

Marbury Middle School (MMS) Parent Engagement Plan

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

Title I, Part A, Section 1118 (e) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 requires that the six “shalls” stated in the law under Building Capacity for Involvement are met as well as documented. The law also provides eight additional “mays” (that are not required, but are allowable) to ensure meaningful capacity building in parents. The six “shalls” stated in the law are:

- (1) SHALL **provide assistance** to parents of children served by the school or local educational agency, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the State's academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
- (2) SHALL provide **materials** and **training** to help parents to work with their children to improve their children's achievement
- (3) SHALL **educate** teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the **value** and **utility** of contributions of **parents**, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school;
- (4) SHALL, to the extent feasible and appropriate, **coordinate** and **integrate parent involvement programs** and **activities** with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children;
- (5) SHALL **ensure** that **information** related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand;
- (14) SHALL **provide** such other **reasonable support** for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request

Increasing parental involvement in school can be challenging, particularly when the families concerned are economically disadvantaged or do not have English as their primary language. Low-income parents' involvement in school may be hindered by transportation difficulties, chronic health conditions, or conflicts with work schedules, while parents whose primary language is not English may not feel able to participate in school activities, or may belong to a culture where questioning teachers is not a norm.

Standards identified by the National PTA build on six types of parent involvement identified by Joyce L. Epstein of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University (1995). Each standard produces unique gains for students, contributes to

effective programs, and fosters school success. Gains for students are greatest when parents participate in activities in each of the six standard areas. (National PTA, 1997).

- Standard I: Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Standard II: Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- Standard III: Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- Standard IV: Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Standard VI: Collaborating with Community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Marbury Middle School uses these standards to guide parental involvement/engagement. Implementation of each of the standards is as follows:

Standard I: Communicating

- Memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications must be clear and understandable for all families.
- Accommodations must be made for non-English speaking families, families with reading difficulties, etc.
- Obtaining ideas from families on ways to improve design/content of major communications like newsletters, report cards and conference schedules are an on-going process. There must be an accompanying vehicle(s) to permit this exchange of information.
- An easy two-way channel of communications must be established to facilitate communication with school-to-home and home-to school.

Standard II: Parenting

- Information must be provided to all families, not just the ones who attend activities at the school
- Families must be encouraged to share information with the school about their family background, culture, children's talents, goals, needs, etc. There must be an accompanying vehicle(s) for them to accomplish this.
- Information provided about parenting must be age-appropriate, usable, and linked to children's success

Standard III: Student Learning

- Design and implement interactive homework in which students must interact with their families in order to accomplish a homework assignment.
- Involve families and students in all important curriculum-related decisions.

Standard IV: Volunteering

- Volunteers have to be recruited widely. Varied talents must be sought and families have to know that their efforts in this regard are very much appreciated.
- Schedules have to be flexible in order to accommodate the work schedule of volunteers.
- Time and talents have to be matched to school needs. Volunteers must be trained.

- Volunteers should be recognized for their assistance.

Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy:

- Parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups that make up the school population must be included in the decision making process
- Parent leaders must be trained as to how to best represent other families within the school.
- When age-appropriate, student representatives along with parents should serve on decision making committees.

Standard VI: Collaborating with Community

- Match business, community volunteers, and resources with school goals
- Inform all families & students about community programs and services
- Ensure equal access to services and programs for all students and families.

Utilizing this existing framework, Marbury Middle School (MMS) has developed a plan to provide opportunities and innovative ways to serve parents who cannot attend traditional school functions. The plan addresses how MMS will remove specific barriers to parent engagement.

**2023-2024 PROGRAM REVIEW:
PARENT ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

Question: How can Marbury Middle School provide innovative opportunities to serve parents who cannot attend traditional school functions?

GOAL: MMS will eliminate barriers to parent engagement by providing opportunities and innovative ways to serve parents who cannot attend traditional school functions.

STRATEGY #1: *Increase parents' understanding and use of electronic communication resources.*

RATIONALE: A large majority of teachers communicate via electronic communication resources (i.e. apps). However, many parents are not familiar with these resources and/or do not know how to effectively utilize them. Providing opportunities for parents to learn about the electronic resources will increase communication and provide more opportunities to be engaged in student learning.

ACTION STEPS: Offer a series of “family technology trainings” to introduce electronic communication resources to parent communities. Encourage adults to bring mobile devices to the training. Have school computers and tablets available for parents to use as well. Demonstrate how to use the media resources used in the classrooms and give parents time to test-drive the tools as part of the meeting. Allow tech-savvy students to participate in the meeting to demonstrate resources. Hold meetings at different times throughout the day to accommodate varying schedules. Partner with parent volunteers to provide additional training throughout the community. These trainings will allow teachers to easily share information relative to their classrooms and ensure that parents have access to and understand the use of electronic communication resources.

TIMEFRAME: The training will begin with Open House prior to the first day of school. Training will be held throughout the first nine weeks of school.

MONITORING PROCEDURES: Sign-in sheets and evaluations will be used to monitor the occurrence and the effectiveness of the training.

STRATEGY #2: *Offer childcare at a minimum of two parent meetings during the school year.*

RATIONALE: Oftentimes, parents cannot attend school functions due to child care needs. Offering free child care services at parent meetings will provide a much needed service to many parents and allow them the opportunity to participate in school functions.

ACTION STEPS: Schedule a parent meeting/school function and inform parents that child care will be provided. Have parents sign-up for the child care services in advance so that enough staff members will be available. Plan simple age-appropriate activities.

TIMEFRAME: Child care will be offered at a minimum of one parent meeting per semester.

MONITORING PROCEDURES: Sign-in sheets and evaluations will be used to monitor the occurrence and the effectiveness of the meetings.

STRATEGY #3: *Hold a minimum of one parent meeting/ school event at a community location, outside of regular school hours.*

RATIONALE: Lack of transportation oftentimes keeps parents from attending school activities. Holding a parent meeting/school event within the community allows parents to be closer to the event, minimizing transportation issues. Also, parents who are uncomfortable attending school functions held at school facilities may feel more comfortable attending a school function held at a familiar location within their own community.

ACTION STEPS: Schedule a parent meeting/school function within the school community. Meetings can be held at a church, a park, a community center, a local business, or anywhere familiar within the specific community.

TIMEFRAME: A minimum of one parent meeting/school event will be held at a specific community location during the school year.

MONITORING PROCEDURES: Sign-in sheets and evaluations will be used to monitor the occurrence and the effectiveness of the parent meeting.

There is no measurable improvement goal associated with this plan. The plan will be measured based on implementation of the three strategies. Evidence of implementation will be reflected in Sign-in sheets, memos/flyers, messenger communication, website notification, and instruction outlines and notes of proposed topics to be covered.