

Greeneville City Schools
Family and Community Engagement Plan
and
Action Plan for Improvement
2005-2006

The Greeneville City School System began its work on its new Family and Community Engagement Plan by sending a team to the Family Friendly School training sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education. The team consisted of Vicki Kirk, Assistant Director of Schools; Terri Tilson, Federal Projects Supervisor; Terri Rymer, Tusculum View Elementary School principal; and Angelia Shipe, Family Resource Center director. In February 2005, the Family Friendly Schools Survey was distributed to the parents of every student in the system (approximately 2600), and 889 surveys were returned. Results from the Family Friendly Schools survey were used in the development of the system plan and were presented to the schools for use in the development of their School Improvement Plans/School Level Family and Community Engagement Plans.

After the completion of the training, Terri Tilson began seeking members to serve on the Family and Community Engagement Team to develop the system's plan. Participation was requested from representatives of different stakeholder groups: teachers, administrators, parents, and the community, including different agencies and programs involved with families in the area. The group met first as the Family and Community Engagement Team with the purposes of developing the district Family and Community Engagement Plan and leading the district's initiative to engage family and community in all schools, their school level plans, and their improvement. The team met on June 16, June 27, July 19, and August 8, 2005, with the end result being the Family and Community Engagement Action Plan for Improvement. In the development of the system plan, barriers were discussed and identified, and strategies to address these barriers are included in the action plan. Survey results, along with input from the schools and the team members, were also considered during the progress.

The team then evolved into the Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council, which met on August 19, 2005, to make final revisions to the 2005-2006 Plan, to review the

Board Policy and the Plan using the Family Friendly Schools Rubric, to prepare for the upcoming state monitoring, and to discuss the expectation for the school level plans. This council will continue to meet throughout the 2005-2006 school year, and a council with possibly new members will continue the work in upcoming school years. The council will continue to consist of members of the different stakeholder groups.

During the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year, Terri Tilson and the schools' principals delivered presentations to train each faculty on effective family and community engagement and the expectations for the schools. Items discussed during these sessions included the following: explanation of No Child Left Behind and the Tennessee family and community engagement initiative, the importance of such engagement, benefits for all stakeholder groups, barriers to engagement, characteristics of successful programs, Family Friendly Schools survey results, the role of the system advisory council, and the tasks at hand for the school in its development of a school level plan. Each school's plan will involve family and community representatives through its existing School Improvement Teams. Each school's School Improvement Plan will contain parent and community engagement strategies to support the academic goals, as well as a specific parent and community engagement goal. These aspects of the School Improvement Plan will be supportive of the School Board Policy and the system's parent and community engagement goals. System level representatives are assisting the schools in the development of their School Improvement Plans and the related family and community engagement strategies and goal. Progress on the SIP goals and strategies will be monitored as part of the School Improvement process. Capacity for strong parent involvement is being built through the training and discussion related to the school improvement process and awareness of the need for family and community engagement. System resources have been dedicated to the promotion of family and community engagement through committed funds for the Parent Involvement Coordinator (Title I), Family Resource/Backyard Learning Centers (Title I, Family Resource Center Grant, Title VI), and family/community engagement (Title VI).

As part of this process, the Advisory Council and the system's administration and faculties have identified current effective strategies in place in the system and at the schools and have committed to continue with these. The school system has involved parents in the activities of the schools; programs, activities, and procedures have been planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents.

- Each school has an active Greeneville Schools in Action (GSIA) parent organization.
- As stated above, each school is also required to have parent and community representatives on its School Improvement Team.
- Each school has an informative website. The elementary schools have newsletters and open houses to communicate with parents. The middle school teachers use websites and open houses; the high school, along with its website and open houses, employs “brown bag lunches” as means of involving parents.
- The school district, parents, and teachers have designed improvement strategies to address such areas as homework, attendance and discipline strategies, and as part of the system Family and Community Engagement Action Plan, each school is required to develop a communication plan regarding these areas.
- Each school in the system has an after-school program to provide tutoring and remediation.
- The system helps to pay for the employment of a truancy officer to aid in promoting good attendance.
- The school district has established written procedures so that parents may learn about the course of study for their children and have access to all learning materials. Curriculum maps are available on each school’s website, as are links to the state’s curriculum frameworks and a statement explaining access to learning materials such as textbooks.
- The school system has coordinated and integrated parent involvement strategies and programs by working with several program and agencies in the area. Each elementary school in the system has a pre-school class which partners with Head Start. One element of that partnership involves monthly parent meetings. Representatives from the system Family Resource Centers (including the system’s Backyard Learning Center) serve on the Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council. The system employs through Title I a Parent Involvement Coordinator who is responsible for the annual Parenting Fair, as well as other family related duties such as serving on the Advisory Council. The Parenting Fair is held in cooperation with the county school system as well as many area organizations and agencies and is well known and well attended. The system also has an Adult Basic Education Program, which includes a family literacy component.

The system is very proud of the effective strategies in place in the system prior to this initiative and sees this year's work as a means for continuous improvement in the area of family and community engagement.

The Greeneville City School System with the consultation of family and community representatives will annually evaluate the content and effectiveness of its plan to improve the academic quality of the schools. The system conducted a survey on family and community engagement in February 2005 and will continue to survey on a yearly basis to gauge its progress. Family and community representatives will continue to serve on the Advisory Council that will review the system progress on its engagement plan and goals and the feedback from the survey. Also, parent representatives on the schools' school improvement teams will be annually involved in the review of academic data and the progress each school is making on its academic goals and the related engagement strategies.

As part of the initiative to improve family and community involvement in the Greeneville City School System, the Advisory Council has developed an Action Plan for Improvement which consists of goals and strategies for the 2005-2006 school year with some strategies extending into 2006-2007. With the system's present effective strategies and the completion of the Action Plan for Improvement, the Greeneville City School System, its personnel, students, families, and community are striving to actively fulfill its motto: Only the best, but getting better.