

## JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### **Background**

In March 2005, the Johnson City Schools Family Engagement Core Team took the initiative in developing a first draft of a system wide plan for family involvement. The core team was made of staff members who had participated in a state wide family engagement training workshop throughout the spring. After creating an initial framework based upon the requirements of NCLB (No Child Left Behind), the plan was presented to groups of principals, teachers, parents and board members for feedback and revision. On September 19, a draft of the Family Engagement Plan was evaluated by the system wide Family and Community Advisory Council. Using input from this evaluation, the core team finalized the plan. The plan was then disseminated to school principals at the September 27 Administrative Meeting. In addition, the plan will be shared with other school system stake-holders as well as posted on the school system's web site.

The Family Involvement Plan is considered a living document and is annually reviewed and updated as needed. Updated versions of the plan will be presented to the PTA Council and PTA presidents for input and will be posted on the system's web site.

### **Purpose**

The Johnson City Schools Family Engagement Plan was developed to:

- Support Goal Four of the Board of Education's Long Term Plan as well as the system's Tennessee Comprehensive System wide Planning Process (TCSPP)
- Support the initiatives found in the Consolidated Federal Projects Application
- Create a common vision of family engagement and resources needed to sustain that vision
- Increase and improve the level of family involvement in our students' education.

## **Plan**

**Component 1:** Johnson City Schools is committed to involving families in policy development.

*Indicators:*

1. Parents will have an opportunity to discuss and provide input through PTA Council and the monthly PTA president luncheons
2. Parents will be represented on each school's site-based council (including all Title I Schools)
3. Parents will be represented on the system's Tennessee Comprehensive System wide Planning Process (TCSPP) core team
4. Parents and educators will have the opportunity to provide input through surveys and through postings on the system's web page

5. Cultural, economic, language, and demographic issues will be given attention through the selection of focus groups and advisory councils and committees
6. The system will provide parents of English Language Learners the opportunity to provide input at an annual community meeting.

**Component 2:** The Family Engagement Plan includes technical assistance and planning support for effective family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. Workshops for parents are scheduled through “Resource Central” (previously known as the Teacher Center); in addition, special education sponsors an annual parent workshop
2. Title I and the PTA Council co-host an annual program “Looking into out Schools” to provide information regarding federal programs and expenditures and to collect feedback from parents.
3. School newsletters are sent home on a regular basis and contain information regarding school report cards, test results, new programming options, and suggestions for parents to become involved in their child’s education
4. The district report card and other key sources of information are linked to the district web site
5. Courses of study may be accessed by a link from the district web site to the state department web site
6. A computer with access to the internet and email will be made available to parents in the “Family Depot” section of “Resource Central”
7. Preschool and kindergarten bags are provided at the time of student registration and contain educational materials for parents to use at home
8. Title I parent involvement activities will be coordinated with parent involvement activities of other programs such as: Even Start, preschool, and ESL programs.

**Component 3:** The Family Engagement Plan supports clearly articulated goals for extent and type of family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. A variety of planned, goal oriented programs will be oriented and implemented to engage all parents in their children’s education in one or more of the following categories:
  - a. *parenting* (strategies to promote effective parenting practices at home)
  - b. *communicating* (strategies to promote positive school-home communication)
  - c. *volunteering* (opportunities for parents to volunteer or be an audience at school)

- d. *learning at home* (learning activities to involve parents with students at home)
- e. *decision making* (opportunities to engage in decision making, governance, and advocacy roles at both the school and system level)
- f. *collaborating with the community* (activities/events that foster school-community partnerships)

(NOTE: the link to student achievement and the importance of providing activities in each of the above categories is derived from Joyce Epstein's research at Johns Hopkins University.)

- 2. Sign-in sheets and other forms of documentation will be kept on file and reviewed annually to assess parent participation in system and school activities in each of the six areas

**Component 4:** The Family Engagement Plan provides for an evaluation process to promote continuous improvement of the engagement of all families.

*Indicators:*

- 1. Annual surveys will be conducted at the system level as well as at each of the school sites to identify barriers to greater participation; to design more effective strategies; and to revise, if necessary, the parent involvement plan
- 2. Survey results will be analyzed to measure the effectiveness of the plan and to secure input regarding modifications in future practices
- 3. Measurable goals for increasing the level and quality of family involvement are required as part of every school improvement plan
- 4. The system wide Family and Community Advisory Council will use the Family Friendly Schools-District Family Policy Assessment and Development (rubric) to evaluate the system wide Family Engagement Plan

**Component 5:** The Family Engagement Plan requires family engagement at all school sites.

*Indicators:*

- 1. All schools (including schools served under Title I-A) will develop a Family Engagement Plan that provides opportunities for family engagement in the six categories supported by Epstein's research (see component 3) and submit an annual update of the plan to the district office
- 2. All schools will conduct an annual parent survey regarding the family practices provided at each school site and submit the survey results to the district office
- 3. Each school will set a goal for family engagement for each major strategy
- 4. All schools will submit their plans to the central office for review and evaluation

**Component 6:** The Family Engagement Plan includes procedures for parents to access and understand course of study or curricular materials as well as Federal, State, and local standards.

*Indicators:*

1. The district web site will contain a link to the Tennessee State Department of Education where the state curriculum for each grade level and subject area can be accessed
2. Progress indicators on elementary report cards will be aligned with state standards
3. The textbook adoption process will provide an opportunity for potential textbooks to be reviewed by parents and the community
4. The current resource known as the “Teacher Center” will be renamed the “Resource Central” and will have specific activities and materials set aside for the involvement of families
5. The Johnson City Schools’ Tennessee Comprehensive System wide Planning Process (TCSPP) document (including learning goals and action steps) is posted on the school system website

**Component 7:** The Family Engagement Plan encourages the support of district involvement in positive parenting skills.

*Indicators:*

1. Parenting workshops will be offered through the “Resource Central” and an annual special education conference
2. Parenting programs such as “STEP” and PASSport to Success” will be provided on an annual basis
3. “Resource Central” will provide a variety of parenting materials for review and checkout
4. Adult literacy and adult education courses will be made available through the technology center at Science Hill High School
5. After school tutoring and homework programs will be provided to improve student homework and achievement
6. Parents will receive phone calls to confirm student absences and to encourage better student attendance; a letter will be sent home once a student has accrued five unexcused absences; each school will receive money to develop attendance incentives
7. Schools will develop reward programs to acknowledge good character and good student behavior (i.e., Character Counts!)

**Component 8:** The Family Engagement Plan incorporates family involvement in decision making and governance.

*Indicators:*

1. School district staff members are friendly towards, respectful of, and helpful to all families
2. All schools are required to have family representation on the site-based team
3. The district has several ways of listening to parents and engaging them in two-way communication (for example, giving time at Board meetings, holding open forums, and providing ways to give input on the district web site)
4. Parent representatives will serve on the system wide Even Start advisory council, the Voluntary PreK advisory council, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century advisory council, and the Family Resource Center advisory council.
5. Parent representatives will serve on each school's School Improvement Planning Process (SIPP) team as well as on the system's Tennessee Comprehensive System wide Planning Process (TCSPP) core team. Parents are also represented each time the Johnson City Schools Board of Education updates its five year plan.

**Component 9:** The Family Engagement Plan supports professional development to build the capacity for family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. Professional development in the area of family engagement will be provided to all staff members
2. Families will have opportunities to be included in family engagement training
3. Schools will be supported by the district office in planning/implementing family engagement activities for the purpose of improving student achievement

**Component 10:** The Family Engagement Plan specifies budget and funding for family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. The district has adequate staff and resources to implement the family involvement standards
2. District and site-based budgets will reflect a commitment to the effective development, implementation, and evaluation of family engagement programs including but not limited to the following:
  - System wide Spanish interpreter
  - "Resource Central" workshops and materials
  - System and school level newsletters and other publications
  - Staff development

- PreK and K parent bags
3. “Resource Central” will serve as a clearinghouse to gather best practices, ideas, materials, new approaches, research, and other program information in order to help schools improve family involvement programs.
  4. All Title I schools will designate at least 1% of the Title I A budget for parent involvement activities