

# Columbia School District

## Parent-Community Participation Action Plan

(Revised 5/09)

**The Columbia School District, in partnership with the community, will provide a safe and positive learning environment which will prepare all students to contribute and compete in a global society.**

The Columbia School District values assistance in the important endeavor of educating the community's youth. This vital process will be accomplished with the cooperation of home, school, and community. It is the goal of all stakeholders that students achieve their greatest potential and this can be reached through collaboration and commitment. There are many levels of involvement in the educational process. In the Columbia School District, everyone has a role to play...all roles are significant and can make a difference.

The Columbia School District parents, teachers, students, administrators, and community members will develop and promote activities that enrich meaningful involvement in the educational process. The term "parent" refers to anyone who shares responsibility for the well being of a child and is actively engaged in his/her education. The cultivation of involvement will be based on the identified needs of students, parents, families and the community. According to the National Parent Teacher Association, decades of research show when parents are involved students have:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
- Better school attendance
- Increased motivation, better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behavior

According to Walberg (1984) in his review of 29 studies of school-parent programs, family participation in education is twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were 10 times greater than other factors.

In *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement* edited by Henderson and Berla 1996, school benefits are:

- Improves teacher morale
- Higher ratings of teachers by parents
- More support from families
- Higher student achievement
- Better reputations in the community

The Columbia School District recognizes the *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs* based on Dr. Joyce Epstein's framework:

**Standard #1: Communicating** – Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

**Standard #2: Parenting** – Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

**Standard #3: Student Learning** – Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

**Standard #4: Volunteering** – Parents are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are needed.

**Standard #5: School Decision Making and Advocacy** – Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

**Standard #6: Collaborating with Community** – Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Within the Columbia School District, each building school improvement team plans to sustain active, meaningful involvement. The challenge is to channel the energy and good intentions in the most productive ways to benefit students.

Specific Stages of Parent-Community Participation Action Plan include:

### ***Notification of Parent-Community Participation Action Plan***

- Distribute the Columbia School District Parent-Community Participation Action Plan to students and parents in the annual Student Handbooks at the beginning of the school year.
- Communicate information about the Columbia School District Parent-Community Participation Action Plan through the *Torchbearer*, the *Exponent*, building newsletters, on the district website, and the Annual Reports.
- Provide Parent/Teacher/Student Compacts as an initial step toward parent involvement.

### ***Development of Title I Planning Process***

In conjunction with current board policies and district practices, the Columbia School District will continue:

- Survey Title 1 parents to gain feedback of program, evaluation, and recommendations.
- Conduct informational meetings at the beginning of each school year in each of the Title I school buildings.
- Seek parental representation on the district's Title I Advisory Committee via the District School Improvement Team.

### ***Annual Evaluation of Parent-Capacity***

- Each year, as a district, the educational partners (individuals, community groups and/or businesses) will be recognized.
- In addition, those partners will be surveyed in order to evaluate, revise and implement strategies that will enhance parent-community participation.

### ***Development of Parent-Community Capacity***

During the course of the 2009-2014, the Columbia School District will develop "quality" parent-community activities which will include the following:

- Help parents with strategies for supporting school work/homework across the grades.
- Provide building level resources that encourage parents to gain insight and knowledge into their vital role.
- Provide resources through the development of a parent involvement link on the district's website.
- Cultivate opportunities for people to contribute specialized skills by developing a talent bank on-line for career days, mentoring, school-to-work experiences, etc.
- Volunteer opportunities such as PTO, student-led conferences, field trips, classroom helpers, booster groups, arts, etc.
- Participate on district-wide and school building committees, attend special topic meetings, Board of Education meetings, etc.
- Maintain district website offerings for parents.
- During the 2010-2011 school year, the Columbia School District will work to broaden the support system for parents by hosting a Parent University workshop utilizing a variety of speakers on topics of special significance to parents.
- Provide parents with materials and training to help them work with their child to improve their child's academic achievements (i.e., family nights, newsletter "tips", etc.)
- Inform parents on curriculum and assessment standards, No Child Left Behind requirements, MEAP, MME, and Jackson County Wide Common Assessments, monitoring their child's progress, and working with educators.
- Encourage administrators and staff members to reach out, communicate, and work with parents as equal partners.
- Coordinate parental participation activities with other community resources and programs
- Communicate information about school and parent programs in an understandable format.

### ***Continuous Improvement Philosophy***

In keeping with the Columbia School District's on-going commitment to continuous improvement (PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT), this facet of the district's endeavors will benefit from:

- Careful monitoring of activities
- Reflection on activities – what can we do to improve? What is working? What needs adjustments?
- Evaluation
- Recommendations for the future

This Parent-Community Participation Action Plan will help Columbia School District to continue to make a difference in the lives of students, their families and this community. **Adopted by the Columbia School District Board of Education May 11, 2009.**