

If families teach the love of learning, it can make all the difference in the world to their children.

– Richard W. Riley
Former U. S. Secretary of Education

It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

– Frederick Douglas
Advisor to President Abraham Lincoln

Life affords no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than the raising of the next generation.

– C. Everett Koop
U. S. Surgeon General, 1981-1989

Getting



The Parent, School, and Community Involvement Guide

Mississippi Department of Education
Henry L. Johnson , State Superintendent of Education
359 North West Street • Jackson, MS 39201 • (601) 359-3513
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us>
June 2004

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Involved!

INTRODUCTION

When parents, families and members of the community are involved with schools, all children benefit. Adult participation sends the message that school is important and the work children do there is worthy of adult attention. Many people may want to volunteer, but don't know how to begin. They may believe the teachers do not want their help or they may not know how to fit one more activity into an already tight schedule. These situations present perfect opportunities for schools to reach out and provide avenues for parents, community members, local businesses and others to provide support.

Research on community and family involvement with schools has consistently shown that such involvement adds to the quality of the schools involved and makes a difference in children's academic achievement.

The Mississippi Board of Education adopted the School/Community Involvement initiative in 2003 as a part of the Mississippi School Level Accountability Model Evaluation Instruments. This guide provides the components of those standards along with ideas and suggestions to assist parents, community members and school staff with the development or enhancement of community involvement programs.

We hope you will find the information in this booklet helpful as you get involved and stay involved in your community's most valuable resource – your local schools.

“I personally believe that every parent wants their child to be successful. The State Board and I are committed to helping ensure that parents have an opportunity to take an active role in their child's education.”

– Rosetta Richard
Board Chairperson



FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT..



As educators, we have a unique mission. No other profession is charged with passing on the things we hold most dear, the current mores, beliefs and ideas of the current generation, to the next generation. To be successful in this task of imparting upon our children our collective wisdom so that they may do the same for their children, we must have stronger child development. We must have rigorous requirements if we are to continue to grow.

Our pledge to you is that the tasks that your children receive will be sufficiently challenging to grow their intellect. We know that young people must engage in intellectual activity to grow intelligence and have stronger development. We pledge to provide the kind of activities they need.

However, the school cannot do this alone. Schools must partner with parents, the community and local businesses to succeed. Working together, we must constantly seek improvement, progress and better student outcomes.

Children begin learning as soon as they are born. You, as their parents and other caregivers, are their first and most important teachers and your support in your child's educational experience is vital. Your collaboration with your child's teacher can have a tremendous influence on their experience.

Schools must create a welcoming environment that will encourage parents as well as community and business leaders to participate. There will be times when we disagree. There will be different points of view on almost every topic. However, we want to hear your voice on the issues. While I cannot promise you the outcomes, I can promise you the process.

We value your ideas; we value our conversations with you. As parents, community and business leaders, you are a vital part of the team that, working together, will help make our schools the best they can be and our students better prepared for their futures.

Henry L. Johnson

Thank you to the following Mississippi Parent, Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee for their contributions to this publication.

Lynn Evans, Jackson
George Robinson, Natchez
Mike Remotigue, Starkville
Lula Williams, Gautier
Wanda Baker, West Point
Theresa Brown, Starkville
Sheila Williams, Starkville
Geraldine Bender, Jackson

Cheryl Phillips, Jackson
George Schimmel, Jackson
Mary Sloan, Oxford
Mary Hardy, Greenville
Vicki Green, Jackson
Judy Johnson Evans, Jackson
Pam Mitchell, Poplarville
Michael Andrews, Biloxi

Tosha Taylor, Meridian
Rick Tillotson, Vicksburg
Anner Gatewood, Byhalia
Susan Mitchell, Woolmarket
Robert Bond, Meridian
Obra Hackett, Jackson
Shawn Hannah, West Point
Janet Shackelford, Poplarville

Rosetta Clark, West Point
Mary Jones, Gulfport
Joyce Sanders, Jackson
Betty Holmes, Raymond
Cinderella Doss, West Point
Linda Long, MS PTA

The Parent, Family, and Community Involvement Advisory Committee would like to credit the National PTA for its work on developing the National PTA Standards for Parent/Community Involvement Programs, and for providing the guidance and inspiration for writing this document for Mississippi. The Committee would also like to credit the Massachusetts Department of Education for information used to create this document.

School - Parent Involvement

Parents play a vital role in the success of a school. Whether parents reserve their involvement only to their child, such as meeting with a teacher about the child's progress, or become involved with the school as a whole, perhaps serving as chairman of the fundraising committee of the PTA, each parent's interest in the school helps to improve the school.



Involved parents are also setting a good example for their children. Parents' involvement in school demonstrates the importance of school and education. This message will influence the child's attitude toward school throughout the child's educational journey.

It is important to find the right outlet for

a parent's participation. Someone who is not familiar with Robert's Rules of Order may not feel comfortable as president of the PTA, but may enjoy tutoring children in math. Tapping into each parent's talents and abilities is crucial for the school-parent relationship to thrive. Parents must also be given the tools necessary for them to succeed in the tasks given to them. Giving parents the information and support they need is an important part of the process.

The power one parent has to make a difference may be limited, but each time parents join together, their power grows. By banding together, parents can accomplish great things for their children and schools.



A parent who is a herpetologist visits biology and zoology classes to communicate his knowledge and experiences to students. Children see how the academic subjects they are learning now relate to real-life jobs and skills.

Left: A volunteer helps elementary students plant flowers around the school grounds.

“There is a direct correlation between parent involvement in a school and that school's success.

Want the best for your child? Walk inside his school and get plugged in.”

– Melanie Moore
2004 Parent of the Year

Parent Education:

- School sponsors a lecture series on children's anxiety
- Parents are sent a monthly recommended reading list for their children
- Parents receive a handbook outlining academic programs and disciplinary policies

Parent Counseling:

- Parents of an unruly child attend sessions with the guidance counselor
- Guidance counselor sets up monthly meetings to exchange ideas and build

support for families of children with disabilities.

- Guidance counselor offers weekly parenting skills classes for parents and students on homework help, communication skills, discipline, handling stress and divorce

Parent Grievances:

- A parent complains to the principal about permitted misconduct in the lunchroom
- Parents complain about the reading of the Bible before assembly
- Members of the PTO com-

plain about children being detained after school without transportation

Parent Conferences:

- Teacher confers with parents about student absences
- PTO officers confer with teachers about field trips
- Principal confers with PTO officers and student representatives concerning next year's schedule

Parent Volunteer Programs

- A father volunteers to help students paint the baseball scoreboard

- A mother volunteers in her child's classroom every Thursday to tutor and assist with materials

Parent Presentations

- A parent, born in another country, talks about the culture in that country to the Spanish I class
- A local farmer talks to the FFA club about how to keep the soil healthy
- Parents visit classes to talk about the importance of academic subjects to students' futures as parents, communi-

ty members and workers

Parent Advocacy Groups

- Parents meet with the principal and cafeteria manager to advocate for better food in the lunchroom
- A parent group advocates for more safety policies during arrival and departure times
- A parent advisory group advocates changes in special education programs during their monthly meeting with school and central office administrators



School - Community Group Involvement

Parents and children are not the only ones who benefit from good schools. Everyone in a community gains from good schools. A

good school increases property values and improves the quality of life for all members of the community.

The local school is an integral part of the fabric of its community. Each is a mirror unto the other; the success of one entity is naturally reflected in the other.

The community is filled with volunteer organizations that can provide a vast array of services and benefits to the local school. When a

community takes an interest in the school, it shows. It shows from the grounds of the campus to the faces of the students. When a community is valued by its citizens, the school is valued by its community.

A school can also be an invaluable resource to its community. Students can volunteer to aid community organizations with their projects and learn invaluable lessons in the process. Not only can these experiences help students choose a career path, they cement the

value of volunteering in their minds. This spirit of volunteerism will benefit the community for many years to come.



A local company furnishes the paint and equipment to paint safety stripes on the school parking lot and driveways.

Left: An architectural firm offers after-school internships for interested students

“It’s about children. As is obvious, home, school and community are inseparable. Positive community involvement can restore and build the public’s confidence in our schools. It takes a whole community to educate our children.”

- Sollie Norwood
Finalist
2004 Parent of
the Year



Partnerships/Collaborations

- The local Red Cross invites students to sing in retirement homes and collect food and clothing donations
- Students are asked to participate in March of Dimes fundraisers
- The local YMCA provides tutoring services after school twice a week in consultation with teachers

Community Volunteer Programs

- Volunteers monitor the lunchroom for teachers on Teacher Appreciation Day

- Community volunteers teach local crafts to young students before Christmas
- Volunteers tutor students who have done poorly on standardized tests three afternoons a week

Community Work Experience

- A student checks daily on an aging person who lives alone
- A student answers phones at the community drop-in center two afternoons a week
- Students set up companies and sell products through National Achievement

Community Presentations

- The Rotary Club makes presentations about opportunities for student exchanges
- Leaders in the local political parties meet with classes to explain how elections work
- A local doctor lectures on medical techniques to biology and chemistry classes

Community Service Learning

- Students paint stripes on the school parking lot
- Students deliver groceries to the homes of the elderly
- Key Club members partici-

pate in a food and clothes donation program

Community Resource Sharing

- Eyeglasses are provided for a student by the Lion’s Club
- A local health agency provides prenatal healthcare and vitamins for teenage mothers
- The local health agency provides free tuberculosis tests for student interns in the child development class

Community Advocacy Groups

- A local pastor meets with the student chorus to solicit members for a holiday com-

munity concert

- Students organize a local terrorism awareness program in conjunction with community police officers
- A local mental health agency encourages senior class members to participate in weekly recreational activities with community members who have disabilities and reside in supported living environments.

School - Business Involvement

Good schools are essential for businesses to thrive. Collaborative efforts between the local school and local businesses are mutually beneficial and will help each group to attain both individual and collective goals.



Successful businesses know that good schools are an investment worth making. Through programs such as internships, mentoring and shadowing, businesses help students to discover their talents, abilities and skills and learn how to apply lessons learned in the classroom in a business setting. Not only do they gain present employees, but businesses are also helping to ensure they have a well-prepared work force in the future.

By sharing the knowledge, expertise and wisdom gained from years in their respective fields, local professionals help reinforce the information and material that is taught by the instructor. Their insight can help students make critical decisions and set goals for the future as well as make the right choices in reaching the goals they set for themselves.

Businesses can also be invaluable in providing the human and financial resources for schools to provide special programs for its students. From business and career fairs to mock investment competitions to providing scholarships for outstanding students, the contributions local businesses can make to a school are endless.

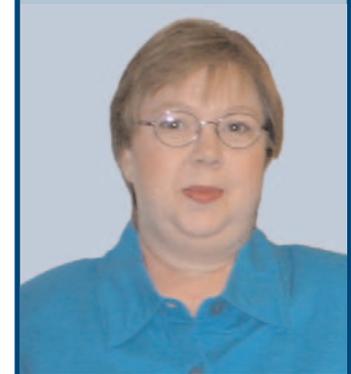


A medical clinic offers a job shadowing day once a year for students interested in the medical field.

Left: A local company furnishes school supplies for students in need.

“Businesses play an important role in our schools. Businesses that are involved in their schools show the students, faculty and the community that they are committed to education and to the future leaders of America.”

– Sheila McQuirter
Finalist
2004 Parent of
the Year



Partnerships/Collaborations

- The owner of assisted living apartments shares information with the special education coordinator regarding supports his facility can provide to graduating students with disabilities in the area of post school/home living so that teachers can share this information with parents during IEP meetings
- The local community college offers an information session for teachers/students/parents on dual enrollment

- A local chemical company furnishes high tech equipment, scientific teaching materials, lesson plans, and programming for classroom teaching and lab instruction

Business Internships

- A student spends a day at a local daycare prior to deciding whether to enroll in the child development class
- A student spends two weeks shadowing a social worker
- A manufacturing company funds summer business management internships

Business Mentoring

- A local nurse meets with a student once a week to instruct the student on how to manage her newly diagnosed diabetes
- Students in the beginning-nursing program meet with health care professionals
- Members of the local business community meet weekly to mentor students in reading and math skills

Work Experience Programs

- A student draws a cartoon for an advertising newsletter

- Two students do landscaping work for a local company one afternoon a week
- Students of the local school take over local government services one day a month

Resource Sharing

- A printing company produces flyers publicizing the school’s drama production
- A local drama group loans their auditorium and props to a school for arts instruction
- Fifth-grade students learn about computers in a local technology company lab

Business Advocacy Groups

- A businessman discusses donating seatbacks to the football stadium if the stadium’s name is changed to the name of his business
- A patriotic group of salesmen who want to have students say the pledge of allegiance meet with the local PTA
- A human relations group wants to offer weekly seminars for the senior class on how to get along with difficult people in the work place

Suggestions for Successful Parental Involvement

Communications

- Foster a climate demonstrating that parental involvement is valued.



- Invite families to participate through welcome signs, friendly staff, open houses, school directories, and displays.

- Provide staff development on effective and regular communication between the school and family.

- Provide progress reports, report cards and follow-up conferences to parents.

- Assess communication between the school and the parents of children performing in lower 10%. Communicate with families of these students using phone calls, letters, and home visits.

- Provide information to parents and students about course selections, extra-curricular activities, student services, testing schedules, and school policies.

Parenting Skills:

- Communicate family involvement through print materials, displays, and thoughtful scheduling.

- View family involvement including setting expectations and participation in school events as essential.

- Ensure that parents and teachers work

together to communicate expectations to students such as regular attendance and homework completion.

- Link parents to resources that provide support services to families.

- Establish a parent/family resource center including information on parenting, child development, and support services.

- Partner with community organizations to provide workshops for families.

- Establish parent involvement policies and practices that acknowledge traditional, non-traditional, and multi-cultural families.

- Encourage collaboration between school personnel and parents to find ways to prevent violence, peer ridicule and other anti-social behavior.

- Encourage and help parents to make educational materials available in the home.

Student Learning Programs:



- Equip staff with strategies to engage parents in their children's education.

- Assign homework that asks students and their families to interact.

- Distribute homework expectations, policies, and help resources.



- Educate parents about the differences in how children learn, study, are motivated, and prepare for testing.

- Involve parents in setting school and student goals, and in planning for higher education and careers. Clearly indicate what classes are necessary for high school graduation.

- Inform parents of curriculum goals for each subject. Advise parents about how they can help students meet individual expectations, and develop skills and habits that promote life-long learning.

Volunteer Programs:

- Initiate a reasonable and effective process for screening potential volunteers to ensure the safety and security of the school population.

- Develop organized and coordinated programs for volunteer activities

- Develop a volunteer database through use of a survey of parents and community members. Identify individuals who are willing to volunteer, their skills, interests and availability.

- Provide volunteers with information on school procedures and protocols.

- Recognize the contributions of volunteers through ceremonies, certificates and other methods of appreciation.

From the Office of Parent Relations...

The parent/teacher partnership is essential in helping your child succeed on each level and from one level to another. This involves meeting together, discussing expectations and monitoring your child's progress. Being involved in your child's education, both in the classroom and beyond, sends a powerful message to your child about the importance of going to school and working hard at the lessons.

The Mississippi Department of Education works with all of Mississippi's public schools to help ensure their success and wants to assist you in any way possible as you work toward the same goals. We hope the information in this brochure has been helpful. Please contact Judy Qualls, Director of the Office of Parent Relations, if you have any questions or need assistance.

Judy Qualls, Director
Office of Parent Relations
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 359-3519
(601) 359-3033 fax
jqqualls@mde.k12.ms.us



Kindergarten

The kindergarten and first grade teachers confer with each parent concerning their child's achievement once every grading period.

School-Parent Involvement



A worried mother is counseled by the school nurse about her child's fingernail biting.

Parent Counseling



The Junior Women's Club provides materials such as paper, pencils and crayons for any elementary student in need.

School-Community Group Involvement



A mother volunteers to bring cookies to her son's Thanksgiving party.

Volunteer Programs

Volunteers help second graders plant flowers around the school each spring.

School-Community Group Involvement

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Parents join to promote homework, offering a daily homework hotline service.

Parent Advocacy Groups

An excited parent shows pictures of her Hawaiian vacation to her daughter's class.



Parent Presentations

A local firm furnishes daily transportation for an after-school tutoring program.

Business Resource Sharing



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A local dentist equips a laboratory for allied health services and directs student interns who work there five hours per week during their senior year.

Business Internships



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Members of the senior class are hired to pick up trash in the local parks twice per month throughout the school year.

Business Work Experience Programs



Students in the junior class are led by the local employment agency staff in writing applications for afternoon work.

Community Work Experience Programs



A local bank provides data, interactive programming, and three in-service workshops for business teachers, as well as materials to teach students how to invest.

Business Partnerships and Collaborative Programs

A local artist presents slides of her trip to Greece to the art classes.

Community Presentations



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A fast food restaurant chain wishes to add skills related to using electronic cash registers to the curriculum. The company provides materials for the classroom and representatives meet with math and business technology teachers monthly.

Parent Education

The Future Farmers of America club meets with local agriculture agents monthly to discuss careers in farming.

Business Mentoring



The Lion's Club sponsors eye examinations for students referred by teachers and/or the school nurse once per month.

Community Partnerships and Collaborative Programs



Parents are invited to a school open house that highlights the new computer lab.

Parent Education

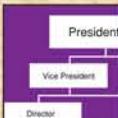
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A group of parents petition the school board to have more advanced instruction in mathematics.

Parent Grievances



Graduation



An engineering firm makes a presentation to grades 10-12 about opportunities for engineers in the U.S.

Business Presentations

A local community member meets with the principal to discuss having a club adopt a highway (picking up trash).

Community Advocacy Groups

Students in the chorus and drama classes design and carry out a Christmas Program for several nursing homes.

Community Service Learning



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