

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY
BUFORD CITY SCHOOLS
August 2011

The Buford City School System recognizes that greater family involvement is crucial if our students are to learn more, to achieve higher academic standards, and to succeed in a world that might otherwise pass them by. It shall be the intent of all parent involvement activities in the Buford City Schools to encourage and support the efforts of home, school, and community in improving the educational opportunities of all children.

1. Buford City Schools shall involve parents in the joint development of the LEA Plan under section 1112.

The Title I coordinator involves parents of Buford City Schools' students in the development of the LEA plan by requesting input. Parents offer ideas and suggestions in writing the local Title I Plan. The parent input comes from a Title I Parent Involvement Committee, groups of parents, individual interviews with parents, parent surveys, School Advisory Councils, media committees, the Safe and Drug Free Parent Advisory Committee, the Special Education Advisory Committee, PTOs and other committees of which parents are members.

2. The school system shall involve parents in the process of school review and improvement under section 1116:

The Title I coordinator in conjunction with the administration of Buford City Schools makes available to parents the results of state assessments and the school system's performance on those assessments. Parents are encouraged to offer suggestions of improvement when assessments are not meeting standards assessed by the state. Assessment results are made available at local board meetings, presented in the local newspapers, presented in newsletters to parents, discussed at parent/teacher conferences as well as mailed home to parents. Suggestions for areas needing improvement will be considered in constructing school improvement plans.

3. The school system shall provide the coordination, technical assistance and the other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance:

The Buford City Schools Parent Involvement Committee will work in collaboration with other parenting programs that exist in the school district such as PTOs and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Committee to provide information and resources to assist parents in ways to help their children succeed in school. The Parent Involvement Committee will meet with school parent advisory groups to plan programs and provide child care and translation of information in languages other than English when such services relate to parent involvement. The system committee will provide whatever assistance is necessary

to participating schools in planning effective parent involvement programs based on individual school needs.

4. The school system and each school shall coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I, Part A with parental involvement strategies under other programs:

Parental involvement activities at the system level are a coordinated effort among Title I, Part A, the Early Intervention Program (EIP), English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, Special Education, and Pre-K, and other state/federal programs whenever appropriate and feasible. The Buford City Schools Title I Parent Involvement Committee will meet with the appropriate representatives of the previously listed agencies at the beginning of the school year, and periodically as needed throughout the year, to plan and implement joint parental involvement activities. This year's system activities will include: Strengthening Families Program, the English...Yes, I Can program for parents, Fall Festival, holiday assistance at Thanksgiving and Christmas, Stuff the Bus for holiday support to children, Red Cross Food Drive, the Red Cross membership enrollment campaign to raise funds, a food drive for North Gwinnett Cooperative, a coat drive, distributing Community Resource Guides and parent education pamphlets at all schools, and the coordination of high school sports activities with community recreation sports leagues.

5. The school system shall conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy:

An annual meeting will be held each year to determine the effectiveness of the program. Parents, community, and school personnel are asked to review the parental involvement goals established for the year and decide which areas, if any, were not met. Barriers to parent participation such as economic disadvantages, disability, limited English proficiency or other barriers are identified. The Parent Involvement Committee will monitor the writing and implementation of the Parent/School Policies and compacts for each school receiving Title I funds.

6. The school system and each school shall use the findings of the evaluations in designing strategies for school improvement and revising, if necessary, the LEA Parental Involvement Policy and the School Parental Involvement Policies.

Following the annual review of the policy, parents, community, and school personnel will meet to plan and revise the policy as needed to improve parent participation.

7. The school system and each school shall help parents to understand the National Education Goals, state content and performance standards, state and local assessments, Title I requirements, how to monitor progress while participating in their children's education, and how to work with educators toward children's improved performance.

To assist parents in understanding various areas of their children's education, quarterly, monthly, and/or weekly newsletters are distributed. Each newsletter contains parenting tips, salutes to individual students and staff members, and/or an explanation of one major area of education. The following areas of education are featured in the newsletters sent home with each student: components of a school-wide program and requirements of Title I, Part A; school improvement and corrective action process; National Education Goals; Adult Literacy Opportunities in Gwinnett county; ways parents can monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children; ways parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children; and state's content standards and student performance standards and state and local assessments. The school system will also communicate with parents by making school news, grades, and announcements available on the LEA's website and PowerSchool as well as through articles in the local newspaper. The web site for Buford City Schools is being developed and updated often with tips and ideas for parenting and links to the Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Learning Connections, the No Child Left Behind Act, curriculum sites for locally adopted science, social studies, reading, and language arts programs and additional resources for parents to become informed about curriculum and educational issues.

8. The school system and each school shall coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs/activities with other programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, Reading First, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool programs to the extent feasible and appropriate.

The Buford City Schools Parent Involvement Committee will ensure that school programs are coordinated with other current programs. The Early Intervention Program will coordinate Pre-K programs with the Kindergarten. School personnel will go to the pre-K schools to assess pre-K students and inform parents about the Kindergarten program. Other programs coordinated with Buford City Schools would include Head Start when appropriate.

9. The school system and each school shall provide assistance to participating parents in various areas to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents and community. The school system and each school may arrange meetings at a variety of times, such as in the mornings and evenings, in order to maximize the opportunities for parents to participate in school related activities.

Parents will be provided timely information about school programs, a description and explanation of the curriculum, and forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress and proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Opportunities will be provided for parents to meet with school personnel to formulate suggestions, and participate in discussions and decisions relating to the education of their children. Parent non-satisfactory comments will be submitted with the LEA Plan if applicable.

A description and explanation of the curriculum is explained to parents at the annual curriculum meetings for each grade level, during parent meetings, and during parent/teacher conferences throughout the school year. Telephone conferences are conducted almost daily and email contact is frequently used. This information is also provided in student handbooks that parents are required to read and sign.

Flexible scheduling of parent conferences is encouraged so that parents can meet with teachers before, during, and after school.

In the event of emergency situations, in-home conferences may be arranged to discuss necessary scheduling, transportation, or instructional details.

10. The school system and each school shall provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement.

The Buford City Schools Parent Involvement Committee will develop a program and activities to address the need for literacy training for parents. Members will investigate what programs are available that address community needs indicated on parent surveys. A directory of ESOL services provided by local churches and organizations has been created to distribute to non-English speaking parents when they enroll their children. A schedule of workshops to be delivered in the schools to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement will be developed by school committees.

The Committee will select for each of the three Title I schools a variety of educational pamphlets and booklets for display in the front offices of each school. These pamphlets will be made available in both English and Spanish, and will offer a variety of

suggestions for parents who are seeking ways to enhance their children's academic and emotional welfare.

Buford City Schools will comply with federal requirements which currently allocate not less than 1% of the Title I grant to parent involvement activities. Not less than 95% of the 1% required for parent involvement will be spent at the school level. Parents will be involved in determining how these allotments will be utilized.

11. The school system and each school shall educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, with the assistance of parents, on the contributions of parents, how to reach out to, communicate, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between home and school.

Educators and parents are given the opportunity to participate in staff development to develop an understanding of the value of parental involvement and how schools can reach out to parents and how parents can become partners with the schools. The Title I Parent Involvement coordinator distributes to each staff member monthly newsletters ("Educators Notebook on Family Involvement") that give suggestions for parent involvement activities.

12. The school system and each school shall develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities, including providing information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools, and encouraging the formation of partnerships between elementary, middle, and secondary schools and local businesses that include a role for parents.

The Buford City Schools Parent Involvement Committee will continue to explore opportunities to involve local businesses in schools. Local partnerships already exist and are represented on School Advisory Councils. Contributions by these organizations will be coordinated and businesses will be encouraged to contribute not only monetarily but of their time and experience. Representatives from schools will be encouraged to speak to civic organizations and churches about new developments in education.

13. The school system and each school 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. The school system and each school shall ensure, to the extent possible, that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the homes of participating children in the language used in such homes.

Parent meetings are arranged on a flexible schedule. Child care and meals are provided for evening programs. Programs are often offered in English one night and in Spanish on another evening. Interpreters are provided at both events. Interpreters are provided at all parent/teacher conferences if required.

Online tutoring for specific homework questions is available at tutor.org through a grant supported program of the Gwinnett County Library system.

Upon enrolling students, LEP families are provided with all communications in English and Spanish. If another language is necessary, the Piedmont Migrant Agency can be contacted for assistance.

14. The school system and each school may train and support parents and teachers to enhance the involvement of other parents and improve instruction.

At the present time an active advisory council in all schools involves parents on planning teams. Various committees including PTO, school improvement, media, and technology committees provide input to school programs. The system Parent Involvement Committee will look into the feasibility of using a model program such as *Parents on Board*, *Active parenting*, *I Care*, *Parents Are Teachers Too*, *National Family Literacy Center*, and *Parent University* to train and support parents to enhance additional parent involvement. Currently the Strengthening Families involves parents and teachers in training other parents in communicating and working with children grades 6.

Parents will participate annually in parent surveys to address the needs at specific grade configurations. The possibility of beginning family literacy programs will be assessed by the Parent Involvement Committee to address the needs of the increasing Hispanic population in the Buford community as well as all other populations.

The development of school-based family resource centers will be investigated as a means of educating parents in ways to help their children at home with skill practice in reading and math.

15. The school system and each school shall conduct other activities such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parents to learn about child development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child, that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.

Parent Resource Centers in schools will be created to provide opportunities and/or information for parents to learn about child development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child. These centers will be designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.