

JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY/ 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, 2005 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 2005 Administrative Meeting. During the fall of 2010, the plan was rewritten to show compliance with the Tennessee Parental Involvement Standards (TPIS), state law as of April, 2009.

The Family Engagement 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.
- Comply with Tennessee state law (public chapter 154)

Science Hill High School Family Engagement Plan

Component 1: Johnson City Schools is committed to involving families in policy development. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 5: sharing power.)

Indicators:

1. Parents will have an opportunity to discuss and provide input through a variety of avenues. (*The Science Hill High School PTSA hosts regular meetings each year including the annual "Meet and Greet" in the first month of school.*)

2. Parents will be represented on each school's site-based council (including all Title I Schools) and will be involved in the development of the parent plan and the TSIPP. (*At Science Hill, we currently have two community volunteers who serve on our site-based committee. Beginning SY 2013-14 the Council annually reviews the Family Engagement Plan.*)
3. Parents will be represented on the system's Tennessee Comprehensive System wide Planning Process (TCSPP) core team.
4. Each Title I school will develop a parent/school compact as part of its parent involvement plan. This compact will describe how parents, staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement.
5. Parents and educators will have the opportunity to provide input through surveys and through postings on the system's web page (*Science Hill provides access to parent resources through the Hilltopper web page, PowerSchool parent portal and e-mail links to Science Hill Staff. Additionally, surveys are distributed at various times and events. These surveys allow community stakeholders a means of providing input relevant to school/community operations.*)
6. Cultural, economic, language, and demographic issues will be given attention through the selection of focus groups and advisory councils and committees
7. 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. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 2: communicating effectively.)

Indicators:

1. Parents will be notified of each school's parent involvement plan in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. (*The Science Hill High School Family Engagement Plan can be found on the school website.*)
2. Each school has convened an annual parent meeting to inform parents about the school's parent involvement programs and right of parents to be involved.
3. Workshops for parents are scheduled through "Resource Central" (previously known as the Teacher Center)
4. Assistance is provided to parents in better understanding state standards (content as well as achievement), local assessments, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with teachers to improve student achievement. (*Science Hill offers assistance and information to parents through its website, a regular publication of "Topper Tidbits" and the parent portal, which can be accessed anytime. In addition, parent conferences are offered twice a year to discuss individual student progress.*)
5. Title I and the PTA Council co-host an annual program "Looking into Our Schools" to provide information regarding federal programs and expenditures and to collect feedback from parents.

- 6 School newsletters are sent home on a regular basis and contain information regarding school programs including report cards, test results, new programming options, and suggestions for parents to become involved in their child's education. (*Science Hill regularly communicates via "Topper Tidbits"*)
- 7 The district report card and other key sources of information regarding academic assessment and expected student proficiency levels are linked to the district web site and to each school's web site.
- 8 Curriculum/courses of study may be accessed by a link from the district web site to the state department web site.
- 9 A computer with access to the internet and email will be made available to parents in the "Family Depot" section of "Resource Central."
10. Parents will be provided opportunities for regular meetings relating to the education of their children and as appropriate participate in decisions relating to the education of their children. (*Science Hill provides opportunities through our Parent-Teacher Conference events as well as individual appointments as necessary*).
- 11 Title I parent involvement activities will be coordinated with parent involvement activities of other programs such as: Even Start, preschool, and ESL programs.
12. Information related to school and parent programs, to the extent practicable, will be sent in a language parents can understand.

Component 3: The Parent Involvement Plan supports clearly articulated goals for extent and type of family engagement. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 1: welcoming all families into the school community.)

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) *Science Hill makes regular use of the "DPR Program", a daily progress report which links parents, teachers and students through simple paper and pencil communication.*
 - c. *volunteering* (opportunities for parents to volunteer or be an audience at school) *Science Hill has implemented a "Freshman Friday" orientation program which is a parent volunteer led endeavor.*
 - d. *learning at home* (learning activities to involve parents with students at home) *At Science Hill we are developing an online archive of digital lessons and loaded onto our Canvas Learning Management System which will afford students and parents an opportunity to have access to teacher-led lessons at any time.*
 - e. *decision making* (opportunities to engage in decision making, governance, and advocacy roles at both the school and system level) Book review Committee
 - f. *collaborating with the community* (activities/events that foster school-community partnerships) Meet & Greet, Teacher/Parent Conferences

(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. Each school will offer a flexible number of meetings (mornings as well as

- evenings).
3. Reasonable support for parent involvement activities will be provided per parent request (i.e., transportation, interpreter, etc.)
 4. To the extent practicable, opportunities will be provided for full participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children.
 5. 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 Parent Involvement 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. (*Results from the School Report Card survey are used to change and update the Parent Involvement and School Improvement Plans.*)
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 Parent Involvement Plan requires parent involvement at all school sites.

Indicators:

All schools (including schools served under Title I-A) will develop a Parent Involvement Plan that was developed jointly with parents, agreed on with parents, distributed to parents, and submitted as an annual update of the plan to the district office.

- 1 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 parent involvement for each major strategy.
4. All schools will submit their plans to the central office for review and evaluation.

Component 6: The Parent Involvement Plan includes procedures for parents to access and understand course of study or curricular materials as well as Federal, State, and local standards. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 3: supporting student success .)

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 (*The Science Hill website has links to our District site as well as links to our PTSA, and our parent portal.*)
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) will be posted on the school system website, and each school’s TSIPP will be posted on the school web site

Component 7: The Parent Involvement Plan encourages the support of district involvement in positive parenting skills. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 4: speaking up for every child.)

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. Materials and training are provided to help parents work with their children to improve their achievement, such as literacy training and using technology to foster parental involvement. (*Resources for Parents are located in our Topper Student Center. All are free and can be taken or checked out for use at any time.*)
5. After school tutoring and homework programs will be provided to improve student homework and achievement. (*Tutoring and homework help is available on a regular basis through our “Safety Net” after school program.*)
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. (*Science Hill employs an attendance supervisor, whose primary function is to communicate with parents regarding student absences and act as a liaison to Johnson City Juvenile Court for students who are truant.*)
7. The HEROES grant will provide parent support strategies including but not limited to the preschool home visitor program. (*Parenting classes as well as individual parenting counseling are conducted by Frontier Health personnel.*)
8. Schools will develop reward programs to acknowledge good character and good student behavior (i.e., Character Counts!). (*Science Hill High School recognizes students who have excelled in our three primary areas (attendance, grades, and behavior) during several award ceremonies in April and May of each school year.*)

Component 8: The Parent Involvement Plan incorporates family involvement in decision making and governance. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 5: sharing power.)

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. (*Science Hill currently has two parent volunteers who serve on our site based committee.*)
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 21st 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 Parent Involvement Plan supports professional development to build the capacity for family engagement. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 3: supporting student success.)

Indicators:

1. Professional development in the area of family engagement will be provided to all staff members, Staff will be educated in the value and contributions of parents, in working with parents, and in building ties between parents and schools.
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 Parent Involvement 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

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. (*South Side allots at least 1% of Title IA funds each year for the Family School Coordinator to use in conducting monthly family night activities.*)

Component 11: The Parent Involvement Plan encourages families and school staff to work together with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation. (NOTE: this component supports TPIS Standard 6: collaborating with community.)

Indicators:

1. Partnerships between schools and community organizations will be encouraged including but not limited to *Boys to Men, Coalition for Kids*, and the *Family Resource Center* at Keystone.
2. Parent involvement strategies are coordinated with parent involvement strategies of other programs, such as Even Start, Family Resource Center, Youth Empowerment Initiative, and Title III.
2. Each school’s parent involvement plan is made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school. (*Science Hill High School will have a link to the Family Engagement Plan on its website.*)