ESSA Required Family and Community Engagement Activities (Titles I, II, III and IV)

# Family and Community Engagement Requirements of ESSA

The activities listed in the first section consist of requirements specific to Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Requirements related to Titles II, III, and IV are addressed in the table at the end of this document. Several of ESSA’s required family and community engagement activities are cross-cutting and may be met through a consolidated stakeholder engagement process, rather than separate processes for each Title. All information described below on family engagement must, unless otherwise noted, be distributed to the families/guardians of participating students in an easily understandable format and language.

# District Family Engagement Policy

**Each district** that receives Title I funds must develop a written family engagement policy. Families/guardians must be involved in the development of this policy and agree to the contents of the policy. The family engagement policy must describe how the district will:

1. actively involve families, guardians, teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, administrators, and other appropriate school personnel in the joint development of the Title I portion of the annual ESSA consolidated grant application;
2. as applicable, center families/guardians in the development and decision making for schoolwide and/or targeted assistance program plans as well as comprehensive support and improvement plans;
3. build and enhance the capacity of all participating schools to implement authentic and effective family/guardian engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;
4. develop culturally and multilingual sustaining systems for effective family engagement **at the district and school level** by:
   1. providing accessible tools to assist all families in understanding state academic standards, local and state assessments, the requirements of Title I;
   2. sharing best practices and resources with families/guardians on how to monitor and improve student academic progress and achievement
   3. educating all school staff on the value of family engagement practices and adopting a strengths-based approach to: building a respectful, trusting, and reciprocal relationship by recognizing the strengths of families; acknowledging, respecting, and learning from individual and group differences; considering family preferences while adapting practices; sharing decision making with family members and guardians; and approaching families/guardians as equal and reciprocal partners;
   4. coordinating, integrating, and aligning Title I family engagement strategies with family engagement strategies under other programs such as the Head Start program and state-run preschool programs;
5. conduct, with the meaningful involvement of Families/ Guardians, guardians, and families, an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of Title-I served schools, including by:
   1. identifying and addressing barriers to greater participation by families/guardians;
   2. identifying what families/guardians are currently providing for their student’s learning, including how families engage with teachers and staff; and
   3. incorporating effective engagement strategies into all systems and services to support successful school and family/guardian interactions;
6. design evidence-based strategies and develop policies for more effective family engagement practices based on the findings of the annual evaluation;
7. review, revise, and establish new practices in the family engagement policy, if needed, based on the annual evaluation; and
8. involve families/guardians in Title I activities, as appropriate.

# School Family Engagement Policy

**Each** **school** that receives Title I funds must develop and update annually, a written family engagement policy. Rather than having separate family engagement policies at the school and district level, **a district may adopt a policy that incorporates all required district-level and school-level components under ESSA**. Regardless of whether the district creates separate policies for itself and Title I schools or just one policy for all, this policy must be developed jointly with, and distributed to, families/guardians of participating students. It must also be made available to the local community. It must describe how the school will:

1. convene at least one meeting for families/guardians of participating students annually at a convenient time, offering multiple meetings and opportunities for multiple languages, if necessary, at which the school will inform families/guardians of the school’s participation in Title I and the requirements of Title I, including family engagement requirements;
2. ensure successful systems and policies are in place for families/guardians to be actively involved in the planning, implementation, and review of Title I programs; and
3. provide to families/guardians of participating students:
   1. timely information about programs under Title I;
   2. an explanation of the curriculum and academic assessments used at the school, as well as the proficiency levels students are expected to meet based on state academic standards; and
   3. if requested by families/guardians, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate in decisions relating to the education of their students and respond to any suggestions as soon as feasible.

# School-Family Compact

As a component of the family engagement policy, **each school** served under Title I shall develop jointly with families/guardians a school-family compact for all students served under Title I. Although some districts choose to require that the school-family compact be signed by involved parties, this is not required. **The school-family compact may be part of the policy covering both district and school-level required components.** The compact will outline how families/guardians, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement, and the means by which the school and families/guardians will build and develop a partnership to help students achieve the state’s high standards. The school- family compact shall:

1. describe the school’s responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment and to help students meet the state’s academic standards;
2. define, with their input, families’/guardians’ role in supporting their student’s learning, volunteering in their student’s classroom, and participating in decisions relating to their student’s education; and
3. address the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and families/guardiansthrough:
   1. annual family/guardian-teacher conferences in schools during which the compact shall be discussed as it relates to the individual student’s achievement;
   2. regular reports to families/guardians on their student’s progress; and
   3. reasonable access to staff for families/guardians, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their student’s classroom, including observation of classroom activities.

# Families’ Right-to-Know

At the beginning of each school year, districts shall notify in writing the families/guardians of students attending a Title I school that they may request, and the district will provide in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of their student’s classroom teachers, including, at a minimum:

1. whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
2. whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
3. whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
4. whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

A school shall provide to each individual family/guardian:

* information on the student’s level of achievement and academic growth in each of the state academic assessments, as required under Title I, and
* timely notice that the student has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet state licensure requirements.

**Cross-Cutting Family Engagement Requirements of ESSA**

*The table below describes the family/guardian and stakeholder engagement requirements of ESSA Titles II, III, and IV. The stakeholder engagement processes described below may be part of a combined stakeholder engagement process that meets all the required components of Titles I (described in the previous section), II, III, and IV.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program** | **Activity or Deliverable** | **When to Complete** | **Carried out By** | **Stakeholders** | **Notes** |
| **Title II**  **(FC 140)** | **Title II Stakeholder Consultation** | **Annually** | **All Title II District** | **Families/ Guardians**, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals (including organizations representing such individuals), specialized instructional support personnel, community partners, and other organizations or partners with relevant expertise | Meaningfully consult stakeholders in development of Title II application  District must seek advice from stakeholders on how best to improve Title II activities to meet the grant’s purposes  District must, through consultation with listed stakeholders, coordinate its Title II activities with other related strategies, programs, and activities being conducted in the community |
| **Title III**  **(FC 180)** | **Title III Activities** | **Annually** | **All Title III Districts** | **Families/ Guardians**  of Title III-supported ELs and community partners | Must use funds to implement family and community engagement activities that enhance or support language instruction for ELs |
| **Title IV**  **(FC 309)** | **Title IV Stakeholder Consultation** | **Annually** | **All Title IV Districts** | **Families/ Guardians**, teachers, principals, other school leaders, students, community-based organizations, local government representatives, and others with relevant expertise | Meaningfully consult stakeholders in development of Title IV application  District must engage in continued consultation with listed stakeholders to improve Title IV activities to meet the grant’s purposes  Coordinate implementation with other related strategies, programs, and activities being conducted in the community |

**DESE Family Engagement Resources**

1. [ESSA Family Engagement website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/family-engagement.html)
2. [Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf)
3. [The Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment Version 2.0](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscp-fundamentals.docx)
4. [DESE Family Portal](https://www.doe.mass.edu/families/)
5. [ESSA Family Engagement Quick Reference Guide: Fulfilling ESSA Requirements while developing capacity building activities](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/qrg-family-engagement.docx)

**Anti-Racism Resources**

[Equity Resource Clearinghouse](https://rise.articulate.com/share/eXKRkUrUl_ustwWIewfFJJ-gw6dCCGIN#/)[[1]](#footnote-2) -

Anti-racism resources to assist district leaders in engaging staff and students in anti-racism discussions and activities. These resources encourage critical discussions, opportunities for learning, and activities that can help efforts to end systemic racism and remove barriers to improved family engagement.

1. **Disclaimer:** Reference in this web site to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public and does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)