

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Title I Part A Section 1118

A Plan for

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Tusculum View Elementary School

2011 – 2012

I. Mission and Beliefs of Tusculum View Elementary School

School Mission Statement:

The mission of Tusculum View Elementary School is to provide an engaging education in which all students demonstrate academic excellence as measured by local, state, and national standards, as well as develop citizenship, social responsibility, and self-worth.

- ***School Beliefs:*** We believe that our curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be data-driven, researched-based, and aligned to our state standards.
- We believe in providing all students with educational opportunities that are both challenging and developmentally appropriate to meet the highest academic standards.
- We believe that the integration of academics, the arts, technology, and life skills will result in a well-rounded program.
- We believe that the school must foster a collaborative partnership among students, staff, parents, and the community in which all value learning and academic success.
- We believe it is the school's responsibility to provide a safe and supportive environment.
- We believe our educators should maintain high standards for professional development and growth that reflect the needs of our students and teachers.
- We believe regular school attendance is essential for learning.
- We believe a decision-making process such as our Site-Base Council promotes opportunities for teachers, administration, parents, and community to work together and advance the school's mission.

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, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand.

Our policy is explained within a PowerPoint presentation during our annual Parent Night that takes place at the beginning of each new school year. Portions of this plan and specific events are related to parents via School Cast and school newsletters. The plan is posted on the school's website.

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.

Parents can view our policy on the school website or have access to it on site. Periodic updates are made to reflect school needs and family needs identified by our Family Friendly Survey results and from input from parents on our Site Base Council.

(c) The school has convened an annual parent meeting to inform parents about the school's parental involvement programs and rights of parents to be involved.

*See attached documentation

(d) The school offers a flexible number of meetings – mornings or evenings.

Since approximately 48% of our student population qualifies for free- or reduced-lunch, we continually take measures to accommodate families from diverse backgrounds.

- We offer our families during- and after-school opportunities to be involved and engaged in our school operations.
- We provide academic support to students needing remediation before-school and after-school to accommodate different schedules.
- Tusculum View's administration and teachers schedule conferences in morning, afternoon, and evening hours to accommodate different schedules.
- The teachers communicate their availability to parents for discussions or phone conferences before-school, during their planning time, and after-school hours to accommodate different schedules.

(e) Parents, or an adequate representation of parents, are involved in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and joint development of the school wide program plan (TSIPP).

Our School Based Decision Making Council, which is comprised of the principal, five teachers, one instructional assistant, and two parent representatives and meets monthly. This group designed the Parent Involvement Plan based on identified needs, input from families, and results from Family Friendly Survey and other needs surveys distributed at Parent Meetings. The Council communicates decisions and actions through school newsletters and the school's website. The Plan for Family Engagement will be distributed at the beginning- of- the- year grade-level parent meetings.

Tusculum View's School Decision Making Council was originally formed to review school policies and make decisions impacting school operations. This committee meets monthly to make decisions that impact the greater school community. Our parent organization co-presidents serve as parent representatives on this committee.

(f) The school provides parents with timely information about school programs under NCLB section 1118;

In order to communicate regularly with families:

- Greenville City School System creates a yearly calendar to be distributed to all families during the first week of school. This calendar, which is available on the district website, reflects important state, local, and school dates and events.
- Our GSIA (Greeneville Schools in Action parent organization) sends home information during the first week of school identifying opportunities for families to volunteer and become involved.
- A school handbook containing important information and school procedures is available to all families through our school website. A paper copy of this handbook is provided to all new families upon enrollment.
- Grade-level parent meetings are held to communicate class schedules, attendance, use of assignment books, and expectations for student learning and behavior. Parents who are unable to attend are provided with alternate dates and times to meet with classroom teachers and principal to discuss these important issues.
- Teachers send weekly or monthly grade-level newsletters to families.
- Students in K-5 use grade-appropriate plan books to communicate with families.
- Our principal publishes school newsletters via our school website every other week. Paper copies are available to parents who do not have internet access. Portions of these newsletters are translated for Hispanic speaking parents.
- The school media specialist uses the school website to communicate with families. In addition to important school dates, events, and reminders, parents may use the Parent Link section found on our school website. This link provides parents with many resources for parental involvement, homework help, parenting tips, etc.
- Each grade level and related arts teacher maintains a web page containing announcements, homework assignments, and other important information.
- Teachers provide parents with their email addresses in order to provide parents with an easy form of communication.
- The administrator utilizes School Cast phone calls in order to communicate important school dates, events, and reminders.
- Teachers send home interim reports and nine-week report cards to inform parents of their child's academic performance. Parents may also check student grades online via their PowerSchool log-in information.

(g) The school provides parents a description and explanation of the curriculum the school uses, forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

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

- In regard to curriculum: Teachers send newsletters highlighting current curricular focus to parents. The curriculum is also discussed with parents at our fall Open House, at grade-level parent meetings, and at our Technology Night event.
- In regard to assessment: The principal and teachers review the prior year's test results. Brochures and letters are sent home accompanying State Test results prior to the first parent/teacher conference day. If parents have questions about the results, they schedule meetings with the principal or teacher. Parents also receive information regarding other assessments periodically throughout the year.

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

When a child is experiencing difficulty, teachers at Tusculum View conference with parents to discuss how to motivate the child, offer suggestions for remediation/enrichment, and solicit help and support from home. Similarly, when a parent requests a meeting with teachers, they come together with the administrator to listen to the views and challenges faced by the parent and offer suggestions and/or accommodations to best meet the needs of the student. The teachers and support staff work together to carry through with recommendations, suggestions, and requests for help made by parents.

(i) A process is in place to 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 district/LEA.

Parent comments are always welcome at Tusculum View Elementary. Parent representatives on the Site-Based Team, parents on the TSIPP committee, and parents representing our GSIA provide input. These groups meet periodically throughout the school year.

(j) Building capacity for involvement- Assistance is provided to parents in understanding topics such as the State's academic content standards, State student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve student achievement.

- Parent training sessions are held by our school guidance counselor at different times of day.
- Our administrator discusses current changes/results in regard to data and the school's areas of success and areas of greatest need at quarterly GSIA (PTA organization) meetings or other times, as needed.
- Our administrator informs families of celebrations, curricular changes/needs, and upcoming assessments through newsletters and *SchoolCast* announcements.

(k) Building capacity for involvement- 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.

The following opportunities are presented annually to families:

- Title I family engagement materials are placed in a "Parent Resource Center."
- Parent training sessions are held by our school guidance counselor at different times of day on topics requested by parents or listed as a need on parent needs surveys.
- "Technology Night" - Families rotate through teacher-led stations learning about the use of Promethean Boards, document cameras, iPods, Virtual fieldtrips, and school and teacher websites.
- Parent Involvement activities are held by teachers during after-school hours. Some examples include: SMART (Students Mastering Accelerated Reader Tests) Santa Workshop, and Second Grade Reading Olympics. "Book a Lunch with a Special Friend," during lunch times during Book Fair Week, and a theme night activity are opportunities to reinforce literacy.

(l) Building capacity for involvement- Staff are educated 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 addition to attending staff development opportunities relating to family engagement, the Tusculum View faculty and staff research and brainstorm on-going ideas on how to increase and promote family participation, collaboration, and contribution.

- Students in K-5 use grade-appropriate plan books to communicate daily with families.
- Newsletters are sent home weekly and/or monthly from classroom teachers. Newsletters are sent home every two weeks by the administrator. Email communication is used

between parents, administrator, and teachers.

- Conference between parents/teachers/administrator occur as need arises and at least once per year in the fall.
- The administrator utilizes *SchoolCast* phone calls in order to communicate important school dates, events, and reminders.
- The school website address is communicated to parents in the beginning-of-the-year information packet. The website includes information on the following:
 - School motto, mission statement, beliefs, and vision
 - Tusculum View student handbook
 - Celebrations of students, faculty, and staff
 - Accelerated Reader information
 - Greeneville City Schools calendar
 - Tusculum View calendar and important dates
 - Roster of faculty and staff
- Grade-level parent meetings are held to communicate class schedules, attendance, use of assignment books, and expectations for student learning and behavior. Parents who are unable to attend are provided with alternate dates and times to meet with classroom teachers.
- Our GSIA (Greeneville Schools in Action parent organization) sends home information during the first week of school with opportunities for families to volunteer and become involved.

(m) Building capacity for involvement- Title I-A parental involvement strategies are coordinated and integrated 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. (NA for State Special Schools)

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

- The Pre-K teacher at Tusculum View Elementary plans with Kindergarten teachers to understand Kindergarten expectations. Her instruction is driven by her understanding of the entry-level expectations for these students. Each Pre-K child becomes familiar with the

building, the staff, and the school expectations. Pre-K students participate in all school-wide assemblies and programs.

- Kindergarten registration is an opportunity to welcome future parents to our building, gather paperwork, communicate needs, and positively begin a relationship with Tusculum View's future parents. Many staff members and parent volunteers are involved in this process.
- Students entering Kindergarten in the Fall begin on a staggered attendance schedule. The use of this schedule serves to ease the transition from Pre-K or home to Kindergarten classes.
- Pre-K students visit the Kindergarten classroom for a portion of one day to see "the life of a kindergartener."
- Kindergarten teachers visit the Head Start program to meet with parents to discuss the transition into Kindergarten.
- Pre-K teacher is closely involved with families through monthly family events held outside the school day which include picnics, bowling, or other outing to help establish rapport and strong school/family relationships to support school success.

(n) Building capacity for involvement- Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents in a format and, to the extent practical, in a language the parents understand.

At Tusculum View, we are very proud of our varied multicultural population. Therefore, every effort is made to assist our parents with limited English proficiency. Many school documents are available in both English and Spanish. Translators are brought in to interpret during meetings. Faculty and staff are also available to assist parents in reading forms and completing paperwork. Information disseminated to families is sent in clear terms. Forms are often sent home in English and in Spanish versions where applicable. "Helping Children Learn" newsletter, available in both English and Spanish, is linked to the Parent Resource section of our school website, and is also sent home monthly to all families.

(o) Building capacity for involvement- Provide other reasonable support for parent involvement activities per parent request. (Example: transportation, childcare)

Every effort is made to assist our parents with limited English proficiency. Many school documents are available in both English and Spanish. Translators are brought in to interpret during meetings with families with limited English Proficiency as needed. Faculty, staff, or other volunteers are also available to assist parents in reading forms and completing paperwork. Information disseminated to families is sent in clear terms. Forms are often sent home in English and in Spanish versions where applicable. Childcare is provided for many parent/guardian events. The school staff and GSIA also seek to actively involve parents with opportunities to volunteer within the school and provide a mentor to help these parents by providing support or translation.

(p) Accessibility-Local educational agencies and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide full opportunities 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.

Home-school visits are conducted throughout the school year or on an as needed basis providing parents with information concerning their child's education, materials to practice and support identified skills relative to their child's learning, and tips for parents, while fostering a positive relationship between the home and school environment.