

Questions & Answers

Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement Requirements During COVID-19

1. **What are the requirements for ESSA Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement?**

Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires that local educational agencies (LEAs), conduct outreach to all parents and family members and implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents and family members. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children (ESSA § 1116[a][1]).

More specifically, Title I, Part A requires LEAs and schools to:

- jointly develop and annually evaluate, a [written parent and family engagement policy](#) with the parents and family members of participating children.
- involve families in the decisions regarding how reserved **Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement funds** are allotted for family engagement activities.
- 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 Title I, Part A, and to explain the requirements of Title I, Part A, and the right of the parents to be involved.
- develop a [school-parent compact in partnership](#) with parents for all children served under Title I, Part A, that outlines how families, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and families will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

2. **Many schools gather family input and cover several of the above requirements during the annual Title I meeting. If schools are unable to hold in-person meetings due to school closures or other COVID-19 related issues, how can they be sure to still meet all of the Title I, Part A requirements for Parent and Family Engagement?**

Typically, required annual Title I meetings are held close to the beginning of the school year in August or September. The timeline for other Title I parent and family engagement activities, planning meetings, etc., are at the discretion of districts and schools. There are several alternatives to having in-person meetings for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing outreach programs, activities, and procedures in meaningful consultation with parents and families. Alternatives may include:

- Hosting online meetings (Facebook Live, Zoom, GoTo, Skype, Google or other online platforms)
 - **TIP:** Whenever possible, virtual meetings should be recorded and posted to the school's website and social media pages and a link to the recording should be emailed to all families with a point of contact for families. Be sure to archive all meeting recordings for documentation.
 - **TIP:** Revise the *Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact* to reflect plans for virtual events and meetings. Families will appreciate a clear explanation of what family engagement will look like this year.
- Conducting conference calls with families
- Seeking input through online surveys sent to families (via email, website, or Facebook posts, placed

in Google Classroom, etc.)

- **TIP:** Follow up each family engagement activity with a survey. Families may not feel comfortable speaking up in a virtual setting, so it's important to provide multiple ways to communicate, as well as points of contact should they wish to follow up. Ensure that families who view recorded meetings also have access to the survey.

The current circumstances provide a unique opportunity for schools and teachers to reach out to families to build educational partnerships through online/virtual resources and other creative outreach measures. Ensure that schools maintain required documentation showing that all families have been contacted and have had the opportunity to participate and provide feedback.

3. *Last spring, my school had to cancel planning meetings with families focused on revisions to the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the School-Parent Compact. Is there any guidance for making up these meetings?*

As noted above, there is the flexibility of having in-person meetings for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing outreach programs, activities, and procedures in meaningful consultation with parents and families. This also applies to events focused on the LEA- and school-level *Parent and Family Engagement Policies, and School-Parent Compacts*. Meetings do not have to take place during a specific period or only when in-person meetings are an option. See in-person meeting alternatives listed in question 2.

4. *What is the proper documentation that LEAs and schools should maintain for virtual meetings and events?*

If the annual Title I meeting, parent advisory meetings, or other Title I family events must be held virtually, LEAs and school staff should maintain documentation including:

• **Sign-in sheets**

- Sign-in sheets should be clearly labeled with the name of the event and, when possible, identify the role of attendees (parent, teacher, school leader, LEA staff, etc.).
- Alternatives to traditional in-person sign-in sheets include surveys, screenshots of all participants logged into the meeting, virtual sign-in sheets, and/ or participant logs of meeting platforms (i.e., Microsoft Teams Google Drive, Skype, etc.).

• **Agendas:**

- Archive copies of detailed meeting agendas. Post agendas online when possible.
- For the Annual Title I meeting, be sure your agenda covers all of the required topics.

• **Invitations/flyers/advertisements for required meetings:**

- Copies of letters or emails to families, flyers, newsletter announcements, website announcements, newspaper ads, radio ads, social media posts, Remind 101 announcements, etc. should be archived.

• **Presentation materials:**

- Archive copies of presentation slides, handouts, and any other meeting materials provided to families.

• **Meeting minutes:**

- Be sure to save copies of meeting minutes with details about what was discussed.

5. *How can our LEA spend funds budgeted for parent and family engagement activities (specifically, Title I, Part A required family engagement set-aside)?*

Distance learning and virtual meetings require a unique partnership between the school and family. There are many possible uses for family engagement using Title I, Part A funds. It is critical to connect learners and their families to what is going on in the classroom to ensure that each child has what they need. Some examples of allowable uses of these funds include:

- web-based parent communication platforms/materials;
- copy, postage, and advertising (newspaper, TV, radio, etc.) costs associated with parent communications;
- creating coaching/teaching tutorials or web-based modules to help families with at-home learning;
- academic materials for at-home learning kits;
- stipends for school staff to lead and attend family engagement activities outside of normal school hours; or
- stipends for school staff to provide wellness checks on families outside of school hours (via phone, video conference, etc.).