

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice School System



The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice School System (DJJSS) has established a Family and Community Engagement Program to foster collaboration among families, schools, and communities. This initiative aims to provide opportunities and resources that support successful student outcomes and prepare youth for reintegration into the community. Recognized as a vital element of our educational framework, this approach is grounded in research indicating that students across diverse backgrounds and academic levels are more likely to succeed academically when schools and families work collaboratively. Therefore, our objective is to enhance student achievement by encouraging parents to take an active role in their children's education.

Parent engagement is “an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools, and communities to increase student academic achievement and success.” To that end, the DJJSS implements several strategies to build capacity for parent and family engagement.

DJJSS utilizes two federal programs focused on family engagement: **Title I-A** and **Title I-D**. Title I-A offers supplemental educational services, while Title I-D ensures that equal educational opportunities are available for neglected, delinquent, or at-risk youth. Both programs provide various services to encourage parents to collaborate with our schools in supporting students' academic success. These activities include open houses, Title I-A Annual Meetings, parent newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, workshops on academic content and assessments, progress report cards, and telecommunications. DJJSS schools welcome feedback from parents after each event and value any suggestions to improve parent-school relationships.

Each DJJSS school is supported by a **Parent Liaison** who serves as the direct link between the school and families. Parent Liaisons play a crucial role in welcoming families, ensuring clear communication, and assisting parents in navigating school programs and resources. Their responsibilities include organizing parent workshops and meetings, sharing essential updates through newsletters and other communications, and ensuring families understand academic expectations, assessments, and available supports. Parent Liaisons also work closely with teachers and administrators to strengthen the home-school partnership and encourage parents to take an active role in decision-making. By being accessible and responsive to the needs of families, Parent Liaisons help create a welcoming environment that builds trust and fosters collaboration, ultimately supporting greater student achievement.

The **Family Engagement Coordinator (FEC)** serves as a district-level leader dedicated to strengthening the partnership between families, schools, and communities. The FEC provides guidance and support to ensure that family engagement is integrated into all aspects of student

learning and school improvement. Responsibilities include developing and implementing strategies that welcome families as equal partners, coordinating training for staff and parents to foster effective communication, and collaborating with community organizations to provide additional resources and services for families. The FEC also monitors compliance with Title I parent and family engagement requirements and works closely with school-based Parent Liaisons to ensure consistency, accountability, and alignment across the school. By bridging connections at both the school and district level, the FEC helps create a culture where families feel valued, respected, and empowered to actively contribute to student success.

The **Family Advisory Council** serves as a district-level forum where parents from each DJJSS school come together to share their voices, ideas, and perspectives. Each school is represented by at least one parent who participates in three virtual meetings throughout the school year. The Council provides feedback on Title I plans, family engagement initiatives, and school improvement strategies, ensuring that parent perspectives are included in district decision-making. By creating a structured platform for collaboration, the Family Advisory Council promotes consistency across schools, encourages the sharing of best practices, and strengthens the partnership between families and the district. This collaborative body empowers parents as advocates and partners, helping to shape policies and activities that directly impact student success.

DJJSS offers multiple opportunities for parents to be actively engaged in their child's education, in addition to the Family Advisory Council. Some of those opportunities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Participate in the Annual Title I Parent Meeting to provide input on school programs and services.
- Serve as a representative on the Family Advisory Council to share ideas and feedback with district leadership.
- Collaborate in developing and reviewing the School-Parent Compact and Parent & Family Engagement Plan each year.
- Complete surveys, evaluations, and feedback forms to help shape family engagement activities and district policies.
- Attend school-based meetings and workshops to provide suggestions for improving communication and student support.
- Volunteer to assist with family engagement events, open houses, and academic nights.
- Join focus groups or discussion sessions organized by Parent Liaisons or the Family Engagement Coordinator.
- Request regular meetings with teachers or administrators to discuss student progress and make recommendations.
- Contribute ideas during stakeholder input sessions for the Comprehensive Local Improvement Plan (CLIP).
- Advocate for students by sharing experiences, concerns, and solutions that can strengthen school practices.

The DJJSS **Parent Mentor** is a vital resource within the Special Education Program, working closely with families, schools, and community stakeholders to strengthen communication and

support for students with disabilities. Parent Mentors are typically parents of children with special needs themselves, giving them unique insight and empathy to help guide other families through the educational process. Their responsibilities include providing one-on-one support to parents, assisting them in understanding special education services, and offering strategies to help students meet individualized learning goals. In addition, Parent Mentors collaborate with teachers and administrators to address concerns, build trust, and promote inclusive practices that enhance student success. By bridging the gap between home and school, Parent Mentors empower families to become effective advocates and active partners in their child's education.

Finally, DJJSS schools will offer training sessions and resources to equip parents with strategies to support their children's learning and to understand academic standards and assessments. DJJSS is committed to ensuring that every parent has access to information and opportunities, offering flexible meeting times, both in-person and virtual sessions, and multiple methods of communication to keep families informed. By engaging parents in meaningful ways, DJJSS schools seek to create strong partnerships that empower families to play an active role in their child's academic success and overall development. To learn more about family engagement activities or to become involved, parents are encouraged to contact their child's school directly.

For more information:

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