

Weakley County School District Parent Involvement Plan

WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Involvement (as defined by the National PTA) is the participation of parents in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in their children's lives. Parent involvement takes many forms, including parents' shared responsibilities in decisions about their children's education, health and well-being, as well as parent's participation in organizations that reflect the community's collaborative aspirations for all children.

Parents help their children have success in school by daily...encouraging, listening, monitoring, praising, reacting and discussing, not necessarily "teaching" school subjects.

Involvement should not be limited to volunteering or attending school-sponsored events. The broad view of involvement affirms the parent's role as the child's primary teacher and the home as the child's first classroom (Barbour, 1966).

Involving every family in a child's education is an important piece of improving that child's learning, according to research by Joyce Epstein, director of the Center for School, Family, and Community Partnerships at John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

The framework of parental involvement includes the following:

- ✚ Parenting—help all families establish home environments to support children as students;
- Communicating—design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress;
- ✚ Volunteering—recruit and organize parent help and support;
- Learning at home—provide information and ideas to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning;
- ✚ Decision making—include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives;
- ✚ Collaborating with community—identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

What families do to help their children learn is even more important to their academic success than how well-off the family is (Walberg, 1994).

When families are involved in their children's education in positive ways, children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education (Becher 1984, Ballen and Moles 1966).

Every research study on parent involvement conducted in the past 20 years has shown the same result: parent involvement increases student achievement and self-esteem. Research has shown this to be true in large and small communities; from preschool through high school; in poor and affluent areas; and in urban, rural and suburban communities.

CONCERNS AT THE UPPER GRADES:

Research shows that there is an inadequate level of Parent Involvement, especially in the upper grades (Binns, Steinburg, and Amorosi 1998).

In the upper grades, teachers report that (1) there is a greater number of uninvolved parents and (2) a lack of parental support especially in doing schoolwork at home.

In the middle grades, teachers report that (1) parents do not devote enough time to their children's education; (2) parents attend only one or two meetings at school after the school year begins; (3) parents do not visit their children's classes; (4) parents do not contact their child's school about their academic progress; and (5) parents do not talk to school officials about academic programs at the different grade levels.

BARRIERS: (What keeps parents from participating in their child's education?)

- Many parents, especially those employed outside the home, do not have enough time.
- Many parents feel ill-informed about how and why academic decisions are made about their children.
- Some parents feel that educators do not care about their opinions or concerns.
- Teachers do not have enough time to maintain communication with parents and involve them in school activities.
- Teachers receive little training in how to effectively involve parents (American Association for the Advancement of Science 1996; National Center for Education Statistics 1998).
- In some schools that have high proportions of poor or minority students, a barrier may be lack of parent education to help with schoolwork.
- Cultural/socio-economic and language differences between parents and staff.
- Parent and staff attitudes.
- Perceived lack of safety in the school area after school hours.

PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS:

- The school must operate from principles that respect the unique role of the parent in a child's home-school relationship.
- ⊕ All parents have strengths and should know they are valued.
- All parents can make a contribution to their child's education and to the school program.
- ⊕ All parents have the capacity to learn developmental and educational techniques to help their children.
- ⊕ All parents have a perspective on their children that can be important and useful to teachers.
- Parent-child relationships are different from teacher-child relationships.
- ⊕ Parents should be consulted in all decisions about parental involvement.
- All parents really do care about their children (Becher 1984).

Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, well-planned, and long lasting, and when it takes a positive approach, rather than focusing on remedial intervention. Parents do not have to be well-educated in order to help; in fact, children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve parents.

WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING?

As an integral part of planning for and writing this plan, the Weakley County Parent Involvement Team, as part of the Family Friendly Schools Training, sent surveys to every parent in the Weakley County School system. These surveys were returned and data analyses were made and reviewed. The findings from these surveys, resulted in the following.

Listed below are the activities as they relate to the six areas in the framework of parental involvement.

P-Parenting CM-Communicating V-Volunteering
L-Learning at Home D-Decision Making C-Collaborating

DISTRICT LEVEL

1. Publish and distribute a Student Handbook, which is sent home to each parent at the beginning of school. This handbook contains most of the pertinent information and policies that parents need, including a directory for schools with personnel and phone numbers.
2. Maintain a school system website, with information needed by parents, including announcements and school lunch menus. An additional feature will be the listing of grade level curriculum by month, so that parents will know what their child is learning.

3. Hold an annual meeting to which parents, school personnel, and interested citizens are invited to have input and ask questions about both the design and implementation of all federally funded school programs, including parent involvement requirements. One important part of these requirements is to annually evaluate the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement plan.
4. Provide technical assistance to schools in helping to plan and implement effective parent involvement activities through such activities as meetings with school principals, meetings with parent-teacher groups, providing financial support for allowable parent engagement activities, and other activities as needed, including promoting parental and community support in programs for ELL students.
5. Meet, and coordinate strategies and plans with other programs having similar goals and responsibilities for parent involvement, including but not limited to Reading First, Pre-School and Head Start.
6. Provide training for parents and staff in ways to implement new initiatives under NCLB.

SCHOOL LEVEL

Listed on the next several pages are some of the Parent and Family Engagement Activities found in our schools. These are not exhaustive lists, but are representative of ongoing efforts to be more family friendly, and to include parents and families in the activities and certainly the learning process of all students in Weakley County.

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: Dresden Elementary

<p>Key to Type of Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Parenting CM - Communicating V - Volunteering L - Learning at Home D - Decision Making C - Collaborating

Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
P, V	Parent Teacher Organization	All Year
D, C	Parent /Teacher Advisory Committee	All Year
CM	Open House	Aug.
CM	Kindergarten Open House	Aug.
CM, V	Donuts for Dad	Oct.
CM, V	Muffins for Mom	Feb.
CM, P	Schoolwide evening programs for parents - performances and training	All Year
P, CM	Citizen of the Month programs	Monthly
P, CM	Citizen of the Year program	All Year
P, CM, C	Parent conferences (2 per year)	Oct. @ Jan.
P, V	Parent volunteer Art classes	Monthly
CM, P	Individual teacher classroom newsletters	All Year
L, CM, P	Weakley Readers program and evening reading with parents	All Year
CM, L	State Standards per grade are sent home to parents	Aug. Sept.
C, CM, P	Parent/Teacher/Student Compact	Aug.
CM, D	DES Student Handbook/ County Handbook	Aug.
CM, C	Weekly notes sent home by Principal and staff	All Year
CM, P	Good News From DES postcards	All Year
V, C	Outdoor Classroom	All Year
V	Lion's Vision Program	Feb.
C, CM	Local business partners programs	All Year
CM	School based Web site	All Year
CM, C	Principal is member of local Rotary club	All Year
CM, C	Report cards	6 Weeks

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: DRESDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

<p>Key to Type of Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Parenting CM - Communicating V - Volunteering L - Learning at Home D - Decision Making C - Collaborating

Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
CM	NEW AND UPDATED WESITE INC. TEACHER EMAIL	DAILY, ALL YEAR
CM	MONTHLY CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS	MONTHLY
V, CM, C	P.I.E. RELATIONSHIPS FOR EACH GRADE	ALL YEAR
C, V	COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS BY STUDENTS IN CLUBS	ALL YEAR
C,V,D,CM	STUDENT COUNCIL AND BETA PARENT MEETINGS	ALL YEAR
V,CM,C	USE PARENT CHAPERONES ON CLUB AND FIELD TRIPS	ALL YEAR
CM	WEEKLY ARTICLE IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS	WEEKLY, ALL YEAR
P,C,V	USE OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS FOR PROJECTS AT SCHOOL	ALL YEAR
C,CM, P	5TH GRADE ORIENTATION, PARENT NIGHT	AUGUST
CM,V,D,C	PTO GROUP (P.R.I.D.E.) AND ADVISORY BOARD	ALL YEAR
CM,V,D,C	ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB (OFFICERS AND MEMBERS)	ALL YEAR
C,CM,D	PRINCIPAL IS A MEMBER OF DRESDEN ROTARY CLUB	ALL YEAR
CM,C	VETERANS DAY PROGRAM AND BREAKFAST TO HONOR VETS	NOVEMBER
CM,V,D,C	SACS COMMITTEES FOR SCHOOL IMP. (PARENTS & COMM.)	ALL YEAR
CM	SCHOOL MARQUIS (ST. RECOGNITION & SCH. INFORMATION)	ALL YEAR
CM,C,P	SCHOOL/FAMILY COMPACT (TITLE SCHOOL)	AUGUST
C,CM	AWARDS NIGHT CEREMONY FOR STUDENTS / PARENTS	MAY
P,CM, C	STUDENT PLANNERS/AGENDAS PROVIDED FOR EVERY STUD.	ALL YEAR
P,CM,C,D	TWO PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES HELD	OCT. & JAN.
CM	REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS	
CM,	CALLING PARENTS TO CHECK ON ABSENTEES	
CM, P, D, L	CALLING PARENTS TO INFORM OF LACK OF HOMEWORK	

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: Gleason School

<p>Key to Type of Engagement:</p> <p>P - Parenting CM - Communicating V - Volunteering L - Learning at Home D - Decision Making C - Collaborating</p>
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Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
P,V	Parent Teacher Organization	All Year
CM	Open House	August
P, CM	Citizen of the Month Program	Monthly
P, CM, C	Parent Teacher Conferences	October and January
CM	Student Planners	All Year
L, P	Family Reading Night	6 times per year
CM	Progress Reports	Mid-six weeks
P, V, C	Apple Day	October
C, CM, P	Parent/Student/Teacher Compact	August
C, D	Parent Teacher Advisory Committee	All Year
CM	School Web Site	All Year
CM, C	Report Cards	6 weeks
V, C	Guest Readers	All Year
L, P	Following the Leaders Program	All Year
D, V	Walk for Diabetes	Spring
P, CM, C	Financial Aid Workshop	January
CM, C	Four Year Plan Registration for Incoming Freshman	Spring
P,CM, C	Academic Awards Banquet	May

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: MARTIN PRIMARY

Key to Type of Engagement:	P - Parenting CM - Communicating V - Volunteering L - Learning at Home D - Decision Making C - Collaborating
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Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AT MARTIN PRIMARY	
P, V	International Walk to School Week	Oct.
V	Mr. Earl Fundraisers	Fall, Spring,
V	Lions Club Eye Screening	Oct.,
V	Eye Screening with Dr. Francis Bynum	Oct.,
V	Assist in Lunchroom	Spring,
V	Teacher Appreciation Day	May,
V	Grandparent's Day at each grade level	Sept.,
V	Lunchroom Duty	Spring
P,C	LETT Night (Parents & Student Technology each Monday Night)	Monday Nights
V	Refurbish Playground Day	Spring,
V	Bike-a-Thon	Sept
V	Assist with Bus Duty and Carlines for Arrival and Departure	Spring
V	Volunteer in First Aid Room	
V	Donations to First Aid Room	Fall
V	Assist in Classrooms	Daily
V	Honors Day for Paraprofessionals	April
P, CM, D, C	Parent Teacher Organization	Sept., Nov., Feb., Apr.
V	E W James Receipt Fundraiser	Sept
V	Field Trips/Chaperones	
CM, C, D	Daily Behavior Reports	Daily
CM, D, C	Weekly Progress Reports	Weekly
CM	Standardized Testing Results/Family Letter	Oct
CM, C	Open House	Sept
CM	School Newsletter	Each Six-Week Period
CM	Regular Classroom Newsletter	Weekly
CM	Special Area Teachers' Newsletter	Sept
V	Yearly Holiday Parties	Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.
CM, P, L	Homework Assignments	Daily
CM	Web Page	Daily

CM, C, D	Advisory Board	
CM, C, D, P	Parent-Teacher Conferences	Oct., Feb
CM, D, C	IEP Meetings	
V	School Volunteer	
CM	Pre-K Home Visits	Aug., Sept.
P	Parents Have Lunch with Child(ren)	

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: MARTIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<p>Key to Type of Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Parenting CM - Communicating V - Volunteering L - Learning at Home D - Decision Making C - Collaborating

Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
CM	Website	All year
CM	THE DOLPHIN NEWSLETTER	Once a month
CM	Progress Reports	Mid-six Weeks
CM	Newspaper Articles depicting school happenings and successes	Weekly
CM	Teacher generated publications (newsletters)	Once a month
V	Parent Volunteer (helping individual teachers in their classrooms)	Various schedules
P	"Home and School Connection" Pamphlet	Once a month
P	"Reading Connection" Pamphlet	Once a month
P	Tech Nights (Per Grade Level)	Bi-weekly
L	Skillstutor.com and Homeroom.com	Anytime
C	Coffee with Ms. Teresa	4 times/year
D	School Improvement Plan (Committee members)	Once a year
D	Parent Involvement Plan Development	Twice a Year
P--	Family Fun Night	Once a Year
V	Volunteer Readers (Read Across America Day)	Once a Year

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: Martin Middle School

<p>Key to Type of Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Parenting CM - Communicating V - Volunteering L - Learning at Home D - Decision Making C - Collaborating

Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
V	PTO	year round
C	Parent Advisory Committee	year round
P	MMS Back to School Cookout	August
P	MMS Open House	August
CM	Mandatory Beginning of Year Teacher Letter	August
CM	Student Planner (teacher email addresses)	year round
	documentation of teacher objectives and student discipline	
CM	Mandatory three week progress report	year round
CM	Notes and reminders printed on all report cards	year round
CM	Calendar of events and bulletin on school website	year round
C	MMS Spring Fest	March
CM	Four Year Plan Registration for High School with 8th graders/parents	April
CM	5th Grade Parent Orientation	May
	8th Grade Graduation	May
CM	Calling students on the absentee list	daily

Family and Community Involvement Activities

School: Sharon School

Key to Type
of
Engagement:

P - Parenting
CM - Communicating
V - Volunteering
L - Learning at Home
D - Decision Making
C - Collaborating

Type of Engagement	Activity Description	When Done
CM	Agenda	daily
CM	Purple Folder	Tuesdays
CM, L	Progress Reports	3 Week Point
CM, L	Report Cards	6 Week Point
P, V	Parent Teacher Organization	Meet Monthly
CM	Parent Open House/ Parent Orientation	August
CM	Kindergarten Reception For Incoming Students of Upcoming Year	May
P, CM	Citizen of the Month Ceremonies	Monthly
P, CM, C	Parent Teacher Conferences (2 per year)	October, January
CM, P, L	Individual teacher classroom newsletters (k -1st)	weekly
L, CM, P	Weakley Readers Initiative Reading Program with nightly reading	August - May
C, CM, P	Parent/Teacher/Student Compact	August
CM, C	County Student Handbook	August
CM	School Based Web Site	Year round
CM	Newspaper Articles depicting school happenings and successes	Monthly
V	Parent Volunteers (assisting various teachers and students)	Various Schedules
V	Mr. Earl Fundraisers	August - September
V	E W James Receipts for Education	September - March
V	Labels for Education	Year round
V	Fall Festival	October
V	Trunk or Treat	October
V, L, P	Various Field Trips	Various Schedules

PHILOSOPHICAL SHIFT

The definition of Parent Involvement in Weakley County will experience a philosophical shift. The objective of parent involvement should not be to create more meetings or more activities for parents. Instead the school will see parents as true partners and recruit them to solve real problems that have a significant impact upon students. The objective of this shift is to establish projects or goals that mean something to parents and then co-op parents to accomplish the projects or goals.

Once parents feel that they are wanted and needed and see the benefit of the focus groups, their involvement will likely increase. We must show them that their input and skills are valuable and needed to ensure the success of the school, and the school system.