



**ELGIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN
2016-2017**



Welcoming All Families ~ Supporting Student Success



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OVERVIEW

Family engagement is defined as the mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities to build relationships to support student learning and achievement and to support family well-being and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated in the child's educational experience and supports the whole child and is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate. TAC §102.1003

It has long been recognized by both researchers and practitioners that family engagement plays a non-negotiable role in education. It is no longer a suggestion, but rather a mandate, in Texas, with the passage of House Bill 4 in 2015. TEC §29.168, created by HB 4, 84th Texas Legislature, 2015, requires a school district or charter school to develop and implement a **Family Engagement Plan** to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. The local **Family Engagement Plan** must be based on the family engagement strategies established by TEA in collaboration with other state agencies.

According to TEA, the goal of TAC §102.1003, High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program, is to “provide districts with an opportunity to expand or enhance high-quality prekindergarten programs for qualifying students.” This ruling also outlines school district and charter school eligibility for grant funding and qualifications for students eligible to receive instruction under the grant program. The new High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program requires school districts and charter schools to meet the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (updated 2015).

The proposal also identifies in rule the family engagement strategies that districts and charter schools are required to address in a **Family Engagement Plan** in order to be eligible to receive grant funding under this program. TEA has identified six family engagement strategies which must be incorporated into the local **Family Engagement Plan**.

A district-wide **Family Engagement Plan** is also required by the Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Cycle 9 Grant, which was received by Elgin ISD In August, 2016. Family engagement is an important component of the grant which requires family engagement surveys and employs a Family Engagement Specialist. This plan will also serve to meet the requirements of the Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant / Elgin ACE Program.

ELGIN ISD FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

1. Facilitate family-to-family support.

- Elgin ISD has identified this as a need and wants to establish more opportunities for parent-to-parent training and parent-to-parent support.
- EISD intends to develop parent to parent networks and programs to expand family and parent engagement activities with qualified volunteers.
- District-wide dual language parent meetings are held monthly and publicized in both languages. English and Spanish speaking parents collaborate regarding program implementation. It is a goal to increase the scope and attendance of the dual language meetings.
- Elgin ISD has accomplished positive outcomes on a small scale through the Latino Literacy Project, Love and Logic parent training, and Partners in Print. These efforts will be continued and enhanced.
- A strong and active Migrant PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) is already in place. The meetings are well-attended and parents establish bonds and networks with other parents facilitating family support. The Migrant PAC model will be used to engage parents across the district.
- Parent education for parents of children receiving special education services is offered quarterly. This provides a forum for communication among parents with mutual interests and concerns.
- Families are able to interact in a positive manner during extended library hours offered at each campus through the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Grant.
- Grant resources will be used to expand parent education offerings so that all families of Pre-K children will have opportunities to participate and become engaged in their child's education.
- Parent-to-parent trainers will be recruited and volunteers will be expanded through Pre-K grant implementation.
- Watch Dog Dads at the elementary schools will be continued and expanded offering a unique opportunity for fathers to interact and support their children.
- PTA organizations at each campus offer family-to-family interaction and support revolving around school activities.
- The EISD monthly Superintendent's Coffee and Holiday Socials offer opportunities for parents and community members to interact and form support networks.
- The District Advisory Committee (DAC) and Campus Advisory Committees (CAC) provide opportunities for parents to interact and network with other parents interested in supporting public education in our community.

- The Family Engagement Specialist, recently hired with Elgin ACE Program funds, will provide activities for Elgin ACE participants and their parents, encouraging family-to-family support.
- ACE family meetings will be held in the evenings with child care and family meals provided by community partners and volunteers.
- EISD has invested in Ready Rosie which focuses on early literacy for families. This software offers mini-lessons in everyday settings for students and families grades birth through 3rd grade. The lessons are available at school and at home. The goal is to get more parents to sign up, enabling family to family support.

2. Establish a network of family resources.

- Elgin ISD has established multiple family resources through several competitive federal grants including the Elementary and Secondary School Counselor Grants, Farm to School Initiative, Innovative Approaches to Literacy Grant, and Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant (ACE Program). This effort is on-going, continually growing the network of family resources. Positive collaboration has been established with:
 - Family Health Center at Elgin ISD affiliated with Community Health Centers of South Central Texas,
 - Austin Community College at Elgin,
 - City of Elgin,
 - Elgin Chamber of Commerce,
 - Texas Center for Local Foods,
 - Bluebonnet Trails Mental Health,
 - Advocacy Outreach,
 - Elgin Pediatrics,
 - H.E.B.,
 - Readers are Leaders,
 - Sow Healthy Coalition,
 - Multiple local business leaders.
- Relationships with faith-based organizations such as Ministerial Alliance, First Baptist Church, and the Catholic Diocese have been established and churches have actually “adopted” EISD schools to support.
- Extended library hours offering after-school access to literature and technology at all campuses has been established through the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Grant. Parent/student involvement activities are also offered several times a year during extended library time. This initiative has been well received and the district plans to sustain the program after the grant period ends.
- Ready Rosie, an early literacy program designed to involve parents in their child's learning through mini-lessons in everyday settings, has been purchased and is available

for all elementary parents as well as community parents whose children do not attend EISD.

- Elgin ISD intends to use funding from the High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program to foster and increase community connections and resources. A new Community Resource Guide will be developed jointly between the City of Elgin and Elgin ISD in early 2017.
- Elgin ISD has a goal of establishing parent resource centers at every campus, beginning with our Pre-K campus, Elgin Elementary School. The parent resource centers will offer parents a comfortable and welcoming place to come for parent meetings, parent education, and educational activities to enhance their child's learning. Resources such as educational games, supplemental materials, and books/periodicals on parenting and childhood education will be offered through a parent lending library.
- Establishing a district-wide parent resource center at the EISD Flex Campus will be discussed as an option for 2017-2018.

3. Increase family participation in decision making.

- Elgin ISD has established a strong foundation of collaboration with parents and community partners. The district offers multiple parent and community involvement opportunities each school year including:
 - Latino Family Literacy Project,
 - Community faith-based partnerships,
 - Extended library hours,
 - Family literacy events,
 - Social work community resource services,
 - Early Head Start Program housed within our school district,
 - Family Health Center at Elgin ISD affiliated with Community Health Centers of South Central Texas.
- Strong Community Advisory Committees have already been established through three U.S.D.E. Grants and one U.S.D.A. Grant.
- Dr. Jodi Duron, Elgin ISD Superintendent, holds regular morning community/parent meetings called "Coffee with the Superintendent." These meetings are well attended with school district updates straight from the Superintendent's mouth. Communication flows both ways facilitating mutual problem solving.
- Parents are provided an opportunity to discuss school issues and provide input through the campus PTA.
- Extended library hours will be continued at all campuses allowing parents an opportunity to interact with school personnel in a less formal atmosphere and to provide input in decision-making.

- The District Advisory Committee boasts multiple community leaders and parents as active and participating members. These meetings are also well attended and allow parents a voice in local education decision-making.
- Parents will be represented on each Campus Advisory Committee and will be involved in the writing of the Campus Improvement Plan. (first 12 weeks of school)
- EISD will consult with parents and families to jointly develop/revise, agree upon and distribute the District and Campus Parental Involvement Policies. (first 12 weeks of school)
- Each Title I, Part A campus has a School-Parent Compact that outlines how the parents, the entire school staff, and the students share responsibility for improved student achievement and by what means the school and parents will build and develop a partnership describing how parents, staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. The School-Parent Compact will be distributed to all Title I parents and families. (first 12 weeks of school)
- Title I campuses will host an Annual Title I Parent Meeting providing information regarding federal programs and expenditures, informing parents of their right to be involved, and explaining the reservation of funds for parental involvement and the parents' role in giving input into use of funds. (first 12 weeks of school)
- Parents and educators will have the opportunity to provide input through surveys and through postings on the district's website.
- Elgin ISD is currently using Partners in Print framework to recruit and train parent volunteers to provide input regarding the school day program as well as the ACE program.
- EISD has a goal of increasing attendance at parent meetings and family events with a focus on first time attendees and parents of at risk students. Information will be obtained as to the best times, best nights, most convenient locations, and transportation in order to eliminate barriers to parent attendance.
- Nutritious refreshments/snacks and drinks, including coffee will be offered at parent meetings for parent convenience and to promote attendance.
- EISD will consult parents and families, students, and community in the design, development, and implementation of the Drug Use/Prevention and Intervention Program, Title IV, Part A.

4. Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning.

- EISD will continue to offer full day Pre-K to eligible students, enhancing and extending socialization and facilitating parent involvement for Pre-K parents.

- High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant funds will be used to increase family engagement efforts by providing parent training in the Pre-K curriculum and assessment process, technology assistance to access electronic reports specific to their child, early literacy, and child advocacy.
- Elgin ISD will expand Pre-K family engagement opportunities through this grant so that Pre-K parent participation is increased by 50%.
- According to a Comprehensive Needs Assessment Elgin has identified a need for a Parent Resource Center at our Pre-K campus. Implementing a functional and effective Parent Resource Center to serve our Pre-K campus is a priority.
- Workshops for parents will be held at the Parent Resource Center. Until a Parent Resource Center is fully established, parent workshops can be held afterschool and/or during the school day at individual campuses. Topics could include:
 - understanding State standards, curriculum as well as assessment,
 - local EISD assessments,
 - how to monitor their child's progress and work with teachers to improve student achievement,
 - parenting classes
 - behavior management, and
 - parent literacy.
- Progress with extended learning for families has been made with extended library hours and planned literacy activities after school involving students and parents. These efforts will be continued and expanded.
- Parents are encouraged to access their student's grades through the Parent Portal on the EISD website.
- ESL classes for parents will continue to be offered through the District ESL/Bilingual program.
- Elgin has a strong Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which consults with parents and families in its migrant program and will continue to encourage migrant family participation at PTA and family events sponsored by the schools.
- Program suggestions specific to Pre-Kinder from parents and staff include:
 - Special Pre-K Meet the Teacher Night,
 - Parent-teacher conferences with Pre-K parents,
 - Pre-K Boot Camp establishing Pre-K expectations,
 - Math Night and Science Night specific to Pre-K.
- The grant-funded Family Engagement Specialist is a welcome addition to current district staff and resources and will collaborate with family engagement activities offered through other programs to avoid duplication and for consistency across the district.

- The ACE Program Family Engagement Specialist will work with campus staff, particularly those familiar with at risk students and families, to gather information about types of parent training and events they believe are most needed at their site to enhance student learning and increase parent involvement.
- The Family Engagement Specialist will set a schedule of time when he/she will be available to parents and families at each site if they would like to conference by phone or set a face to face appointment to get support and provide input.
- Each campus will publish a school newsletter, available in digital format, to keep parents informed of important information including progress reports, report cards, test results, new programming options, and suggestions for parents to become involved in their child's education.
- A monthly Elgin ACE newsletter will be published at each campus which will include a calendar of events along with other pertinent parent and family information.
- District curriculum /courses of study may be accessed by a link from the EISD website.
- Parents will be notified of their right to request and receive information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. (Parent/Student Handbook)
- Written notice will be provided to a parent or guardian of each student in the classroom in which an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during a school year. (Parent/Student Handbook)
- Information will be provided to parents in a format and language they understand. All parent communication will be offered in English and Spanish.
- EISD utilizes Remind 101, an automated telephone notification system. Parents receive a telephone call reminding them of upcoming district and campus events and meetings. An automatic call is made to parents when a child is absent, including specific periods absent for secondary students. Cafeteria notices are also automated through this system.
- Parents are encouraged to access their student's grades through the Parent Portal on the EISD website.
- Parents will be provided frequent reports on student progress. Report cards and school assessment results are sent home by mail each 6 weeks and at the end of each semester. Progress reports are sent home mid 6 weeks.
- Parents will be provided information about the level of achievement of the child in each of the required state academic assessments in the final report card or as soon as practicable.

- Federal Report Cards results will be disseminated to parents, no later than early March. Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) will be disseminated to parents. These reports will also be posted on the EISD website for public access.
- Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled at least once per year. School-parent compacts are discussed during these conferences at Title I campuses. Conferences are available anytime as needed by parents or teachers. An appointment may be made by calling the teacher directly or calling the school office.
- Title I parent involvement activities will be coordinated with parent involvement activities of other programs such as Pre-K, ESL, Migrant, and ACE Programs whenever feasible. Multiple family engagement activities will be offered at each campus throughout the school year. These activities will be documented by sign-in, agenda, and minutes (as appropriate) and filed electronically through Title I Crate.
- Enrolling students will complete the Home Language Survey.
- EISD will provide outreach to parents and families of LEP/Immigrant students and inform them how they can be involved in the education of their children and assist their children attain English proficiency, not later than 20 days after the beginning of the school year or within the first two weeks of the child being placed in a language instruction program when the child was not identified prior to the beginning of the school year.
- EISD will promote parental and community participation in programs for LEP, Title III, Part A.
- Parents and families of LEP/Immigrant students will be notified within 30 days if EISD fails to meet annual measureable achievement objectives.
- The LEA Homeless Liaison will inform parents/guardians of homeless students of the educational opportunities and other services available to the child (Identification of homeless students usually occurs at registration but can occur at any time during the school year as family situations change).

5. Provide professional development opportunities for educators on culturally responsive, evidence-based strategies that support the education of the child.

- Pre-K teachers' staff development plans will include strands on cultural diversity, evidence-based strategies to involve parents in the education of their children, and family poverty as it impacts schools. One cannot assume that teachers or parents come to the table with a knowledge and appreciation for cultural diversity or with the skills needed to customize learning to students with diverse cultural backgrounds. These skills can and must be taught, monitored, and reinforced.
- EISD staff will be educated in the value and utility of the contributions of parents, and in building ties between parents and schools. Elgin families will also have opportunities to be included in family engagement training. (first 12 weeks of school)

- Cultural, economic, language, and demographic issues will be given attention through the selection of focus groups and advisory councils and committees.
- Professional development will be provided for counselors and social workers including, but not limited to, cultural diversity, strategies for low socio-economic populations, behavioral strategies, and students experiencing trauma.

6. Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement.

- Elgin ISD currently uses parent surveys to gain information on preferences of programs and parents' perception of program effectiveness. Surveys are completed each spring to gather information to plan for the next school year. Several additional campus-specific surveys are fielded each year depending on campus needs. Elgin ISD has had a good response to posting surveys on the district website and will expand this effort in the 2016-2017 school year. Valuable information gathered from family surveys is used to improve programs and increase parent outreach and involvement. Examples of surveys include:
 - Title I Parent Survey
 - ACE Program Family Engagement Survey
 - Texas 21st Century Grant Surveys
 - Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Survey
 - Frog Street Early Childhood Curriculum Surveys
- EISD will conduct an annual evaluation and review of the content of and effectiveness of the Title I, Part A Parent Involvement Program and Parental Involvement Policy. Parents and families will be involved in this review, aimed at improving the academic quality of Title I, Part A Schools.
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment - Family engagement efforts will be evaluated on a continuous basis at the district and campus levels to determine whether the level of participation has increased and if activities meet the needs of parents. Programs and activities will be constantly monitored, identifying strengths and weaknesses, in order to affect change at the earliest possible date to assure program effectiveness.
- Parents and families will be consulted in the development, review/revision, and evaluation of the Campus Improvement Plans and District Improvement Plan through the CACs and DAC at the end of each school year in order to address needs and goals for the upcoming year.

INFORMATION/RESOURCES

EISD Family Engagement Contacts:

Dr. Peter Perez
Deputy Superintendent
512-281-3434, Ext. 1278
peperez@elginisd.net

Sherilyn Kisamore
State and Federal Programs Specialist
512-281-3434, Ext. 1279
sherilyn.kisamore@elginisd.net

Kathy G. Moore
Special Programs Coordinator
512-281-3434, Ext. 1240
kathy.moore@elginisd.net

Caroline Johnston
Elgin ACE Grant Project Director
512-281-3434, Ext. 1271
caroline.johnston@elginisd.net

Juan Lopez
Elgin ACE Family Engagement Specialist
512-281-3434, Ext. 1282
juan.lopez@elginisd.net

Michelle Wenzel
Elgin ACE Administrative Assistant
512-281-3434, Ext. 1273
michelle.wenzel@elginisd.net

Toni Rangel
School/Parent Liaison
512-281-3434, Ext. 1915
arangel@elginisd.net

Ana Garcia
Homeless & Foster Care Liaison
512-281-3434, Ext. 1900
ana.garcia@elginisd.net

Deb Mahone
Grant Project Director
512-281-3434, Ext. 1238
debra.mahone@elginisd.net

TEA Family Engagement Contacts:

Christine McCormick, Statewide Coordinator
21st Century Community Learning Centers
512-463-2334
Christine.McCormick@tea.texas.gov

Howard Morrison, Statewide Coordinator
Early Childhood Education
Texas Pre-K Grants
512-463-9581
howard.morrison@tea.texas.gov

NCLB Parental Involvement
Division of Federal and State Education Policy
512-463-9414
nclb@tea.texas.gov