

# South Cumberland Elementary School Parent/Family Engagement Policy

South Cumberland Elementary School recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To support the goal of educating all students effectively, the school and family must work as knowledgeable partners. Although families are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children.

Parental/family involvement is the participation of parents/families in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including and ensuring:

- that parents/families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
- that parents/families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
- that parents/families are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

## Standard 1: Welcoming all families

- Families are welcomed by friendly front office staff that give them correct information and help them connect with appropriate faculty members.
- All parents/families are welcomed into the school and are treated with courtesy and respect by school employees.
- Parental input concerning school activities/policies is encouraged and valued.
- Communication with parents/families will be in a language and/or form, which can be understood by the parents/families.
- An annual parent/family meeting will be held at to which all parents/families of participating children are invited.
- Additional meetings will be arranged at various times to give parents/families greater opportunities for input and involvement.
- Parent meetings will be planned to address a variety of topics/concerns.
- School sign and monthly calendars inform families and community of school events.
- Parent group works with the school to organize a volunteer group that works with the faculty at school events. School events are kept low-cost or free.

## Standard 2: Communicating effectively

- In the fall of each year, with the presentation of the State Report Card, South Cumberland Elementary School will inform parents/families of the academic assessment and adequate yearly progress at the annual meeting held at the beginning of each school year.
- The State/School Report Card will be made available online, at PTO meetings, and in the local newspaper.
- State curriculum guidelines, standards and assessment practices are discussed at annual parent/family meeting, parent teacher conferences or upon parent inquiry or request.
- Required notifications will be distributed to all students, parents, and families in handbook. Notifications will be sent in the child's native language. These items are also available on the community table at the front of the school.
- A student/parent handbook is provided which includes the Parent/School Compact. This is also available on the school website.
- Parents/families attend parent teacher conferences to discuss their child's educational program. Two are offered school-wide. Individuals may schedule meetings with teachers as needed during the school year.
- Parent/teacher meetings are arranged at varied times to accommodate the schedule of the parent.
- Parents/families are encouraged to contact the school about programs and services offered.
- Parents/families and school employees work cooperatively to improve educational opportunities.
- The school staff advertises school activities/events through various media outlets (flyers, school website, school sign, radio, newspaper).
- School calendars and classroom newsletters are distributed on a regular basis.

- Progress notes are sent home at least every four and a half weeks to update parents on student achievement and behavior.
- Parents whose second language is English are provided accommodations as needed.
- A parental involvement survey is completed once a year. These results guide the development of parent involvement groups.
- The principal shares information about school wide issues at PTO meetings with opportunities for individual follow-up discussion by appointment.
- PTO meets monthly and group president or principal informs group of current school issues and concerns. The group strategically looks at issues that affect families to determine whether there is a need for a school wide response.
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#### Standard 3: Supporting student success

- Families assist in creating a parent network that fosters support for parents, students, faculty, and administration.
- Families attend parent gatherings, special events, and other activities offered by the school.
- Families respond to school surveys.
- Parents volunteer to work in the school.
- Families keep the school informed about contact information (new phone numbers, addresses) when changes occur.
- School personnel will be educated in the value and utility of the contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties with parents and the school.
- South Cumberland Elementary School, in collaboration with parents/families, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent/family involvement at all grade levels and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.
- Parents can contact teachers through e-mail, notes or phone messages and receive a timely response.
- Teachers make contact with families at the start of the year to establish positive relationships.
- Parents are contacted with positive news as well as concerns about their children.
- Student work is displayed throughout the school. Data walls indicate academic progress towards meeting state standards.
- The principal presents the school's academic goals and reports on progress made previous year. PTO and principal collaborate to discuss needed academic improvements. Parents help develop strategies to support improvement.
- The school informs parents of after-school and before-school learning opportunities.
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#### Standard 4: Speaking up for every child

- An annual parent/family meeting will be conducted at South Cumberland Elementary School in order to evaluate parent/family involvement. The effectiveness of involvement activities, the degree of participation, and any barriers to parent/family participation will be studied. The evaluation will include parents/families at all grade levels and in a variety of roles.
- Opportunities for parent/family participation in school activities, programs, and events will be provided equally.
- Surveys pertaining to school climate will be distributed, tallied, and analyzed to determine areas of needed improvement.
- Helpful parenting tips regarding how to monitor their child's academic progress, work with their child at home and partner with their child's teacher are included in newsletters and websites.
- The principal will provide information of the school's mission, goals and organizational structure. The PTO and school collaborate to determine the role of parent involvement in the school.
- Parental involvement mandates are included in the handbook and provided on the community table at the entrance into the school. Parents are provided rights and responsibilities under state and federal laws. These are explained to parents in meetings.
- Opportunities for before-school and after-school learning are provided to all families.

- Spring orientations assist children in transitioning to our school or to the high school. The guidance counselor meets with families to assist in high school class scheduling.
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#### Standard 5: Sharing power

- A Family Engagement Policy and Parent/School Compact are developed with staff and parent input.
- Parents actively participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan and parental involvement plan.
- School policies/procedures are available for parent review and input.
- Families work with the school staff and teachers to revise the perceptions of the school's climate.
- Families attend Open House and other parent engagement meetings at various times to offer suggestions for improvement and to create an educational environment that is beneficial to students.
- Varied opportunities for parental/family involvement/input in school decisions, policies, and practices will be made available.
- Parents/families of children served in Title I schools will be involved in decisions regarding the use of Title I funds reserved for parent/family involvement.
- The school informs families about issues or proposed changes and gives them an opportunity to respond.
- Parents with diverse background are asked to join parent groups.
- The PTO works with school staff to address barriers to family involvement and student success.
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#### Standard 6: Collaborating with community

- To strengthen the bond between the community and school, parents/community members are encouraged to be school volunteers.
- Community members/parents serve as resource persons for classroom activities.
- Families/students are encouraged to participate in extended learning opportunities available through varied civic groups within the community.
- Community resource information is shared with families.
- Community groups make presentations on programs available to children and families outside of school. School campus is utilized for meetings and practices of community groups.