



Georgia Academy for the Blind Family Engagement Plan 2019-20 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 provide resources to help in academic and Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) at home, 2. Regional Family Meetings (RFMs) throughout the state, and 3. phone-in and video meetings, 4. continuous updates on in home strategies and community resources shared through the *Panther Press* newsletter, emails, notes home, the website and Facebook posts. This plan describes the various ways families 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 families are invited to participate in the ongoing development and revision of this Family Engagement Plan, as well as the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE)'s Division of State Schools' Family Engagement Plan, School Improvement Plan (SIP) School- Family Compact, Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), and program evaluations. Family input and comments are invited through surveys, comment cards, and attendance at Regional Family Meetings (RFMs) and School Council meetings that are scheduled on multiple days and at varied times to encourage family participation.

Family feedback regarding this plan is encouraged and welcomed 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 Family Engagement Plan available? Copies of this plan will be provided at Registration and Open House, Regional Family Meetings, School Council Meetings, IEPs and at each time when there are family 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 under the families' tab and in the Family Resource Room located in the Hendricks Building on campus in Macon. It can be mailed upon request.

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

Family Engagement activities at GAB will include opportunities for families 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 Regional Family Meetings (RFMs), Better Seeking Team (BST), and School Council.
- * attend Registration Open House and the Annual Title I Family 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 Jennifer Minter, 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 Family Meeting nearest you.
- * attend workshops and conferences for families, 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 RFMs on how the school can improve family involvement programs, communicate best with families, and build collaborative partnerships with families to improve student achievement.
- * attend the Family Program held simultaneously with Braille Challenge.



2



State Schools Goals for 2019-20:

- Increase the percent of students identified as *proficient* in English/Language Arts (ELA) on Georgia Milestones Assessments by 10% as evidenced by scores of 5th grade, 8th grade and all Math/ELA End of Course (EOC) high school students.
- Increase the percent of students identified as *proficient* in Math on GMAS by 10% as evidenced by scores of 5th grade, 8th grade and all Math/ELA EOC high school students.

GAB Focus Goals for 2019 – 20 to support the State Schools’ Goals are:

- Students will demonstrate growth by 3% in ELA and Math proficiency as measured by benchmarks.
- Graduates will be employment and post-secondary ready as tracked by checklists, job attainment, vocational rehabilitation programs, and enrollment in college
- Students will achieve independent living skills as measured by the ECC checklist.

What is Title I? GAB is a Title I school. 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 I involvement. All Title I schools must jointly develop with all families a written Family Engagement Plan.

School-Family Compacts: Each school year, as part of this Family Engagement Plan, GAB and families will develop a **School-Family Compact**, which is a signed agreement between families, teachers, and students to work together to make sure that all students are making progress toward reaching grade-level standards. This compact will be reviewed and updated annually based on input from families, students and teachers during multiple meetings and from survey data. As with the Family Engagement Plan, the Compact will be provided at Registration and Open House, RFMs, IEPs, the website and in the Family Resource Room.

School Council Meetings: You are always invited! Please join us for School Council Meetings on campus or through our call in system. The agendas are varied but you always get the latest school news, academic achievements and assessment information, opportunities to share ideas for school improvement. The first meeting will be in announced August and future dates will be scheduled at that time. Additional information will be forthcoming through GAB emails and newsletter.

Family Engagement Standards: GAB 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*

Building Family Capacity

GAB will host a variety of events to build capacity for strong family engagement and support a partnership with the school, families, 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, REMIND text messages, Facebook, e-mails, and paper flyers/teacher notes sent home and will include:

- * **Annual Title I Meeting** will take place as a separate meeting on the day of pen House/Registration the day before the school year begins. Families will learn about our Title I program, including the Family Engagement Plan, School Improvement Plan, School-Family Compact, and parents'/guardians' rights to be involved.
- * **School Council Meetings** will be held quarterly 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 Family Engagement Plan, School Improvement Plan, and the School-Family Compact. Nominations and elections are held annually for families, staff, and community members. All families are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings on campus or through phone in system.
- * **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 families.
- * **Regional Family Meetings (RFMs)** 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. Family 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 family request at any time.
- * **Transition to Post Secondary Options.** Families are an important part in planning for positive post-secondary success. Our families will have access to our Transition Specialists, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Parent to Parent to Parent Transition Partner who will assist them in transition planning and positive post-secondary options.

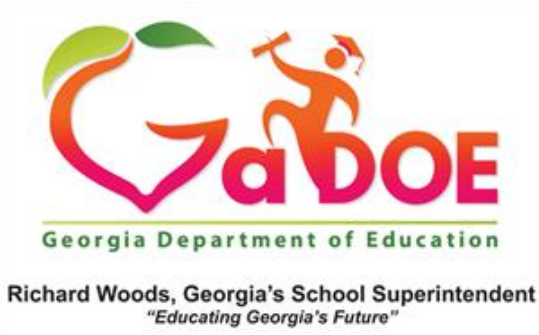


Stay Informed! GAB will ensure that all information related to school and family programs, meetings, and other activities is published in a family-friendly, timely manner, with limited jargon, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that families can understand. Information will be shared through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

For more information, contact:
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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 students’ 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) _____

