

## JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### Cherokee Elementary Title I Family Engagement Plan 2014-15

#### Background

In 2009, Cherokee Elementary School qualified for Title I Targeted Assistance status for the first time. For the 2011-12 school year, we met the criteria to be a school-wide Title I project and have qualified every year since. Our site-base team has worked together to revise and update our Family Engagement plan to meet Title I standards.

The Family Engagement Plan is considered a living document and will be annually reviewed and updated as needed.

#### Purpose

The Johnson City Schools Family Engagement Plan was developed to:

- Support Goal Four of the Board of Education's Long Term Plan
- Support the learning goals found in the Consolidated Federal Projects Plan
- Create a common vision of family engagement and the resources needed to sustain that vision
- Increase and improve the level of family involvement in our students' education.

#### Plan

**Component 1:** Johnson City Schools is committed to involving families in policy development.

*Indicators:*

1. Parents will have an opportunity to discuss and provide input through PTA Council and the monthly PTA president luncheons.
  - **Cherokee PTA officers attend the monthly PTA president luncheons and our PTA council meets once a month for planning.**
2. Parents will be represented on each school's site-based council.
  - **Two Cherokee parents serve on the site-base council. This parent has a mailbox available to any parent who wishes to bring a concern to the site-base committee.**
3. Parents and educators will have the opportunity to provide input through surveys and through postings on the system's web page.
  - **Cherokee's web page is updated frequently with important school information for parents.**

4. Cultural, economic, language, and demographic issues will be given attention through the selection of focus groups and advisory councils and committees including the system wide Family and Community Advisory Council and the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee
5. The system will provide parents of English Language Learners the opportunity to provide input an annual community meeting.
  - **A Hispanic RIF night is planned where parents of ELL students will receive school information in Spanish and receive free books and materials. ESL families are also invited to a system-wide informational meeting organized by Fernando DeSousa, system translator. A translator is able at all the grade-level open houses.**

**Component 2:** The Family Engagement Plan includes technical assistance and planning support for effective family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. Workshops for parents are scheduled through the “Resource Central” (previously known as the Teacher Center); in addition, special education sponsors an annual parent workshop.
  - **Cherokee parents receive information about all “Resource Central” workshops, and our resource teacher is available for specific special education information.**
2. Title I and the PTA Council co-host an annual program “Looking into our Schools” to provide information regarding federal programs and expenditures and to collect feedback from parents.
3. School newsletters are sent home on a regular basis and contain information regarding school report cards, test results, new programming options, and suggestions for parents to become involved in their child’s education.
  - **The Cherokee newsletter *The Wolf Pack* goes out monthly to all parents. It contains information on all school events, tips on keeping students prepared for schools, and examples of student artwork and writing.**
4. The district report card is linked to the district web site
5. Courses of study may be accessed by a link from the district web site to the state department web site
6. A computer with access to the internet and email will be made available to parents in the “Family Depot” section of “Resource Central.”
  - **School computers are available to parents when requested. A kiosk is available in the lobby for parent use.**
7. Preschool and kindergarten bags are provided at the time of student registration and contain education materials for parents to use at home.
  - **All Cherokee preschoolers and kindergarteners receive an information bag at registration. A Spanish version and a translator are also available.**

**Component 3:** The Family Engagement Plan supports clearly articulated goals for extent and type of family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. A variety of planned, goal oriented programs will be organized and implemented to engage all parents in their children's education in one or more of the following categories:
  - a. *parenting* (strategies to promote effective parenting practices at home)
    - **The Cherokee Challenge after-school tutoring program also offers a monthly parenting session where parents of participating students can get tips on study skills, organization, homework help, etc.**
    - **Family Reading and Family Math Nights will be held to encourage parents to take a more active role in their child' education.**
    - **Special lunch events such as Grandparent's Day and Super Bowl lunch will encourage parent involvement.**
  - b. *communicating* (strategies to promote positive school-home communication )
    - **All school information (including school and teacher newsletters) is sent home on Wednesdays.**
    - **Appointments with teachers, the counselor, or the principal can always be scheduled by parents.**
  - c. *volunteering* (opportunities for parents to volunteer or be an audience at school)
    - **Cherokee has an extensive network of parent volunteers who help in classrooms, with Accelerated Reader testing, and with cafeteria duties.**
  - d. *learning at home* (learning activities to involve parents with students at home)
    - **Each grade level uses different types of project-based learning that involve parents at home.**
  - e. *decision making* (opportunities to engage in decision making, governance, and advocacy roles at both the school and system level)
    - **Cherokee has a very active PTA that is involved in many aspects of school activities and also has representation on the system-wide PTA council.**
  - f. *collaborating with the community* (activities/events that foster school-community partnerships)
    - **Partnerships with various community businesses such as Knoxville TVA Credit Union and Second Harvest Food Bank benefit Cherokee in numerous ways.**

(NOTE: the link to student achievement and the importance of providing activities in each of the above categories is derived from Joyce Epstein's research at Johns Hopkins University.)

2. Sign-in sheets and other forms of documentation will be kept on file and reviewed annually to assess parent participation in system and school activities in each of the six areas.
  - **Documentation of all PTA meetings, parent workshops, volunteer hours, etc. is available.**

**Component 4:** The Family Engagement Plan provides for an evaluation process to promote continuous improvement of the engagement of all families.

*Indicators:*

1. Annual surveys will be conducted at the system level as well as at each of the school sites.
  - **Cherokee survey results are gathered and analyzed each year and the data is used in the School Improvement Plan.**
2. Survey results will be analyzed to measure the effectiveness of the plan and to secure input regarding modifications in future practices
3. Measurable goals for increasing the level and quality of family involvement are required as part of every school improvement plan
4. The system wide Family and Community Advisory Council will use the Family Friendly Schools-District Family Policy Assessment and Development (rubric) to evaluate the system wide Family Engagement Plan

**Component 5:** The Family Engagement Plan requires family engagement at all school sites.

*Indicators:*

1. All schools will develop a Family Engagement Plan that provides opportunities for family engagement in the six categories supported by Epstein's research (see component 3) and submit an annual update of the plan to the district office.
2. All schools will conduct an annual parent survey regarding the family practices provided at each school site and submit the survey results to the district office.
3. Each school will set a goal for family engagement for each major strategy.
4. All schools will submit their plans to the central office for review and evaluation.

**Component 6:** The Family Engagement Plan includes procedures for parents to access and understand course of study or curricular materials as well as Federal, State, and local standards.

*Indicators:*

1. The district web site will contain a link to the Tennessee State Department of Education where the state curriculum for each grade level and subject area can be accessed
2. Each school site will house a hard copy of all state curriculum available for parent and community review.
3. The textbook adoption process will provide an opportunity for potential textbooks to be reviewed by parents and the community
4. The current resource known as the “Teacher Center” will be renamed the “Resource Central” and will have specific activities and materials set aside for the involvement of families.
5. The Johnson City Schools’ Consolidated Plan (including learning goals and action steps) is posted on the school system web site.

**Component 7:** The Family Engagement Plan encourages the support of district involvement in positive parenting skills.

*Indicators:*

1. Parenting workshops will be offered through the “Resource Central” and an annual special education conference.
2. Parenting programs such as “STEP” and “PASSport to Success” will be provided on an annual basis.
3. “Resource Central” will provide a variety of parenting materials for review and checkout.
4. Adult literacy and adult education courses will be made available through the technology center at Science Hill High School.
  - **Our Cherokee ESL teacher makes course information available to all parents of ELL students.**
5. After school tutoring and homework programs will be provided to improve student homework and achievement.
  - **Cherokee Challenge is offered to students in grades 3-4 on Mondays through Thursdays from 3:15-5:00. Students receive homework help and remediation in reading and math.**
6. Parents will receive phone calls to confirm student absences and to encourage better student attendance; a letter will be sent home once a student has accrued five unexcused absences; each school will receive money to develop attendance incentives.
  - **After three or more unexcused absences and/or tardies, a letter from the principal and counselor will be mailed to parents. If attendance problems continue, a conference with parents will be scheduled.**
  - **Cherokee will use attendance incentive money to reward the class with the best attendance for each nine weeks and all students with perfect attendance will be able to participate in a prize drawing.**

7. Schools will develop reward programs to acknowledge good character and good student behavior (i.e., Character Counts!)
  - **Cherokee uses the Lifelong Guidelines as a school-wide discipline system. The Guidelines are recited each morning during announcements and selected students are recognized for showing good examples of one of the guidelines. Those students are allowed to eat in the Cherokee Café. Classes are also rewarded with an extra recess for demonstrating the guidelines. Our counselor also organizes Red Ribbon Week with activities and dress-up themes involving saying no to drugs.**

**Component 8:** The Family Engagement Plan incorporates family involvement in decision making and governance.

*Indicators:*

1. School district staff members are friendly towards, respectful of, and helpful to all families.
  - **Cherokee office staff makes every effort to communicate with parents about all types of school issues. They also handle the clinic and call parents about illnesses or accidents as needed.**
2. All schools are required to have family representation on the site-based team.
  - **Cherokee has two parent representatives on the site-base team.**
3. The district has several ways of listening to parents and engaging them in two-way communication (for example, giving time at Board meetings, holding open forums, and providing ways to give input on the district web site).
  - **The Cherokee principal and staff make every effort for parents to stay involved. We use many volunteers in various capacities all around the school. We also allow for PTA meetings and other informational meetings as a forum for parents to share their concerns. A brown bag lunch with school board members was held for parents to share concerns. A community forum concerning the building of a sidewalk around the school was held in the school theater.**
4. Parent representatives will serve on the system wide Family and Community Advisory Council and Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

**Component 9:** The Family Engagement Plan supports professional development to build the capacity for family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. Professional development in the area of family engagement will be provided to all staff members.
  - **Staff development opportunities involving community mapping and poverty training are available to all staff.**
2. Families will have opportunities to be included in family engagement training.

- **A Hispanic night will allow ELL parents to have their school concerns addressed in a comfortable setting.**
- **Cherokee Computers and Communication meets five times per semester to assist ESL parents in computer skills and basic life skills.**

**Component 10:** The Family Engagement Plan specifies budget and funding for family engagement.

*Indicators:*

1. The district has adequate staff and resources to implement the family involvement standards.
  - **All programs described in this document are funded through either our school budget, PTA budget, Title I funds, or site-base funds.**
2. District and site-based budgets will reflect a commitment to the effective development, implementation, and evaluation of family engagement programs including but not limited to the following:
  - System wide Spanish interpreter
  - “Resource Central” workshops and materials
  - System and school level newsletters and other publications
  - Staff development
  - PreK and K parent bags
3. “Resource Central” will serve as a clearinghouse to gather best practices, ideas, materials, new approaches, research, and other program information in order to help schools improve their family involvement programs.