

Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Compact Frequently Asked Questions

This document is designed to provide districts and schools with information surrounding the parent and family engagement policy and the school-family compact requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Instructions for using the policy and compact templates created by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) are also included.

General Information

1. Q: Who is required to have a parent and family engagement policy?

A: ESSA 1116(a)(2) requires all districts receiving Title I, Part A funds to develop a district-level policy jointly with parents. All schools served under Title I, Part A are required to develop a school-level policy jointly with parents per ESSA 1116(b)(1).

2. Q: Who is required to have a school-family compact?

A: ESSA 1116(d) requires all schools served under Title I, Part A develop a school-family compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff and students 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.

3. Q: Are the requirements for district-level and school-level policies the same?

A: No, each policy has unique requirements outlined in ESSA. The requirements are outlined in KDE's [Effective District Parent and Family Engagement Policy Checklist](#) and [Effective School Parent and Family Engagement Policy Checklist](#).

4. Q: Are single-school districts or districts with only one school served under Title I, Part A required to have two separate policies, one for the district and one for the school?

A: Not necessarily. The district and school may opt to create a single policy that meets the requirements of both policies at their discretion per ESSA 1116(b)(3).

5. Q: Are participating private schools required to have parent and family engagement policies and school-family compacts?

A: No.

6. Q: Who should be involved in developing and writing the policy and compact?

A: ESSA states that policies and compacts must be developed jointly with parents. Districts and schools are responsible for providing all parents with the opportunity to provide feedback on these documents and participate in their development. Common methods for obtaining feedback are through parent meetings and surveys. Districts and schools should document that the opportunity to provide feedback was extended to all parents, for example, emails, social media posts, flyers, etc. advertising the opportunity. Documentation of feedback received and how that feedback impacted policy and

compact revisions should also be saved. For example: survey results and evidence of their analysis or meeting materials (sign in sheets, agendas and minutes, documents with evidence of revision, etc.) where parents participated in the review/revision of the documents.

7. Q: What happens if the district/school does not receive feedback from parents?

A: The district/school must still demonstrate that the opportunity for parents to submit feedback was provided. In the event that no feedback is submitted, the district/school should also examine how feedback was requested to identify opportunities for improvement. Consider factors such as how the opportunity was advertised, the window of time feedback was accepted, when meetings were scheduled, etc. Methods for gathering feedback that prove to be unsuccessful should not be continued each year.

8. Q: When and how should the policies and compact be made available to parents?

A: The policy and compact help establish expectations and set the tone for the school year and should be distributed to parents at the beginning of the school year. Waiting to provide the documents to parents until the middle or end of the school year decreases their impact and usefulness. In addition to distributing copies of the policies and compact, districts and schools should consider making the documents available through other means such as posting to websites and including them in informational handbooks. Additionally, ESSA 1116(d)(2)(A) requires the compact be discussed in relation to the individual child's academic achievement during at least one parent-teacher conference at the elementary school level. It will be difficult to engage in a meaningful discussion if parents have not seen and/or signed the compact prior to the conference.

Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Compact Templates

9. Q: Are districts and schools required to use the parent and family engagement policy and compact templates from KDE?

A: No, districts and schools are not required to use the templates created by KDE. The templates are designed to simplify the process for creating these documents and help ensure that all required information is included.

10. Q: Which template should I use?

A: In terms of the school-family compact, the [School Compact Template](#) is the only one available, and it can be customized by all schools receiving Title I funds. There are three different policy templates. Districts should use the [District Policy Template](#). Although the [Elementary School Policy Template](#) and the [Secondary School Policy Template](#) look similar, they are different. ESSA 1116(d)(2)(A) requires the compact be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement during at least one parent-teacher conference in elementary schools and the elementary policy template includes space for

schools to outline how this requirement will be met. The secondary school template does not include this information as it is not required of middle and high schools.

11. Q: How should the templates be used?

A: The templates are designed to list out all ESSA requirements and then provide space for the district/school to address how those requirements will be met. The sections where the district/school needs to customize the document and add specific details are highlighted in yellow and denoted by brackets (see image below). The text that is not highlighted should not be altered as it specifies each ESSA requirement. The italicized text at the top of each document is instructional and should be removed prior to finalizing the policy or compact.

<p>Section I: Policy Involvement [ESSA 1116(c)]</p> <p>[School Name] will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Involve parents in an organized, <u>ongoing</u> and timely way in the planning, review and improvement of the Title I, Part A program as well as the parent and family engagement policy. [Describe specific actions the school will take to involve parents in this process.]

12. Q: Can any sections be removed and/or left blank?

A: Words such as “must” and “shall” indicate requirements and removing information and/or not completing those fields will result in the policy not meeting ESSA requirements. However, there are some instances on the policy templates where ESSA uses the word “may,” indicating the items are not required for compliance. The following items may be removed from the policy templates at the discretion of the district/school. Please note that the school compact template does not contain any sections which may be removed.

- **District Policy Template:** Item 1 under section IV (Involve Parents at the School Level). ESSA lists the creation of parent advisory boards as an example for meeting this requirement; however, districts are not required to establish such advisory boards. This information has been placed in brackets with instructions to be removed in the event the district is not establishing a parent advisory board. The district must still provide a description of the specific actions it will take to support Title I schools in involving parents in parent and family engagement activities.
- **Elementary and Secondary Policy Templates:** Items 6-14 under section III (Build Capacity for Involvement). ESSA states that schools may implement the activities outlined in items 6-14; however they are not required to demonstrate

compliance. Language has been added to this section instructing schools to remove any/all items in this section that do not apply.

13. Q: Can the document formatting be changed?

A: Yes, within reason. Each district/school should work with parents to select the formatting and styling that ensures the document is easily understood by all stakeholders. For example, a district/school may opt to place the text on their letterhead, change the font, add a school logo, etc. Some districts/schools may add information in paragraph form while others prefer a bulleted list.