

*Hamblen County Department of
Education's
Parent Involvement Plan*

Hamblen County's Family and Community Advisory Council helps develop appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that parents are involved in the educational experiences of children. We recognize that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Research indicates that parent involvement helps foster success of children. When schools welcome families, establish personal relationships among families and staff, help parents understand how the educational system operates, and encourage family-community collaboration with the educational community, student achievement will improve and schools will become more effective.

Hamblen County continuously seeks input from parents and other community members as we constantly assess our standards and strategies. We consult with parents on an on-going basis and set aside time annually to determine what needs to happen at the district level to increase parent involvement. Strategies and ideas are shared among schools as all schools strive to make their environments more family-friendly and family-engaged. As we evaluate our progress, parents are involved in both the district and school level planning and school improvement process. Parents from various schools and backgrounds are represented on committees at the district level. There are parent and advisory committees which meet with the Director of Schools and other district level employees evaluate programs, share ideas, and offer suggestions. Parents are invited to state trainings, such as the Family and Community Engagement, when possible.

Hamblen County's Family Engagement Team, which included parents from our community and school administrators, attended state training on Family and Community Engagement. Together, we coordinated the system-wide Families First Survey. We used the results to guide the direction of our team's actions for the next school

year. Updates are made annually through consultation with parents, students, school leaders, school board members, and TCSP team members.

Hamblen County holds the following **beliefs**:

- When families are engaged, student achievement is higher.
- The best way to improve student attendance and behavior is to improve the family's attitude about school.
- If parents understand state testing, they will discuss it more freely.
- Parents need to know how important they are to their child's academic success and future success.
- Families who read to their children will help instill a love of reading and learning in their children.

The following **expectations/goals** are identified as part of our plan. **Strategies** are listed below each goal.

- To increase the degree to which families are involved in the academic learning of their children
 - Annual parent meetings
 - Parent Conferences and Open Houses
 - Report Cards and progress reports with explanations of state report cards and standardized testing
 - The Family-Community Coordinator will act as a liaison in relaying student activities, school information, and opportunities for involvement to the public through newspaper, Info-Connect, School System Web Pages, television, radio, and helping publish school brochures on individual schools.
 - Using creative forms of communication which are convenient and accessible to a variety of parents such as e-mail, written notes, telephone calls, mailings, newsletters, and web pages.
 - Monthly school newsletters will provide information on upcoming school events, opportunities for involvement, and the TN testing program.

- Providing services through ParentConnects, a web-based school to home communication service which enables parents to view information about their child including daily grades, discipline actions, tardiness, and attendance.
- To recognize and attempt to remove barriers to family engagement such as communication barriers, cultural barriers, and uncomfortable feelings or fear which may prohibit families from attending school functions
 - Provide a safe and welcoming environment
 - Monthly School Newsletters will provide information on upcoming school events, opportunities for involvement, and the TN testing program.
 - A volunteer program will be supported to involve family members and community members in educational efforts.
 - Interpretation of test results, Title I school status, Adequate Yearly Progress, and other NCLB terms in a language parents can understand
 - Collaborating with community agencies such as Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority in developing, reviewing, and improving strategies and services
- To recognize that for children to succeed, families must be engaged on a daily basis and not in a perfunctory manner
 - Parent-School-Student Compacts
 - Offer parent training and literature from our Family Resource Centers
 - Submit Articles/Ads to the local newspaper from the county Reading Specialist on family involvement in a child's reading success/progress
 - Published calendars and newspaper inserts to increase community awareness
 - Parent-Teacher Organizations

- To assess family needs and interests and adjust our plan accordingly to increase the level of parent involvement
 - Involvement of parents and community/business leaders in the school improvement process
 - Assessing family needs and interests and self-assessment
 - School Orientation to new students
 - Parent-Teacher Organizations
 - Programs and activities to help families understand what their children are learning and promote high standards

As a school system, we will encourage families to be:

- Teachers of their children at home
- Active supporters of our schools and of public education
- Decision-makers in school policy and practice
- Supporters of ALL children
- PTO members who actively recruit and welcome families from all backgrounds

The Hamblen County Department of Education will promote the ideals of Family-Community Engagement as outlined in the Tennessee School Boards Association Parent/Family Involvement policy #4.502 and the NCLB guidelines provided by the Tennessee Department of Education. All schools will be involved in implementing Parent/Community Involvement strategies. Title I schools will be monitored yearly on their efforts to inform parents of the status of Title I issues including budgets, AYP, highly-qualified status of teachers, and safe-schools. A total of 1% of the county's Title I allocation is dedicated to Parent Involvement. Each school must spend this money on parental involvement. These expenditures must be documented and the requests submitted for central office approval. All expenditures must be directly connected to the school improvement plan which addresses parental involvement. All

schools, not just Title I schools, are expected to adhere to this Parent Involvement plan and actively seek partnerships in achieving academic excellence.