

Jefferson County High School Family and Community Engagement Plan 2016 - 2017

We—the administration, faculty, and staff at Jefferson County High School—recognize the importance of parental and community involvement in education. We know that parents, as well as other community members, play an integral role in the achievement and success of our student body. We value the influence these stakeholders provide, as we at JCHS continue to improve our school.

The intent of this “Family and Community Engagement Plan” is to afford an opportunity for all stakeholders—educators, administrators, staff, parents, community members, as well as students—to develop and to build a trusting and collaborative relationship as we continue to strive for excellence.

Welcoming Families

We at JCHS welcome and value our families, regardless of ethnicity, national origin, gender, or age. We encourage parents to become active participants in their child’s education. To enable our parents to feel more connected to their child’s involvement at school, we service them in a number of ways:

- As visitors drive onto the JCHS campus, the security guard welcomes them to the school.
- We offer visitor parking spaces and have a front office staff prepared to answer questions and to make visitors feel welcome.
- We have an open-door policy at JCHS. We welcome parents to visit the school at their convenience for a sit-down conversation with the administration, counselors, or teachers as needed or desired.
- We send home with each student at the beginning of the year an updated *Student Handbook*.
- We provide the *Curriculum Guide* on the school’s web site. If families don’t have Internet access, they can receive hard copies.
- We hold a LINK Freshmen Night at the beginning of each school year for parents and students of ninth graders.
- We also hold tnAchieves / TN Promise meetings for parents and senior students periodically during the year.
- At the beginning of each semester or course, teachers make at least twenty parental contacts as a means of introducing themselves and the course to the parents.
- Students enrolled in the following classes have all pertinent paperwork delivered to their parents / guardians through them: Work-Based Learning, Clinical Internship, and Service Learning.
- Parents are invited to come in each year for educational planning of students who receive Exceptional Education services.
- The Counseling Department hosts a Parent Night for ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students and their parents. These meetings are held after 5:00 p.m. and never on Wednesday, in hope of attracting more parents. At these parent meetings, the counselors discuss requirements for graduation, requirements for college admittance, financial aid, clubs and organizations available, etc. Basically, these are informational meetings to provide parents with data to help students make educational decisions.
- The Counseling Office has an “open door policy.” Parents are encouraged to meet with counselors at any time, with or without an appointment.
- We welcome all stakeholders each year to our Night of the Patriots / Veterans’ Day program, which showcases the talents of many of the students at JCHS. This event is an opportunity for the veterans of the community to be honored. The event begins with a free Veteran’s chili supper.
- AP classes hold an AP Parent Night so that families can meet their students’ instructors.
- Parents are welcome to use the resources available in the media center.

Communicating Effectively

We at JCHS strive to engage in regular, meaningful communication with our parents. From publicized events—using a variety of media—to phone calls, e-mails, conferences, and newsletters, etc., we keep our parents well-informed of student learning and activities. The following examples showcase effective communication with our families:

- We utilize the Blackboard Connect Call system, as well as “text” messages for students who signed up, as methods of communicating to them or their families.
- Each teacher in the school is expected to have an up-to-date website available to anyone with Internet access.
- We also have an Attendance Review committee for students with absentee problems.
- The JCHS sign next to Highway 92 advertises school events to the community.
- The JCHS website informs parents of school events and information that keep them connected to the life and activities of the school.
- We send home with the students mid-term and final grades during the school year. Dates for these events can be found on the web site.
- In addition to the initial twenty contacts mentioned earlier, teachers stay in touch with their parents via phone calls, e-mails, and conferences as the need arises.
- The ESL (English as a Second Language) Department makes phone calls to parents on a regular basis concerning the progress of students.
- The ESL Department also translates all documents in the student’s home language.
- Teachers also use the Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) that is directly sent to the parent’s address as need arises. Teachers and parents also sit down in a conferencing setting to evaluate student progress at the end of grading periods.
- At the beginning of each semester, CTE (Career Technical Education) faculty members send home safety training information and course competency guides with each of the students in their classes.
- The ESE (Exceptional Student Education) Department holds regular IEP meetings, involving parents in the development of their special needs students.
- The ESE Department makes positive phone calls to parents when students demonstrate good behavior / work ethic.
- The ESE Department also makes phone calls to parents when students struggle with classes, behaviorally or academically.
- The ESE Department invites parents in for positive behavior / academic support meetings.
- CDC teachers send daily progress notebooks home with students. Parents can then respond to the daily notes and return these to the teacher.
- ESE students who struggle with behaviors have daily sheets that are signed by parents each night.
- ESE students each have a case manager who communicates with parents and teachers regarding student progress.
- ESE students’ progress reports are sent out every 4 ½ weeks.
- Patriot Academy sends home a newsletter each nine weeks with information from our Counseling Office and news from each team.
- Teachers communicate with parents before a discipline problem escalates.
- Teachers also send home failure notices on Academic Improvement Plans after the 4 ½ week mark.
- Families are contacted to set up meetings with the counselor and teacher if their student is at risk of failing a course.
- Some teachers include parents with their Remind.com effort.
- All teachers can be contacted directly through the school website.
- The Counseling Program offers a text alert by graduating class.
- Parents, along with students, have access to Aspen, our grading system, to view grades.
- We also have a Twitter account @JCHSPatriots that communicates important school information.
- *Beyond the Books* is a monthly newsletter that highlights events and new resources available in the media center. It is sent out to all students through the Office 365 email account.

Supporting Student Success

We at JCHS collaborate with our families on a regular basis to support student learning and healthy development here at school, as well as beyond the school zone. We offer regular opportunities for students and parents to engage in activities that will do so effectively. We truly recognize the importance of working together to improve our school. The following examples highlight school / parental collaboration to achieve common goals:

- The JCHS Special Education Department works with parents / guardians of the students they serve to set up and to monitor Individual Education Plans.
- The ESL students are monitored regularly (every 4 ½ weeks) to ensure success in the regular curriculum.
- The ESL Department also translates flyers for kindergarten and pre-school enrollment; these are sent home with older siblings.
- JCHS has an annual AP Night to introduce parents and students to the course content and requirements for advanced placement courses.
- The ESE Department makes positive phone calls to parents when students demonstrate good behavior / work ethic.
- The ESE Department also makes phone calls to parents when students struggle with classes, behaviorally or academically.
- The ESE Department invites parents in for positive behavior / academic support meetings.
- CDC teachers send daily progress notebooks home with students. Parents can then respond to the daily notes and return these to the teacher.
- Students who struggle with behaviors have daily sheets that are signed by parents each night.
- The counselors host a financial aid night for parents and students to provide them with “how to” information regarding financial aid availability and accessibility.
- Counselors schedule computer labs to help twelfth grade students complete college applications and the TN Promise applications for College Application week.
- Tenth grade students are provided their Plan results and are asked to share this information with parents.
- Eleventh grade students are provided their ASVAB results and are asked to share this information with parents.
- The Blackboard Connect Call alerts parents that both Plan and ASVAB results are being sent home by the students.
- The counselors coordinate and collaborate with the TN Promise scholarship to host two meetings for parents and students who will be attending a community college or technical school in the fall. This scholarship gives “last dollar” money to these students.
- The Night of the Patriots showcases the talents of many of the students at JCHS. It also utilizes the talents of the construction trade classes who build props and backdrops.
- Athletic teams (baseball, football, dance, and basketball) hold youth camps.
- At Patriot Academy, teachers meet regularly to discuss student progress in their classes. Whenever necessary, teachers schedule parent / teacher / student conferences.
- Students who are struggling are placed on an Academic Improvement Plan that might include tutoring. The lab is open at Patriot Academy in the morning from 7:30 – 8:05. Students may get academic assistance during this time or just use the lab to complete assignments.
- Patriot Academy offers tutoring before and after school by teams of teachers.
- Also “Credit Recovery” is offered after school, Tuesday, and Thursday from 3:30 – 5:00, in Room 219.
- Students from JCHS are regularly featured in the local newspaper for various achievements, including academic, athletic, and community service. For example, in August, Service Learning students received coverage in the local newspapers for receiving the distinguished award, “Volunteer Group of the Year for Tennessee.”
- JCHS also provides “Starfish” teacher mentoring for its students.
- The media center continues to streamline the user experience for students and to assist them in their personal achievements and successes.
- The media center continually upgrades equipment and instructional materials to meet current standards and technology objectives.
- Counselors provide resources to students, such as computer access for post-secondary purposes, ACT registration, and scholarship completion.
- Students have the opportunity to take a free ACT prep class during school hours.
- The Counseling Department provides junior and senior students with the opportunity to attend a local college and career fair each fall.
- Patriot Academy offers parenting skills classes and resources for parents and community members.
- The main campus media center is open from 7:30 until 4:00 P.M. to meet the needs of students throughout the day.

- We have two new partnerships this school year, one with Niswonger Foundation to work with students that will be first time college attendees and one with Cherokee Health Systems for students with unique behavioral needs that interfere with the school environment and learning.

Speaking Up for Every Child

We at JCHS truly value each and every student at our school. We endeavor to treat every student fairly and equally, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or disability. We understand the vital role parents play in their child's education. We feel that informed parents make better parents; therefore, we welcome parents as advocates of their child's needs. To support our stance on the intrinsic value of each student, we provide the following services:

- JCHS has two Open Houses each school year.
- Resources, such as interpreting and translating, are provided to families that speak other languages.
- The Family Resource Center provides assistance for almost any situation that may arise with a student or his / her family when in need.
- JCHS teachers must sign off on FERPA laws and policies each year, as well as Title IV, Suicide Prevention, Section 504, Bully & Harassment Prevention, Child abuse, Title IX, Blood borne Pathogens, and AED Training. .
- Peer tutoring and the Patriot Pals programs are support programs that benefit all students that are involved in the experience.
- The ESE Department works with parents / guardians of the students they serve to set up and monitor IEPs.
- The ESE Department also reads parents their IDEA parental rights at each meeting.
- Counselors connect families with the Family Resource Center to access their services (food, clothing, and shelter, etc.).
- Office space is provided to DCS and other case workers who need to meet with students during the school day.
- JCHS often hosts and promotes School Board meetings that allow the community members to voice their opinion on school policies and actions taken by our School Board.
- Communiqués are sent home at the beginning of each year detailing the rights that parents have in their child's education, i.e., FERPA.

Sharing Power

We at JCHS welcome a joint partnership in crucial decision-making. We realize that all stakeholders—administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members—have a voice and are vital in effecting and creating practices and programs. The following examples substantiate our willingness to work alongside other stakeholders:

- Parents, teachers, students, community leaders, and staff are surveyed to gain valuable insight into our programs so that we can plan more effectively.
- Community leaders and parents are encouraged to attend School Board meetings and are able to voice their concerns at these meetings.
- All of our sports programs have active and supportive Booster Clubs, composed of both parents and community members.
- Parents, faculty, and other community members work together to plan and to carry out Project Graduation, the annual event for our seniors to celebrate their matriculation the evening before their actual graduation.
- An interpreter is available to assist during the IEP development process to allow parents equal participation.
- The yearbook is supported by community sponsors and advertisements each year.
- JCHS also hosts monthly School Board meetings at Patriot Academy; the public is welcome.
- TAP students complete practicum experiences in other schools. These opportunities allow our students an opportunity to observe the education profession and to represent our school.
- Teachers are encouraged to contact parents before students are sent to the office for a referral in order to work with parents on how to curb potential problems.
- Teacher e-mail addresses are posted on the school website for parents and community members to communicate with teachers on various issues.
- Teachers within Patriot Academy hold frequent team meetings with parents to address behavioral / academic issues.
- Teachers at the main campus also hold frequent meetings with parents to address behavioral / academic issues.

- Teachers also discuss and complete an academic or behavior improvement plan during their frequent meetings. They also send out notices regularly if a student is not performing to expectations.
- At the grade-level meetings, held by the Counseling Department each year, the counselors discuss requirements for graduation, requirements for college admittance, financial aid, clubs and organizations available, etc. Basically, these are informational meetings to provide parents with data to help students make educational decisions.
- Exceptional students attend their IEP meetings to participate in planning their program and schedules.

Collaborating with Community

We at JCHS value our community members and their willingness to become joint partners in education. We feel certain that community members, along with parents, have a genuine interest in improving education. We acknowledge the many learning opportunities, services, and civic benefits proffered by community stakeholders. To show our support of the community, as well as its support of JCHS, we offer the following:

- Parents, faculty, and community leaders are informed of the JCHS School Improvement Plan.
- Community groups regularly utilize our facility for meetings and classes.
- Community business leaders serve on a Career and Technical Education Advisory Panel to provide input on how to improve the CTE curriculum.
- Professionals in the community are routinely utilized as guest speakers in classes throughout the high school.
- Faculty and students associated with many clubs and organizations at JCHS, most notably in our Service Learning program, work with groups and citizens of Jefferson County in various community service projects.
- JCHS holds the Night of the Patriots event, open to the entire community. This also includes a chili supper for veterans in our area.
- The annual Senior Play is open to anyone in the area who wishes to buy a ticket. It is a well-received and well-attended program that connects the students, faculty, and staff of JCHS to the community.
- Students in English 12 classes job shadow community members as part of their preparation for career I-Search papers.
- The Remote Area Medical (RAM) organization operates a free clinic at JCHS for families in need.
- The flyers from local organizations, such as Appalachian Outreach, i.e., coats for the cold and free backpacks, are translated and sent home with the students.
- JCHS opens up its greenhouses to the public to sell flowers each year.
- JCHS collects fruit to reach a goal of 1,400 families in the community. Family Consumer Science classes pack boxes, and the leadership class helps to deliver the food.
- During Honors Day, JCHS recognizes a member of the community as the “Community Patriot Recipient.” A student from JCHS is recognized as “Student Community Volunteer,” after being nominated by members of the community.
- Every senior that receives ESE services is given an opportunity to fill out an application for vocational rehabilitation.
- Students who are enrolled in the work-based Service Learning Program have the opportunity to work in the community daily.
- Different organizations at JCHS are involved in the following outreaches: Blankets for Babies, Jeans for Teens, Nails at Nursing Homes, Christmas Shoeboxes, Sharing Christmas in Jefferson County, Samaritan House, Humane Society, Safe Space (cell phones), and choir singing at churches.
- Our Patriot singers and band perform on Martin Luther King Day and other community events.
- The JCHS band participates in community activities, such as local and area Christmas parades.
- JROTC participates in various community events, such as parades.
- Our leadership class assists with the Chamber of Commerce Banquet each year.
- Members of the community mentor students through the TN Promise initiative.
- Local clubs, churches, and community members spend time with students to encourage them and to award scholarships.
- Service Learning classes are involved in civic and community activities, including helping public libraries, Glenmore Mansion activities, the Jefferson County Courthouse Christmas decorating, the Dandridge Ministerial Association’s Emergency Food Pantry, the Jefferson County Litter Program with the County Mayor’s Office, the “Great American Smokeout” and the “Kick Butts Campaign” with the Health Department, and nursing homes visitation.

- Carson-Newman University collaborates with the counselors and students at JCHS to fast track students and to provide direction and advice to encourage students to make wise decisions concerning their future college and life-time careers.
- CTSO (Career Technical Service Organization) sponsors the Skills Annual Service Recognition Program for EMT / law enforcement.
- Student teachers from local colleges complete their practicum (student teaching) at JCHS, a potential employer.
- Parents are encouraged to become active volunteers in athletic and school club events.
- In collaboration with Walters State Community College, JCHS students now have the opportunity to complete an associate's degree, prior to high school graduation.