

EAST KNOX COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Family Community Engagement Plan

2023-24



The plan addresses the federal and state requirements of a Title I school; supports our school improvement plan; and complies with Senate Bill N. 293, which requires schools to comply with these six standards:

Tennessee Standards for Family-School Partnerships are:

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community

Standard 2: Communicating effectively

Standard 3: Supporting student success

Standard 4: Speaking up for every child

Standard 5: Sharing power

Standard 6: Collaborating with community

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community:

Goal 1: Creating a Welcoming Climate: When families walk into the building, do they feel the school is inviting and a place where they "belong"?

- Staff members open car doors and stand at the lobby entrance to welcome students. Students assist with dismissal procedures.
- Meet the Teacher Night / Open House is held before the first day of school.
- To welcome our families of PK and Kindergarten students, in person kindergarten and PK parent meetings are held with administrators immediately after drop off on the first staggered day.
- Coffee with the principals is scheduled for a morning and evening time to better get to know parents/guardians.
- One of the administrator's top five expectations is that we create a physically and emotionally safe environment to work and learn because our families are handing over to us the most precious thing in the world – their child. We take this responsibility seriously and want families to feel secure sending their child to school each day.
- Road signs are in place to mark school entrance during school hours and the entrance after school hours. Brush/trees are kept trimmed for visibility and safety.

- A school sign with an electronic messaging center is visible from Rutledge Pike and for families in the car rider line.
- A Parent Information Station and bulletin board is set up in the front office.
- The building has murals painted throughout the school including “Welcome to East Knox County Elementary School” in the lobby.
- The *Leader In Me* 7 Habits are painted on the Cougar paws on the sidewalk as you enter the school.
- There are landscaped areas at the front and back entrance.

Goal 2: Building a Respectful, Inclusive School Community: Do the school's policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community?

- Parent Conferences are held each semester with the expectation that teachers ask questions, listen to parents, and learn from the expert on the child: the parent(s). We do not have a Parent Conference Night, we have a two-week period in which teachers set up various times for parents to sign up for conferences.
- One of the administrator's top 5 expectations of all staff is to show mutual respect for any and every person who walks in the door.
- Our Student Support team (counselor, social worker, Title I behavior coach, PBIS teacher, nurse) provides support to build relationships and support students and their families.
- Our front office, ELL teacher, and classroom teachers along with our KCS Welcome Center support new international families, facilitate communication, foster professional learning and support academic growth & citizenship for our students.
- Information shared on parent night reviews our policies and procedures that include administrator's welcome message, our work as a *Leader In Me* school, information on communication, and school procedures.
- We are a Special Olympics Unified Champion School: use of building buddies, World Down Syndrome Day, and Spread the Word: Inclusion Campaign.
- We are a “Kindness” certified school.
- Kindergarten and Pre-K Round-Up is held in April to register our newest members of our school family.

Standard 2: Communicating Effectively

Goal 1: Sharing Information Between School & Families: Does the school keep all families informed about important issues and events, and make it easy for families to communicate with teachers?

- Weekly family school newsletter is sent by principal via ParentSquare and includes dates of school events for the entire school year
- ParentSquare allows parents and staff to securely and confidentially communicate with each other, as well as share information and pictures of the class or grade level. The ability for families to download the ParentSquare app makes communication convenient, timely, and effective. Phone calls and emails are also used for communication.
- Parent Conference Weeks happen after the first 4.5 weeks of each semester. Teachers have common topics to encourage listening to parents, and sharing information. We encourage all parents to accept the invitation to come to a parent conference, so staff can learn more about the student, and we can work more effectively to help each child succeed.
- At the beginning of the year parent meeting (ppt on website) these communication tools are shared: “How to find out what is going on at East Knox:”
 - Take Home Folders or Notebooks
 - ParentSquare
 - East Knox School Facebook page
 - East Knox PTO Facebook page
 - Twitter @EastKnoxElem
 - Newsletters
 - School Website <http://www.knoxschools.org/eastknoxes>
- Title I handbooks are provided by Knox County Schools Federal Program department, and are sent home to families.
- One of the administrator’s top five expectations of staff is positive communication. We can communicate things that may be hard to discuss in a way that focuses on problem solving and supporting our students.
- The school sign/electronic messaging center provides information about upcoming events to the community when they drive by Rutledge Pike and to families when they go through the car rider line.
- A projection system and screen in the gymnasium is used for daily PE instruction as well as for parent meetings, programs, and assemblies.
- Title I funds were used to purchase Apple TV and TV for the conference room to display student plans and information to be discussed in individual parent meetings.

Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Goal 1: Sharing Information About Student Progress: Do families know and understand how well their children are succeeding in school and how well the entire school is progressing?

- Parent Reports are sent home and/or shared at parent conferences
 - TCAP Reports sent in fall
 - Universal Screeners - iReady Math; AIMSWEB
- Interim reports are sent home to every student every 4½ weeks to inform parents of progress in the subjects.
- Report cards are sent home every 9 weeks for parents to review.
- Parents of students in RTI2 interventions are sent progress reports after progress monitoring.
- Parent Conferences after the first 4.5 weeks, offered on multiple days at multiple times. East Knox will have parent conferences the 2 weeks after the first 4.5 weeks of each semester.
- The school implements a positive reinforcement system and recognizes students for consistently following expectations, and growth in behavior expectations.
- Students who get multiple academic, social, or behavioral celebrations in the classroom get a POSITIVE OFFICE REFERRAL and are celebrated by office staff. They get to pick some school swag from the “woohoo” wagon (a large tricycle) and pictures of the celebrations are shared with families
- Students who meet their goals can come to the front lobby to “ring the bell” mounted on the wall beside the mural painting that says “Do you hear my success?”
- ASK ME stickers are available to give students so others see and can ask them, “How did you earn that? What goal did you accomplish?”

Goal 2: Supporting Learning by Engaging Families: Are families active participants in their children's learning at home and at school?

- Beginning of year parent meetings with administrators and teachers include “How you can help your child be successful”
- PTO meeting in fall - each grade level will share information about the new Math curriculum.
- Math Family Letters from each unit are sent home that have a suggested family activity to support the math focus of the unit.
- Reading Curriculum Student Text (magazines) have family engagement activities on the back cover.
- Based on research concerning the importance of Reading 20 minutes each night, teachers often incorporate this into homework policies.
- Teachers use take home folders/notebooks to send class and grade level specific information about their child's homework or new learning.

- Family Engagement Nights are scheduled and sponsored by Subject Specific Vertical teams.

Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child

Goal 1: Understanding How the School System Works: Do parents know how the local school and district operate, and how to raise questions or concerns about school and district programs, policies, and activities? Do they understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws, as well as local ordinances and policies?

- East Knox has a parent who serves on the Knox County Schools Region 3 Family Advisory Council: Ms. Shawn Parsons.
- A Parent Information Station is set up in the office to notify parents of school activities.
- When parents have bus concerns, we address it at our school level, and tell them how to contact or complete a Knox County Schools transportation concern form.
- Concerns/Commendations forms are available if a staff member is not available when parents stop by the office.
- New student packets address student rights such as Transfer Option for Students Victimized by Violent Crime at School Under the Tennessee State Board of Education's Unsafe School Choice Policy, Tennessee Code Annotated 40-38-111 (g).
- At the beginning of the year Parent Meeting, the administrator reviews how the school operates, and information about being a Title I School.
- The Title I handbook is provided to families.
- The Notice of Parent Rights are reviewed at the beginning of IEP and 504 meetings.
- Families of students receiving RTI2 interventions receive parent letters after RTI2 team meetings to review progress, and any changes that need to be made to meet student needs.

Goal 2: Empowering Families to Support Their Own and Other Children's Success in School: Are parents prepared to monitor students' progress and guide them toward their goals through high school graduation, postsecondary education, and a career?

- Our Counselor has available on the website the focus of the life skills classes taught to our K-5 grade students.

- Information about students' progress is shared with parents through report cards with academic, behavior, and work habits grades; assessments; and universal screener reports.
- Parent Conferences provide an opportunity to discuss a students' long-term goals and the impact of their current progress.
- Families are invited to share their career or invite other community members to share their career at our Career Fair in March for all our elementary students,
- Administrators and teachers work with 6th grade middle school counselors and administrators to communicate middle school parent nights, and plan the 5th grade transition to middle school including Carter Middle School principal speaking at 2nd semester PTO meeting.
- The High School principal of the feeder school is invited to the spring PTO meeting to share about the 865 Academy structure for Carter High School. (KCS priority of Career Empowerment & Preparation)
- East Knox collaborates with Carter High School to plan a Senior Graduation March in which CHS seniors who are former students come back to East Knox in their cap and gown. This gives our students a vision of the goal we have for them all of graduating high school.

Standard 5: Sharing Power

Goal 1: Strengthening the Family's Voice in Shared Decision Making: Are all families full partners in making decisions that affect their children at school and in the community?

- The PTO board meets with administrators at monthly board meetings.
- Coffee with the Principals will be held at a morning & evening time to accommodate parents' schedules to get input and feedback on the Title I compact, and these Tennessee Standards for School Family Partnerships.
- Title I Handbook and Title I Compact are provided to families. It includes the responsibilities of school, families, and students.
- Parents are invited to Parent conferences, and S-Team Meetings to make decisions about their child's education.
- The parents of students receiving special education services meet at least once a year to review and revise their child's IEP.
- Parent representatives are on the school-wide committee to help make decisions concerning school planning and funding decisions (Title I Budget).
- KCS parents can decide whether their child will attend in person at their zoned, or apply for a transfer to KCS virtual school or a KCS magnet school.
- In our daily Social Emotional curriculum, *Leader In Me*, we teach our students Habit #8 to "find their voice".

Standard 5: Sharing Power *(continued)*

Goal 2: Building Families' Social and Political Connections: Do families have a strong, broad-based organization that offers regular opportunities to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders?

- The PTO board meets at monthly board meetings with school administration. PTO has quarterly general membership meetings at 6:00 pm for families.
- Administrators invite the middle and high school administrators to PTO meetings.
- PTO has a Facebook page for reporting events, celebrations, and school recognitions.
- Family Engagement Nights provide opportunities for families to develop relationships with other families, staff, and community members.
- Coffee with the Principal will be held with a morning and evening opportunity to ask questions and provide input/feedback.
- East Knox has a parent representative on the Knox County Schools Region 3 Family Advisory Council: Ms. Shawn Parsons.

Standard 6: Collaborating with Community

Goal 1: Connecting the School with Community Resources: Do parent and school leaders work closely with community organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education to strengthen the school, make resources available to students, school staff, and families and build a family-friendly community?

- University of Tennessee Early Childhood Development Program provides full year interns to learn from our veteran teachers. For the 2023-24 school year we have 3 UT interns - one in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. This partnership has been in place for over 20 years.
- Kids Place provides after-school care for our students. Kids Place conducts parent evaluations. The School Administrator and Kids Place site director work closely to support each other and meet 2 times a year to evaluate the program.
- Junior Achievement provides volunteers/mentors to teach Financial Literacy lessons to our students, with older students going to "Biztown".
- "Backpack Buddies" program sends food home to students on the weekends. The food is provided by Second Harvest Food Bank and coordinated by our school counselor.
- The PTO sponsors many family and community events throughout the year. (Winter Festival, PTO meetings, Valentines Family Dance). The administration and PTO board meet monthly to collaborate.

- Community Partners and local faith organizations such as Hopewell Church provide supplies, time, and resources for our students, families, and staff (Back to School Bash in July; Winter Festival; Holiday baskets; Holiday gifts for every student & staff; Spelling Bee Awards; Staff Luncheons).
- The Rotary Club of Knoxville's Literacy Committee has sponsored our school by donating numerous library books; 4th grade pen pals; and 5th grade essay contest.
- East Knox is one of many international *Leader In Me* schools. *Leader In Me* unites students, staff, and families around a common goal to prepare students with college, career, and life-readiness skills necessary to thrive in today's ever-changing, fast-paced environment. We collaborate with staff at other LIM schools and LIM coaches to further improve leadership, culture, and academics.