	3 Describe specific ways students will be responsible for their learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect strategies to what students are learning in class.
	Provide information and actions specific to each grade level, tied to the school improvement plan? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	This is best practice and not required under Title I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include high-impact strategies for each grade level, designed by grade-level teams with families, after asking students for input. Design strategies to address high priority areas of challenge for each grade level.
Activities to Develop Partnerships	4 Describe school activities to build partnerships with families, including chances to volunteer, take part in, and observe classroom activities, and communicate with teachers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d) 1116(d)(2)(C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide both families and teachers opportunities to develop skills for working together (for example, schedule literacy conversations, demonstration lessons, class meetings, workshops; publicize volunteer and leadership opportunities). Offer activities based on identified family needs. Offer meetings at different days and times.
Jointly Developed	5 Describe how families are involved in developing and revising the compact? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d) 1116(f)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide resources to cover costs for families to participate, such as child care and transportation. Give specifics about how families are involved (for example, parents participate on data teams that meet to update the compact; annual review by the school governance council, which includes family members). Schedule meetings at accessible locations and at different days and times.
Communicate About Student Progress	6 Describe several methods for regular teacher-parent communication so that families are kept up-to-date on their students' progress and get regular tips on home learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(d)(1) 1116(d)(2)(A and B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include parent-teacher conferences at least once a year in elementary schools, during which the compact will be discussed. Include follow-up steps to support families and students. Consult families on communication strategies that work best for them. Make communication do-able and user-friendly.
Format and Language	7 Ensure that the language and format of the compact are family friendly? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1116(f)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with families to identify and eliminate jargon and negative language. Engage families/staff with design skills to create an attractive final product. Translate the compact and other communications into families' first languages.

Adapted from the *Transforming Your Old Title I School-Parent Compacts into Effective Action Plans* training kit developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. [Web](#).

Compact Tool 3-B: Compact Template (Brochure Style)

Note: An editable version of this template can be downloaded [here](#).

<p>What is a School-Home Compact?</p>	<p>Activities to Build Partnerships</p> <p>4</p>	<p>SCHOOL NAME School-Parent Compact</p> <p>7</p> <p>School Year School Website School Phone Number</p>
<p>Jointly Developed</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Communication About Student Learning</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Insert School Logo or Picture</p>

Compact Tool 3-B: Compact Template (Newsletter Style)

Note: An editable version of this template can be downloaded [here](#).

	Communication About Student Learning
SCHOOL NAME 7	6
YEAR School-Parent Compact	
<u>What is a School-Parent Compact?</u>	
<u>Jointly Developed</u> 5	
<u>Building Partnerships</u> 4	
<i>Principal Name Phone number Website</i>	

Our Goals for Student Achievement

District Goals

1A

School Goals

Teachers, families, students – Together for Success

In the Classroom

1B

At Home

2

Students

3

Compact Tool 3-C: Sample School-Parent Compacts

Note: A copy of this sample can be downloaded [here](#).

Example 1: Elementary School Compact with Fourth Grade Focus (Brochure Style)

What is a School-Home Compact?

A School-Parent Compact is an agreement that families, students, and teachers develop together. It explains how families and teachers will work together to make sure all students reach grade-level standards

Effective Compacts:

- * Link goals to the School Improvement Plan
- * Focus on student learning skills
- * Describe how teachers will help students develop skills using high-quality instruction
- * Share strategies families can use at home.
- * Explain how teachers and families will communicate about student progress

4 Building Partnerships

3rd Thursday Family Fun Learning Nights!

Join us for our "Go for the Gold" Night, the third Thursday of September (5:30-7:00PM)

- * Help your child become a "Gold" Medalist! You and your fourth grader will learn how to set 2-3 student learning goals and ways to achieve them.
- * Enjoy GAME TIME with your child, exploring free home learning kits designed to support your child's learning goals. Gold medals and pizza provided!

MORE FAMILY FUN LEARNING NIGHTS

3rd Thursdays in October, January, March, & May

Detailed information will be sent home and posted on our website

5 Jointly Developed

The families, students, and staff of Poplar Elementary School developed this School-Parent Compact. Teachers suggested home learning strategies, families added ideas to make them more specific, and students told us what would help them learn. Meetings and events are held each year to review the compact and make changes based on student needs.

Families are welcome to contribute comments and suggestions at any time.

If you would like to volunteer, participate, and/or observe in the classroom please contact Susan Smith at ssmith@poplar.org or 615 555-1212.

6 Communication About Student Learning

Poplar Elementary School is committed to frequent two-way communication with families about student's learning. Some of the ways you can expect us to reach you are:

- * Weekly homework folders
- * Monthly "check-in" notes or phone calls
- * Updates on the school website and current grades in PowerSchool
- * Class meetings on understanding student progress
- * Parent-teacher conferences in November and March

Do you have questions about your child's progress?

Contact your child's teacher by phone (615 555-1212) or email. Email addresses are listed on the school website at www.poplarschool.org

Poplar Elementary School

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT 2017-18

4th Grade Focus for Student Success



Mary Pleasant, Principal
www.poplarschool.org
615 555-1212

Our Goals for Student Achievement

1A

District Goals

The Board of Education sets goals for the entire district. The district goals for 2017-18 are:

Reading - all students will show a 15% increase in reading proficiency on TNReady.

Math - all students will show a 15% increase in mathematics proficiency on TNReady.

Poplar Elementary School Goals

Poplar administrators and teachers have studied our student achievement data to determine the most important areas for improvement for our school.

Reading - To increase reading proficiency from 55% to 70%, our school will concentrate on the following areas:

- * Vocabulary development in grades K-4, and
- * Making text connections in grades 5-6.

Math - To increase math proficiency from 67% to 82%, our school will concentrate on the following area:

- * Place value and estimation in grades K-6.



Teachers, Parents, Students—Together for Success

In the 4th Grade Classroom

1B

The 4th grade classroom will work with students and families to support students' success in reading and math. Some of our key connections with families will be:

- * Provide families with a home learning kit full of fun materials dealing with estimation and place value.
- * Offer 4 free Family Fun Nights per year in our Parent Academy, concentrating on estimation and problem solving strategies.
- * Our monthly newsletter will feature games that families can play to review vocabulary words we have introduced in our classroom.
- * Our class web page has links to family friendly web sites for building vocabulary and math skills.

Poplar School Students

Poplar School students joined staff and families to develop ideas about how they can succeed in school and reach for the stars in math and reading. Students thought of the following ideas to make connections between learning at home and school:

- * Talk with my family about new vocabulary words and what I am learning in math.
- * Bring home our class newsletter and invitations for Family Fun Nights.
- * Keep a log of games I play at home to practice new vocabulary words and math.
- * Try to make up my own learning game and share it with the class.

At Home

2

Poplar School families joined staff to develop ideas about how families can support students' success in reading and math. Families may have other ideas to add to this list.

- * Have fun with math. Use materials in the math kit to explore math at home.
- * Try to attend Family Fun Nights or get information from my child's teachers if we can't attend.
- * Play word games with the new vocabulary words and find ways to use these words in family conversations.
- * Look for the class newsletter each month and check out the school's website: www.poplarschool.org.

3

When teachers, students and families work together,
we CAN achieve our goals!



Compact Tool 3-C: Sample School-Parent Compacts

Note: A copy of this sample can be downloaded [here](#).

Example 2: Elementary School Compact with Fourth Grade Focus (Newsletter Style)

POPLAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2017-18 School-Parent Compact

7

What is a School-Parent Compact?

A School-Parent Compact is an agreement that families, students, and teachers develop together. It explains how families and teachers will work together to make sure all students reach grade level standards.

Effective Compacts:

- *link goals to the School Improvement Plan;
- *focus on student learning skills;
- *describe how teachers will help students develop skills using high-quality instruction;
- *share strategies families can use at home; and
- *explain how teachers and families will communicate about student progress.

Jointly Developed

5

The families, students, and staff of Poplar Elementary School developed this School-Parent Compact. Teachers suggested home learning strategies, families added ideas to make them more specific, and students told us what would help them learn. Meetings and events are held each year to review the compact and make changes based on student and family needs.

Families are welcome to contribute comments and suggestions at any time.

If you would like to contribute, please contact Susan Smith at Ssmith@poplar.org or 615 555-1212.

Building Partnerships

4

3rd Thursday Family Fun Learning Nights!

Join us for our "Go for the Gold" Night, the third Thursday of September (5:30-7:00PM)

- *Help your child become a "Gold" Medalist! You and your student will learn how to set 2-3 student learning goals and ways to achieve them.
- *Enjoy GAME TIME with your child, exploring free home learning kits designed to support your child's learning goals. Gold medals and pizza provided!

MORE FAMILY FUN LEARNING NIGHTS:

3rd Thursdays in October, January, March, & May

Detailed information will be sent home and posted on our website: www.poplarschool.org

Mary Pleasant, Principal
615 555-1212
www.poplarschool.org



Communication About Student Learning

6

Poplar Elementary School is committed to frequent two-way communication with families about student's learning. Some of the ways you can expect us to reach you are:

- *Weekly homework folders
- *Monthly "check-in" notes or phone calls
- *Updates on the school website and current grades in PowerSchool
- *Class meetings on understanding student progress
- *Parent-teacher conferences in November and March

Do you have questions about your child's progress?

Contact your child's teacher by phone (615 555-1212) or email. Email addresses are listed on the school website at: www.poplarschool.org



4th Grade Focus for Student Success

District Goals

The Board of Education sets goals for the entire district. The district goals for 2017-18 are:

Reading - All students will show a 15% increase in reading proficiency on TNReady.

Math - All students will show a 15% increase in mathematics proficiency on TNReady.

Poplar Elementary School Goals

Poplar administrators and teachers have studied our student achievement data to determine the most important areas for improvement for our school.

Reading - To increase reading proficiency from 55% to 70%, our school will concentrate on the following areas:

- * Vocabulary development in grades K-4
- * Making text connections in grades 5-6

Math - To increase math proficiency from 67% to 82%, our school will concentrate on the following area:

- * Place value and estimation in grades K-6

Teachers, families, students –Together for success

In the 4th Grade Classroom

The 4th grade classroom will work with students and families to support students' success in reading and math. Some of our key connections with families will be:

- * Provide families with a home learning kit full of fun materials dealing with estimation and place value.
- * Offer 4 free Family Fun Nights per year in our Parent Academy, concentrating on estimation and problem solving strategies.
- * Our monthly newsletter will feature games that families can play to review vocabulary words we have introduced in our classroom.
- * Our class web page has links to family friendly web sites for building vocabulary and math skills.

At Home

Poplar School families joined staff to develop ideas about how families can support students' success in reading and math. Families may have other ideas to add to this list.

- * Have fun with math. Use materials in the math kit to explore math at home.
- * Try to attend Family Fun Nights or get information from my child's teachers if we can't attend.
- * Play word games with the new vocabulary words and find ways to use these words in family conversations.
- * Look for the class newsletter each month and check out the school's website: www.poplarschool.org.

Poplar Elementary School Students

Poplar School students joined staff and families to develop ideas about how they can succeed in school and reach for the stars in math and reading. Students thought of the following ideas to make connections between learning at home and school:

- * Talk with my family about new vocabulary words and what I am learning in math.
- * Bring home our class newsletter and invitations for Family Fun Nights.
- * Keep a log of games I play at home to practice new vocabulary words and math.
- * Try to make up my word learning game and share it with the class.



1A



2



3

Compact Tool 3-C: Sample School-Parent Compacts

Note: A copy of this sample can be downloaded [here](#).

Example 3: Middle School Compact (Brochure Style)

What is a School-Home Compact?

Our annual school-parent compact offers ways that we can work together to help our students succeed. This compact provides strategies to help connect learning at school and at home.

Effective compacts:

- Link to academic achievement goals
- Focus on student learning
- Share strategies that staff, parents, and students can use
- Explain how parents and teachers can communicate about student progress
- Describe opportunities for parents to observe, volunteer, and participate in the classroom



Jointly Developed 5

The families, students, and staff worked together to shared ideas to develop the school-parent compact. Teachers met with their subject area teams to design practical strategies for parents to use at home. Parents provided valuable feedback on their needs to help their students. Students completed comment cards to add ideas for the compact. Meetings are held each year to review and revise the compact based on the school's academic goals and students' needs.

Parent are welcome to provide feedback on the compact at anytime during the school year. All feedback will be collected and reviewed during the annual revision meeting with families. Please call Susan Smith at 615 555-1212 or visit our website, www.connectmiddle.org for more information.

Building Partnerships & Communicating About Student Learning 4 6

Connect Middle School offers ongoing events and programs to provide parents and students with access to our staff. Please contact our school to learn more about these great opportunities and more.

- Fall & Spring Open House
- Teacher websites/blogs
- Family Resource Center (M-F 8:00 am -5:00pm)
- Grade level newsletters
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Grade level curriculum night potluck dinners
- Parent Portal
- To make an appointment with your child's teachers, visit the school faculty webpage or call 615 555-1212.

Family Engagement 4

There are many opportunities at our school for parents to volunteer and play a role in their child's education. Please consider joining the faculty, staff, and your student through some of the following events and programs:

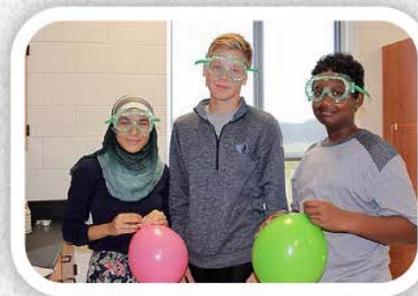
- Parental Classroom Observation Days: 2nd Friday of each month
- Parent-teacher mentor program
- Family Engagement Day—November 19
- Family Tutor and Volunteer Program

To participate or learn more about these opportunities or other ways to observe and volunteer, please contact Susan Smith at 615 555-1212.



CONNECT MIDDLE SCHOOL 7

2017-18 School-Parent Compact



Mary Pleasant, Principal
615 555-1212
www.connectmiddle.org

Academic Achievement Goals

1A

District Goals

- Student performance of the math portion of TNReady will increase from 45% proficient to 60% proficient.
- Student performance on the science portion of TNReady will increase from 76% proficient to 85% proficient.

School Goals

- Student performance of the math portion of TNReady will increase from 58% proficient to 73% proficient.
- Student performance on the science portion of TNReady will increase from 73% proficient to 82% proficient.



Areas of Focus

- **6th Grade Focus:** Use concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems.
- **7th Grade Focus:** Use proportional relationships to solve multistep ratiion problems.
- **8th Grade Focus:** Compare two different proportional relationships represented in different ways.

As a school, we will...

1B

- Develop homework assignments that allow parent participation as well as provide sections for parents to send feedback to the teacher about the assignment.
- Conduct and post online monthly math seminars for students and parents to review lessons at school or online.
- Give families a math packet with instructions for solving real world problems involving ratios and proportional relationships to solve with their student every six weeks.
- Post new ratio problems and explanations on the school website every week for students and parents.



As families, we will...

2

- Use the interactive homework assignments to review problems that my student was unable to solve and send feedback to the teacher in the space provided.
- Attend or download online the monthly math seminars with my child to learn what is being taught in class.
- Review the math packet to work with my student on solving real world problems and ensure the packet is completed every six weeks.
- Visit www.connectmiddle.org and other recommended websites with my student to learn new math and science facts and problems.

As students, we will...

3

- Complete the homework assignments with my family and mark the math and science problems that I do not understand to review with my teachers.
- Attend/download math seminars to receive extra assistance with math problems that I need help solving.
- Finish the math packet every six weeks at home including creating my own linear equations using variables that I observe.
- Use the websites my teachers share with me to complete science and math practice test and activities.

MY Goals

My own personal goal for MATH is:

My own personal goal for SCIENCE is:

My TEACHER can help me reach my goal by:

My FAMILY can help me reach my goal by:



When families, teachers, and students CONNECT, we can achieve our goals!

Compact Tool 3-C: Sample School-Parent Compacts

Note: A copy of this sample can be downloaded [here](#).

Example 4: High School Compact (Brochure Style)

What is a School-Home Compact?

It is a written commitment describing how members of the school community—families, teachers, principals, and students—agree to share responsibility for student learning. The compact helps bridge the learning connection between school and home.



5 Did You Know?

- ⇒ Families, students, teachers, and faculty members work together to develop our school-parent compact. Each school year, two meetings are held for parents, teachers, and students to compare the compact with school achievement data to review our progress and assess our goals.
- ⇒ The compact is uniquely developed to meet the needs and goals of our school and students.
- ⇒ Families can provide feedback on the compact at any time. Please call Susan Smith at 615 555-1212 or visit our website, www.achievehigh.org for more in-

4 Parent Outreach Opportunities

There are many opportunities for families to involved and learn about Achieve High School, whether through our volunteer program, frequent visitor initiative, or open door classroom policy. Please contact our school to learn more about these great opportunities and more.

- ⇒ Family mentor program
- ⇒ Family engagement day
- ⇒ Family volunteer program
- ⇒ Parents as Tutors (P.A.T.)
- ⇒ Open house
- ⇒ Parent-teacher conferences
- ⇒ Daily school tours

Please call 615 555-1212 to schedule an appointment with your child's teacher or visit our website, www.achievehigh.org and click on the "Parent Information" link to learn more.

6 School and Home Communication

Achieve High school is committed to providing regular, two-way communication with families about student learning through the following methods:

- ⇒ Parent Portal
- ⇒ School website
- ⇒ Six week progress reports
- ⇒ Monthly newsletter
- ⇒ Telephone messages
- ⇒ Parent-teacher conferences
- ⇒ Text message system

For assistance utilizing any of our communication systems, please contact Susan Smith at 615 555-1212.

ACHIEVE HIGH SCHOOL

2017-18 School-Parent Compact



Mary Pleasant, Principal
615 555-1212
www.achievehigh.org

7

District Goals

1A

- ⇒ Increase student scores on the English I End of Course (EOC) exam by 5% in 2017-18.
- ⇒ Increase student scores on the English III EOC exam by 5% in 2017-18

School Goals

- ⇒ The school score on the English I EOC for first time test takers will increase from 80% to 87%.
- ⇒ The school score on the English III EOC for first time test takers will increase from 76% to 81%



Focus Area

To help students be strong writers across all content areas, we will focus on the following areas to improve student writing skills:

- ⇒ Write analytic arguments with valid reasoning and claims.
- ⇒ Produce clear and coherent writing in the development, organization,

Increasing Literacy Skills

As a school—We will facilitate and utilize student-led conferences for students to share their literary portfolios and goals, including a review of their writing samples from the monthly school-wide writing days. These days are designated for students to write of specific topics in a clear and supportive style.

1B

As a parent—I will participate in student-led conferences and provide constructive feedback, learn ways to support student goals, and discuss samples of my student's persuasive writing.

2

As a student—I will maintain a literary portfolio that will include the self-evaluation of my reading and writing goals, as well as on going samples of my writing completed during monthly school-wide writing days.

3

Improving Vocabulary

As a school—We will distribute a list of literary terms for parents and students to master, recommend educational websites for extra practice, and provide families with a progress log to monitor students' practice on vocabulary websites.

1B

As a parent—I will ensure my student masters the list of literary terms by the end of the first nine weeks, and ensure my child spends 45 minutes each week practicing on the recommended vocabulary websites by reviewing student usage records and signing off on the weekly progress log provided by the school.

2

As a student—I will work with my family to master the list of literary terms by the end of the first nine weeks and complete 45 minutes each week of vocabulary practice on the recommended websites and include my signed progress log in my literary portfolio for conferences.

3

Building Better Writers

As a school—We will provide students and parents with a "Writer's Checklist" to assist students and parents with the essential elements of standard written and spoken English.

1B

As a parent—I will review samples of my student's writing three times a month and use the "Writer's Checklist" while discussing teacher feedback with my student.

2

As a student—I will routinely refer to my "Writer's Checklist" to guide my writing and learn ways to strengthen my writing style and structure.

3

Compact Tool 3-D: Questions to Review the Compact Development Process

The school-parent compact is like a blueprint. It's a plan for building a partnership between families and teachers to improve student achievement.

The school-parent compact, when completed, should identify:

- the purpose of the school-parent compact,
- the primary district and school academic goals, and
- the principle stakeholders and their responsibility in meeting those goals.

As the school-parent compact is developed, designed, and then promoted within the school community, consider these questions:

- Did you win buy-in from the school staff, most notably from the school principal, but also from parents and families?
- Did you include parents and families on the committee that designed and developed the compact?
- Did you assess your families' interests and strengths as well as challenges?
- Did you provide surveys to families and students?
- Did you review data and findings gathered in the most recent school improvement plan needs assessment?
- Did you review the priorities and goals in the school improvement plan?
- Did you align the goals in the compact with some of the identified goals in the school improvement plan?
- Did you gather input from each grade level?
- Did you maintain a record of the compact committee meetings: sign-in sheet, agendas, handouts, and minutes?
- Are the suggestions for student success relevant, reasonable, and practical?
- Are the suggestions about building partnerships and facilitating communication relevant, reasonable, and practical?
- Did you review the compact using the guide to quality (Compact Tool 3-A)?
- Do you have strategies in place to introduce, promote, and implement the compact?
- What is the process to review, revise, and celebrate the compact?



When the committee charged with the design and development of the school-parent compact can confidently answer the above questions in the affirmative or provide a reasonable description of the

process, then the compact is ready to be presented to school leadership for final review. Upon approval, you are ready to move onto Compact Step 4: Promote, Engage, & Implement.

Compact Step 4: Promote, Engage, & Implement

Overview

Description: This section has three intended outcomes: *promote* the compact to all stakeholders, develop relationships with families to *engage* them, and *implement* the compact as a tool to strengthen partnerships for student achievement. Ongoing, meaningful, two-way communication is a goal of Title I, Part A, and the compact is a means to make this happen.

Legal Reference: P.L. 114-95 Section 1116 (d) and (e)

Tools:

- **Tool 4-A: Promote the Compact:** Several ideas for getting the compact in front of all stakeholders, so it can help everyone see how families and teachers will collaborate for the benefit of students.
- **Tool 4-B: Welcome and Engage Families:** Schools that successfully create strong partnerships for student achievement consistently reach out to families and connect them to teachers and to what their children are learning and doing in class. This tool provides tips on how to do that.
- **Tool 4-C: Sign-in Sheet Template:** A standard template that can be used to document stakeholder involvement in any school or district planning meeting/event. The template contains fields for participant name, position, and role on the team.
- **Tool 4-D: Implement the Compact:** At workshops, class meetings, parent-teacher conferences, or orientation events, share grade-level goals and strategies with families. Follow up with two-way conversations about how to work together to support the goals and brainstorm home learning strategies families can use on a regular basis.

Additional Resources:

- [Outreach to Families \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)
- [Reach Out to Families: Parent-Teacher Conversations about Learning \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)
- [Market the Compact \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)
- [Classroom Family Engagement Rubric \(Flamboyan Foundation\)](#)
- [Tools for Engaging Families and Communities as Partners In Education](#)

Compact Tool 4-A: Promote the Compact

Developing a strong, meaningful compact is a huge accomplishment! The next step is to ensure it gets out there and actually has an impact. Share the compact to help everyone see how families and teachers will collaborate for the benefit of students, and use it to keep the community aware of school goals. The compact may spark ideas in families, teachers, and community members about how to do even more. Here are some tips for promoting the compact:

- **Tip 1 - Include the compact in school information and materials.** Include the compact in orientation packets sent to families at the beginning of the year with a personal note. Explain to stakeholders what the compact is and how the goals of the compact are going to be the instructional focus of the year in each grade level.



BRIGHT IDEA: One school changed its fall “back-to-school night” to focus on the compact at each grade level. The teachers greeted families in their classrooms and went over the strategies and details of the compact, explaining how they could be engaged at home to support the school’s goals for student achievement.

- **Tip 2 - Display the compact.** Post the compact on the school website and make sure learning activities and events are posted on the home page. Hang an attractive and enlarged version at the front entrance of the school for all to see. Display grade-level compacts in classrooms. Have copies in the office for all visitors and volunteers. Put extra copies in the guidance office. Post the compact at the post office, public library, and other neighborhood businesses.
- **Tip 3 - Discuss the compact at parent-teacher conferences.** The law states that the compact shall be discussed, as it relates to the individual child’s achievement, during [parent-teacher conferences](#) in elementary schools at least annually [Section 1116 (d) (2) (A)]. Remember to document that this took place.
- **Tip 4 - Keep it going!** Revisit the compact at other meetings and school functions throughout the year: open houses, math/reading nights, student performances, the annual Title I meeting, etc. Review the compact at faculty meetings to remind teachers about reaching their classroom goals. Ask teachers to share their experiences using the compact and the activities laid out in it. Automated messaging systems can also be helpful for mentioning the compact, reminding families of its purpose, alerting families about upcoming learning events, and sending home a learning tip of the week. The school newsletter can have tips from workshops and learning events, such as simple math games for families, words of the week, or other learning strategies.

- **Tip 5 - Bring everyone on board.** Let your entire staff know the goals of the compact, and brainstorm ideas for how they can help. Write announcements for the principal to promote activities and workshops planned through the compact and to make reports on progress toward the goals in the compact.
- **Tip 6 - Enlist community partners to help promote the compact.** Approach local community groups and businesses to help raise awareness of your compact. How can they help to explain its purpose and assist in fostering partnerships between families, schools, and community partners?



Compact Tool 4-B: Welcome and Engage Families

Teachers tell us that reaching out to families and engaging them in school activities is difficult. Schools that do this successfully establish what is called the [Joining Process](#)⁶ – one that *welcomes* families, *honors* who they are and what they can contribute, and *connects* them to teachers and to what their children are learning and doing in class.

Before families will step in and help with academic skills, they first need to feel comfortable, invited, and able to do what we ask of them. It's not just what we do, but *how* we do it. Here are some strategies that schools can use to reach out and engage families.

Welcome families and make sure they feel fully invited:

- Greet families outside the building in the morning and afternoon as they drop off and pick up their children. Make a personal connection, and remind them of upcoming school events. It's especially meaningful if the principal does this, too.
- Recruit families to evening events as they are picking up their children from after-school programs. Offer books, learning activities, and dinner.
- Do more than just send out flyers; call families with a personal invitation. Families often say when they get flyers, they think the invitation isn't really for them. The family coordinator can make a contact list and divide it up among the principal, parent group leaders, teachers, counselors, the assistant principal, literacy and math coaches, etc.
- Do a "[Welcoming Walk-Through](#)" to make sure your school is warm and friendly to families and visitors.
- Organize a "buddy system" to draw families to learning activities. Family "buddies" reach out to new families, stopping by their homes to welcome them to the school and offering to accompany them to the next family event. This is a natural job for the school PTA/PTO or other parent group.
- Whatever you offer, make sure it's fun! Don't call it a "compact meeting;" think of something enticing, like a family math game night, book talks, or author's tea. Put on some music or ask local musicians to play. Facilitate a conversation, not a presentation.

Honor families and ask for their ideas:

Honoring families manifests in a number of ways: showing respect, listening to families' ideas (and acting on them), thanking families for their contributions large and small, removing barriers to their

⁶ Henderson, Mapp, Davies and Johnson. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

participation, and interviewing/surveying them to learn more about who they are and what they can offer (See the surveys in Compact Step 2 for examples).

- Organize a [“community walk”](#) over the summer, one evening after school, or on a weekend to meet and greet families where they live. Ask family members who live in the neighborhood to help lead the tour. Pass out books and information about the school, and invite families to attend upcoming events. Students and families will appreciate this signal that school staff really care and want to know them better.
- Translate materials into families’ home languages, and be sure there is someone who can provide translations at all meetings for families.
- Have events and activities at times and places that are convenient for families. Ask families what works for them. Have an ice cream social in a local park, or offer coffee with the principal in families’ homes.
- Invite the whole family to events, and offer fun learning activities for children. Serve food so families don’t have to prepare a meal before they come.
- Involve families in planning activities, and use their ideas. They will know what will attract their friends and the best times to hold an event. Recognize their expertise! Ask family members to lead meetings or organize a workshop. Families may step up to call and recruit other families, host house meetings, conduct and tally survey results, organize childcare, and form car pools for workshops.

Connect families to what their children are learning:

- Hold exhibitions of student work, and show families how to use a rubric to assess its quality. Ask students to explain what they learned from doing a project or assignment.
- Make [home visits](#) to find out children’s talents and interests, explain what is in the school-parent compact, and provide learning materials families can use with children.
- Invite families to observe in class and learn how teachers set up the classroom for learning.
- Open a family resource area: an inviting place to gather and lend learning materials and games. Stock up on information about colleges and postsecondary training programs.
- Send home [interactive homework](#) assignments and learning kits regularly, along with a folder of graded student work.
- Hold structured grade-level or classroom learning conversations (see Compact Tool 4-D: Parent Teacher Learning Conversations) between teachers and families to discuss how they can work together to help children develop crucial academic skills and accomplish the grade-level goals addressed in the compact.

Compact Step 4-C: Sign in Sheet to Document Stakeholder Involvement

Note: An editable version of this template can be downloaded [here](#).

Utilize this template to document stakeholder involvement in any school or district meeting/event where stakeholder input will be shared. The sign in sheet contains fields for participant name, position, and role in the meeting.

School Name: <u>Poplar Elementary School</u>		
Name of Event or Meeting: <u>School-Parent Compact Committee Meeting</u>		
Date and Time: <u>January 25, 2018; 3:30-4:30 p.m.</u>		
Name	Position	Role
<i>Amy Smith</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>3rd grade representative</i>
<i>Mark Johnson</i>	<i>Math Coach</i>	<i>Support Staff</i>
<i>Jill Starks</i>	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<i>School Leadership</i>
<i>Sara Jones</i>	<i>Afterschool Coordinator</i>	<i>Community Partner</i>
<i>Bob Green</i>	<i>1st Grade Parent</i>	<i>Family representative</i>
<i>Lisa Williams</i>	<i>Art Teacher</i>	<i>Related arts representative</i>
<i>Justin Fowler</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>5th grade representative</i>
<i>Melissa Peters</i>	<i>3rd Grade Grandparent</i>	<i>Family representative</i>
<i>Joyce Carver</i>	<i>School Counselor</i>	<i>Support staff</i>

Compact Tool 4-D: Parent Teacher Learning Conversations⁷

Holding structured grade-level specific [learning conversations](#) with families is a powerful way to form partnerships and improve student learning. It can be done in about an hour, and the goal of the conversation is to discuss how families and teachers can work together to help students develop crucial academic skills. Follow up with positive communication and further conversations later in the year to check on progress and revise goals and strategies. Use these conversations as a building block for your new school-parent compact, and use this time with families to practice the home learning strategies included in the compact.

A learning conversation can take place as part of an activity or event that the school is already hosting. For example, a back-to-school night can be restructured so that parents meet with teachers in the classroom. Other possibilities include literacy/math nights, family workshops, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, and holiday celebrations. Steps include:

1. **Icebreaker/welcome** (10-12 minutes): Welcome families, and seat them in small groups.
 - Ask families to share with their group: “What are some things you are doing at home to help your child learn?” Have someone at each table record participants’ responses.
 - After a while, ask tables to report out, one idea per table at a time. Chart the answers.
 - Listen closely, and affirm what families say. This builds trust, establishes a more personal relationship, and provides good information about what to build on.
2. **Share data on key skills** (10 mins):
 - Share with families some learning goals for the year, and explain the skills where students need the most help. Hopefully, this information is included in your current school-parent compact.
 - Explain what the skills are and how they are measured (e.g., Fluency: fourth graders should be able to read 105 words a minute correctly and with expression. Our students average about 62 words, and only 15% are at grade level.)
3. **Model a teaching strategy that addresses the learning goal** (5 mins): “Here is something that you can do at home to help your child with this skill.” Pick 1-2 strategies that families can easily use at home.
4. **Practice this activity at tables.** (10 mins): Ask families to pair up. One person can play the role of the child as the other person practices the approach the teacher just shared. Allow

⁷ For more information and videos on each step, see Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships’ [Parent-Teacher Conversations About Learning](#)

enough time for everyone to practice. (During this time, walk around and coach families, as needed.)

5. **Help families set goals for their child.** (5 mins) (e.g., "If your child is at a 62 in fluency now, where would you want/expect him to be three months from now?") Coach parents to set realistic goals.
6. **Ask families, "How can I help you and your child accomplish this goal and make growth?"** (10 mins): Chart families' questions and ideas. (e.g., Can we come watch you teach this in class? Can you record any weekly progress in my child's planner? Can you send us more ideas about how to help at home? Can we borrow books and learning games from the class library?) All of this information can be used as content for the school-parent compact.
7. **Closure** (5 mins): Ask for any lingering questions, explain how you will follow up, and share your contact information.

Compact Step 5: Review, Revise, and Celebrate

Overview

Description: This section covers the importance of viewing the compact as a cycle of continuous improvement. Continuous improvement means that plans and goals are *reviewed* to determine what has been achieved, what is working, and what needs to change for improvement. As goals and priorities that have been identified in the school improvement plan and needs assessment are met, new ones are identified. Then, the compact is *revised* to reflect these changes. Finally, it is important to highlight all the work that has been done, *celebrate* goals that have been reached, and build momentum for the next year.

Legal Reference: P.L. 114-95, Section 1116, (d)(2)(A)

P.L. 114-95, Section 1116 (a)(2)(E) and (b) (1)

Review:

Remember, your school-parent compact must be reviewed annually with input from families. There are several evaluation tools, such as focus groups, that can be considered by schools and districts as they complete the annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the school-parent compact. Using multiple methods will result in a better review of the compact.

Tools:

- **Tool 5-A: Summary of Evaluation Tools:** A chart showing advantages and disadvantages of three different methods of reviewing the school-parent compact.
- **Tool 5-B: Focus Group and Open Discussion Forum Facilitation Tips:** Provides guidance and questions for conducting a school-parent compact focus group or open discussion forum.
- **Tool 5-C: School-Parent Compact Review Meeting Template:** A template that provides example questions to ask during a school-parent compact review meeting in order to receive effective feedback tied to student achievement. This form should not be used with families in isolation. It is designed to be used as a “thought catcher” during a guided conversation that evokes two-way communication.

Revise:

Once families have provided input and helped review the compact, the next step is to revise the compact to make sure it aligns with the current SIP and continues to foster what’s working while also improving on areas of growth.

Look at your SIP to make sure the compact is up-to-date with any changes in goals and priorities. Are the skill areas you identified still current? Update these, with help from grade level/content and data teams.

Check the cover and other contents. Are they current? Revise the list of staff, and add new events and activities, as needed.

Celebrate:

The compact development team has done a lot of work to revitalize your old compact. Take an opportunity to celebrate and appreciate those involved. Ending the year on a positive note will help build momentum for the next year.

BRIGHT IDEA: Every June, one school district holds a dinner party for all of the school compact teams to celebrate the highlights of the school year. This event is called “Grow and Glow”, and teams of teachers, families, and community members dine together and share their successes. Each school does a display and presentation about their school-parent compact, and each display showcases what has happened as a result of the compact’s programs and goals and what steps will be taken to improve next year. This is a wonderful way to share ideas and convey the importance of engaging families. It brings closure at the end of a job well done, and it renews energy for the coming year.



Additional Resources:

- [School-Parent Compact Checklist \(TDOE document\)](#)
- [Using Focus Groups in Schools](#)
- [Compact Tool 3-A: School-Parent Compact Guide to Quality](#)
- [Review, Revise and Celebrate Progress Each Year \(Connecticut School, Family, Community Partnerships\)](#)

Compact Tool 5-A: Summary of Evaluation Tools

There are several evaluation tools that can be used by districts and schools to complete an annual review of the content and effectiveness of the school-parent compact. Using multiple methods often results in a better review. Refer to the chart below for a summary of three different evaluation tools.

Evaluation Tool		
Focus Group	Surveys	Open Discussion Forum
Target Audience		
Title I Families	Title I Families	Title I Families
Description		
Focus groups are small groups of 6-12 attendees used to gather qualitative data to better understand families' perspectives.	Surveys are a commonly used method for collecting family feedback in an anonymous format.	Open discussion forums are similar to town hall meetings, allowing large groups of families the opportunity to provide feedback.
Advantages		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and hear parent and family opinions firsthand • Open/safe environment that encourages parents and family members to engage in discussion. • People are often willing to talk longer face-to-face versus filling out a form or via phone • Costs can be contained if internal resources are used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows respondents to complete at their leisure with a specified return date • Commonly viewed as less intrusive and more private than other evaluation methods • Effective way for all families to be part of the process in a short amount of time • Receive more accurate answers to sensitive questions due to confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and hear parent/family thoughts and opinions firsthand • Allows for large audience to participate • Can be a cost-effective method to gain input when striving to evaluate the compact in a short amount of time • Multiple meetings can be scheduled to accommodate various schedules
Disadvantages		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits the number of opinions at one time that could come from a larger/wider audience • Group conversation may be dominated by a few attendees, resulting in only their opinions being heard • The facilitator needs to find a centralized location to have the meetings, send out notices about the focus group, and make arrangements for families without transportation to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all parents may participate due to low literacy levels • Requires persistent follow-up and tracking to ensure high response rate • May require computer access to participate • Mailing surveys can get expensive with the costs of postage, labels, copies, and envelopes • No face-to-face interaction to gauge the conversation and determine sincerity • Can be challenging to develop a high-quality survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a central location to host a meeting may be difficult if the anticipated audience is too large for school facilities • Skilled facilitator must lead the forum and allow time for a majority of attendees to comment • Can be hard to regain control of the group if it is lost • Cost of transportation and childcare can cause meeting to become expensive if held multiple times

Compact Tool 5-B: Focus Group and Open Discussion Forum Facilitation Tips and Sample Questions

Focus Group

A focus group provides the opportunity for people to get together in a confidential setting and allows for structured evaluation that is intended to yield useful data. Schools and districts can facilitate focus groups as the main source of evaluating their school-parent compacts; however, it would require that several focus group meetings be held to ensure all families are given an opportunity to participate. Focus groups can also be used as a supplemental evaluation to follow-up on feedback that is received from surveys.

Invite a few parents into small groups during a celebration, learning activity, PTA/PTO meeting, parent-teacher conference, or other event. Try to make sure that the group represents the diversity of your school community. You may have to offer multiple meetings to make sure all families have the opportunity to participate. Keeping the groups small (i.e., 6-12 people) makes it less intimidating, so participants feel free to speak up.

Asking questions in small groups rather than in a written survey allows for discussion and the exchange of ideas and experiences. In settings like these, relationships develop, volunteers step up, and leaders emerge. Remember, it's all about the conversations!

Open Discussion Forum

An open discussion forum provides a way to gather input from many different people in a large group setting. This can sometimes be challenging to facilitate and organize, but with effective planning, it can yield a large amount of participation and data for evaluating your school-parent compact.

Considerations include having a large and centralized place to meet that is also welcoming and will foster participation and ensuring that child care, language translation, and other barriers to participation are planned for. Allotting for time, managing different points of view, and other group facilitation challenges must also be considered when planning an effective open discussion forum.

One way that this can be achieved is through a question gallery walk. The questions listed below and others created by the school/district are written on chart paper around the room. Breaking the participants into smaller groups and having them spend a set amount of time brainstorming responses to each question, allows everyone to participate and consider others' viewpoints as they move around the room. It is important that facilitators also participate and move around the room praising, encouraging, and keeping the groups motivated and focused. After all participants have spent time on each question, the facilitator can gather everyone back into a large group and discuss the responses.

Focus Group and Open Discussion Forum Sample Questions

Step 1: Begin with an overview of the current school-parent compact.

Step 2: Facilitate a discussion using the following questions, ensuring that responses are carefully recorded.

- What programs or strategies would you like to see added to the school improvement plan (SIP) or school-parent compact in the future? Remember that the SIP is the basis for the school-parent compact.
- What do you like about the current school-parent compact?
- How did you use the compact?
- In what ways was the compact helpful?
- What do you think would make the compact better?
- Name some ways in which the school has been successful in helping you and your children meet academic goals and challenges throughout the year.
- How can the school and district get more families to participate in this process?

Compact Tool 5-C: School-Parent Compact Review Meeting Template

Note: An editable version of this template can be found [here](#).

School-Parent Compact Review Meeting

Name of School

Grade Level

Date and Time of Meeting

SAMPLE: This template provides an example of questions to ask during school-parent compact review meeting in order to receive effective feedback tied to student achievement. This form should not be used with families in isolation. It is designed to be used as a “thought catcher” during a guided conversation that evokes two-way communication. The text in **bold** type should be edited to meet the needs of your school, students, and applicable data. The text in **red** type provides an example of how a family might respond.

A school-parent compact is an agreement that parents, students, and teacher develop together. It explains how parents and teachers will work in partnership to make sure all students get the individual support they need to reach and exceed grade-level standards.

The data just shared with you show that **85 percent of the 2nd grade students at our school are proficient or higher in math on the TNReady Assessment. While most of our students are doing well, there are about three entire classrooms of students (or 15 percent of the students at the school) who are not proficient in math standards.**

Do you agree that the 2nd grade School-Parent Compact should focus on increasing the **math scores on the TNReady?**

Yes X No

If no, please explain why:

In the chart below please list a few things your child exceeds at with **math** as well as few things your child struggles with.

In math , my child exceeds at:	In math , my child struggles with:
My child can subtract basic math facts.	My child sometimes has a hard time with subtraction when he has to regroup

Math Focus Area for Compact: Place value and math fact fluency

In the chart below please list a few things you, your child, and your child’s teachers could help with to increase your child’s **math** skills. Look on the board to see suggestions already provided by teachers and students.

My child's teacher can help me help my child with math by:	I can help my child in math by:	My child can help improve his/her math by:
Give me ideas of math games that my son can play online for additional practice.	Playing math games with my son to make sure he is practicing and learning.	Asking for help when he does not understand his math work. Playing math games to practice his math skills.

Appendices

Appendix A: Public Law 114-95 Section 1116

a) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY POLICY-

(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.

(2) WRITTEN POLICY- Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part **shall** develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy. The policy **shall** be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establish the agency's expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family involvement, and describe how the agency **will** —

(A) involve parents and family members in jointly developing the local educational agency plan under section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1111(d).

(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;

(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;

(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, **including identifying**—

(i) 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);

(ii) the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and

(iii) strategies to support successful school and family interactions;

(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; and

(F) involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the local educational agency 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.”; and (C) in paragraph (3)—

(3) RESERVATION-

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each local educational agency **shall** reserve at least 1 percent of its allocation under subpart 2 to assist schools to carry out the activities described in this section, except that this subparagraph shall not apply if 1 percent of such agency’s allocation under subpart, 2 for the fiscal year for which the determination is made is \$5,000 or less. Nothing in this subparagraph shall be construed to limit local educational agencies from reserving more than 1 percent of its allocation under subpart 2 to assist schools to carry out activities described in this section.

(B) PARENT 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.

(C) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS- Not less than 90 percent of the funds reserved subparagraph (A) **shall** be distributed to schools served under this part with priority given to high need schools.

(D) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds reserved under subparagraph (A) by a local educational agency shall be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the local educational agency’s parent and family engagement policy, **including not less than 1 of the following:**

(i) Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for local educational agency and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.

(ii) Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.

(iii) 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.

(iv) 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.

(v) Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the local educational agency determines are appropriate and consistent with such agency's parent and family engagement policy.”;

(b) SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY-

(1) IN GENERAL- Each school served under this part **shall** jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents, that **shall** describe the means for carrying out the requirements of subsections (c) through (f). Parents **shall** be notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. Such policy **shall** be made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

(2) SPECIAL RULE- If the school has a parent and family engagement policy that applies to all parents and family members, such school may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

(3) AMENDMENT- If the local educational agency involved has a school district-level parent and family engagement policy that applies to all parents and family members in all schools served by the local educational agency, such agency may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

(4) PARENTAL COMMENTS- If the plan under section 1112 is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the local educational agency shall submit any parent comments with such plan when such local educational agency submits the plan to the State.

(c) POLICY INVOLVEMENT- Each school served under this part **shall**

(1) convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain the requirements of this part, and the right of the parents to be involved;

(2) offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;

(3) involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b) except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children;

(4) provide parents of participating children —

(A) timely information about programs under this part;

(B) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and

(C) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible; and

(5) if the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

(d) SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HIGH STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT- As a component of the school-level parent and family engagement policy developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part **shall** jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. Such compact shall —

(1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging State academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and

(2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, **at a minimum** —

(A) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement;

(B) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;

(C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and

(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.

(e) BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT- To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school and local educational agency assisted under this part —

- (1) **shall** provide assistance to parents of children served by the school or local educational agency, as appropriate, in understanding such topics the challenging State academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
- (2) **shall** provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parental involvement;
- (3) **shall** educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school;
- (4) **shall**, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children;
- (5) **shall** ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand;
- (6) **may** involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;
- (7) **may** provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the local educational agency has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training;
- (8) **may** pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- (9) **may** train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;
- (10) **may** arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation;
- (11) **may** adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement;
- (12) **may** establish a districtwide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section;

(13) **may** develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and

(14) **shall** provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request.

(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.

(g) FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS.—In a State operating a program under part E of Title IV, each local educational agency or school that receives assistance under this part shall inform parents and organizations of the existence of the program.

(h) REVIEW- The State educational agency **shall** review the local educational agency's parent and family engagement policies and practices to determine if the policies and practices meet the requirements of this section.

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