PIC Minutes - Region 1
March 14, 2013

I. Welcome

Michelle Sandrock, Parent Engagement Program Manager, opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance, introducing the Georgia Department of Education staff and thanking Whitfield County for hosting the meeting. She continued by explaining that districts were encouraged to bring parent leaders to the PIC meetings and recognized the parent leaders in attendance. Michelle directed everyone to their folders where the agenda, as well as the evaluations, which are used to plan upcoming meetings and determine needs were located. She also shared with everyone that the 2014 Family Engagement Conference is scheduled for January 9 – 11, 2014 at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia pending contract approval. She explained that the registration fee for the conference will include a reduced price for the early bird group rate if at least one of the four people is a parent who is not employed by a school district. Also, to help districts plan for their budgets, "Save the Date" cards will be sent out soon. Additionally, she asked people who are interested in volunteering to serve on conference committees and help with various planning aspects of the conference to please complete the Conference Organization Committee interest form located in their folders. Those asked to serve as part of the Conference Organization Committee will be notified in August. Everyone was also informed that there would be an opportunity at the end of the meeting for anyone who has compliance questions or concerns to speak with the GaDOE staff. She then introduced the hosting district's speakers and presentation.

II. Learning from Each Other: Whitfield County Schools PIC Presentation

Lorijo Calhoun, Director of Federal Programs, began the Whitfield County presentation by providing an overview of the Whitfield County Schools Parent Involvement Coordinator (WCS PIC) structure. She shared that it takes a team and any team has to have a mission statement. The mission statement for the WCS PIC is;

- Parent Involvement Coordinators are responsive to parents' needs by facilitating positive relationships between parents and school.
- PICs foster a safe environment, which allows parents to become engaged in their children's learning and to partner in their academic success.

Whitfield County employs a unique model for the bilingual PIC services to meet the needs of their large non-English speaking population. The county is strategically divided into four regions and assigned two PICs to each region to increase assistance and build relationships with families from elementary to middle and high school. Lorijo explained that the PICs practice collaboration and maintain a balance work load thanks to the lead PIC in each region who coordinates duties. Lorijo described how Whitfield County builds capacity in the PICs through professional learning and book studies. PICs participate in computer skills training classes and translation skills training for English and Spanish to better serve and meet the needs of the families in their schools. Another way that the PICs participate in professional learning is through research and book studies as they join all system employees in reading a selected book on building relationships. Additionally, the PICs participate in a book study together to learn about communicating with parents and work together on improving parent communication. Lorijo concluded by introducing Whitfield County's bilingual parent involvement coordinators; Victor Rodriguez, Jeaneth Figueroa, Madeline Gonzalez, Keta Martinez, Marisol Sanchez, Iliana Martinez-Velez, Flor Nunez, and Flor Vidal.

Whitfield County also employs school based Title I Parent Involvement Coordinators who are doing different things to get parents involved at one specific school. This group of individuals includes Diane Sheppard, Tammy Cantrell, and Darenda Milam. Dianne discussed how the different ways she get parents involved by using technology to effectively communicate with parents. While it requires a lot of work, she shared how they send forms home to collect the email addresses for the parents so they can email a monthly newsletter to all parents. This is done because they realized that there is a big change from elementary to middle school where students tend to bring less information home when they are in middle school. Since most parents have cell phones, they also use a text notification system to send out updates to parents. Parents can sign up for this service and their phone numbers remain confidential. Other methods of technology used to communicate and share information with parents include the use of Twitter, Facebook and even developing an app for the middle school to provide information about events and schedules. The school based PICs also provide parents with support by offering English classes, parenting skills classes and computer and internet safety training. Another event that was offered to better serve parents was a Health Fair Day that was led by parents who are in the health profession. Lastly, they shared their success they experienced this year for their annual Title I meeting by partnering with local community businesses to provide food and drink.

The bilingual PICs in Whitfield County explained how they have created different opportunities to reach out, welcome and educate the Hispanic families in their communities. To help parents feel comfortable in the schools, the PICs offer informative parent presentations to help parents better understand the registration process, district testing, PIC services, and tips on communication. Additionally, all schools provide a parent resource center that is a welcoming place for parents to read and check out appropriate grade level resources to help their child. While parents are welcome in the schools every day, the PICs hosted a special event on National Parent Involvement Day for all parents to spend time in their child's classroom and share a meal together. The holidays are another great time that the PICs

schedule special events for the parents to attend celebrations and the cafeteria will make meals for these occasions.

An additional way that the bilingual PICs seek to make parents feel welcome is by providing translation and interpretation services. They provide these services for all events including parent teacher conferences, schools meetings, and other school outreach programs and events. All parents are also able to attend classes offered by the PICs to help parents learn the English language, active parenting skills and basic or intermediate computer literacy. The bilingual PICs also shared how they help to educate school staff on the Hispanic culture by offering panel presentations designed to bridge the gap between cultures in order to increase communication between schools and families. Lastly, they also host school content focused parent workshops such as math night and science night as well as a summer learning workshop to provide parents with information focused on building their child's academic skills.

The next portion of the presentation focused on how Whitfield County utilizes a unique model for collaboration to increase community engagement. The PICs provide assistance and help during school events such as the Health Partnership Community Health Fair and the Sharing is Caring Christmas event. Next, they discussed how Whitfield County partners with Americorps, which was described as a domestic version of Peacecorps, and the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program to host events for parents such as Kindergarten Peek, Summer Reading Program, Family Reading Night, Kindergarten PTA Night, Puzzle Play, For the Love of FUN!, Know Before You Go. These events are offered when parents are already present at the school and connect with academic learning by helping Pre-K parents with work with their child on math skills and sight words. Overall, there are 12 VISTAs serving Pre-K, elementary and high school in Whitfield County. One program The VISTAs in Pre-K have partnered with the Northwest Georgia Regional Library provide a Lunch & Learn summer program for children ages 3-5 and their parents to build essential skills for Pre-K and kindergarten. Lastly, they provided an overview of a new literacy initiative that was created to help address the high unemployment rate in Whitfield County. This literacy initiative, Readers to Leaders, focuses on three areas; education, economics, and environments. The program provides literacy opportunities for children ages 0-5 in home languages, of English, Spanish or Bilingual books and aims to assist development before school begins.

The last segment of the Whitfield County presentation highlighted the unique neighborhood family engagement outreach programs because parent involvement is not limited to when families come to the school. Whitfield County realizes that it can be difficult getting parents to attend school meetings, so they have taken the schools to the neighborhood. The schools will host various events in neighborhoods, such as "School Has Left the Building!" and "Take It to the Bay!" and show parents that school staff are part of the community and care about their students.

Lastly, Lorijo shared that thanks to a $100,000 charitable and education grant from Lowe's, they were able to fund a parent resource center housed in the high school that serves as a community center resource for parents. With 32 total computers, she explained that this facility is open extended hours for parents' convenience and helps the large population of parents without internet access to connect them with resources and provide opportunities for lifelong learning.

III. Break

IV. Recognizing the Difference Between Parent Influence and Parent Power

Lakeita Servance, Parent Engagement Specialist, introduced this segment by asking the audience if they feel that leaders are born or leaders are made? Depending on their answer, the audience was instructed to stand up and move to either side of the room marked with signs indicating "Born" or "Made". After people relocated, volunteers shared their rationale for selecting which side of the room they were standing and defended their opinions regarding whether leaders are born or made. Lakeita concluded this activity by informing the group that everyone was correct because with the proper training and studying, anyone can be a leader. She continued by explaining that the framework for this presentation is section 1118(e) which states that parent involvement programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children. Lakeita further described Parent Influence as the ability to affect a course of events or someone's thinking without having complete control of the situation and asked the group what type of words come to mind to describe Parent Influence. She explained that Parent Influence is important because children learn best when their parents are able to play four key roles as teachers, supporters, advocates and decision makers in their children's education. On the other hand, Lakeita described Parent Power as when parents have a voice in policy and decision-making matters that directly impact academic achievement outcomes and parents are more likely to take ownership when they play a role. She explained that some schools say that they support the concept of "parent power", but many hope to bypass parents completely in making decisions about school policies and plans. However, when parents, school, and communities collaborate, they can form a dynamic partnership that will allow all to accomplish the main goal of improving student achievement.

Lakeita continued by showing how there are two ways parents use their power and influence either as supporters or reformers. She reviewed that supporters are typically peace-makers who support worthwhile school and community projects that impact education. They are actively engaged in "school improvement" projects or activities, and help with fundraising campaigns, athletic programs, and special development projects. She elaborated that these services are needed by parents and other supporters of education; otherwise, students would be negatively affected because many schools do not have the monetary resources needed to compensate staff for these extra duties. Lakeita stated that the other way parents use their power and influence is by reformers, who strive to change or improve current school policy and guidelines. These are individuals who do not hesitate to express their concerns about matters that impact their child's education and elect to sit on school councils and committees that will provide an opportunity for them to be directly involved in decision-making. Lakeita shared a quote from Michelle Brooks, the Assistant Superintendent for Family and Student Engagement in Boson Public Schools, who basically said that if there is a problem, parents will push us to respond and our job is to respond, our fear is that the advocacy and training they receive might turn against us but that is okay, chaos is the only thing that causes change – don't be afraid of chaos! Lakeita continued by reminding everyone that parent power should be used to bring about change to the student achievement solution,

not to be abused regarding minuscule matters. The key is to find a common ground between supporters and reformers so parents can effectively use their power to influence change.

Lakeita continued by illustrating that it is essential to use diplomacy, the skill of managing your communication and relationships, and tact, the delicate perception of saying or doing the right thing without being offensive, when using parent power to influence change or the message will never be received. She further explained that there are times when our natural reaction may or may not be the correct response depending on the situation and asked if people can recall an incident when they wish they had not used their natural reaction when trying to influence change. Or perhaps recall a time a time they wish they had spoken up about a matter that effected their child's education? She recommended that it is important to establish the facts and practice open communication to collaboratively problem solve. However, expect there to be some hurdles such as direct confrontation and criticism.

Lakeita further explained that families are empowered to be advocated for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their successes. In relation to the PTA Standard 4, speaking up for every child is:

- Parents working with teachers and administrators in the decision-making process of education initiatives on behalf of all children.
- Providing the opportunity for parents to present information about school policies and guidelines to other parents.
- Allowing parents to organize discussions, meetings or workshops around areas of school goals, parent resilience, and literacy.

To illustrate what a parent leader looks like; Lakeita provided the following scenario and asked based on this situation, how a parent leader could implement the previous PTA Standard?

- A phone call was made home to Elizabeth's mom, Mrs. Johnson. The teacher explained that Elizabeth did not turn in her science project which was now three days late. Elizabeth had told the teacher that there had been a death in the family and she could not complete it in time. Mrs. Johnson verified that this was true. The teacher explained school policy and said if the project is not turned in by tomorrow, Elizabeth will receive a zero.

Lakeita continued by stating that families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs and sharing power is:

- Ensuring that parents' values and interests are heard and respected.
- Making the school more accountable to its parent community as far as the including parents and creating opportunities for them at the table.
- Ensuring that the values and opinions are sought outside the formal school structures.

She offered the following scenario as an example of how a parent leader might approach the situation.

- You hear on the news that next week the school board is going to vote on closing the local elementary school your kids attend and some of your friends currently have children there as well. This is the first you've heard about this and when you speak with other parents, they tell you they had no opportunity for input on the decision that's being made and neither did you.

Lakeita emphasized that parent power is meant to be used in a positive way that impacts changes for all students academically. Schools have an important responsibility in that parents trust them to provide a solid educational foundation for their children and working together will help this goal be accomplished with greater ease and that's a large part of why it's important for parents to use their power in such a way that it influences schools and communities to want a true partnership. Ultimately, it is a cycle and it will require change to develop a family-school-community partnership with everyone serving as a key player and seeing each other as true partners. She continued by urging everyone to support parent leaders in the schools by, developing a quality parent leadership program, sharing responsibility to engage families, recognizing families actively supporting their children's learning, and creating practical and justifiable plans and programs that focus on increased student achievement.

Lakeita directed everyone to additional and new resources that are available on the Georgia Department of Education Parent Engagement website for educators and parents. She pointed out that everyone was given a copy of the Parent Leadership flyer and the Parent Leadership Strategies handout in their folders.

http://www.gadoe.org/school-improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Parent-Engagement-Resources.aspx

http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Parent-Engagement-Program-For-Parents-Links.aspx

In closing, Lakeita asked everyone to discuss with their neighbors how schools can develop, utilize, and sustain parent leaders to influence changes that need to be made.

V. Working Lunch: Parent Involvement Coordinator Spotlight

The Georgia Department of Education, Parent Engagement Program, has developed a method to highlight the important and extraordinary work Parent Involvement Coordinators (PIC) and other parent professionals are doing across the state. Every month one PIC will be featured in the "PIC Spotlight", which is an announcement bulletin that will be e-mailed to the entire PIC network. Individuals will be selected based on the progress they have made with parent engagement initiatives in their school, district, and/or community. Attendees were asked to review the PIC Spotlight information and share one parent engagement practice that is unique and has proven strong by completing the form they received with their folders.

VI. Making Every Year Count: Planning Parent Engagement

Nate Schult, Parent Engagement Specialist, began this networking activity by explaining that everyone will have the opportunity to share and learn from each other and will leave with new ideas and suggestions that they can take back to their local school and district. He stated that during this segment, participants will tackle parent involvement regulations with meaningful and strategic actions, plan best practices for the entire school year, network with colleagues, and learn new strategies to improve parent engagement. It takes meaningful and strategic action to build parent capacity, meet requirements for the school year with an effective and impactful purpose, and use innovative and new ideas to overcome frequent obstacles. Nate shared three quotes to keep participants motivated and focused on their work:

"The mark of a successful organization is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with; but whether it is the same problem you had last year."

-John Foster Dulles

"If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail."

-Benjamin Franklin

"Behold the turtle. He only makes progress when he sticks his neck out."

-James Bryant Conant

Nate explained the importance of planning best practices. He stated that most people begin the school year with the statement "this school year is going to be different." However, it is important to develop a timeline for the year to plan wisely for the students and parents. He stated that as educators, it is understood that they are very busy, but everything that they do or don't do makes a difference for the students and their parents. The questions he asked is "what is happening during the dash?" (i.e. 2012-2013) and went on to explain that there are many factors one has to consider when planning such as staff development (improving learning), parent involvement plans (engaging all parents), school-parent compacts (support student learning), communication (increase understanding), parent notifications (find areas for change), schoolwide plan (impact student achievement), expenditures (building opportunities), Title I meeting (welcome and encourage families), community partnerships (strengthen resources), and parent training (assist parents). He stated that there is an opportunity to make a real difference for students if these requirements are met with thoughtful and meaningful planning. He proceeded to explain the networking exercise and divided participants into groups so they could share best practices by building a school calendar around parent engagement using the guiding questions listed under each month. Participants were told that activities could not be repeated from month to month; all activities needed to be unique. Their responses for each month are recorded are in the chart below.

May

How will your school involve all parents in developing and revising schoolwide plans? What methods of communication can help improve parent engagement?

- Send surveys home and use the parent volunteer orientation to get parents ready, review the parental involvement policy, and go over transition information.
- Give parents specific topics to discuss as table topics during this meeting.

August

How will your school welcome parents to another great year? What is the best way to plan an effective Title I meeting that parents are encouraged to attend?

- Host an Open House event and information meeting about everything that's available during the year.
- Conduct a plan of action meeting to look at assessment scores.
- Entice parents to support the Open House event by advertising that they will get student schedules at Open House.
- Facilitate a special "Coffee" for new families.

September

How will your school provide opportunities for parent engagement in September? How will your school use the school-parent compacts as tools?

- Host a fall carnival, recruit volunteers during football games, and ask the grandparents club to sign-up for reading to students.
- Facilitate a Wheel of Standards games for parents to learn the standards. Have the students spin the wheel, read the question the arrow lands on and if parents get it right, they get a smarties candy.
- Conduct a parent resource training where you invite parents to the parent resource room and tell them about all of the information they can find in there.

October

What type of staff training on parent engagement is offered in October? How will you integrate parent involvement with other programs?

- Conduct a staff training based on parent engagement where you show videos (pre-authorized) of how the families you work with live and provide a powerpoint presentation that explains what needs to be done to meet families where they are.
- Encourage staff to be accessible to parents.

November

In November, what opportunities for parent learning will your school provide? How does your school promote family engagement?

- Collaborate with the Migrant Program and go to work with parents for a day or a week to break down the barriers, build rapport, and gain their trust.
- Have a pot luck lunch/dinner for parents that requires teachers to cook and bring a dish and then sit down, eat, and talk with parents.

December

How does your school evaluate the progress it has made at this point? How does your school collaborate with other parent and family engagement professionals?

- Invite the District Parent Advisory Council to evaluate the policy in depth and take a closer look at revisions that could be made; use the wheel of standards to get them involved and guide their responses by asking specific questions about the policy.
- Use Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) to get dads involved and keep them involved all year.

January

How will your school conduct an annual evaluation and share results? What roles does your school develop for community organizations?

- Send home surveys.
- Conduct a basketball event focused on dads and between dads to see who can dominate the court, then pass out worksheets with activities to all parents in attendance based on grade level. This will give the school staff a chance to interact with parents in a less stressful setting.
- Donate newborn needs bags to the hospital for new babies in need.

February

How will your school involve parents in the development of training for other educators? What types of parent leaders exist at your school?

- At the primary level, develop a new hire committee that includes a parent participating in the interview process for hiring new teachers.
- The school council makes most of the decisions that affect school planning and outcomes.

March
How will your school educate parents on academic assessments and standards in March? How does your school share information with the school community? ➢ Conduct a CRCT drop-in where teachers meet with parents as they come to pick up their kids. ➢ Provide parents with sample questions and display prep questions on the website so they can help their children practice at home. ➢ Have a math and literacy coach explain math facts and sight words to parents so they can help with practice sessions at home.
April
What parent workshops will your school offer in April? How will your school prepare parents and students for summer planning? ➢ Facilitate Middle School Transition at the elementary level and have 5th graders participate with a strong presence. ➢ Provide a summer resource guide for parents to help them decide on the best way their child can spend their summer.

In closing, Nate stated that it is important to plan for success, make every year county and embrace necessary change. He challenged participants to return to their schools, look at what they have already accomplished this school year, what they still want to achieve, and to not be afraid to make changes or do something different. In closing he said it is still the 2012-2013 school year, and there is still time to get more accomplished during the dash.

VII. Making Title I School-Parent Compacts Meaningful

Michelle began the next segment by asking the audience if everyone knows what is a school-parent Compact and how the Compacts are used? Michelle continued by explaining that the Parent Engagement Program realizes the best approach to explain parent involvement law to the districts and schools is by focusing on pieces of the law to provide a better and more thorough understanding. She explained the GaDOE has seen trends across the state where schools and districts are coming up short with their school-parent Compacts. However, she realizes that the State has not always provided the guidance needed to this point, so districts being monitored this spring do not need to worry about changing their Compacts before their monitoring. However, this guidance will be in effect for the 2013 – 2014 school year. Additionally, this information will be shared with the Title I directors at the Title I conference this summer. Michelle continued by reviewing Section 1118(d) of the law which stipulates that Title I schools must jointly develop with parents a school-parent Compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. She showed everyone how the schoolwide plan, the school parent involvement plan and the school-parent Compacts should all be tied together to impact student achievement. She explained that a Compact is defined as:

- A written commitment indicating how all members of a school community – parents, teachers, principals, students, and concerned community members – agree to share responsibility for improved student achievement.
- A written agreement between teachers and parents that provides an opportunity to create new partnership sin your school community.
- An action plan to enhance and to promote student success.

Michelle stated that the school-parent Compact should be:

- A written agreement of shared responsibility describing how families, students, and teachers will work together this year to achieve the goals of the school improvement plan.
- A valuable tool to effectively and meaningfully engage the school and the home in supporting the academic development and needs of the students.

Michelle expressed that it has become a missed opportunity to really engage families and increase student achievement and according to U.S. ED, it is one of the weakest areas of Title I Compliance and the need for technical assistance is substantial. She realizes that this is a national issue, not just one that is seen in Georgia. She elaborated that school-parent Compacts are not present, not meaningful and not specific and engaging families should be at the core of school improvement. Michelle asked what Compacts have become and explained that as a result of the compliance culture plus little experience with families has resulted in boiler plate language aimed at "fixing" parents. She provided an example of a school-parent Compact that contains the same standard language for all schools in the system to illustrate how this Compact is not uniquely created to meet the needs of all schools.

Michelle continued by outlining the requirements of the school-parent Compact:

- Provide all parents of Title I students, the opportunity to be involved in the development of the School-Parent Compact. We understand that you make not get all parents in the school to help develop the Compact, but it is important that all parents were given the opportunity to be involved. If a meeting is used to provide this opportunity, then it must be clear that the meeting is intended to review and discuss the Compacts.
- Outline how parents, school staff, and student will share responsibility for student academic achievement and how they will build and develop a partnership to help student achieve the State's standards.
- Describe the district and school student performance standards, as well as provide ways in which the school will support the student's learning to achieve them through high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- Describe the ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning.
- Describe the ways in which students will be responsible for their learning.
- Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through at a minimum –
    - Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, during which the Compact shall be discussed as the Compact relates to the individual child's achievement.

    - Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress.
    - Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom.
- Write in a family –friendly language and to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand.
- Distribute a copy of school-parent Compacts to parents, students, and school representatives for review and signature (all Compacts must be signed and dated by each party and the school representative can be a teacher or administrator, but must be an original signature not a stamp either way).
- Develop a process for revising the Compact annually with all parents of Title I student having the opportunity to provide inputs. Current school year as well as the revision date (M/D/Y) must be listed on the Compact.

Michelle continued by comparing the traditional model for school-parent Compacts that is a standard document that contains generic language and focuses on behavior as opposed to the innovative method that creates a grade level specific school-parent Compact as a tool to address school improvement using school data and linked to learning. The innovative method is adapted from the model developed by the Connecticut Department of Education, who has done a lot of great work in this area and generously agreed to share their initiative. Michelle proceeded by explaining that she will explain both models to develop school-parent Compacts and assuring that if the school follows the traditional model then they will be in compliance since it addresses the requirements of the law.

Michelle proceeded by describing the process and steps in order to develop the traditional school-parent Compact. She stated that the school-parent Compact should be linked to learning, rather than everyday issues.

1. Review district/school performance standards such as main core content areas as well as the school-parent partnerships.
2. Develop multiple ways (meetings, feedback forms, surveys) to provide opportunities for all Title I parents to provide input into the School-Parent Compact.
3. Hold meetings with teachers, parents, and students to discuss in detail the necessary School-Parent Components and address the Compact's effectiveness. Ask if the Compact was successful in the past? Consider attractive methods for schools to market a meeting for parents to discuss the Compact.
4. Revise the School-Parent Compact using feedback from parents, teachers, and students ensuring all Compact components are addressed.
5. Share the School-Parent Compact with entire school community ensuring signatures from parents, students, and a school representative.
6. Publicize and utilize the Compact throughout the year as a tool for student achievement – don't just file away!

Michelle directed the audience to the handout titled, "School-Parent Compact Example One" and stated that the old template provided by the GaDOE is no longer being used. This new template will provide

schools with the necessary components of the Compact and the freedom to include their school's goals and information. However, schools still need to uniquely develop Compacts for their schools based on school district and school goals. Michelle continued by sharing the traditional timeline for developing the Compact and recommended that the school collect input throughout the year but schedule a formal opportunity for input during the spring. She recommended that schools advertise on the website or in newsletters that parent feedback is continuously welcome on the Compact, but make sure that parents are notified about the on-line opportunity. Also, explain to parents when their feedback will be incorporated into the updated Compact. Michelle offered the following tips for schools to follow when developing the traditional school-parent Compact:

- Work with parents to evaluate commitments and determine how successful each party has been in their part of the agreement (surveys, etc.).
- Hold periodic meetings to evaluate the Compact process, better yet, address at every school function and meeting.
- Work with parents to develop an understanding of how the Compact can be used as an advocacy tool to hold the school/district accountable for its part of the Compact.
- Ensure the Compact is linked to learning and addresses testing scores and academic proficiency.
- Reflect constantly upon "Has fulfillment of the Compact commitments helped to improve student learning?" <u>This is an important question to ask when revising the Compacts</u>.
- Develop videos and other tools that demonstrate what meaningful Compact relationships and meetings entail.
- Distribute the Compact to the school as well as the greater community.
- Publicize Compact commitment reminders in school newsletters, on the school website, sent home with students, in letters and emails to parents. For example, one principal sends out a weekly voice message to students sharing weekly information and ends the message with a reminder about the School-Parent Compact.

Michelle continued by describing the exciting work that the Connecticut Department of Education has shared with her on developing School-Parent Compacts. The Connecticut Department of Education conducted research on this topic and asked what do parents want from us? The number one response from parents was to know what their child is expected to know at each grade level. This response helped Connecticut to see that if the Compacts are supposed to be a tool for student learning, then the Compacts should be designed for the grade level rather than to serve the entire school. Michelle clarified by saying that what a third grader is doing is very different than what a fifth grade is learning. For those in high school, she suggested considering developing a content area Compact since students have multiple teachers. She explained that the innovative way to develop School-Parent Compacts is not a requirement and schools can choose the traditional method, but it is recommended as a best practice.

Michelle proceeded to explain that the Connecticut Department of Education aligned their Compacts with district and school improvement plans based on student data in order to develop grade level strategies. This new approach will link to the goals of the school improvement plan and the school's grade-level achievement data. The Compact will describe strategies families can use at home to

strengthen students' skills and explain what teachers will do to support family learning. It will also describe what students will do to reach achievement goals. The Compact will also be written in a family-friendly language and with meaningful input from families and students. She continued by stating that these Compacts will no longer use general statements like, "Teachers will hold high expectations for all children and offer high-quality instruction". Or statements focused on behavior, such as "Parent will monitor attendance and TV watching, and make sure their children do their homework" or "Students will be good citizens, read 30 minutes every day, and bring home notices from school". Michelle explained that if the school has a school goal tied to literacy then it is appropriate to include a student strategy related to reading, but the Compacts should not include requirements such as providing correct contact information that are not related to academic achievement.

Michelle proceeded by sharing a brief video from the Connecticut Department of Education and Judy Carson, the Parent Engagement Program Manager, explaining the importance of developing meaningful school-parent Compacts. She continued by explaining the "10 Steps to Success" Toolkit to develop school-parent Compacts. The first step, as it is with anything important, is to motivate and get buy-in from the staff. Share with staff what Compacts are and how they are important to student success to help them better understand. She shared that the next step is to designate a leader preferably someone with strong leadership skills, perhaps a math or literacy coach, data team leader, or home-school coordinator to get feedback from teachers to develop strategies and breakdown data. Michelle explained that the next step is to align the Compact with the school improvement plan by reviewing and analyzing the school data and turning the data language into family-friendly language in order to develop the "Bang for Your Buck" actions to determine strategies for students, parents, and teachers. She elaborated that the Compacts only need to include three strategies for students, three strategies for parents and three for teachers. The next step to success, if schools are creating grade-level Compacts, is to get grade-level input on skills that are needed to improve in each grade. Ideally, data teams will identify three goals for each grade level and draft home learning ideas to discuss with parents. She proceeded by explaining the fifth step to successfully creating the Compact, which is to reach out to families. Michelle suggested hosting different types of meetings and since a meeting called "School-Parent Compacts" may not appeal to parents, and then embed the Compacts with other family-friendly events. When developing agendas or plans for these meetings, it is important to not simply state that the school will share the Compacts, because this does not indicate parents gave feedback. Rather make sure that it is clear the Compacts are reviewed and discussed and document all parent feedback. Michelle emphasized that developing school-parent Compacts is based on the conversations between the school and the parents so encourage parents to attend fun events and assign them to smaller groups based on grade level to review and discuss the Compacts. Also, make sure to ask parents how can the school help you support your children's learning? The school should type up and circulate parents' ideas, and then teachers can meet at each grade level to respond, draft the Compact plan for parents to approve. Michelle continued to explain the next step in the process by stating that once the school has feedback from the parents, then they need to also get feedback from the students. Schools can ask students how they will take responsibility for their learning and what do they want teachers and parents to do to support them? Michelle explained that the last step is to pull it all together and possibly recruit

an art teacher or graphic design teacher to help create an attractive, family-friendly Compact with input from all and design a roll out plan to share it with the school, parents, and the community.

Michelle reviewed the School-Parent Compact template created by the Connecticut Department of Education which is given to the attendees and will be available on the GaDOE website. She pointed out that this template provides a cover sheet with space for required signatures so schools can obtain the necessary signatures and keep the cover sheet and parents can keep the important information on the Compact. She also indicated that this sample Compact includes areas shaded in gray that are not required, but considered best practices. The template is designed like a brochure and contains different sections that provide information on the school and district goals, the strategies for parents, students, and teachers as well as information about what is a Compact, how it is jointly developed, different activities to build partnership and communication about student learning. Michelle showed everyone what this can look like by reviewing the completed Compact with the sample school's information and concrete details about school plans and goals. She suggested that people visit the website www.schoolparentcompact.org to watch the videos especially the ones where principals share their support and their buy in for this process.

Michelle stated that while the Connecticut Department of Education does not require signatures on their School-Parent Compact, the Georgia Department of Education does require signatures on the School-Parent Compact and they will need to ensure signatures are in place for the monitoring process. Therefore, she recommends that a cover sheet be attached to the School-Parent Compact brochure for capturing signatures that states that all parties have read and agreed to the School-Parent Compact.

Michelle continued by explaining that the next step to success is to align all resources and review school needs based on the Compact goals and allocate funds to support parent workshops, staff development, and other materials. She further described the eighth step to successfully creating a School-Parent Compact is to market the Compact. Many schools use the Compacts at parent-teacher conferences to check on the progress that the school, parent, and student have made. The Compacts should be advertised and utilized throughout the year and the school should get the word out at every opportunity about the Compacts. Michelle stated that the last step is to review, revise and celebrate progress made based on the School-Parent Compact. Ask what worked and what needs to improve to develop a new plan. She encouraged schools to celebrate success and ask students to show off!

Michelle shared with everyone the recommended timeline for completing this process which does take a year to develop, but she pointed out that school goals typically do not change too much each year so once schools develop the Compact it can be used with little changes each year. She continued by saying that while she discussed different types of documentation for each step of developing the Compact, she also wants everyone to understand the documentation requirements that schools should provide and maintain:

- School-Parent Compacts
    - Labeled with School Name
    - Labeled with current school year and revision date (M/D/Y)

    - Contains all School-Parent Compact requirements
    - Contains signatures and dates from each parent, student, and school representative
- Agendas and Sign-in sheets (must be detailed)
    - Labeled with school name, location, date, and time of meeting
    - Meeting agenda contains School-Parent Compact as either purpose of meeting or a detailed item as part of the meeting.
    - Sign-in sheets with signatures and roles defined (i.e. parent)
- Minutes/Evaluations/Feedback
    - Labeled with school name and meeting purpose
    - Labeled with location, date, and time of meeting
    - Record of parent, students teacher feedback on Compact
    - Pictures or video or survey
- Communications (Meeting Announcements/Sharing) that show evidence that all Title I parents were invited to provide input in the development/revision of the School-Parent Compact
    - School/Community newsletter, flyers, or letter to parents
    - Emails, call logs, website, social media, video announcements
    - Parent-teacher conferences, school events, or parent meetings

Michelle concluded this segment by encouraging everyone to visit the website to see more information and answering questions.

VIII. Closing

Participants were asked to complete their evaluations and submit them in the appropriate box. Participants were also informed that the minutes and material presented would be available soon electronically on the Parent Engagement Program website. Michelle Sandrock thanked everyone for attending and certificates were distributed to all in attendance.

IX. Optional Parental Involvement Compliance Review

Participants were invited to bring questions pertaining specifically to parent involvement compliance regulations and/or documentation. One-on-one technical assistance was provided to those with questions or if they wished to have select documents reviewed.