**Family Engagement Plan**

**Southwest Middle School**

**Building Facilitator: Addie Cummings**

**Plan Review/Revision Date: 9/10/2019**

**District Level Reviewer: Christine Harrell**

**District Level Approval Date: 9/26/2019**

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**About this Parent and Family Engagement Plan:**

The Southwest Middle School Parent and Family Engagement Plan is a comprehensive map for how families can be actively engaged in their child’s education. This living document will be reviewed and updated annually based upon data collected from family and stakeholders. The Southwest Middle School Parent and Family Engagement Plan was jointly developed with and approved by the Parent and Family Engagement Committee.

**About the use of the word “parent”:**

Title 1 defines parent as follows: “The term ‘parent’ includes a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare).” 20 USC 7801(31)

**Parent and Family Engagement Committee**

Carrie Parsley (Principal): [cparsley@searcyschools.org](mailto:cparsley@searcyschools.org)

David Landers (Assistant Principal): [dlanders@searcyschools.org](mailto:dlanders@searcyschools.org)

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Addie Cummings (Parent Facilitator/ Counselor): [acummings@searcyschools.org](mailto:acummings@searcyschools.org)

Diane Killough: PTO President

Jessica Wilson: PTO Vice-President

Katie Lawson: PTO Treasurer/Teacher Representative: [klawson@searcyschools.org](mailto:klawson@searcyschools.org)

Tricia Kauffman: PTO Secretary

**Purpose of the Parent and Family Engagement Committee:**

The purpose of the PFEC is to review the Southwest Middle School Parent and Family Engagement Plan and its implementation.

***Supporting Your Child’s Education***

1. **Reasonable Access to School Staff**
2. **Methods of contacting school staff:**

* **Parents/caregivers may contact school staff through:**

-A phone call to the main office number: (501) 268-3125

- A note sent to school or left in the main office

-Email to the teacher/ staff member (email addresses may be found on the school website: <https://www.searcyschools.org/o/southwest-middle-school/staff>

- Speaking with the teacher or staff member in-person during a scheduled meeting that does not disrupt instruction time

**B. Scheduling Appointments:**

* Parents/caregivers may schedule an appointment with teachers through the methods mentioned above
* The teacher/staff member and parent/caregiver will work together to find a meeting time that fits everyone’ s schedule and does not interrupt instruction.

**C. Availability:**

* All teachers, administrators, and most school staff are available by phone, email, and in-person during designated times.
* Depending on additional grade-level meetings, teachers may be available to meet during their scheduled planning periods.
* Teachers may make themselves available to meet before of after school, but parents/caregivers should be aware that teachers are not required to arrive at school before 7:30 am or stay after 3:30 pm.
* Teachers and staff may also choose to make themselves available through other means, such as Class Dojo or other online tools, as long as they do not replace availability by phone or conference.
* Parents/caregivers are encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences scheduled for October 17, 2019 and February 13, 2020.

**D. Response Time:**

* School staff will respond within one school day after a parent/caregiver makes a request.
* Requested meetings will be scheduled at the earliest possible convenience for everyone involved.

**2. Opportunities to Volunteer and Participate in School Activities**

Parents/caregivers will be given multiple opportunities to volunteer and participate in school events. **All parents/caregivers must sign a Volunteer Application in a grade-level office and be approved before volunteering at school events.**

**A. Types of opportunities:**

* Classroom volunteer
* Annual Block Party
* Community Science Day
* Field trips
* Parent-teacher conferences (October/February)
* Open House
* Class party events (October, December, February)
* PTO meetings (August, December, February, May)
* Family Literacy Night (Fall) and Family Math Night (Spring)
* Handbook Committee
* Open lunch for parents/caregivers to eat with their child
* Fundraisers (Penguin Patch, Spirit Wear, Spirit Tattoos)
* Guest speakers from the community

**B. Sharing and promoting volunteer opportunities:**

* A volunteer interest survey will be given at registration in August
* Parents/caregivers may decide to volunteer after August. Volunteer Application are available in the offices year-round.
* PTO/volunteer opportunities will be shared on social media and the school website and via newsletter throughout the year.

**C. Process for volunteering:**

* Parents/caregivers must complete a Volunteer Application prior to volunteering.
* Parents/caregivers will receive a letter from central office once their application has been approved.

**D. Recognizing volunteer accomplishments:**

* A volunteer appreciation reception will be held in the spring. Invitations will be sent in the mail.

**E.** **Feedback from volunteers:**

* The PTO asks for feedback/recommendations at each meeting.

**3. Observation of Classroom Activities**

**A. Arranging an individual classroom visit:**

* Parents/caregivers wishing to set up an individual classroom observation must first contact an administrator for approval. Approval will depend on necessity and consideration of the privacy of other students.

**4. Frequent Reports to Parents/Caregivers on Children’s Education**

Parents/caregivers should receive frequent reports about their children’s academic progress in order to most effectively collaborate with the school to support their children’s learning.

**A. Information to be included in reports:**

* The child’s grades
* Specific skills, knowledge, and material students are expected to learn, including benchmarks for each grade
* The individual child’s mastery level of those skills and standards
* Trends in student’s behavior and social skills development
* Contact information for the teacher/staff member in the event of additional questions

**B. Methods and frequency of reports:**

* Updates on students’ progress are entered weekly in the Home Access Center (HAC) and can be accessed by parents/caregivers at any time. Parents with questions regarding HAC may contact the main office at (501) 286-3125
* Progress reports are sent home in September, November, February, and April.
* Report cards are sent home in October, January, March, and May.

**C. Training on accessing and understanding the report information:**

* Letters with login information will be sent home with progress reports in September. SWMS will provide additional HAC training during the fall and spring enrichment nights. Notice of these trainings will be sent home with students and posted on the school website and social media.

**D. Assessing and improving the use and effectiveness of the reports:**

* With the collaboration of parents/caregivers, the school will assess the:
* Extent of access to HAC
* Extent to which reports have reached parents/caregivers
* Extent to which parents/caregivers understand the information and have been able to use it to work with their child and the school
* Identify barriers to greater access, understanding, and use of the information
* Consider and implement changes to improve access, understanding, and use of the reports

**5. Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents/caregivers and teachers will meet regularly throughout the school year to monitor students’ academic and behavioral progress as well as discuss and adjust strategies to promote student success.

**A. Frequency of conferences:**

* Parents/caregivers may request a conference at any time
* Official parent-teacher conferences will be held October 17, 2019 and February 13, 2020

**6. Supporting Student Learning at Home**

Parent/caregivers support of learning at home is a key component of student success.

**A. Monitoring completion of homework:**

* Parents/caregivers should be aware of nightly homework expectations and check that it is completed.
* Students should share school work and school communication each night with their parents/caregivers, including information about the due dates for assignments.
* Students are encouraged to discuss what they learn with parents/caregivers.
* Teachers will establish and communicate a method of weekly communication about assignments and other expectations for the week.

**B. Helping with homework:**

* Parents/caregivers:
* Should provide their child with a quiet place to do homework
* Should provide all necessary signatures for documents that need to be returned to school
* Are encouraged to spend time, when possible, sitting with their child to help with homework
* Should check the homework for completion
* Should read and practice with their child when possible
* Are encouraged to require their child to read at least 20 minutes a day
* Students are responsible for:
* Copying homework assignments accurately
* Bringing home assignments and additional materials needed to complete them
* Completing homework and assignments on time
* Asking for help from teachers and parents/caregivers as necessary
* Eliminating distractions such as TV while doing homework
* School staff will:
* Provide training and resources to parents/caregivers on helping students at home as needed
* Communicate with parents/caregivers about patterns of missing assignments
* Conference with students individually to identify barriers to assignment completion and develop and implement strategies to address them that involve the parent/caregiver when appropriate

**C. Involving students in real-world activities that support the school curriculum:**

* Parents/caregivers are encouraged to:
* Involve children in real-world activities and situations that support the curriculum provided by the school, such as educational board games, trips to museums, and budgeting
* Expose children to as many cultural experiences outside the school day as possible
* Students are encouraged to:
* Read for pleasure during free time to learn new things
* Read for a variety of texts, including magazines, newspapers, menus, recipes, etc.
* Participate in extracurricular activities
* The school will:
* Provide resources as needed on low-cost appropriate activities available in the community
* Provide opportunities for field trips and other real-world learning experiences

**7. Helping Children Be Ready For School**

**A. Monitoring and helping the child with attendance and coming to school prepared:**

* Parents/caregivers should:
* Have specific times for waking up, starting to do homework and going to bed
* Ensure their child attends school on time daily
* Ensure their child wears appropriate clothing
* Ensure their child brings with him/her all needed materials and completed assignments
* Maintain contact with your child’s teachers to keep up with what is being taught in the classroom and to keep an eye on your child’s progress
* Check their child’s attendance through HAC
* Students should:
* Come to school on time, rested, and ready to learn
* Wear appropriate clothing
* Bring needed materials and completed assignments
* School staff will:
* Call to check on students with patterns of absenteeism
* Set up meetings with parents/caregivers to meet with school staff to jointly develop strategies for addressing school absences
* Send letters notifying parents/caregivers of absences with information about consequences of multiple absences and about resources and school staff who can work with them to address absences
* Have the child change into different clothes if they violate the dress code or are seasonally inappropriate
* Reward students with satisfactory attendance through attendance initiatives
* Make parents/caregivers aware of options available to them to get the supplies that their children need for school and keep their requests confidential

**B. Promoting positive behaviors:**

* Parents/caregivers should:
* Discuss, model, and reinforce appropriate behaviors at home, in the community and at school
* Encourage their child to follow their class’ social contract and behavior expectations in the Student Handbook
* Encourage their child to try to resolve conflicts through the Capturing Kids’ Hearts communication process and without negative confrontations or bullying
* Students will:
* Follow rules and expectations on the way to school, during school, and on the way home from school
* Try their best to resolve conflicts using the Capturing Kids’ Hearts communication process and without negative confrontations or bullying
* Follow their class’ social contract
* Tell teachers, school staff, or other trusted adults of incidents of bullying
* The school will:
* Provide students and parents/caregivers with access to the Student Handbook (located on the school website) as well as information on expectations and procedures in the classroom
* Provide parents/caregivers with information on the Capturing Kids’ Hearts process
* Discuss, model, and reinforce appropriate behaviors at school

**8. Communicating and Working with the School and Participating in Educational Decisions About the Child**

**A. Checking and responding to communication from the school:**

* Parents/caregivers should:
* Check students’ backpacks daily
* Check for information about activities, events, assignments, student work, notes from school staff, and other communication from the school
* Respond to requests from the school by the date requested in the communication or within one school day
* Students will:
* Share their schoolwork with parents/caregivers
* Share any school communication each night with their family, including notices for parents/caregivers\
* School staff will:
* Utilize a variety of different ways to communicate with parents/caregivers (school website, social media, Remind, Class Dojo, newsletter, phone call/message, conferences, etc.)
* Develop and implement with families a clear and effective structure for communication (such as take-home folders and newsletters) that are as easy as possible to see, understand, and respond to
* Teach students communication and organizational skills to keep track of and share information and ask questions as needed

**B. Ways that our school provides parents/caregivers an opportunity to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children:**

* Inviting parents to participate in the PTO and/or Parent and Family Engagement Committee
* If their child qualifies or needs an Individual Education Plan, 504 Plan, od Behavior Intervention Plan, they will be involved in the development.

**C. Attending meetings related to the student’s achievement:**

* Parents/caregivers will:

-Attend parent-teacher conferences

-Attend parent/caregiver workshops and events as frequently as possible during the school year to increase student achievement

* Students will inform parents/caregivers of the dates and times of events
* School staff will:

- Contact parents/caregivers utilizing a variety of different methods

- Effectively address barriers to family participation by:

- Providing clear communication

- Scheduling events at convenient times

**D. Working with the school to make educational decisions about the child:**

* Parents/caregivers will have a voice in educational decisions made about their child, including but not limited to retentions, Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans, and testing.
* The school will provide parents/caregivers with advanced notice of meetings to discuss decisions related to the issues mentioned above, and will work with the parents/caregivers to find a time that fits everyone’s schedule.
* Educational decisions about a student will be made as a collaborative effort between school staff and parents/caregivers.
* Parents/caregivers will be given the information necessary to make informed decisions for their child.
* Parents/caregivers have the right to deny evaluation for an Individual Education Plan or a 504 Plan.
* Parents/caregivers may meet with an administrator to appeal decisions regarding retention.
* Parents/caregivers will be fully informed of their additional rights concerning students who may have disabilities or are English-Language Learners.
* Administrators will mediate differences between school staff, parents/caregivers, and students if their initial attempt to resolve does not resolve the matter.

***Working Together to Improve the School for All Children***

**9. Implementation and Revision of the Parent and Family Engagement Plan**

**A. Review and improvement of the Family Involvement Plan**

* Reviewing the Parent and Family Engagement Plan in its implementation will be done by the Family and Parent Engagement Committee. Any changes will be submitted in May to Christine Harrell, our district level coordinator, for review and approval.
* The review process will evaluate:
* How well each component of the plan has been implemented
* The extent to which, when implemented, the plan has been successful in achieving the purpose of the component
* The extent of family engagement
* The impact of family engagement on improvements on student achievement
* Barriers to more successful and impactful family engagement, with particular attention to parents/caregivers who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy skills, or of any minority background.
* The review will draw upon:
* Annual academic data
* Annual needs assessments
* Qualitative data from committee members’ observations
* Additional feedback from parents/caregivers
* The review process will be designed to:
* Incorporate feedback from as many families and staff as possible
* Encourage information that is accurate and honest
* Identify specific barriers to success within each component of the plan
* Carefully analyze data and its significance

**10. Meetings and Information Related to Schoolwide Involvement**

**A. Types of parent/caregiver-teacher meetings that will be scheduled and the reason for meeting:**

* New/Returning Student Registration: August 2019
* Collecting accurate demographic data and other state-required information for each student
* Open House: August 2019
* Meet the teacher(s)
* Classroom expectations, procedures, and rules
* Clarifying transportation needs
* Time for parents/caregivers and students to ask questions as needed
* Parent-Teacher Conferences: October 17, 2019 and February 13, 2020
* Review student data
* Discuss concerns/strategies for improvement
* Celebrate student successes
* Family Literacy and Math Nights: Fall 2019 and Spring 2020
* Sharing strategies and resources for promoting student success from home

**B. Invitation and outreach for the meetings:**

* Families will be invited and encouraged to attend through:
* Written newsletters
* Posts on the school website and social media
* Reminders through teacher communication (Class Dojo, Remind, etc.)
* Phone messengers

**C. Flexible meetings and supports:**

* When possible, school staff will offer meetings at different times

**D. Accessibility and assistance:**

* Advance notice from parents/caregivers is requested, and if available, auxiliary aids and services will be provided in order for parents/caregivers to participate in the meeting

**E. Follow-up:**

* Meetings will be evaluated via staff and parent/caregiver feedback

***Building Capacity for Carrying Out Our Roles***

**11. Providing Training**

**A. Parental trainings/workshops:**

* Volunteer Meeting: training parent/caregiver volunteers on school protocol and student safety
* Family Literacy and Math Nights: providing resources for families to promote student success from home
* Coffee With the Counselor: Providing parents/caregivers with training and additional resources on key topics (bullying, cyber safety, promoting executive functioning, and transitioning to junior high)

**B. Staff training:**

* Professional development designed to enhance understanding of effective parental engagement strategies will be provided during staff orientation
* Administration will provide additional training on the Capturing Kids’s Hearts communication process and its pertinence to family engagement
* Additional training will be provided throughout the school year as needs arise

**12. Accessibility**

**A. Oral and written communication regarding programs, meetings, and activities will be provided:**

* Oral communication- phone calls/messages
* Written communication- messages via communication apps, posts on school website and social media, written newsletters
* Written information will be presented in a format that is easy to understand by using tools such as highlighting, bulleted memos, and visual aids.
* Members of the Parent and Family Engagement Committee will review and approve schoolwide memos and announcements

**B. Parents/caregivers with limited English proficiency:**

1. **Identification:**

* At registration, the school will seek to identify all parents/caregivers whose primary language is not English and have limited English proficiency and identify what their communication needs are.
* The school will contact the district ELL coordinator, Susan Gooch, for additional translated resources (Transact, phone translation services, etc.).
* To the greatest extent, teachers and staff will seek to develop a relationship of trust with families to effectively identify specific needs and promote successful collaboration.
* The school will ask parents/caregivers with limited English proficiency to help identify barriers to accessibility in the annual needs assessment.

**II. Meetings:**

* Translators will be present for meetings where there are likely to be one or more parents/caregivers with limited English proficiency.
* Two-way translation will be provided to promote active and informed collaboration.

**III. Interpreters and Translators:**

* The school will ensure that translators and interpreters are competent to interpret both in and out of English, understand terms of confidentiality, and are aware of any specialized terms to be communicated.

**C. Parents/Caregivers with Disabilities**

1. **Affirmative Outreach:**

* Parents are encouraged to communicate any auxiliary needs in advance with a secretary at one of the grade level offices. Secretaries will then relay information to those staff members to coordinate applicable needs to the best of the school’s ability
* Teachers and staff will seek to develop a relationship of trust with families to identify specific needs and promote successful collaboration.

**II. In Presentations and Meetings (School Wide and Individual):**

* Once the school has knowledge that a parent/caregiver has disability-related needs, the school will make its best effort to provide accommodations to afford parents/caregivers an equal opportunity to participate in presentations, meetings, and other activities; to understand information discussed/described in those activities, including any information in written form; and to respond, discuss, and be understood.

**III. In Information and Communication Sent to Parents/Caregivers:**

* Once the school has knowledge that one or more parents/caregivers has a disability that interferes with written communication, and may rely upon a different mode of communication as a result of a disability, the school will provide effective auxiliary aids and supportive services to accommodate the parent/caregiver’s disability-related needs in receiving, understanding, and responding to information.

**IV. Physical Access:**

* The school will provide effective accommodations that allow parents/caregivers with physical disabilities to access the school, all meetings, and his/her child’s classroom, and to participate in events and activities in which other parents are participating.

**V. Involvement in Developing Approaches to Meet Their Needs:**

* The school will ask parents/caregivers with disabilities to help identify barriers to accessibility in the annual needs assessment.

**D. Migratory and Mobile Families Whose Children Change Schools:**

Migratory children and their families may face particular barriers resulting from the children enrolling and leaving at different times during the school year. This can result in a lapse in course work and missed information/training previously provided to other families.

1. **Migrant Facilitator: Glenda Porter- gporter@searcyschools.org**

* Migrant families will be identified at the time the student registers.
* Migrant families will immediately be connected with Glenda Porter who will work with the families to connect them with resources and provide translated (as needed) materials to answer questions regarding school routines and policies.
* The school will ask migratory parents/caregivers to help identify barriers to accessibility in the annual needs assessment.

**E. Homeless Families**

Homeless children and their families may experience challenges in regular communication with the school via phone or mail. They may also lack appropriate resources to promote student learning at home and help their children be ready for school.

1. **McKinney-Vento**

* At registration, parents/caregivers will fill out a housing information form to provide some information regarding family needs.
* Families identified as homeless will then be sent a McKinney-Vento services form to list more specific needs.
* The district McKinney-Vento coordinator, Christine Harrell, and school counselors and administrators will work with families identified as homeless to coordinate potential services provided within the community.
* School staff will work with families identified as homeless to accommodate needs regarding school-home communication.
* The school will ask parents/caregivers identified as homeless to help identify barriers to accessibility in the annual needs assessment.

**13. Assistance in Understanding Information and Topics**

**A. Forms of Help:**

On these and other topics that are relevant to the comprehensive school model, the education of the individual child, and the involvement of families in both, the school will provide a variety of forms of help, including:

* Training in those areas where, based on staff experience and parent/caregiver input, it is likely to be needed for parents/caregivers to fully understand. This includes encouraging students to participate in student-led conferences with their parents to discuss their academic progress.
* On-the-spot help during meetings to clarify terms and concepts that are unclear. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to ask questions as needed.
* Notice of appropriate points of contact and their contact information on memos and other forms of communication sent home.

**B. Assessing the Assistance:**

* The school will ask for feedback from parents/caregivers regarding the clarity and success of assistance in needs assessments throughout the year.

**14. Roles for Community-Based Organizations and Businesses**

**A. Appropriate Roles of CBO’s and Businesses:**

* Donating food, services, and money for events and meetings
* Donating gift cards
* Allowing flyers for school activities in community institutions
* Providing information well in advance about programs that reinforce classroom learning
* Participating in presentations, workshops, and school-wide events where educationally appropriate

**B. Guidelines for Appropriate CBO and Business Involvement at SWMS:**

* Avoiding quid pro quo relationships
* Avoiding commercialization within the school
* Following security procedures and protection of student and family privacy
* Requiring that the principal must approve involvement
* Requiring regular review and monitoring of CBO and business roles

**15. Parent Center**

* Parents/caregivers are encouraged to contact school staff regarding resource needs and requests
* School counselors are prepared to send resource materials home with students for parents/caregivers to utilize.