

A Plan for
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Highland Elementary School

2010 – 2011

I. Mission and Beliefs of Highland Elementary School

School Mission Statement:

The Mission of Highland Elementary School is to reach excellence at each learning level through quality teaching, educational experiences, measurable achievement, and partnerships with all who are involved in the students' lives.

School Beliefs:

- Our school will foster a love for learning by supporting and challenging the academic goals of each child.
- Students will learn skills to achieve proficiency and beyond through a quality educational program consisting of technology, various teaching strategies, experiences, and high expectations.
- Collaboration and communication within a school, a system, and a community are essential to making data derived decisions to help with student success.
- Policies and procedures are aligned to maintain a focus on achievement within a safe environment.

The written school parent involvement policy establishes the school's expectation for parent involvement and describes how the school will build the school's and parent's capacity for strong parental involvement.

(a) Parents are notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and provided in a language the parents can understand. The plan is posted on our website for parents in both English and Spanish (the two languages spoken by our parents). It will be distributed at Open House at the beginning of each year.

(b) The school's parent involvement policy/plan is made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school by being posted on Highland's Web Page. It is reviewed and updated annually by the faculty and School Improvement Team.

(c) At the annual parent meeting each Title I School informs parents about the parental involvement program, Section 1118 requirements, and rights of parents to be involved in Title I programs.

(d) Each Title I School offers a flexible number of meetings – mornings or evenings.

Since approximately 86.6% of our student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch, we continually take measures to accommodate families from diverse social backgrounds.

- We offer our families opportunities to be involved in our school operations both during and after school.
- We provide academic support to students needing remediation after school.
- Teachers schedule formal conferences during the month of October and at various times throughout the year as needed.
- The teachers communicate to parents through Monday folders, daily planners, and during their planning times.

(e) Parents or an adequate representation of parents are involved in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, reviewing, and improving of the parental involvement policy and schoolwide (TA) program plan.

Highland's Family Involvement Plan was developed by the School Improvement Team, a group of 15 (including teachers, classified staff, specialists, the school principal, parents, and students) who meet monthly. This plan was presented to all staff for their recommendations and approval. The plan will be distributed annually at our beginning of the school year "Open House". The Family Involvement Plan is considered a living document and will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Highland Elementary School's School Improvement Team (SIT) reviews policy and makes decisions impacting school operations. This committee meets monthly to make decisions that impact the greater school community. Parents also serve in leadership roles as members on committees of the TSIP.

(f) The school provides parents with timely information about school programs under NCLB section 1118. Parents are informed well in advance of GSIA meetings, programs, Intersession and Parent Nights via newsletters, notes home, school website, SchoolCast and a Facebook presence.

(g) Provide parents a description and explanation of the curriculum the school uses, academic assessments to measure progress, and proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

Curriculum and assessment are two of the most critical areas on which to educate our families.

- In regard to curriculum: Standards work is being completed at the system level and our school's curriculum maps will be posted on our school website. Teachers highlight current curricular focus to parents through staff web pages. At "Parent Night", teachers have the opportunity to demonstrate and discuss grade level curriculum with parents.
- In regard to assessment: Brochures and letters are sent home accompanying end of the year (TCAP) test results prior to the parent/teacher conference. If parents have questions about the results, they schedule a meeting with the principal or teacher. Teachers explain how to understand results of testing and student proficiency level during conferences.

(h) Per parent request- opportunities for regular meetings as soon as possible to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

The focus of Highland Year Round School is always on the child. If the student experiences difficulty in academic work, teachers and parents communicate and work together to form a plan for success. Parental requests for meetings are scheduled as soon as all stakeholders can participate.

(i) Submit parent comments on the school-wide program (TSIPP) if it is not satisfactory to the parents when the school makes the plan available to the school district.

Parents were involved in all areas of writing and approving our school-wide improvement plan. They are reminded through the school newsletters to view our plan on the school website and submit any questions they may have concerning the plan. Parents with no Internet access are encouraged to come in and view a copy of the plan.

(j) Provide assistance to parents in understanding topics such as the State's academic content standards, State student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, requirements of Section 1118, how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve student achievement.

Through "Open House" and "Parent Night" families have the opportunity to learn about new programs and ways to help their child be successful in school.

These include: Promethean boards, virtual field trips, how to help children with reading, how to help children with math skills, and how to help children stay fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Angelia Rodriguez, the system Family Support Coordinator, presented a “Read, Love, Learn” workshop to parents.
- Families are surveyed annually to determine strengths and areas to strengthen with our school program.
- Principal discusses current changes/results in regard to data and the school’s areas of success and areas of greatest need with the SIT.
- Principal informs families of celebrations, struggles, curricular changes/needs, and upcoming assessments through newsletters.
- Families can also be involved through the GSIA organization. This organization works closely with teachers and administrators in many ways to carry out the vision, mission, and beliefs of our school. For example, the GSIA held fundraisers in order to purchase lockers for use by students.

(k) Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their achievement, such as literacy training and using technology to foster parental involvement.

Parent Night- flashcards, books to take home, and Dolch words lists were given to parents for use at home with their children.

- Family Support Center Coordinator, Angelia Rodriguez, conducted a “Read, Love, Learn” workshop to give parents ideas on helping their child with reading.
- Title I family engagement brochures are placed at the entrance of the school.
- Highland participates in a county wide “Parenting Fair” that provides information about various community organizations that support children, parents, and families.

(l) Educate staff with the assistance of parents in the value and contributions of parents; and in working with parents: how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with as equal partners; implement and coordinate parent programs; build ties between parents and the school.

In 2010, the principal plans to focus a staff development day on ways to involve and engage more parents in school activities.

- Homework sheets, Monday folders, and behavior reports are used for communication in grades 3-5 and are signed nightly by parents.
- Newsletters are sent home monthly from the Principal. Email communication is used between parents, principal, and teachers.
- Conferences between parents/students/teachers occur as needs arise and are held at least once a year beginning in the fall.
- Parents are invited to be involved in school events through a “parent involvement” form. This form is distributed by our school improvement team and used throughout the year.
- Website address was communicated at the “Open House” and through our newsletters. The school website includes information on the following:
 - School motto, mission statement, beliefs, and vision
 - Celebrations of students, faculty, and staff
 - School address and phone numbers
 - Roster of faculty and staff
 - Parent, student, teacher resources
 - School handbook
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Afterschool program and intersession
 - Newsletter in both English and Spanish

(m) Coordinate and integrate Title IA parental involvement strategies with parent involvement strategies under other programs such as Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, State-run preschool programs, and Title III language instructional programs

In an effort to smooth the transition from home to school for young children the following measures are in place.

- Pre-K and Kindergarten hold a parent meeting at the beginning of the school year.
- Pre-K and Kindergarten begin the school year on a staggered schedule. This allows students time to adjust to their new surroundings.

- Pre-K students and their families have an opportunity to participate in a monthly activity outside the school day. These include attending movies, trips to area parks, swimming, and picnics.
- Kindergarten registration is an opportunity to welcome future parents to our building to gather paperwork, communicate needs, and positively begin a relationship with Highland's future parents.

(n) Ensure school related information on programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents in a format and to the extent practical in a language the parents understand.

Highland School has a designated staff member to translate forms, interpret during meetings or conferences, and send SchoolCast information as needed. In some cases, family members allow us to help them read forms or paperwork and fill out necessary information. Information is sent to families in clear terms and in each parent's native language.

(o) Provide other reasonable support for parent involvement activities per parent request.

The faculty and staff at Highland strive to provide resources, flexibility, and encouragement to meet the needs of our families (bus routes and After School Program information). Parents are invited to attend special class events, field trips (Knoxville Zoo-K, Cherokee-4th and 5th), parties, and school wide events (Art Show and Music Program).

(p) The school provides for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.

- Family Resource Center assists with Migrant families
- A Spanish speaking staff person attends conferences and other meetings with Spanish speaking parents and translates forms and information for them.

The written Parent Involvement Policy contains the Parent-Student-School Compact with the mandatory school statements and evidence that they were developed with parents and distributed at teacher-parent conferences. See attached list of requirements for the compact.

This compact is distributed in the beginning of the year folder and discussed at the beginning-of-the year Title I Open House/Parent Meeting. The parents sign the document and review it with their children. The document is kept on file at school and is reviewed during conferences as needed.