

Georgia Academy for the Blind
Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent
www.gabmacon.org
478.751.6085

Family Engagement Plan 2018-19

for Shared Student Achievement

What is this plan? This Family Engagement Plan explains how the Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB) will provide opportunities to improve family engagement to support student achievement and independence. GAB understands the importance of family engagement in an equal partnership for this common mission. GAB further understands the challenge that distance is for our families and will provide: 1. various online resources to help in academic and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) at home, 2. Regional Parent/Guardian Meetings (RPMs) throughout the State, and 3. phone-in and video meetings. This plan describes the various ways parents/guardians can help plan and participate in activities and events that promote student learning at home and at school.

How is this plan developed and revised? All parents/guardians are invited to participate in the ongoing development and revision of this parental involvement plan, as well as the GaDOE's Division of State Schools Family Engagement Plan, School Improvement Plan (SIP) school-parent/guardian compact, Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), and program evaluations. Parent/guardian input and comments are invited through surveys, comment cards, and attendance at Regional Parent /Guardian Meetings (RPMs) and School Council meetings that are scheduled on multiple days and at varied times to encourage parent/guardian participation.

Parent/guardian feedback regarding this plan is welcome at any time throughout the year. All feedback received during the year will be used to revise the plan for the next school year.

Where is the Family Engagement Plan available? Copies of this plan will be provided at Registration and Open House, Regional Parent Guardian Meetings, School Council Meetings, IEPs and at each time when there are parent meetings and gatherings (winter and spring music programs and art shows, Braille Challenge, prom, spring festival and Awards Day). Additionally, it will be posted on the website and in the Family Resource Room located in the Hendricks Building on campus in Macon. They can be mailed upon request.

What is Family Engagement? Family engagement means the participation of parents/guardians in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, ensuring that parents/guardians play an integral role in assisting their child's learning and are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making.

Family Engagement activities at Georgia Academy for the Blind will include opportunities for parents/guardians to:

- * apply to volunteer and be involved in school activities.
- * observe in your child's classroom (with 24 hours' notice).
- * attend school wide events such as the winter and spring musicals, senior dinner, high school prom, book fair, art shows.
- * learn ways to provide home support for your child's education.
- * participate in school decision-making through RPMs, Better Seeking Team, and School Council.
- * attend Registration Open House and the Annual Title I Parent/Guardian Meeting.
- * provide feedback and suggestions on programs through surveys and comment cards after meetings and events.
- * visit the Family Resource Room to check out the lending library, talk with Sonya Milam, our Parent Mentor, or browse for information on topics related to disabilities, special education, parenting, community resources, transition (from elementary to middle school, from middle to high school, from high school to post-secondary options, etc.
- * attend the Regional Parent/Guardian Meetings nearest you.
- * attend workshops and conferences for parents/guardians, such as the Family Engagement Conference held on even years, GVEST (Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Training), and Transition Fairs throughout the state.
- * provide suggestions through surveys, comment cards, School Council, and RPMs on how the school can improve family engagement programs, communicate best with parent/guardians, and build collaborative partnerships with parent/guardians to improve student achievement.
- * attend the Parent/Guardian Program held simultaneously with Braille Challenge.

Academic Achievement Goals

State Schools' Goals for 2018-19:

Improve transition planning and post secondary outcomes for students.

Increase the use of differentiation of instruction to support students' individual learning.

GAB Focus Goals for 2018-19 to support the State Schools' Goals:

Enhance the Physical, Social and Emotional Needs of Living and Learning Students.

Develop a Comprehensive Guidance and Transition Program for college and career readiness.

Continue embedded guidance program through our instructional curriculum, ECC, transition program, Work-Based Learning (WBL), Project SEARCH EECC, ELT, and advisement program.

Systematically use Data Analysis and have professional growth on how the data can be utilized to enhance the student learning.

Increase Positive Transition Outcomes –100% of graduates from the GAB will be positively engaged in a post-secondary outcome within one year of graduation.

Improve Academic Achievement Outcomes – Students will improve test scores on state mandated assessments in all academic areas, specifically targeting math, science, and social studies

More in depth information about these goals can be found on page 10 of the 2018-19 Student Handbook.

Building Parent/Guardian Capacity

GAB will host a variety of events to build capacity for strong family engagement and support a partnership with the school, parents/guardians, and community to improve student achievement. Invitations and details for events will be published through a variety of media, including the *Panther Press*, the website, School Cast Calls, text messages, Facebook, e-mails, and paper flyers/teacher notes sent home.

- * **Annual Title I Meeting** will take place as a separate meeting on the day of Open House/Registration the day before the school year begins. Parent/guardians will learn about our Title I program, including the Parental Involvement Plan, School Improvement Plan, School-Parent/Guardian Compact, and parents'/guardians' rights to be involved.
- * **School Council** will be throughout the year. This is your venue to learn about what is happening at GAB and offer feedback. Meetings will offer parents/guardians opportunities to share ideas about the Parental Involvement Plan, School Improvement Plan, and the School-Parent/Guardian Compact.
- * **Focus Groups or “Coffee Chats”** are additional meetings and trainings that will be scheduled in conjunction with student performances to include information to help you understand what your child is learning, how we assess their learning, how you can work with your child to improve their learning, and other topics requested by parents/guardians.
- * **Regional Parent/Guardian Meetings (RPMs)** will be held to provide information on requested topics, student achievement standards, communicating with teachers, Title I requirements, transition, and how to monitor your child's progress. Dates, times, and locations to be announced at the beginning of the school year. They will take place September through March.
- * **Professional Learning/Staff training** on best practices to improve communication with parents/guardians and increase family engagement will be held multiple times during the School year. Parent/guardian input is welcome!
- * **Parent-teacher conferences** and **ASPIRE student led IEP meetings** are scheduled annually to discuss student achievement and goals. Additional meetings may be held upon the parent/guardian request at any time. **ASPIRE Parent Surveys** will be administered after each IEP meeting.
- * **TRANSITION TO POST SECONDARY OPTIONS** parents are an important part in planning for positive post-secondary activities. Our parent/guardians will have access to our Transition Specialists, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Parent to Parent Transition Partner who will assist them in transition planning and positive post secondary options.

What is Title I?

The Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB) is a Title I school as part of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 2015. Title I is a federal grant that was designed to ensure that all children receive a high quality education and attain high academic standards leading to a future of as much independence as possible. Title I programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support family engagement. All Title I schools must jointly and annually develop with all parent/guardians a written Family Engagement Plan.

School-Parent/Guardian Compacts

As part of this plan, GAB and families will develop a **School-Parent/Guardian Compact**, which is a signed agreement between parent/guardians, teachers, and students to work together to make sure that all students are making progress toward reaching grade-level standards. Compact will be reviewed and updated annually based on input from parent/guardians, students and teachers during multiple meetings and from survey data. As with the Parental Involvement plan, the Compact will be provided at Registration and Open House, RPMs, IEPs, the website and in the Family Resource Room.

School Council Meetings You are always invited!

Please join us for School Council Meetings held quarterly. Nominations and elections are held annually for parents/guardians, staff, and community members. All parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings. These can be attended on campus or by calling in. The first meeting of the 2018-19 year is September 7 at 1 pm. At this time, future meetings will be scheduled and published. The agendas are varied but you always get the latest school news, academic achievements and assessment information, opportunities to share ideas for school improvement

Parental Involvement/Family Engagement Standards

GAB along with the Georgia Department of Education supports the following National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships as a model for engaging families, students, and the community:

Welcoming All Families
Communicating Effectively
Supporting Student
Success

Speaking Up for Every Child
Sharing Power
Collaborating with
Community

Stay Informed! GAB will ensure that all information related to school and parent /guardian programs, meetings, and other activities is published in a family-friendly, timely manner, with limited jargon, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. Information will be shared through the weekly *Panther Press* and posted on the school web site. Additional notifications may come through texts, School Cast calls, e-mails, flyers, notes home, and Facebook. Parents/guardians must opt in to receive non-emergency school announcements. This opt-in form will be part of the 2018-19 registration packet.

*For more information,
contact Sonya Milam, Parent Mentor*

smilam@doe.k12.ga.us
(478) 262-3303

Share Your Thoughts Comment Card

We want to hear from you! If you have any suggestions or if there is any part of this plan that you feel is not satisfactory with the student's and the school's goals for academic achievement, please provide us with your comments in the space provided and leave this form in either the Hendricks School Office or the Family Resource Room.

Name (optional) _____

Telephone (optional) _____

Email (optional) _____
