



DISTRICT PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The Elizabethton City School System (ECS) has always encouraged parents to have an active role in the education of their child(ren). This process was accelerated in the spring of 2005. At that time, a comprehensive Family-Friendly Schools Survey was administered at each school in the Elizabethton City School System. Survey results were used to facilitate the development of a family involvement plan at each school. In addition, for the first time in education history, the city and county systems met in a joint session with Dr. Steven Constantino, Founder of the Family-Friendly Schools Institute as the keynote speaker, to intensify efforts to take Family Engagement to another level.

In a 2009 legislative session, Senate Bill No. 293 was enacted which required the Tennessee Department of Education to develop parental involvement standards in public schools. The Tennessee Standards listed below are based on the PTA's National Standards for Family- School Partnerships. These standards were adopted by the State Board of Education on July 30, 2010.

During the 2010 – 2011 school year, this plan was updated to include the state standards, increase collaboration, and promote community ownership. It was our intent to meet (or exceed) the goals outlined in each standard.

Now in the 2016/2017 schoolyear, we have taken time to review what we are doing to engage our parents and community partners. It is our desire to build upon the successes of the past, and find new opportunities that will help us work together as we prepare our students for the future.

To that end, we believe all stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, business and community leaders) should work together to create a culture and climate that fosters academic success by:

- setting appropriate goals at the school and system-level that are attainable, rigorous, and content-driven.
- developing school and system plans that are living documents that drive the educational process.
- reviewing and updating these plans to reflect data and outcomes associated with testing and weekly formative assessments.

- working with parents, community partners, and other stakeholders to help our children thrive during their time with us, and prepare them to be successful in the future.

With respect to the Tennessee Parent Involvement Standards, ECS is committed to the following:

1: Welcoming All Families into The School Community:

- Families will be active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class and school.
- Parents will have representation on each school leadership team and will work with each school and the school system (overall) in the planning process (TSIP and TCSP).
- ESL and Families in transition will find the assistance and support they need through the appropriate services and offerings provided by our staff (that includes our ESL teachers and Homeless Liaison).

2: Communicating Effectively:

- Families and school staff shall engage in regular, meaningful communication regarding student learning.
- Communications for ESL students will be provided in a language the parents can understand.
- ECS will keep parents informed of meetings, family events, and school emergencies through SchoolMessenger.
- Parents will be provided opportunities to engage administration and staff regarding the education of their children. Title I meetings, Parent/Teacher Conferences, Parent Involvement Meetings, and other scheduled meetings will give parents opportunities to ask questions and receive insight into the development of their children.

3: Supporting Student Success

- Families and school staff shall continuously work together to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.
- Parent compacts are implemented at the elementary level and are updated yearly with parents to provide insight into our responsibilities as a school administrator, teacher, and parent in how we can work together to support our children.
- Teacher will share with parents (in grade-level meetings) the methods they are using to teach their children, the state standards that are being addressed, provide updates on testing, and discuss student progress.
- Progress reports, System, school, and teacher phone calls, student handbooks and journals will be used to convey information with parents regarding assignments, testing schedules, and other information pertaining to attendance and academic success.

4: Speaking Up for Every Child

- Families are informed and enabled to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that they are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
- Teachers and will work with parents to help them know how to assist their children to be successful in the classroom.
- Counselors, ESL Teachers, and the Homeless and Foster Liaison will provide information and assistance for those they may not understand our language, or have a parent or guardian to assist them

5: Sharing Power

- Families and school staff are equal partners with equal representation in decisions that affect students and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
- Parents will be represented in school leadership teams, PTO, PTAC, system and school planning, parent involvement, and other opportunities (identified in the school parent involvement plans).

6: Collaborating with Community

- Families and school staff work together with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.
- Families will partner with the schools to participate in service learning projects, fundraisers for programs such as the food pantry at Hale's Community Ministry, assist with backpack buddies, raise awareness for special causes (breast cancer, ALS, etc.), all of which have impacted our community.
- After-school clubs and organizations, tutoring (by staff and community stakeholders), the Elizabethton Boys and Girls Club, the Extended School Program, athletics, volunteer programs and services are all provided at schools and through community agencies and organizations.

Elizabethton City Schools is a small school system of five schools, located in Carter County. We strive to provide an excellent educational opportunity to the students living within the district, as well as for those paying tuition to attend. Being a small system gives us an opportunity to foster strong relationships with parents, family members, and other stakeholders through two-way communication in meetings, at events, or in visiting the schools. Our families and stakeholders make us who we are, as we could not do it on our own. We work closely with our city council, local banks, churches, Boys and Girls Club, and other service-oriented businesses and faith-based organizations because that is what our community is about. Working together and helping each other. That's why Elizabethton is special.

This relationship begins in our pre-K and special needs 3 and 4-year-old programs. Relationships are fostered and built upon the idea that parents and family members are needed to educate every child, giving them a well-rounded education. Here the foundation for success in education is built. In these programs, parents are given insight into the importance of working with the school system and providing input and encouragement throughout the year. Multiple opportunities occur weekly as the elementary schools reach out for volunteers, chaperones, PTO and PTAC members, and Leadership Team members, just to name a few. Teachers and administrators provide multiple opportunities for parents to be in the school as active participants as we look to work together with them through the years. To fully utilize our parents, we must first educate them on several things. What are their children being taught? How are we teaching them? How can we work together for the benefit of all students? At the elementary level, we have a parent involvement coordinator (PIC) at each school. They work with our system-level PIC to develop ideas and strategies to be shared with parents during family nights and grade-level meetings... all of which have a curriculum centered theme. Here, teachers share standards, lessons, testing strategies, and model ways that parents can work with their children. Opportunities for volunteering abound. Classroom workers, officers for various committees, chaperones for fieldtrips, dances, and other events are needed and appreciated.

When students move to the middle school and high school, involvement changes to a degree. While many of the events that are held at the elementary-level are no longer part of the middle school experience, it in no way lessens the importance of parent involvement and communication. Opportunities still abound... such as athletic, band, and school booster organizations, leadership teams, orientation meetings and transition meeting from each level to the next. Progress reports, grade cards, and parent access to their child's grades through our student database program (Skyward) allow parents to have first-hand knowledge of academic and attendance information.

Regardless of the grade-level, all schools work to engage our parents and community stakeholders. All schools, along with the district, work with parents and stakeholders to develop the district and school plans (in ePlan). Surveys are given to parents to review and make suggestions on how best to utilize Title I funds, change or update the parent/school compact (at the elementary-level) and parent involvement plans at the school-level. The elementary schools, while focusing on their individual strengths and weaknesses, also collaborate with each other, to ensure that we are all working toward the same goal, which is to prepare our elementary students for the rigors of middle school education, and beyond.

Communication comes in many forms. The fastest way for us to inform parents and staff of events, meetings, emergencies, and other school-related information is through an application called SchoolMessenger. One call from an administrator can send out over two thousand calls within a matter of minutes. School messages concerning meetings and events, bus rider information, student, staff, and messages pertaining to our parents, can be sent out for one school, or level, or even all students and staff. It has become a tremendous tool for getting information into the right hands, and doing so in a timely manner.

It should be noted that in a small community, coordination between schools and school-levels is needed to keep from overtaxing some stakeholders (when looking for assistance). Our community takes great pride in our school system, which is evidenced by the information below:

- The citizens voted a half-cent sales tax increase to fund school capital projects
- Citizens provided over \$700,000 through contributions and in-kind giving to fund a new stadium, Band room, and additional classrooms at Elizabethton High School
- Citizens and religious organizations funded our first, “Back to School Bash,” prior to the beginning of the school year. More than 1000 backpacks, filled with school supplies, were provided to our students.
- Citizens/Stakeholders donated half of the funds needed to resurface the high school track (app. \$200,000).
- Numerous family members and stakeholders provide individual college scholarships (annually) for high school students:
 - Bill Trivette Scholarship, Ogden Shook Scholarship, Daniel Adams Scholarship, Jim Ensor Scholarship, Nancy B. Hunt Scholarship, Elizabethton Women’s Civic Club Scholarship, Rotary Club Scholarship, Dr. E. E. Perry Memorial Scholarship, E. T. S. U. Scholarships, Milligan College Scholarships, Tusculum College Scholarship, Northeast Community Credit Union William Armstrong Scholarship, Fred Wetzel Memorial Scholarship, Lawrence C. Timbs and Dixie Nadine Jenkins Scholarship, Crockett and Montgomery Scholarship, and the Nathan Norman Memorial Scholarship.

While we have been blessed by the funding that has been provided by our community, we can’t put a price on the countless hours of service provided by our parents and community stakeholders. It truly takes a community, to partner with our schools to offer an outstanding education that will afford them opportunities to live, work, and thrive in our community. It is our hope that they too, will give back and partner with our schools in the future.