

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The Nye County School District Board of Trustees recognizes that greater parental involvement generally results in higher academic achievement, improved behavior and reduced absenteeism. Therefore, parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education in order to enhance the attitudes, behaviors and achievement of their children. The term "parent" refers to any caregiver/guardian who assumes responsibility for nurturing and caring for his/her children.

Parents and families provide the primary educational environment for children. Consequently, parents are vital and necessary partners with the educational communities throughout their children's school career. Although parents come to the schools with diverse cultural backgrounds, primary languages and needs, it is assumed that parents share a common interest in an excellent education for their children. Nye County schools, in collaboration with parents, teachers, students and administrators, shall develop and promote strategies that enhance parental involvement and reflect the needs of students, parents and families.

The Nye County School District believes that staff members are willing to communicate with any parent who has a concern regarding the educational process and the educational success of his/her child. The Board of Trustees encourages parents to initiate such contacts. The board believes that parents can become involved through:

- Fulfilling basic parental responsibilities for their children's education and social development at home, such as:
 - Ensuring that children arrive at school well rested;
 - Ensuring that children are appropriately clothed;
 - Ensuring that children are well fed;
 - Ensuring that dedicated space and time are provided for homework; and
 - Signing, returning, complying with, and having children comply with, the Educational Involvement Accord and Code of Honor that are distributed annually.
- Working with their children, such as:
 - Providing home-based learning activities for their children;
 - Showing their children how they, themselves, value education;
 - Monitoring homework; and
 - Providing tutoring to their children and others.
- Participating in and supporting school events, such as:
 - Attending meetings and parent/teacher conferences;
 - Attending school programs and sporting events;
 - Volunteering time;
 - Being a classroom aide;

- Serving as a chaperone for field trips or other school events; and
- Fundraising.
- Serving as an advisor or decision maker, such as:
 - Serving on a committee (School Improvement Plan Team, District Improvement Plan Team, Parent-Teacher Organization, etc.); and
 - Helping in the governance of the school as part of a planning and implementation team.
- Being an advocate for the school and its programs in the community, such as:
 - Vocally supporting efforts to increase school funding;
 - Encouraging local businesses to form partnerships with schools; and
 - Serving as part of a district-organized committee at community and legislative forums.

In order to enhance parental involvement, six essential elements shall be promoted:

1. Communication between parents, families and schools is regular, two-way, meaningful and relating to learning by pupils. Effective communication requires school-initiated contact with the parent as well as parent-initiated contact with the school so that both parties provide vital information about a child's strengths, challenges and accomplishments. To communicate effectively, both parties must be aware of and address issues such as cultural diversity, language differences and special needs. Appropriate steps shall be taken to allow clear communication among participants.
2. Collaboration among parents, families and schools to support learning by pupils and a healthy development of pupils at home and at school. The parent and families play a primary role in a child's education, and schools must respect and honor traditions and activities unique to a community's cultural practices and beliefs. Schools shall support positive parenting by respecting and affirming the strengths and skills needed by parent and families to fulfill their role. Wherever necessary, parents and families shall be linked to community programs and resources that provide essential support services.
3. Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning. Educators shall recognize, acknowledge and empower parents and families to advocate for their children and the children of other parents and families to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that support pupil achievement. Schools shall provide opportunities for parents to learn effective ways to support their children's educational needs, including information on how parents can support student behaviors such as punctuality and regular attendance.

4. Schools are open and inviting to parents and families and actively seek parental support and assistance for school programs. Schools promote an atmosphere for parents and families to visit the school that their children attend and feel welcome, valued and connected to the staff of the school, other parents and families, and to the education of their children. They will be invited to volunteer at all educational levels, capitalizing on their skills and interests in order to strengthen the family, school and community partnership.
5. Promotion of parents, families and schools as equal partners in making decisions that affect children, parents and families in informing, influencing and creating school policies, practices and programs. Parents, families and schools have a mutual responsibility to make informed decisions related to all aspects of the education provided to District students. Schools shall actively enlist parent participation in decision making. Efforts shall be made to recruit and support participation by parents and families representing diverse student groups such as limited English proficient, special needs, gifted and talented, and homeless. The role of parents, families and schools in shared decision making shall be continually evaluated, refined and expanded.
6. Collaboration and connection of parents, families and schools with the community to promote learning opportunities, community services and civic participation. In order to identify community resources and innovative programs that increase educational opportunities for children, collaboration of parents, families and schools will be cultivated to build relationships with additional members of the community.

A primary goal of Nye County School District is to provide all students with equal access to quality education. It is vital that all partners (parents, educators, businesses and communities) have the opportunity to provide input and offer resources to meet this goal. These partnerships are mutually beneficial. Developing cooperative efforts and linking access to resources will ensure improved academic achievement for all students, as well as quality schools.

This policy is subject to annual review.

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NEPN/NSBA Classification: KC

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