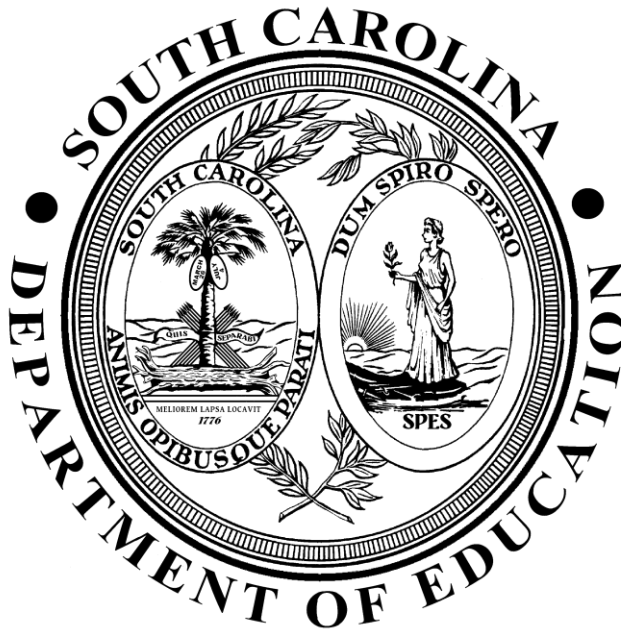


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Office of Early Learning and Literacy
Family Engagement Framework

Act 284, Read to Succeed

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The Legislative Mandate

On June 11, 2014, Governor Haley signed into law Act 284 (Read to Succeed). The purpose of this legislation is to improve literacy rates of the students in South Carolina. One of the many components of Read to Succeed includes family and community engagement as a strategy for improving student achievement in reading and writing. The following sections of the Act 284 set forth specific directives and practices for districts and schools to implement to develop family and community partnerships that support a student's literacy development.

Section 59-155-130. The Read to Succeed Office must guide and support districts and collaborate with university teacher training programs to increase reading proficiency through the following functions, including, but not limited to: . . .

(5) developing information and resources that school districts can use to provide workshops for parents about how they can support their children as readers and writers.

Section 59-155-140(B)(2) Each district PK-12 reading proficiency plan shall: . . .

(b) include a system for helping parents understand how they can support the student as a reader at home.

Section 59-155-150. With the enactment of this chapter, the State Superintendent of Education shall ensure that every student entering publically funded prekindergarten and kindergarten beginning in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 will be administered a readiness assessment by the forty-fifth day of the school year. . .

(C) Programs that focus on early childhood literacy development in the State are required to promote:

- (1) parent training and support for parent involvement in developing children's literacy; and
- (2) development of oral language, print awareness, and emergent writing; and are encouraged to promote community literacy including, but not limited to, primary health care providers, faith-based organizations, county libraries, and service organizations.

Section 59-155-190. Local school districts are encouraged to create family-school-community partnerships that focus on increasing the volume of reading, in school and at home, during the year and at home and in the community over the summer. Schools and districts should partner with county libraries, community organizations, local art organizations, faith-based institutions, pediatric and family practice medical personnel, businesses, and other groups to provide volunteers, mentors, or tutors to assist with the provision of instructional supports, services, and books that enhance reading development and proficiency. A district shall include actions taken to accomplish the requirements of this section in its reading proficiency plan.

Section 59-155-200. The Read to Succeed Office and each school district must plan for and act decisively to engage the families of students as full participating partners in promoting the reading and writing habits and skills development of their children. With support from the Read to Succeed Office, districts and individual schools shall provide families with information about how children progress as readers and writers and how they can support this progress. This family support must include providing time for their child to read, as well as reading to the child. To ensure that all families have access to a considerable number and diverse range of books appealing to their children, schools should develop plans for enhancing home libraries and for accessing books from county libraries and school libraries and to inform families about their child's ability to comprehend grade-level texts and how to interpret information about reading that is sent home. The districts and schools shall help families learn about reading and writing through open houses, SCETV, video and audio tapes, websites, and school-family events and collaborations that help link the home and school of the student. The information should enable family members to understand the reading and writing skills required for graduation and essential for success in a career. Each institution of higher learning may operate a year-round program similar to a summer reading camp to assist students not reading at grade level.

Section 59-156-110. There is created the South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program which is a full day, four-year-old kindergarten program for at-risk children which must be made available to qualified children in all public school districts within the State. The program must focus on: . . .

- (4) incorporating parenting education, including education the parents as to methods that may assist the child pursuant to Section 59-155-110, 59-155-130, and 59-155-140; and
- (5) identifying community and civic organizations that can support early literacy efforts.

Introduction

The *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* was developed in 2014 by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators' (SCASA) Superintendents' Roundtable. The *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* promotes world class knowledge, world class skills, and life and career characteristic development. The South Carolina Department of Education's (SCDE) vision is that all students graduate prepared for success in college, career, and citizenship. Family and community support is an essential part of preparing students for success.

Research clearly identifies family engagement as an essential component for student success. "Families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7). Evidence from a longitudinal study conducted by The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago shows positive impact on student achievement and school improvement when educators, families, and community members work together (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & Easton, 2010). Effective family engagement encourages educators, families, and community members to share responsibility for student success (National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group, 2009). Offering leadership and support, the SCDE continues to work toward establishing a culture in which families are seen as equal partners in the systems that serve their children.

The Office of Early Learning and Literacy (OELL) at the SCDE is committed to a vision for family engagement that ensures families and community members actively engage with children, students, teachers, school personnel, education leaders, and decision-makers as full partners in the shared responsibility of preparing all learners for college, career, and life. This vision, developed in collaboration with other SCDE offices including the offices of Family and Community Engagement (FACE), Federal and State Accountability (OFSA), Special Education Services (OSES), and General Counsel (OGC); faith-based, civic, and community organizations; and state and local agencies, promotes a partnership bridging home, school, and community to ensure that the families of all South Carolina learners are represented, empowered, and engaged to support the success of every child and student. Together with districts, schools, families, and the community, robust and systemic family engagement that is a priority at every level of the educational enterprise will become a reality.

In acknowledgement of variations in family structure and to encompass learners of all ages, the framework defines family broadly as a network of individuals who support the social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and educational growth and development of children and students. The SCDE seeks to empower families and community members by providing capacity-building assistance and resources for effective family engagement that promotes literacy. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for districts and schools to support family and community engagement.

The framework defines literacy broadly as a lifelong process that involves creativity, understanding, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and effective communication

including reading, writing, speaking and listening (Keefe & Copeland, 2011). According to the Urban Child Institute, “These early years are a window of opportunity for parents, caregivers, and communities; positive early experiences have a huge effect on children’s chances for achievement, success, and happiness.”

This framework is aligned with the following goals set forth in the Read to Succeed legislation:

- Building collaboration with higher education research and training programs, and faith-based, civic, and community organizations—including state and local agencies, to support South Carolina’s family engagement and literacy efforts.
- Developing and disseminating information and resources to support ongoing learning opportunities for families that focus on advancing children’s and students’ literacy.
- Developing systems that help families and schools support literacy at home.
- Developing a public information campaign about the importance of family and community engagement for supporting children’s and students’ literacy.

Six Essential Elements of Successful Family Engagement

Evidence shows that schools play a key role in facilitating effective family engagement with learners. They do this by creating a welcoming school climate for families and by providing families opportunities to develop the capacities they need to do this work. The National Parent Teacher Association’s (PTA) Standards for Family-School Partnerships provides a guide for schools to assess current practices for engaging parents and implementing continuous improvement of family engagement initiatives. These six essential elements are encompassed in this framework.

Welcoming All Families

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful, two-way communication about student learning.

Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities for strengthening their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Speaking for Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Collaborating with Community

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Strategies for Success in South Carolina

The following strategies, delineated by level of responsibility, are critical to ensure success in student learning and should be considered as action items in support of South Carolina family engagement goals. These goals and strategies were developed through a collaborative process by the SCDE and representatives of numerous stakeholder groups throughout the state. This framework is intended to be a document that will be periodically revised.

Goal 1: Build collaboration with higher education research and training programs, faith-based, civic, and other community organizations - including state and local agencies - to support South Carolina's family engagement and literacy efforts.

State Strategies:

- Work collaboratively with all offices and agencies supporting family and community engagement priorities to align efforts.
- Develop an asset map of agencies and organizations that can help districts and schools with family engagement and literacy efforts.
- Develop and disseminate information about the family-centered learning opportunities, resources, and services offered by faith-based, nonprofit, medical, and other organizations.
- Provide a clearinghouse of Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) research opportunities.

District Strategies:

- Form an advisory team for school, family, and community engagement to include representatives from higher education training and research programs, faith-based, civic, and community organizations, and state and local agencies. Maintain ongoing communication to ensure that all partners are in sync.
- Complete an inventory of resources readily available for supporting children's literacy and family and community engagement. Evaluate the inventory that is available to family and community members and develop additional resources where needed.
- Participate in training opportunities provided through IHE clearinghouse.

School Strategies:

- Partner with local businesses and community organizations to support family engagement in literacy.

Community Strategies:

- Develop and encourage partnerships between schools and the faith-based and general community to support family literacy.

Family Strategies:

- Select family literacy champion/ambassador.
- Identify stakeholders who support literacy in the community.
- Develop strategies to collaborate with educational and community partners who support literacy.

Goal 2: Increase development and dissemination of information and resources to support ongoing learning opportunities for families that focus on advancing learners' literacy.

State Strategies:

- Develop a webpage on the SCDE website featuring research and best practice resources in literacy and family-community engagement, and provide access to all stakeholders.
- Provide districts and state-level community organizations with a list of topics and professional learning resources to support ongoing learning opportunities for families.

District Strategies:

- Share literacy resources with families and community members.
- Assist schools in making family engagement and literacy resources available to parents.
- Develop family literacy resources and provide access online and in print, in multiple languages.

School Strategies:

- Create a page on the school website for families to access literacy resources.
- Develop ongoing learning opportunities to support children's and students' literacy based on input and feedback from school personnel, families, and community members. Gather data through town meetings, focus groups, and surveys. Consult with School Improvement Council.
- Develop information and resources for ongoing learning opportunities that incorporate Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other accessibility requirements.

Community Strategies:

- Share information and resources about family literacy and adult education opportunities.
- Provide portable literacy resources for families; for example, prepare food backpacks with related literacy activities including recipes, books, and games.
- Promote and establish free libraries as a community project to support family literacy; for example, partner with community centers to set up book carts (especially in rural communities).
- Encourage families to participate in activities at the libraries.

- Assist families in obtaining a library card.
- Encourage lifelong learning.
- Plan community events that promote literacy.
- Host gatherings for families and community members at varying times and locations to encourage participation, promote trust, and build relationships.
- Promote family engagement at school with parent mentors.
- Celebrate successes.

Family Strategies:

- Encourage lifelong learning.
- Seek information regarding how to support literacy at home and at school.
- Build relationships with other families to support with literacy efforts.
- Develop a family literacy support group.
- Create a forum for communication and dissemination of literacy ideas and resources.

Goal 3: Implement systems that help families and schools support literacy at home.

State Strategies:

- Develop and implement a framework for family-community engagement.

District Strategies:

- Develop and implement an action plan for family, school, and community engagement to be evaluated and updated annually.
- Include family and community engagement activities in the district's strategic, Title I, and reading plans.
- Identify a liaison for family, school, and community engagement.

School Strategies:

- Develop and implement a framework for family-community engagement to support literacy at home, with the active participation of family and community members.
- Engage parent volunteers, Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO), School Improvement Councils (SIC), and others to support family engagement and literacy efforts.

Community Strategies:

- Partner with schools to support student learning and literacy.
- Encourage lifelong learning.

Family Strategies:

- Develop collaborative relationships with teachers to improve literacy.
- Promote the importance of literacy at home and school.
- Be accessible and maintain ongoing communication with school and teachers centered on student learning and literacy.
- Maintain high expectations for student learning and literacy.

Goal 4: Implement a public information campaign about the importance of family and community engagement for supporting children's and students' literacy.

State Strategies:

- Develop and implement a clear message regarding the importance of family and community engagement in students' literacy.
- Develop and implement a communications toolkit and conduct a statewide messaging campaign about the importance of family and community engagement for literacy.
- Develop and implement a marketing plan to bring attention to the importance of literacy.

District Strategies:

- Engage advisory teams in the development process for implementing a public information campaign to market best practices and ideas concerning children's literacy.
- Contextualize state and district family-community engagement messages to align with school priorities that resonate with school community members.

School Strategies:

- Contextualize state and district family-community engagement messages to align with school priorities that resonate with school community members.

Community Strategies:

- Develop and communicate a core message to support family literacy.

Family Strategies:

- Maintain high expectations for student learning and literacy.
- Encourage lifelong learning.

Conclusion

The OELL Family Engagement Framework is the result of South Carolina stakeholders working together to ensure that every child is spoken for and all voices are heard. This framework identifies evidence-based practices, strategies, and actions to build strong collaboration among parents, families, schools, and communities to support the success of all South Carolina learners.

Recognizing that “it takes a village to raise a child,” this framework is designed to support multi-stakeholder engagement; to partner effectively with families, communities and schools; and to maintain ongoing dialogue about how to share responsibility for student learning and literacy. Building stakeholder capacity to develop meaningful family engagement in all South Carolina schools increases support for student achievement and school improvement, and as a result, students graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

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