

Toolkit for Kansas Schools

Involving Parents in No Child Left Behind

Creating Family, School,
Community Partnerships

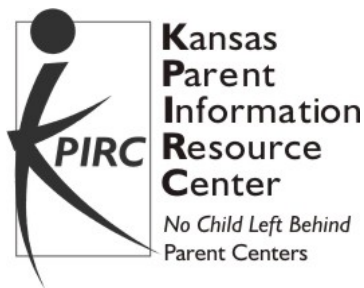


**Kansas
Parent
Information
Resource
Center**
*No Child Left Behind
Parent Centers*



Toolkit for Kansas Schools Involving Parents in No Child Left Behind

Creating Family, School, Community Partnerships



This publication is available from the

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How to Use this Document

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, signed into law by Congress on January 8, 2002, makes many important changes in the educational opportunities public schools offer to disadvantaged youth and others. Among the changes is a firm commitment to the idea that parents play a pivotal role in their children's learning success. Consequently, NCLB requires schools to inform and involve parents in their children's education. Specifically, NCLB requires schools that receive Title I funds and other federal funds:

- ◇ to involve parents in school decisions and in school improvement;
- ◇ to inform parents about the qualifications of those who teach their child, how well their child is doing, and if their child's school is safe and is meeting annual achievement goals.

According to NCLB requirements, parents have options to improve their children's education. Informing parents about what is in the law should be combined with the school's ongoing efforts to effectively involve parents in children's learning. This Toolkit attempts to give schools strategies for accomplishing both.

Section 1 offers an overview of the NCLB and articles to help parents and educators understand how the law impacts schools and children's learning. Section 2 explains and describes the NCLB requirements for parental notification. Section 3 describes NCLB parent involvement requirements. Sections 2 and 3 offer ideas, strategies, and sample materials schools can use to carry out the requirements in ways that families will understand and find useful. Section 4 provides strategies for families, schools, and communities to work together to improve education for all children, within the framework of the newly developed PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. This section is an overview of each standard and teacher tools and resources that provide guidance on how to implement the standards. Section 5 contains a list of resources schools can access for further and more in-depth information. An appendix with tools and resources is found at the end of each section.

This document is intended to be a useful resource for district and building-level teams of teachers, parents, administrators, and community members to review, as they consider ways to carry out NCLB mandates, school improvement goals and family, school, partnerships that help every child learn. The most effective activities and goals will be those that respond directly to the unique characteristics and needs of your school's children and families.

For the purposes of this document, all references to parents and families may include relative caregivers and others who are court appointed legal guardians.



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Dear Educators:

The future of the world is in your classroom, a future with the potential to improve tomorrow. What a responsibility you fill each and everyday and how well you do it! Kansas students continue to top the national average on the ACT and SAT; 77 percent of graduating seniors go on to some postsecondary education; and on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Kansas 4th and 8th graders ranked second in that nation on the mathematics assessment.

The involvement of parent and family members in their child's education is also of critical importance to us and to the success of our students. We know that when schools effectively involve parents and families in support of their children and their education, meaningful and lasting results are produced. Anne Henderson (author of *Beyond the Bake Sale*) once said:

“When parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school – and the schools they go to are better”
(Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Please know that not only do we value the participation of parents in their child's education, we honor it as well. A parent's vision for the future of their child's education is of utmost importance to us and their engagement in this process is one of the keys to a school's and your success as an educator. Parent involvement is a dynamic force that influences every child's future success.

Your role as an educator is to ensure that schools not only actively engage parents in the education of their children, but to also ensure that they play an integral role in assisting in their child's learning. Additionally, as educators, we must promise to keep parents informed of the expectations we have for their child, and to regularly report their student's progress. We also believe that communication between home and school must be regular, two-way and meaningful. Parents are always welcome in the schools, and their assistance and support are constantly sought.

It is our belief and practice that schools must view parents as full partners in the decisions that affect their child and their family. Please continue to develop this true partnership with parents as we work together to ensure that every child benefits from his/her educational program. Thank you for everything you do everyday for every child in Kansas.

Sincerely,

Alexa Posny
Commissioner of Education
Kansas Department of Education

Table of Contents

Toolkit for Schools: Involving Parents in No Child Left Behind

Acknowledgements

Foreword

How to Use this Document

Section 1: Understanding No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 1

Background Information About the No Child Left Behind Act 5

Glossary of Terms..... 9

Talking Tips: For Discussing the NCLB with Parents.....12

Section 2: Parent Notification Requirements21

Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.....23

 Regarding Right to Receive Teacher Information 25

(Sample Letter to Parents on School Letterhead) 25

 Individual Student Achievement Reports..... 26

 District Report Cards 27

 School Performance Data Available Online at: www.ksde.org..... 29

 Sample Statement to Parents..... 29

 Schools Identified for Improvement 30

 Option to Transfer Child to another Public School 32

 Supplemental Educational Services 39

 Kansas State Department of Education B Supplemental Educational Services Providers 44

Title III—English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement49

Title IX—General Provisions51

 Military Recruiters 51

 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)..... 55

 Model Notice for Directory Information..... 55

 Student Surveys 56

 Sample Parental Permission Forms for Student Surveys 57

Title X, Part C—Homeless Education 59

Appendix for Section 2..... 61

 NCLB Title Programs of Key Parent Notification Requirements..... 63

 Understanding Your Building Level Report Card Brochure 67

 School Choice Brochure 69

 SES Brochure 71

Section 3: Parent Involvement Requirements	73
Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.....	75
NCLB Requirements for the School Parent Involvement Policy	76
The School-Parent Compact	77
The Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC)	79
Title I, Part C—Education of Migratory Children	80
Parent Involvement Under Title I, Part C	80
Title II — Part D	82
Enhancing Education through Technology	82
Title III — Limited English Proficient	82
Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students	82
Title IV — Part A	82
Safe and Drug-Free School Activities	82
Title IV – Part B	82
21st Century Schools	82
Title V — Part A	82
Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs	82
Appendix for Section 3	83
No Child Left Behind Act, Title I, Section 1118: Parental Involvement	85
Template for Developing Your Own District Parent Involvement Policy	89
Sample Parent Compact	93
KPIRC Brochure	95
Section 4: Families and Schools Working Together to Improve Achievement.....	97
Research Synthesis	99
National Standards for Family School Partnerships.....	105
Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community.....	106
Standard 2: Communicating Effectively	119
Standard 3: Supporting Student Success	133
Standard 4: Speaking Up For Every Child	147
Standard 5: Sharing Power	161
Standard 6: Collaborating With Community	171
Section 5: Resources and Bibliography.....	183
Bibliography	191

Section 1

Section 1: Understanding No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

What is the purpose of this section?

In this section you will learn how you can help parents to understand: 1) what major changes NCLB requires of Kansas schools and districts; 2) how NCLB requires schools to keep parents informed and involved; and 3) how you can help parents and community members make sense of NCLB and its impact on children's learning.

The No Child Left Behind Act is a vast and complex law that spans 45 federally-funded education programs under ten titles. The information in Section 1 attempts to provide "the big picture" about NCLB to parents whose children and students must learn by it. You can use this information as handouts to give to parents to inform them of the law, or as background information for discussion starters in meetings with parents to introduce them to the requirements of the legislation.

Table of Contents for Section 1

Parent Handout:	No Child Left Behind: An Overview for Parents
School Resource:	An Overview of NCLB and Ten Other Things Parents Should Know About No Child Left Behind Act
Glossary of Terms	
School Resource:	Talking Tips: For Discussing NCLB with Parents
Appendix:	Sponsoring a School-Parent Forum: Tips for Success

No Child Left Behind: An Overview for Parents

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was first enacted by the federal government in 1965 to ensure educational opportunities for our nation's most disadvantaged youth. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a major reform of the ESEA, was passed by Congress and signed into law on January 8, 2002. The Act encompasses 45 education programs across ten areas, referred to as titles.

How is NCLB funding awarded to schools?

Kansas's 296 school districts access NCLB funding primarily through formula-driven entitlements and, to a lesser degree, through state competitive grants or directly from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). Formula driven entitlements are allocated to school districts based on pupil population and poverty rates. The more students a district has and the higher the rate of poverty, the more funds a district receives. School districts submit an application indicating how they will comply with NCLB requirements for programs involving:

- disadvantaged children
- migrant children
- neglected and delinquent youth
- teacher and principal training and recruiting
- education technology
- children with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- safe and drug-free schools and communities
- innovative programs, or promising, new school improvement programs, including charter and magnet schools.

The largest entitlement program is Title I, Part A, representing the greatest amount of dollars out of Kansas's total allocation under NCLB, and has the most significant requirements that will impact all school districts.

What are NCLB requirements for Kansas?

NCLB requirements that impact school districts and school buildings include:

- **Testing students statewide in reading and math** in grades 3 – 8, and once in high school and as of 2007/08, students will also be tested in science in grades 4 and 7 and once during high school.
- **Set up a statewide accountability system** that ensures all students will be proficient or better in math and reading by 2013-14. This statewide accountability system establishes annual gains in reading and math test scores, or benchmarks, all schools must reach each year, also known as making *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*. All schools and districts are required to test at least 95% of students annually and meet established benchmarks for attendance at the elementary and middle school level and graduation rates at the high school and district level.
- **Measure and report on the progress of all students** and subgroups of students by race/ethnicity, disability, economically disadvantaged, and limited English proficiency (LEP).
- **Measure and report on the progress of all students** and subgroups of students by race/ethnicity, disability, economically disadvantaged, and limited English proficiency (LEP).

- **Name schools and districts identified for improvement.** Schools and/or districts identified for improvement are those that have not made AYP toward reaching state-set benchmarks in reading and math for two years in a row for all students or any subgroup of students.
- **Require all teachers of “core academic subjects” to be highly qualified.** Core academic subjects under NCLB are English, reading or language arts, math, science, foreign, language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Highly qualified teachers are those who hold Kansas teaching licenses for the subjects that they teach.
- **Develop and disseminate a state report card** with specific reporting requirements, including the progress of all students and subgroups by race/ethnicity, disability, economically disadvantaged, and limited English proficiency on state reading and math assessments.

What does NCLB require of school districts and buildings?

School districts and school buildings receiving Title I funds must meet additional new NCLB requirements. Title I funding is independently awarded at two levels - district and school. In 2006, all 296 Kansas school districts received Title I funding, although not all schools received funding. NCLB imposes sanctions on schools receiving Title I funds, that do not make AYP, with increasing levels of accountability the longer a school stays in improvement status. Sanctions range from offering public school choice within the district, offering supplemental educational services or free tutoring to Title I eligible children, implementing corrective actions, and reconstituting the school. NCLB requires schools and districts receiving Title I funds to:

- Notify parents about many issues, including parents' rights to receive information about their child's teacher, status of the school, and parent options when a school is identified for improvement.
- Ensure that all teachers, who are teaching in programs supported by Title I funds, are highly qualified in core academic subjects and that Title I paraprofessionals meet stricter requirements.
- Develop and share with parents, school district and school building level report cards that include the progress of all students and subgroups of students by race/ethnicity, disability, economically disadvantaged, and limited English proficiency on state assessments in reading and math.

What are other NCLB requirements for all schools?

- **Participation of private school** children, their teachers, and other education staff in Title I school district programs and services.
- **Development of a state unsafe school option policy** that allows students attending a persistently dangerous school to transfer to a safe public school within the district.
- **School districts receiving NCLB funds are required to provide military recruiters** and institutions of higher education the names, addresses, and telephone listings of high school students and access to high school students as is provided to institutions of higher education and prospective employers.
- **No policies** preventing or denying participation in institutionally protected school prayer.

Background Information About the No Child Left Behind Act

Although the new law offers a wealth of information and options for parents, few parents know about the law or how it impacts their child’s education. Listed below are questions parents commonly ask about NCLB, and information about the major changes in the law that affects Kansas parents; as well as responses that schools can give to parents concerning these questions. For more information about NCLB, visit the KPIRC website (www.kpirc.org) and/or the Kansas State Department of Education website (www.ksde.org)

Questions About NCLB	Talking Points and Responses to Share With Parents
1. Where did No Child Left Behind Come from?	<p>The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a major reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush on January 8, 2002. Since its beginning in 1965 under President Johnson’s “war on poverty,” the ESEA traditionally covered supplemental aid for poor and disadvantaged children in K-12 education, but evolved over the years to address other education reform priorities for all children. As the law undergoes reauthorization again, additional changes may occur. Currently, NCLB redefines the federal role in K-12 education and seeks to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers.</p>
2. How does the NCLB affect my child’s education?	<p>NCLB requires all states to develop and administer annual tests in reading and math for all students in grades 3-8 and at least once in these subjects in grades 9-12. These tests must align with each state’s current academic content standards, which in Kansas are referred to as Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) standards. In Kansas, test scores are assigned to one of five levels that describe how well students performed on the state tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exemplary • exceeds standards • meets standard • approaches standard • academic warning. <p>The overall goal of NCLB is to have all children score at the “proficient” or “meets standard” level on statewide tests in reading and math by 2014.</p>
3. What is Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP?	<p>Kansas has devised a series of indicators or benchmarks that show if schools are making the required adequate yearly progress (AYP) each year. To make AYP schools and districts are also required to test 95% of enrolled students in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, meet state goals for student attendance in school and for high school graduation, and meet annual achievement goals set by the state in math and reading. In addition, schools must break down or disaggregate the achievement scores and test participation percentages by race, economic status, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students. All disaggregated subgroups, defined as a group of at least 30 students, must meet the annual accountability indicators. Failure to meet an annual indicator for two or more consecutive years results in a school or district being identified for improvement.</p>

<p>4. How will I know how well my child and school is doing on state tests?</p>	<p>Schools must send parents information about their child’s level of achievement on state tests. The accountability system in Kansas is based primarily on the State assessments in reading and mathematics, which are based on curriculum standards adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education.</p> <p>All school districts are required to send parents a report card on how every school and district; is performing in reading and mathematics. This report also must include student achievement data on state tests by race, ethnicity, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged, and gender.</p> <p>A listing of all information included in the School Performance Report is available at http://online.ksde.org/rcard/. District report cards must be given to all parents of students attending district schools. The district report card is required to be in an understandable format and language.</p>
<p>5. What happens if my child’s school does not make AYP?</p>	<p>Schools that do not make AYP for two or more consecutive years are identified for improvement. Once identified, a school needs to meet AYP for two consecutive years to have its “in need of improvement” designation removed.</p> <p>Although all districts and schools are subject to testing and accountability requirements, only districts and schools receiving federal Title I funds are subject to federal sanctions for not making AYP for two or more years in a row. Sanctions applied to schools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 (after 2 consecutive years): Schools must adopt two-year improvement plans (developed in consultation with parents), invest in professional development for teachers, and give parents the option to transfer their children to a higher-performing public or charter school in the district, with the district paying for transportation. Priority for transfers will go to the lowest-achieving, low-income students. • Level 2 (after 3 consecutive years): Schools continue improvement efforts and give students from low-income families the option of obtaining supplemental educational services (i.e. tutoring) from private providers. • Level 3 (after 4 consecutive years): Schools continue previous improvement activities and also are subject to “corrective action.” Corrective action involves: implementing a new curriculum, replacing school staff, appointing an outside expert as advisor, extending the school day or year, or restructuring the school. • Level 4 (after 5 consecutive years): Schools must plan for restructuring, which may involve replacing staff, contracting with a private firm to manage the school, or the State Board of Education recommending that the legislature abolish or restructure the local districts. • Level 5 (after 6 consecutive years): Schools must implement their restructuring plan.

<p>6. What can parents do if their child is in a school identified for improvement?</p>	<p>If the school receives Title I funds, the school is required to explain to parents why the school is in improvement status. Schools should also involve parents in school improvement efforts. Finally, parents in schools that receive Title I funds should be notified of additional options available to them (the options are listed above in Question 5).</p>
<p>7. How does NCLB ensure quality teaching?</p>	<p>In every school, all teachers of core academic subjects have to be “highly qualified.” Currently licensed teachers in Kansas are “highly qualified” if they hold at least a bachelor’s degree, are fully licensed or certified by the state in the subjects they teach, and can demonstrate competence in the subjects they teach. Paraprofessionals, or teacher assistants with instructional duties, currently must have two years of college or an associate degree, or they must demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to assist with reading, writing, and mathematics through a formal state or local assessment.</p>
<p>8. How does NCLB promote school safety?</p>	<p>The NCLB provides schools with funds to improve school safety. In addition, Kansas is required to develop a state policy that identifies persistently dangerous schools. NCLB requires schools to notify parents if the school has been identified.</p>
<p>9. How can parents be involved in their child’s school?</p>	<p>All Title I schools are required to consult with parents about the Title I program and ways parents can be involved. School districts must have a written parent involvement policy that describes how the district will help Title I schools plan and implement effective parent involvement activities. Districts receiving more than \$500,000 in Title I funds must use at least one percent of those funds for parent involvement activities. If districts do not receive \$500,000 in Title I funds, they are still required to implement parent involvement strategies. Title I schools must conduct an annual meeting for Title I parents and inform parents about Title I programs, the school curriculum, and student achievement data.</p>
<p>10. What other information are schools required to share with parents, under NCLB?</p>	<p>NCLB requires schools to inform parents about their right to request that their child’s name, address, and telephone number be withheld from recruiters for the military and for institutions of higher education, inspect student surveys and to opt their child out of those surveys if the surveys collect, disclose, or use personal information about students related to behavior, attitudes, or beliefs of students or their families.</p> <p>Schools must also involve parents in establishing policies that notify parents of their right to inspect student surveys at the beginning of each school year. School districts using Title III funds must also conduct effective outreach to parents of limited English proficient children and inform parents of ways they can be involved in their children’s education. Regular meetings with parents must be held to respond to parent recommendations for improving their child’s education.</p> <p>Schools receiving Title I funds are required to make parents aware of the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC) and the resources that the KPIRC provides to families to assist them in helping their children to succeed in school. The KPIRC website – www.kpirc.org – has hundreds of parent involvement resources.</p>

Glossary of Terms

Many people believe that the No Child Left Behind Act uses a language of its own. This glossary attempts to define some of the more frequently-used terms and acronyms in the NCLB that you can make available to parents to help them understand the “jargon” in the legislation.

Assessment — Another word for “test.” Under No Child Left Behind, student tests are aligned with academic standards. As of the 2005-06 school year, schools have been testing students in reading and mathematics in every grade – 3 through 8 and once in high school. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, science achievement must also be tested in grade 4, 7, and once in high school.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — Schools must show that they make progress each year toward the goal of having all children proficient in math and reading by 2014. Kansas has devised a series of indicators or benchmarks that show if schools are making the required progress each year. AYP is the annual accounting of indicators, taken from student test results which schools, districts, and the state must meet under NCLB. These indicators require schools to:

- test 95% of enrolled students in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school in reading and math, and in grade 4, 7 and once in high school in science,
- meet state goals for student attendance in school and for high school graduation, and
- meet annual achievement goals set by the state in math and reading.

In addition, schools must break down, or disaggregate the achievement scores and test participation percentages by race, economic status, students with disabilities and limited English proficient students. All of the disaggregated subgroups must meet the annual accountability indicators. A subgroup is defined as a group of at least 30 students, including subgroup size of students with disabilities. Failure to meet an annual indicator for two or more years in a row results in a school or district being identified for improvement.

Capacity-building — the effort of schools to strengthen their human resources’ ability to achieve targeted goals and to plan, make policy, and do the work needed to meet these goals. In NCLB, schools receiving Title I funds are expected to build their capacity for parent involvement. This requires schools to strengthen parent and staff resources to more meaningfully involve parents in supporting children’s learning.

Disaggregated data — “disaggregate” means to separate a whole into its parts. In education, this term means that test results are sorted into groups of students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial and ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English fluency. This practice allows parents and teachers to see how each student group is performing.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) — the principal federal law affecting K-12 education. The No Child Left Behind Act is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA, or the version that has most recently received legislative approval. The law is currently being reauthorized, again.

Highly-qualified – new federal rules state that a “highly qualified” teacher has to be in every classroom. Highly qualified means the teacher is fully licensed both at the level and for the subject he/she is teaching. A major objective of No Child Left Behind is to ensure high-quality teachers for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity or income, because a well-prepared teacher is vitally important to a child’s education. In fact, research demonstrates the clear correlation between student academic achievement and teacher quality. Parents should never hesitate to inquire within their school and district about the qualifications of teachers instructing their children.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) — the most important legal document written for children with

disabilities. The program is developed through discussion by parents and school staff at a team meeting to address the child's unique needs. The IEP ensures that a child with a disability receives a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Limited English Proficiency — refers to individuals whose dominant language is not English and who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language. Schools receiving Title III funds for limited English proficient students must comply with specific parent notification and involvement requirements in NCLB.

NCLB — an acronym for “No Child Left Behind,” the name of the federal law passed in 2001 and signed into law on January 8, 2002.

Paraprofessional — an individual with instructional duties that may include:

- providing one-on-one tutoring for students; if tutoring is provided at a time when the student did not have access to a teacher,
- assisting with classroom management,
- providing assistance in a computer lab,
- conducting parental involvement activities,
- providing support in library or media centers,
- acting as a translator, or
- providing instructional services to a student.

The NCLB requires paraprofessionals in schools funded by Title I federal programs to meet higher standards, which include completion of two years of study at an institution of higher education; an associate (or higher) degree; or meeting a rigorous standard of quality and ability to demonstrate, through a formal assessment, knowledge of and ability to assist in reading, writing, and mathematics instruction. Newly employed paraprofessionals in Title I-funded programs must meet these criteria prior to employment. This requirement does not apply to paraprofessionals who do not work in Title I schools or those who work in targeted assistance schools, but are not paid from Title I funds.

Parent advisory council — a group of parents, trained to represent other parents, organized by Title I schools to give the schools the parent perspective, comments, and ideas for school parent involvement programs. They also may work with community-based organizations and businesses to develop parent involvement activities.

Public school choice – under NCLB, parents of children attending Title I schools that are not meeting state academic standards and are “in need of improvement” status may be able to move their children to other public schools, including public charter schools, that are meeting these standards. This option gives parents the chance to ensure that their children are attending a school where they are getting the instruction they need to succeed academically, while at the same time, allowing school officials to make improvements in the children's regular schools.

School improvement plan — the plan that schools identified for improvement are required to write for district approval in consultation with parents who are impacted by the plan. The plan should contain specific objectives, strategies, policies, practices, and professional development components that address problems which caused the school to be identified for improvement. The plan must also describe how the school will provide written notice to parents and include strategies to promote effective parent involvement.

Supplemental education services — tutoring and other supplemental academic enrichment services provided outside of the regular school day. NCLB-required supplemental educational services must be of high quality and research-based. They must also be specifically designed to increase the academic achievement of eligible children and help children attain proficiency in meeting the state's academic achievement standards.

21st Century Community Learning Center — an entity that helps students meet state and local academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics. A center may provide students with opportunities for academic enrichment activities and a broad array of other activities (such as drug and violence prevention, counseling, art, music, recreation, technology, and character education programs). Such centers operate during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session, such as before and after school or during summer recess. Centers can be located in schools or in other buildings in a community. Programs offered by a center reinforce and complement the regular academic school programs of students served. A center may also offer students' families opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Title I — the first section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I refers to programs aimed at improving education opportunities for the most disadvantaged children. Title I, Part A provides federal dollars to help supplement educational opportunities for children who live in high poverty areas who are most at risk of failing to meet the state's content and performance standards. There are two types of programs: Targeted Assistance and Schoolwide.

Targeted Assistance – one in which individual students are targeted to receive Title I services, based on academic need. Services may be delivered in a number of ways such as in-class instruction, pull out instruction, extended day, week or year programming. The Title I teacher(s) are responsible for providing extra services to the identified children, coordinating with other school personnel involved with the children and involving parents in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Title I program.

Schoolwide Program – a Title I school is eligible to become a school wide program when the poverty level, (determined by free and reduced lunch counts) is at or above 40%. In Kansas, schools can have as low as 30% poverty and apply to be a schoolwide program. A schoolwide program is designed with the knowledge that there is a link between poverty and low achievement; therefore, when there are large numbers of disadvantaged students, interventions will be more successful when they are implemented "schoolwide." A schoolwide program has more flexibility in the use of Title I funds and in the delivery of services. Staff paid with Title I funds are free to work with all students in the building, or there are no students identified as "Title I." The school works together to develop its curriculum and instruction to raise the achievement of all students.

Additional educational terms are defined in the *"The ABC Book of Educational Terms: A Plain Language Guide for Parents,"* published by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center. This booklet can be found on-line at: www.kpirc.org/DownloadForParGenPI.htm

Talking Tips: For Discussing the NCLB with Parents

Talking about the requirements and impact of the No Child Left Behind Act with parents and community members can be a daunting task for anyone. An excellent way to provide them with opportunities to learn more about NCLB is to host a School-Parent Forum (see the Appendix at the end of this Section). As preparation for hosting a forum, it helps to be prepared for the inevitable questions from parents, staff, media and community members. Following are some general guidelines for framing discussion of the NCLB in clear and understandable terms with parents and the public.

What do parents think about NCLB?

Recent polls show that:

- Most parents don't understand what NCLB is or how it affects their schools.
- In general, parents rate their schools highly and support high academic expectations for all students.
- Parents support testing if test results are used to improve instruction. Parents do not want testing to be used to punish schools or to narrow the curriculum.
- Parents are especially concerned about discipline, class size, and teacher quality and favor efforts to address these issues.

When communicating about NCLB, put NCLB in the context of current efforts.

- How has your school or district made progress toward meeting state and local school improvement goals related to student achievement?
- Are your staff members highly qualified?
- Is your school a safe place where children feel connected and cared for? (Use your building's initiatives and successes to connect parents to the goals of NCLB.)

Discuss two or three topics parents in the school are interested in.

Don't feel obligated to cover every aspect of the NCLB. The details of the entire law are beyond the interest of most parents. Stick to what parents in your community are most interested in and to areas that your school has actively addressed. Make clear that your commitment to children is front and center.

Strive to be jargon-free.

Parents will be hearing and reading about "Adequate Yearly Progress" for some time to come. Do explain what AYP is and how it relates to test scores and the NCLB. Conversely, be careful not to overwhelm non-educators with the acronyms and "educationese" associated with NCLB. For example, some sources suggest substituting the phrase, "different groups of students," for "disaggregated data."

Accessing the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center's "*The ABC Book of Educational Terms*" is a great resource to help explain many school-related and NCLB terms in parent-friendly language. This resource is available on-line at www.kpirc.org/DownloadForParGenPI.htm.

Commend schools for their progress.

What is your school doing right? Where are students succeeding? Where has progress been made? It's important to celebrate successes even as improvement is still happening. Be sure to publicly recognize at meetings and through the media:

- staff who receive awards or recognition for their work
- students and classrooms showing outstanding accomplishment in a variety of areas
- parents or volunteers who have made special contributions to the school
- community organizations or businesses who have been exemplary partners.

Explain what you have done, what you are doing, and plans to improve achievement.

Schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years become "Schools Identified for Improvement." Point out that all schools, even top schools, need to work on improving. Explain why your school has been identified for improvement, what it is doing to address concerns, and how parents will be kept up-to-date.

Communicate in many ways.

NCLB requires schools to communicate with parents on several specific topics and occasions. As a general rule, the more communication, the better. Use all available avenues — school newsletters, the Internet, local media, and school-parent forums or community discussions — to disseminate your school's improvement plans. How can your school parent group help? Feature NCLB-related information on your school's website. Devote regular space in your school newsletter to discuss NCLB-related developments.

Be prepared for the "tough" questions.

Think about how to discuss difficult or sensitive issues to avoid blaming staff, students, or parents. Be open about any lack of resources, but reassure the community that staff will continue to do their best with what is available. Here's a short list of questions school administrators have confronted. Feel free to add your own!

- Why is this school identified for improvement?
- Why are some groups of students doing worse than others?
- How do student test scores in this school compare to those statewide?
- What are you doing to improve these results?
- What can parents do if their children are in schools identified for improvement?
- Given budget constraints, what will be done to help schools that need it most? What are the trade-offs?

Offer specific ways for parents and the community to help.

Invite everyone to become part of the solution in do-able ways. How can community members, businesses, and groups contribute to student math achievement as volunteers, mentors, and partners? How can parents support student reading at home? How can students be involved in taking responsibility for their behavior and improving the learning environment?

Framing the Discussion & Tips for Community Outreach, available from the Learning First Alliance, www.learningfirst.org

Appendix for Section 1

Sponsoring a School-Parent Forum: Tips for Success

The NCLB presents a host of complex issues on student learning that schools and parents need to explore, discuss, and act upon together. Many schools and districts have found a school-sponsored parent forum to be an effective way to address education-related questions large or small. The benefits of well-attended, participatory parent forums are many and extend to schools and parents.

Although the NCLB requires schools receiving Title I funds to conduct an annual meeting for Title I parents, a parent forum can help any school improve communications, decision making, and relationships with parents – also important goals of the NCLB. You can also incorporate the Title I annual meeting into the parent forum. By making the effort to call together the parents of the children they serve, listen to parents' comments and ideas, and incorporate parents' suggestions into school plans or programs, schools are sending parents the message that they are important and are partners in student learning.

The word, "forum," connotes open discussion. No matter what school-related issue is addressed during a forum; educators who sponsor a school-parent forum show that they are willing to listen to all views and make decisions or take actions based on views expressed or consensus reached. If your school cannot make this commitment, it should not plan to have a forum. For example, if an issue has already been decided and the primary intent of the gathering is to present information, then it is a meeting or a question-and-answer session, not a forum.

Here are some questions that the sponsoring group should answer in organizing a forum:

What is the purpose of the forum, i.e., what do we want to accomplish?

- The goals of the forum must be clearly stated in all communications. For example, is this a listening session, or do sponsors hope to have an "action plan" laid out by the close of the forum?
- Does the forum help the school meet Title I or other requirements of NCLB?

What are some examples of issues discussed at school parent forums in Kansas?

- What is our school doing well and how can we improve?
- How should the district spend funds?
- How do district budget cuts/revenue caps affect our children and schools?
- What is the No Child Left Behind Act and how does it improve student learning?
- What is Kansas Quality Performance Assessment (QPA)?
- How do the Kansas QPA Standards affect my child's learning?
- How can our school better communicate with parents?
- Is our community and school district meeting the needs of families with young children?
- What kinds of programs should our school offer for students, families, and the community?
- How can we help all students read well or become proficient in math?
- What do you need to feel confident in your role as a parent, and how can the school support you?
- How can we support teens in the community?
- How can we build positive relationships among youth and adults in our community?
- How can all segments of our community work together for children?
- How can we help students become better citizens?

Who is sponsoring the forum?

- Is it the Title I program, school board, school administration, School Site Council, PTA or PTO, or a combination of all?
- Does everyone have ownership and interest in the issue to be discussed?

What are the costs and how will it be paid for?

- Be sure to consider the cost of printing and mailing out notices and/or results, printing materials to be distributed at the forum, refreshments planned for the forum, or speaker/facilitator costs.

When and where will it be held?

- Is the location accessible to everyone?
- Can it accommodate a large group or a breakdown of the large group into smaller discussion tables?
- Who is communicating the needs for room set-up to appropriate parties?

How can we make sure everyone knows about the forum and feels welcome to attend?

- Is the forum being publicized in places throughout the community where families gather: churches, fast food restaurants, grocery stores, and the family resource center?
- Are parent leaders from all ethnic groups inviting participants?

How can we insure that all families and their viewpoints are represented at the forum?

- Does everyone feel welcome to attend and to participate in the forum?
- What language or culture barriers do we need to consider?

Do we want to use a facilitated process to come to a consensus on an issue, vote on the issue, or develop several recommendations about the issue?

- At some point, be sure each person feels welcome to state their viewpoint. For example, a consensus-building process may start with small group discussions which invite comment from each person.
- Some forums begin by reviewing a few principles emphasizing respectful listening and speaking objectively.
- Will the large group take a vote on the issue, or will small, table-sized groups have the opportunity to discuss the issue, make recommendations, then vote at large on those recommendations?

How can we consider the views of parents not able to attend the forum?

- Will we consider staging forums at different times or in different places so more parents are able to attend?
- Will the proceedings and results of the forum be published in the local newspaper? In the school district newsletter?
- Will parents not able to attend be invited to express their views via phone or e-mail? How will such comments be considered?

How will we communicate the results of the forum?

- Will results be printed or presented in languages other than English for non-English speakers?
- Will the forum be broadcast over the local cable channel?
- Will results be reported in the local newspaper and at the next school board meeting?

What are the next steps? What group or individual will be responsible for carrying out or considering the results or recommendations of the forum?

- Next steps need to be clearly communicated during and following the forum.
- The school or other sponsoring body needs to be accountable for following up and reporting on the progress of forum recommendations or participants may feel disappointed. Assign one person, if possible, to follow through with recommendations.

What other individuals, or decision-making groups or bodies in the school or community need to know about the forum, be involved in setting it up, or know about the results of the forum?

- Will the local media be invited to attend or to help sponsor the forum?
- Will community leaders or representatives be invited to help plan the forum? To contribute to forum expenses?
- How will the local PTA be involved? What community resources can we use to conduct the forum or pursue next steps?

Section 2

Section 2: Parent Notification Requirements

What is the purpose of this section?

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires schools to provide many different kinds of information and notices to parents about their children's school, academic progress, teachers, and more. Schools must make reasonable efforts to present the information in an understandable format and in a language parents can understand.

In this section you will learn about the major parent notification requirements found in NCLB which include: Title I (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged), Title III (English Language Acquisition, Language enhancement, and Academic Achievement), Title IX (General Provisions), and Title X, Part C (Homeless Education). Included are the specific requirements that parents have the right to request, and challenges and questions to expect as you provide this information to parents. Throughout this section are example letters and survey notices that you can adapt for your own use as you meet the parent notification requirements in the law. In the Appendix at the end of this Section is a summary chart of all Key Parent Notification Requirements.

Table of Contents for Section 2

School Resource:	Title I – Improvement of the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged Parent Notification Requirements
Sample Letters:	Parent Right to Receive Teacher Information Parent Notification for Public School Choice Parent Notification for Supplemental Educational Services
School Resource:	Title III – English language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
School Resource:	Title IX – General provisions
Parent Handouts:	Access to High School Students and Information on Students by Military Recruiters Family Educational Rights and privacy Act (FERPA)
Sample Letters:	Parental Permission Forms for Student Surveys (Passive & Active Forms)
School Resource:	Title X, Part C – Homeless Education
Appendix:	NCLB Title Programs of Key Parent Notification Requirements Brochure: Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Building Level Report Card Brochure: Parent's Guide to School Choice Brochure: Parent's Guide to Understanding Supplemental Educational Services

Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

Teacher Information

At the beginning of each school year, school districts receiving Title I funds must notify all parents of children attending Title I schools that federal law gives parents the right to request information about the qualifications of their child's teachers and paraprofessionals. The district must respond in a timely manner to a parent request for this information.

Parents have the right to request information on

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and has a license for the grade level and subject(s) he or she teaches;
- Whether the teacher has an emergency or provisional license;
- What degrees the teacher holds and the field of discipline of his or her certification or degree; and
- The qualifications of any paraprofessionals serving their child.

In addition, Title I schools must notify parents in a timely manner when their child has been taught for 4 consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of being highly qualified.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: Need to explain federal and state requirements for teachers to become highly qualified.

Questions to Expect

- Is my child's teacher highly qualified?
- How many teachers in this district/this school are qualified?
- What is the district doing to help all teachers become qualified?

Challenge 2: May need to explain teacher shortages and why temporary teachers are needed.

Questions to Expect

- What is the district's plan to attract qualified teachers to my child's school?
- What impact does it have on my child's learning or classroom if her/his teacher is not highly qualified?
- What do paraprofessionals do? How are they different from teachers?
- How is the district working with nearby colleges or universities to ensure that new and practicing teachers are highly qualified?

Challenge 3: Need to hear staff and parent ideas for notifying parents and providing them with NCLB-required information about teacher qualifications.

Questions to Expect

- How is the district providing parents with clear and uniform information, including parents who don't speak English, those with limited literacy skills, and those who may be difficult to reach?
- What can parents do to help inform other parents about these issues?
- How can parents help ensure that highly qualified teachers are in each classroom in this school/district?

The following are ideas and activities that your school can use to meet the parents' right to request teacher information and teacher qualifications requirements under No Child Left Behind.

Parents' Right to Request Teacher Information	Notifying Parents about Teacher Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with PTA/PTO or another school parent group to establish a plan for notifying and informing parents. • Send a notice home with students or mail to parents. • Place a notice in local newspaper at start of school year or as needed during school year. • Place a notice on school website. • Place a notice in grocery stores and other places in the community where parents gather. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a parent forum or series of public forums on this topic for families and the community. • Display teaching certificates and diplomas near all teachers' classroom doors or place a notation of these in the school office. • Place teacher qualifications on the school website. • Place teacher photos, certifications, and continuing education in the student handbook.

On the following page is a sample letter that you can send to parents to explain to them the qualifications of the school's classroom teachers, as required under the law. This letter needs to be sent out by the districts and schools that receive Title I funding and must be sent out at the beginning of each school year.

Regarding Right to Receive Teacher Information
(Sample Letter to Parents on School Letterhead)

Date

Dear Parent:

The federal education law – No Child Left Behind – requires that we share with you the qualifications of teachers in this school (or insert school name). There are questions you may ask, including:

- Is my child's teacher licensed to teach the grades or subjects assigned?
- Has the state waived any requirements for my child's teacher?
- What was the college major of my child's teacher?
- What degrees does my child's teacher hold?
- Are there instructional aides working with my child? If so, what are their qualifications?

Let me say that all teachers have at least a bachelor's degree in (name your district/school), and (number or percent) have advanced degrees. In addition all (or a percent) of the teachers in this school (or school's name) are fully licensed for their assignment. If you want to see the state qualifications for your child's teacher you may ask us.

In addition, we have (number) instructional aides, and they all (or a percent) are considered qualified for this work. If you would like more information about this school (or school's name), please feel free to call me at (telephone #).

Sincerely,

(Principal's or designee's signature)

Individual Student Achievement Reports

All schools receiving Title I funding must notify parents in a timely manner of their child's level of achievement on state assessments.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: Need to help parents understand the state academic standards, state and federal testing requirements, and test scores at their child's school and district.

Questions to Expect

- What can I do at home to help my child succeed in school?
- How are state academic standards, the curriculum in my child's classroom, and my child's scores on state tests connected?
- What options or interventions does the school offer if my child is not doing well?
- What is my child's teacher doing to recognize my child's learning strengths and help him tackle learning challenges?

Challenge 2: Need to communicate complex information in an understandable way to all parents.

Questions to Expect

- How is the district communicating this information to parents who do not speak or read English well?
- How does the district know if parents do not understand this information? Where can parents go for help?
- How are parent groups involved in developing and disseminating information?
- How is the district communicating this information to parents who have children with disabilities?

The following are ideas and activities that your school can use to meet the federal requirements concerning sharing information about individual student achievement.

- Ask school and parent leaders to work together to develop clear, parent-friendly information about student test scores that is consistent from school to school.
- Devote parent-teacher-student conferences to explaining individual student test scores. Together, write a plan or commit to action steps that will help students continue good work or improve scores.
- Host parent meetings, serving coffee, snacks, or breakfast, to discuss student test scores, answer questions, and create a sense of community about the need to help students maintain or improve test scores.
- Send home student achievement information with final report cards.
- Ask parents to return a postcard or tear-off to indicate that they received a report. Leave space on the returned item for parents to jot down questions, concerns, and ideas.
- Conduct meetings with parents by neighborhood, language spoken, or by grade or proficiency level to answer questions and take action.
- Schedule home visits by school staff to explain complex information to parents who may be hard to reach or who speak a language other than English.

District Report Cards

Each school district receiving Title I funds must disseminate a report card to parents and the public that includes the following information at the district and school levels:

- Aggregated student achievement at each proficiency level on state tests including comparison to state averages;
- Disaggregated student achievement at each proficiency level on state tests by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged. The local data must also show a comparison to state averages;
- Comparisons of student achievement by subgroup to the state's annual measurable objectives for each group on each test;
- The percentage of students not tested disaggregated by the above subgroups;
- The most recent two-year trend in student achievement in each tested subject area and grade level;
- Attendance rates for elementary and middle school students by subgroup and a comparison to state averages;
- Graduation rates for high school students by subgroup and compared to state averages;
- The names, number, and percentage of schools identified for improvement and how long the schools have been identified for improvement;
- The professional qualifications of teachers (aggregated and disaggregated comparing high-poverty to low-poverty schools);
- The percentage of teachers teaching with emergency or provisional licenses (aggregated and disaggregated comparing high-poverty and low-poverty schools);
- The percentage of classes not being taught by highly-qualified teachers (aggregated and disaggregated comparing high-poverty to low-poverty schools).

The district's report cards must be widely available to the public and disseminated to all parents of students attending its schools and to all schools in the school district. The report card must be in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand. District report cards may not reveal personally identifiable confidential information about individual students.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: Need to help families and community members understand the No Child Left Behind Act and sections concerning children and parents.

Questions to Expect

- How does NCLB benefit children and parents? What are the major changes?
- What is the district doing to comply with NCLB requirements?
- How will NCLB improve children's learning?
- What practices, programs, or policies will change in my child's school as a result of NCLB?

Challenge 2: Need to help parents and staff interpret disaggregated data and understand what data represents.

Questions to Expect

- How will I know if my child's school is a good place to learn?
- In what areas does my child's school need to improve?
- How will the district help children who do not perform well on state tests?
- What children are not tested? How do scores of new students compare to scores of long-time students?
- What is Kansas doing to ensure that all children attend good schools?

Challenge 3: Need to make sure that schools make data available in a consistent form understandable to parents and community members. Districts may want to release data for all schools at the same time.

Questions to Expect

- Where can I learn more about how test scores at my child's school compare to other schools in this district and in the state?
- I don't have a computer at home. How can I find out what data are available for our school and district?

Challenge 4: Need to respond to parents' questions about district report cards and parents' ideas for improving annual reports.

Questions to Expect

- With whom can I talk to if I have questions or ideas about the content or format of the district report card?
- How and when can I contact them?
- What is the school doing to involve parents in improving student learning?
- How can I get involved in improving student learning at my child's school?

On the following page are ideas and activities that your school can use to meet the NCLB requirements for disseminating information about district report cards to parents.

- Convene a focus group of parents, teachers, and other staff to suggest ways to make written district report card information understandable for all parents, to plan for its uniform release and distribution at each school, and to invite questions and comments from parents.
- Hold a meeting at each school or a series of meetings in the community to discuss student achievement data, answer parents' questions, and explore ways that schools can work with parents to improve student performance.
- Distribute district and state report cards at the same time annually to local media. Use local media to showcase the performance of each school in the district or to showcase the performance of the district compared to the state.
- Work with the PTA/PTO or another parent group to create and distribute information to parents and to discuss the information with parents.
- Include positive information about the school and district, including progress in family-community partnerships.
- Send home a copy of the brochure – *A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Building Level Report Card* – found in the Appendix at the end of this Section.

School Performance Data Available Online at: www.ksde.org

Sample Statement to Parents

The No Child Left Behind Act requires school districts receiving Title I funds to publicly disseminate district and school performance data. Much of the required information is available on the www.ksde.org website. Districts have the option of including the URL for the www.ksde.org website on pre-existing School Performance Reports, newsletters, and/or other documents distributed to all parents with information about how to access this site for parents without home web access (local public library, school, etc.) and what Report Card data are included on the Kansas State Department of Education website.

The following is a sample of the type of statement needed on these local documents.

These data and more detailed district and school information about test results, graduation, attendance, other academic indicators, teacher quality, and much more can be found on the KSDE Website – <http://online.ksde.org/rcard/>. To find test results for [Add District Name Here], copy and paste the following URL into your browser: [Insert your district's URL here]. If you do not have home Web access, visit [Add Name of Public Library] or [Add Name of School where a computer might be set up for this purpose with hours of access]. For further information or assistance, contact [Name of District Report Card Person].

Schools Identified for Improvement

NCLB requires all students to become proficient or at the “meets standard” level in reading and math by 2013-14. The state must set proficiency benchmarks each year — referred to as Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP — that all schools must reach. Schools that fail to meet AYP for two years in a row are identified for improvement. Schools identified for improvement that receive Title I funds must promptly notify parents of each child enrolled in the school that the school has been identified for improvement and the notice to parents must include:

- an explanation of what the identification means;
- the reason for the identification;
- how the school compares in terms of academic achievement with other schools in the district and state;
- what the school is doing to address low achievement;
- what the district and state will do to help the school;
- how parents can become involved in helping the school improve academically;
- an explanation of parents’ options to transfer their child to another public school or to receive supplemental educational services for the child.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: Need to explain clearly to parents what it means for a school to fail to make AYP and to be identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

Questions to Expect

- What are the school’s strengths and its areas needing improvement?
- Why is the school weak in these areas?
- What are parents’ options for their children’s education (i.e., supplemental services, school transfer, etc.)?

Challenge 2: Need to coordinate dissemination of information to all parents.

Questions to Expect

- Who will send this notice, the school or district?
- When is the state expected to release information?
- How does this school compare to other schools in the district? In the state?
- How will the school know if parents receive and understand the information?
- How is the school communicating this to parents who do not understand English or are hard to reach?

Challenge 3: To promptly decide what actions the school will take to improve and inform parents of plan.

Questions to Expect

- Were parents involved in planning for school improvement?
- How will we know if students make progress?
- What specific steps will teachers, administrators, and other school staff take to help students improve?
- What can parents do at home and at school to help children achieve?

The following are ideas and activities that your school can use to notify parents that the school is in improvement status.

- Mail a notice that the school is in improvement status home or send a notice home with students.
- Put annual reports on the school's status in the school and district newsletter and local newspaper.
- Have district leaders issue reports on all schools at the same time as a district-wide activity.
- Provide information in oral form on school phone system for parents who do not read English well.
- Plan to discuss the notice and related issues and plans on local radio or cable TV shows.
- Promptly schedule a parent forum, with translators present, to explain designation, parent options, and a plan for improvement to parents. Leave plenty of time for questions and suggestions. Publish a summary of the forum in the district or school newsletter.
- Include a reply postcard with notice sent home to learn if notice was received and if parents have questions. If reply postcard is not returned, follow up with a phone call.
- With notices, include information on how the school will work with families and community partners to improve student academic achievement.
- Survey parents on their ideas for identifying children's learning needs, ways to continue learning at home, and how more two-way communication between home and school could enhance children's learning.
- Post school plans and parent ideas in school newsletter and on school website.
- Schools that are in improvement status are required to make choice options available to all parents. An informational brochure on school choice -- *Parent's Guide to School Choice* -- may be found in the Appendix at the end of this Section.

Option to Transfer Child to another Public School

Schools that do not show adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years must offer parents the option of transferring their child to another public school. Schools that do not show adequate yearly progress for three consecutive years, in addition to school choice, must also offer parents supplemental education services for their children. Notice about the right to transfer their child to another public school not identified for improvement within the district must be given to parents before the start of the next school year after the school has failed to meet AYP. In this Section you will find four sample letters that the school can modify and send to parents to notify them of their choice options. Although all children must be given the option to transfer, priority will go to the lowest-achieving students from low income families. Parents must be given a choice of more than one school, if available, and be notified of:

- the option to transfer to another public school;
- what schools the child may transfer to;
- the academic achievement of the schools to which the child may transfer; and
- how free transportation will be provided as long as the child's original school remains in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring status.

The notice to parents must be in a format and language that parents can understand. Schools in improvement status must also involve parents in developing a plan to improve the academic achievement of students.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: The district needs to clearly explain all options to parents, including how the child's present school plans to improve; to inform parents about the status of child's school, if possible, in the spring or before the end of the school year; and to inform parents as early as possible if their child will be transferred, to where, and how the child will be transported.

Questions to Expect

- If my child chooses to stay at his present school, how can I be confident he is receiving a quality education?
- How can I expect my child's learning to improve if I choose to transfer her to another school?
- How is the district planning to keep parents informed about changes and answers to these questions during the summer?
- How long does the option to transfer last? If my child's school is no longer in improvement status, will my child be returned to his/her original school?
- How many other parents with children eligible to transfer are doing so?
- When will I find out if my child is able to transfer?
- Who decides which school my child will attend? Can we change our mind about the decision to seek a transfer?
- How can parents help our school improve?

The district also needs to inform staff of these plans and regulations and where to refer questions that they cannot answer. Questions that staff might have include:

- What sources of information are available to answer parents' questions?
- In what specific areas (subjects/grade levels) does our school need to improve?
- In what specific areas (subjects/grade levels) does our school excel?

- What can I tell parents and community members about our school's efforts to improve?
- What summer and before or after-school learning opportunities are available to students? How are families informed of these?
- How can parents and community members get involved in helping our school to improve?

The following are ideas and activities that your school can use to inform parents of their rights under No Child Left Behind, to exercise their option for public school choice, if your school is "in improvement" status.

- Send fliers or letters to students' homes, promptly followed by meetings with parents about options and procedures for choosing new schools.
- Conduct the choice program as a district-wide activity, releasing choice news and other information from all schools simultaneously.
- Provide one-on-one meetings for parents with counselors or advisors to guide parents who want help in deciding whether to choose a new school and which school to choose.
- Show graphs of test scores and trends over time for all district schools that may be selected, so parents can decide if their child's current school is moving ahead or if changing schools is the best option.
- Create a brochure for every school in the district to explain its programs, test scores, and future goals.
- Conduct a "town hall" or community meetings in various locations during the day and evening to explain school test scores and options to parents.
- Present parents with information about how each school plans to improve its programs and to involve families and the community in the process.
- Hold a "fair" for families to learn about programs in the schools they may choose for their children.
- Videotape meetings so parents who could not attend can learn about the information presented.
- Create a parent visitation schedule to help parents decide about school choice and learning options for their child.
- Send eligible parents a copy of the brochure -- *Parent's Guide to School Choice* – found in the Appendices at the end of this Section.

On the following pages are four sample letters, and choice forms for notifying parents of their choice options under No Child Left Behind.

**Parent Notification: Public School Choice
Sample 1**

(School Letterhead)

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child's school has been designated under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) as a Title I School Improvement School. This designation alone does not indicate a failing school, but provides for a focus on areas of school improvement by principals, teachers, and parents. Identified schools become eligible for additional support from the school district and state as they work together to improve teaching and learning, especially in the areas of reading and mathematics. Under the federal *NCLB* legislation, when a Title I school is identified as in need of improvement, parents have the option to:

1. Remain at the school and participate in the school improvement process; or
2. Seek enrollment in one of the designated schools below.

(List Schools)

Based on your child's current grade level and address, the following are schools that may be available as a transfer option. (List Schools)

While all parents will have the opportunity to indicate whether they want their children transported to other schools, there is no guarantee that all children can be accommodated. Furthermore, if a school has special entrance requirements, enrollment will be dependent on your child meeting these requirements. If you would like more information about any of these schools, please contact the principal at your child's current school.

If your child's application to enroll in another school is approved, the school district will provide transportation services based on the district's transportation guidelines. Transportation will be provided until the current school exits school improvement status. Your child may remain at the new school until the highest grade is completed.

We have worked very hard to improve the academic achievement of all of our students, and we are initiating a variety of changes at the district and school levels to support academic achievement. We have demonstrated that the classroom is the most important place in our district and we are working hard to support our families, teachers, and principals as they improve teaching and learning for all children.

If you choose to apply for a transfer, fill out the attached form, and return it to the indicated address. Postage is included. We must receive your response no later than (Date). If you need assistance or have questions, please contact (Person/Phone).

Sincerely,

Attachment to Sample 1

No Child Left Behind Act Transfer Request Form

Please Note: There is no guarantee that your child will be able to enroll in another school if you submit this form. The number of seats at each receiving school is limited, and applications will be approved only if space is available and students meet any special entrance requirements that the receiving school may have. In addition, please talk to the current school principal regarding any other transfer guidelines.

Submitting this form indicates your preference to have your child enrolled in another school. Your response is due (Date). Complete a separate form for each child.

Dear District Administration:

I request that my child, _____, be considered for transfer to the following school based on space availability.

_____ 1st Choice

_____ 2nd Choice

_____ 3rd Choice

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR CHILD REMAIN AT HIS/HER CURRENT SCHOOL, NO RESPONSE IS NECESSARY.

Parent/Guardian Name

Child's Current School

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Phone Number

**Parent Notification: Public School Choice
Sample 2**

(School Letterhead)

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

(School Name) was recently identified as a school in need of improvement under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. This means the school did not make as many improvements in student test scores as required by the federal *NCLB* legislation.

As a parent whose child attends (School Name), you may choose to keep your child at this school or send your child to a school listed on the enclosed postcard. The law requires that we give priority for transfers to the lowest achieving students from low-income families. Bus transportation will be provided for your child to attend the school of choice.

Please know that (School Name) has many initiatives underway to improve student achievement. These school improvement initiatives include (List Initiatives). If you have questions, please feel free to call (Principal) at your child's current school. Thanks you very much for returning your child's postcard as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Principal

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Complete and drop this stamped, pre-addressed postcard in the mail by (Date). Please print below the name of each child for which you request a transfer from (School Name).

Child 1: _____ Child 2: _____

Indicate your school of choice in order of preference for each child.

Thank you. You will be notified by (Date).

**Parent Notification: Public School Choice
Sample 3**

(School Letterhead)

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In January 2002, a new federal law, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, was signed into law to improve educational opportunities for all children. This new legislation supports the school district's efforts to provide a strong, standards-based educational program for its students along with accountability for student achievement. The purpose of this letter is to share important parent information related to the new law and your option for public school choice.

Your child attends a school operating a Title I program. This program provides assistance to schools to help raise achievement particularly in the areas of reading and mathematics. The *NCLB* legislation requires all schools to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in these academic areas. The state has established annual student achievement targets or goals in order to measure a school's progress.

The school that your child attends did not make adequate yearly progress in one or both of the priority subject areas for two or more years. Therefore, this school has been designated as a school in need of improvement under the *NCLB* legislation. Parents of students attending this school have the opportunity to request a transfer to another school within the district that is not in need of improvement. The school district will provide transportation until the current school is no longer designated as in improvement. Federal law requires us to give priority to the lowest-achieving students as transfer requests are honored.

The school district will continue to devote time and resources to improve student achievement at (School name). Parents can become involved in addressing the school's academic deficiencies by providing input on the school improvement plan. We also encourage you to make certain that your child attends school on a regular basis. You can also closely monitor homework completion.

School choice applications are available at the current school's office or at (Identify Locations). The district is accepting applications for the 2008/09 school year from (Date) to (Date). Should you have questions about this information, please feel free to call the school principal (Or other Name) at (Contact Information). Parents who are not submitting a transfer request need not complete or return an application.

Sincerely,

Principal

(District develops an application to correspond to the letter)

**Parent Notification: Public School Choice
Sample 4**

(School Letterhead)

**Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress and Public School Choice
Please Read: Important Information Affecting Your Child**

Dear (School Name) Parent or Guardian:

We are writing to let you know that your child's school did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading and/or mathematics (Or Include Which/Both) for at least two years based on 2007-08 test results. Your school is now called a School Improvement school under the federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* law. Regardless of this designation, we will continue to focus on ways to improve academic achievement for every student at (School Name). We are confident we will be successful.

Under the law, we are required to offer school transfer options to parents who have children in School Improvement schools. Though the principal and staff at (School name) have a relationship with your child and want to continue serving him or her all the way through grade (Enter Grade), the transfer options available to you are listed below.

Choice School 1 _____

Choice School 2 _____

Choice School 3 _____

If you are the parent of a child with an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or a child with limited English proficiency, please call (Name/Phone) for the available public school choices that best meet the needs of your child. All other questions from any parent should be direct to (Name/Phone).

Transportation to the choice school will be provided for as long as your child's current school remains in School Improvement.

If you would like to request a school transfer, please complete the Request for School Transfer form enclosed for each child and return the form to (Where) at (Address) by (Date). The district will respond to your request by (Date) with written notice regarding your child's school assignment.

You will then have an opportunity to communicate whether you accept the approved choice or want your child to remain at the current school. If you accept an approved transfer, your child will be allowed to attend the choice school until he or she completes that school's highest grade.

Sincerely,

Principal

Supplemental Educational Services

Schools identified for improvement for three years in a row are annually required to notify parents of eligible students, in a language and format that parents can understand, of the supplemental educational services available. Schools must also furnish parents with a state-approved list of service providers.

The notice to parents must contain information about:

- the availability of the supplemental educational services, no later than the end of the first full year after their child's school has been identified for improvement;
- a list of state-approved supplemental service providers in the school district or those reasonably available in nearby districts;
- a brief description of the services, qualifications, and demonstrated effectiveness of each provider;
- how parents can request and get help from the school in choosing a provider;
- fair and equitable procedures to be used if approved providers are oversubscribed and can take no additional students.

The school must protect the identities of students eligible for or receiving supplemental services.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: Need to provide parents with information about why the school must provide supplemental services; the supplemental service providers in or near the district and their qualifications; and how parents can receive help in choosing a provider.

Questions to Expect

- What are my options for choosing times, providers, and transportation for my child's supplemental services?
- What qualifications do supplemental service providers have?
- How will I know if the provider is really helping my child?
- What options does my child have if he/she is making little or no progress with her current provider?
- What subjects will my child study with his/her provider?
- What do I do if my child qualifies for supplemental services, but space with all available providers is filled?
- What summer learning opportunities are available for my child?
- How will he/she be transported?
- Will supplemental services be provided if my child's school is no longer designated as in need of improvement?

Challenge 2: Need to designate school staff and source(s) of written information for staff to address parents' questions and concerns.

Questions to Expect

- Who can I talk to about choosing a provider, and how can I reach him/her?
- Who can help parents who do not speak or read English well?
- Can I meet with a school staff member or supplemental services provider to find out if my child is improving?
- How often will the provider communicate with me about my child's learning? With my child's teacher?

The following are ideas and activities that your school can use to meet the federal requirements concerning notifying parents about the availability and eligibility for supplemental educational services.

- Mail lists of qualified providers to parents or distribute at meetings, or post on school websites and bulletin boards.
- Have counselors or advisors available to phone parents or to meet one-on-one with parents to discuss what services may be best for their children and share information about summer learning opportunities long before summer.
- Hold “Extra Services Night” to allow parents the chance to meet and ask questions of service providers.
- In large districts, establish supplemental service centers at schools or other strategic locations in the district to serve groups of schools.
- Plan to report to parents the success rate of students assisted by each service provider, and satisfaction reports from parents who selected various services.
- Send eligible parents a copy of the brochure – *A Parent’s Guide to Understanding Supplemental Educational Services*, found in the Appendices at the end of this Section.

On the following pages are sample letters that your school can send to eligible Title I parents to notify them of the option for supplemental educational services. Also included is a listing of all the state-approved Supplemental Educational Services providers, as of the 2007-08 school year.

**Parent Notification: Supplemental Educational Services
Sample 1**

(School Letterhead)

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians of _____,

Our school will be providing additional support to our students by offering supplemental education services (tutoring) under the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Questions you might have are:

1. What is supplemental educational services (SES) tutoring?

- § It is free tutoring in reading and math for students in schools identified as Needs Improvement for the 2nd consecutive year, Corrective Action, Planning for Restructuring, or Restructuring. Our school is one of these schools.
- § Tutoring will be provided outside of regular school hours (e.g., after school, before school, school vacation, or week-ends).
- § There is a set amount of funding allowed for tutoring for each student.

2. Who may receive SES tutoring?

- § All students at our school who get free or reduced-price lunch may receive tutoring. Report card grades in reading and math are used to select students.
- § Since funds and tutors are limited, not all students will receive tutoring. Students with the greatest academic need will be chosen first.

3. Who may tutor my child?

- § A list of state approved tutors is included with this letter.

4. How do I get SES tutoring for my child?

- § Fill out the attached application form.
- § Choose your first, second, and third choices of tutors.
- § Return the application form to our school office by _____.

If you have any questions, please call _____ at _____.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Supplemental Educational Services Tutoring
Application Form**

Complete all sections in bold print and return to school by: _____

1. _____ I request free Supplemental Educational Services Tutoring for my child(ren) listed below.

Name of child (ren)	Grade	ID# (to be completed by school)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Mark your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice of provider: (Providers will be assigned on the basis of student need and number of spaces available.)

Choice	Provider

Contact Information
 Parent or Guardian Name: _____
 Mailing Address: _____
 Contact Numbers(s): _____

_____ I give permission for the school to share contact information with the approved provider for communication purposes only.
 _____ I do not give my permission for the school to share contact information for any purpose.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Parent Notification: Supplemental Educational Services
Sample 2**

(School Letterhead)

To: Parents of Student attending school eligible for Supplemental Educational Services (SES)
From: <Insert school name>
Date: <Insert date> (NOTE: Statute requires that a school district make SES available for students not later than the first day of the school year following the school year in which the school district administered the assessments that resulted in the school being identified as in need of required improvement)
Re: SES Services

<Insert name of school> is hosting an informational meeting on <insert date> at <insert time and location> to inform families about free academic tutoring available to their children. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, when a school fails to meet adequate yearly progress for three years, students are eligible to receive free academic tutoring called Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

Through SES, your child is eligible for extra help in reading, math, or other core subjects. You may choose a tutoring service from a list of approved providers. These services are paid for by the school and are available before or after school, on week-ends, and during the summer.

This meeting will allow you to learn more about SES, register your children, and speak to staff to answer your questions. If you are unable to attend, contact the office at <insert number> and a staff member will answer all of your questions.

Kansas State Department of Education B Supplemental Educational Services Providers
Approved for 2007-08

Organization	Contact Information	Description	Levels Served	Area Served
ABC Tutors	Kirk Golbach/Carol Sieber 7234 W. 151 st Street Overland Park, KS 66233 913.685.0533	Parent may choose between individual and small group tutoring. Certified teachers will provide instruction using high quality curriculum specifically designed to address Kansas= Reading and/or math standards. \$40/hour for small group tutoring, \$60/hour for individual tutoring	K-12	Kansas City area
Achievia Tutoring	300 Ozark Trail Drive, Suite 1-7 Ellisville, MO 63011 314.477.3430	The basic academic tutoring program of Achievia Tutoring is diagnostic, prescriptive, individualized and motivational in reading and math instruction. \$50/hour	1-9	Statewide
Applied Scholastics	Mary Duda 11755 Riverview Drive St. Louis, MO 63138 314.355.6355	Applied Scholastic tutors use a powerful teaching method that produces students who can read fluently and with comprehension, do math problems with understanding, and who not only pass tests, but have learned how to overcome study barriers and be less dependent on teacher help. Subjects include math and reading. \$25/hour per student small group instruction, \$50/hour for individual tutoring		
ATS Educational Consulting Services B Project Success	William Britt 20674 hall Road Clinton Township, MI 48038 586.465.9474	Project Success offers eligible K-8th grade students support in English language arts including reading and mathematics. Services are offered online and provided in the student=s home. Students are supplied a pre-programmed computer and dial-up Internet service at no cost. ATS teachers keep students connected to the program by monitoring and providing feedback to students on a daily basis. \$40/hour; total of \$2300/30 hours	K-8	Statewide
Bluestem Learning, LLC	Connie Stilwell Box 9101 Shawnee Mission, KS 66201-1701 913.522.8864	Bluestem learning provides direct instruction by certified teachers on the Kansas Standards. The curriculum used is aligned with Kansas indicators at each grade level. Instruction is provided on a one-to-one basis or in small group instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics. Tutoring can be provided in-home or onsite in the students= school. \$40/hour-private; \$23.50/hour-in-school tutoring	3-8	Northeast Kansas

Creating Family School Community Partnerships

Bridges to Success	Larry Dixon/Katina Brenn 123 North Eisenhower Dr. Junction City, KS 66441 785.717.4714/785.717.4019	Bridges to Success offers direct instruction provided by teachers, as well as tutorial support using technology. The program is designed to assist students in achieving performance expectations for their grade level. This service is provided in an after school setting from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the school site.	6-8	Central Kansas
Catapult Online	Derek Abrams 506 S. Central Avenue Baltimore, MD 21202 800.627.4276 X6861	Catapult Online offers live, at home direct instruction which students access via the Internet on a computer provided by Catapult Online. This researched based program uses individualized instruction and mastery learning techniques to improve students= reading or math skills. Cost is based on school=s SES allocation/child	3-12	114 Kansas districts
Club Z!, Inc.	Todd Walden 15310 Amberly Drive, Ste. 185 Tampa, FL 33647 800.434.2582	Club Z! Inc.=s model of instruction focuses on individualized instruction for students. One-on-one in home tutoring or small group instruction is provided so students receive the attention they deserve. Club Z! Requests information from each teacher using a student survey form, and pre-assesses each student to discover areas where remediation is necessary. Services offered will help Title I students improve their achievement in both reading and mathematics. \$60/hour	K-12	Statewide
Education Station, LLC	Kristen Lander 10106 W. San Juan Way Suite 100 Littleton, CO 80127 303.526.3380	Education Station=s small group direct instruction programs are provided to students in grades K-12 who are functioning at instructional levels K-8. Students will receive tutoring in either reading or mathematics in small groups consisting of targeted student: instruction ratios of 10"1 for on-site programs, and 4:1 for online programs. Education Station=s research-based programs target students= individual skill gaps to help them become better reading or math students. \$55-95/hour	K-12	Statewide

Creating Family School Community Partnerships

<p>HUDDLE Learning, Inc.</p>	<p>Dr. Donald Fast 532 North Rock Road Newton, KS 67114 316.842.9958</p>	<p>The HUDDLE Literacy and Numeracy Program utilizes the best practices for at-risk populations. Framed from the concept of a family literacy, HUDDLE software packages, aligned with the Kansas Standards and the National Reading Panel recommended standards, were designed and developed to evaluate, monitor, and track student progress on a continuous basis. The tutor uses this information to formulate the individual learning plan. \$50/individual tutoring, \$35/person for small groups (up to 5 persons)</p>	<p>K-12</p>	<p>Johnson, Wyandotte, and Sedgwick Counties</p>
<p>JFL Enterprises, Inc. D.b.a. Failure Free Reading</p>	<p>Joseph Lockavitch 140 Cabarrus Avenue West Concord, NC 28025 800.542.2170</p>	<p>This SES provider utilizes research-proven multimedia interventions for struggling readers and writers. Tutors deliver lessons through small group instruction (a typical student to teacher ratio is 8/10 to 1). Tutors utilize tutor directed activities, proprietary talking software and follow-up written activities. Tutors are directed to monitor student success and to provide as much repetition and support, as students need to read the day's selection with adequate fluency. \$45/hour, 9-12 hours of instruction/month; \$80/hour for individual tutoring</p>	<p>K-12</p>	<p>Statewide</p>
<p>Jefferson Learning, LLC</p>	<p>Casey Moore 10101 Thompkins Lane Oklahoma City, OK 73162 866.483.8887</p>	<p>Jefferson Learning uses a research-proven learning system and the combined experience of state certified instructors. Students move from diagnosis through engaging instruction and assessment. The program facilitates comprehension that allows students to master skills that aid in reading and math comprehension. Student instruction is presented in a small group format of no more than 7 students per teacher. \$35/hour</p>	<p>K-12</p>	<p>Statewide</p>
<p>Kansas City, Kansas School Linked Services</p>	<p>Steve Goceljak 4601 State Avenue, Suite 38 Kansas City, KS 66102</p>	<p>School Linked Services will provide quality small group instruction in reading, math, and writing during after school tutoring sessions held in the building. School Linked Services Pyramid Project incorporates scientifically research-based proven effective reading programs, Kansas Accelerated Literacy Learning (KALL) and READ 180, and the Destination Math Curriculum in tutoring. All programs have proven effective in increasing student performance. SLS has designed its program to implement district supported curricula, standards and benchmarks. \$45/hour, 2.5-32 hours/day, 2-3 days/wk for 25 weeks</p>	<p>K-8</p>	<p>Wyandotte County</p>

Creating Family School Community Partnerships

LULAC National Educational Service Center	Mike Macias 5008 Independence Avenue Kansas City, MO 64112 816.561.0227	LNEESC of Kansas City uses the Young Readers and Math Quest Programs as the basis for the 26-week program conducted within the appropriate Kansas City, KS school buildings, providing first through third graders with low-proficiency in reading and math. Weekly sessions provide structured academic and enrichment activities that link the building of language skills with the establishment of daily reading habits as well as family literacy events. Both math and reading programs begin with an assessment of the student's reading level and comprehension and understanding of math concepts. \$12/hour per student; \$36/student per 3 hour class	1-4	Kansas City, Turner, Olathe, Shawnee Mission school districts
Reach for Tomorrow	Peter Underwood 13888 Lewis Mill Way Chantilly, VA 20151 703.818.1425	Reach for Tomorrow utilizes a web-based academic program that is customized for each student based on academic needs which includes access to a tutor online 7 days a week. Local teachers are employed to manage the class and ensure district standards are maintained. \$40/hour	K-12	Statewide
Southwest Plains Regional Service Center	Bill Biermann 900 Lark Avenue P. O. Box 1010 Sublette, KS 67877	SWPRSC infrastructure allows it to provide exceptional SES through its 11 Community Learning Centers. The major component on instruction and intervention will be the AnyWhere Learning System computerized software program, an American Education Corporation product. The system allows educators to create tests for placement within the curriculum based on any national, state, or local learning objective, at which time assignments are created and prescribed that are designed to meet student needs. This will be supplemented with individual tutoring. \$1000/student/course	1-12	Statewide
Urban League of the MidPlains	Brian Black 1802 East 13 th Street Wichita, KS 67214 316.262.2463	The Urban League of the MidPlains utilizes Skills Tutor assessment and instruction system, an online instruction and tutoring program designed by Achievement Technologies, Inc., in its program design. Skills Tutor is self-paced and automatically personalizes instruction to help every student reach core skills master. The program has successfully proven to motivate and encourage students who do not fit into traditional learning settings.	K-8	Sedgwick County

Title III—English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

Limited English Proficient Students (LEP)

Title III funds sent to eligible school districts must be used to provide language instruction education to students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Schools and school districts receiving Title III funds must notify parents of children identified for participation in an LEP program no more than 30 days after the start of the school year. For a child identified as in need of an LEP program after the start of the school year, parents must be notified within two weeks of placement in a program.

If your district and/or school receive Title III funds you must then notify parents of the following:

- The reasons for identifying the child as Limited English Proficient and for placing the child in a language instruction educational program for LEP students.
- The child's level of English proficiency, including how the level was assessed and the status of the child's academic achievement.
- The instructional methods to be used in the program in which the child is participating or might be assigned to, and a description of all language programs that differ in content, use of English, and a native language.
- How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child.
- How the program will help the child learn English and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards.
- Specific exit requirements of the program, including when the transition will take place. Secondary schools also inform parents of the child's expected date of graduation.
- For children with a disability, how the program will meet the objectives of an individualized education program (IEP).

The notification must include written guidance that explains the following:

- The parent's right to have his or her child removed, immediately upon request, from the language instructional program.
- The other possible programs or methods of instruction available, and the parent's option to decline enrolling his or her child.
- How parents will receive assistance in selecting another program or method, if one is offered by the district.

School districts are also required to notify parents of LEP children participating in a Title III program if the program is failing to help the child make progress on annual measurable achievement objectives. This notice must be provided no later than 30 days after the failure occurs and, as with all notices, must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand.

A child may not be admitted to, or excluded from, any federally assisted education program on the basis of a surname or language minority status.

Challenges and Questions to Expect

Challenge 1: Need to explain how the LEP program chosen will help a child learn to speak English and support a child's individual academic achievement goals and needs.

Questions to Expect

- What will my child learn in this program?
- How does this program use my child's learning strengths and strengthen areas he/she needs to improve in?
- How long is my child expected to be in this program? What level of achievement must he/she have to leave the program?
- How will my child be tested?
- Who can I contact, and how, if my child is having difficulty in this program?

Challenge 2: Need to explain all parent options: other LEP programs, parent's right to withdraw child, and how school will help the parent choose another program, if desired.

Questions to Expect

- Will my child receive English language instruction even if I choose to place him/her in a regular classroom?
- If I choose to withdraw my child from this program, what are my child's options?
- How can I support my child's learning in this program?
- How can the school ensure that parents have access to and understand information about their child's learning, rights, and program options?

Ideas and Activities

Work with school and community-based family literacy and parent outreach programs including churches, community centers, Head Start centers, social services, and preventive health services, to notify parents and distribute information.

Consider establishing a school parent group for non-English-speaking parents to discuss information.

Make home visits to parents of LEP students to offer one-on-one conversations.

Organize school and community suppers and dialogues to bring together parents of various language and ethnic groups to discuss important education issues.

Make sure translators are available to assist non-English-speaking parents at school meetings and parent-teacher conferences.

Title IX—General Provisions

Military Recruiters

If your school and/or school district receive funds under any NCLB Title program, you must upon request, provide student directory data (names, addresses, and telephone numbers) to military recruiters and institutions of higher education. School districts must notify parents of their right to request that this information be withheld from disclosure, and districts must comply with such requests.

Student Recruiting Information

Districts shall provide, upon a request by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to high school student names, addresses, and telephone listings. A high school student or the parent of the student may request that this information not be released without written parental consent. Districts are required to notify parents of this option and shall comply with any request.

In essence, if a military recruiter asks for the names, addresses, and telephone listing of high school students, that information must be provided by the school officials except in the following circumstances:

- The school is a private school and maintains a religious objection to service in the armed forces that is verifiable through information or materials of the school.
- The school has afforded parents the opportunity to opt out of providing this information to third parties, and the parents opted out.

Access to Students

Districts shall provide military recruiters the same access to high school students as is provided generally to post-secondary educational institutions or to prospective employers of those students.

On the following pages are questions and answers developed by the U.S. Department of Education concerning this provision and a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Model Notice for Directory Information for parents that you can provide for parents to notify them of these provisions under No Child Left Behind.

Access to High School Students and Information on Students by Military Recruiters (October 9, 2002)	
What are the recent changes made by Congress concerning military recruitment of high school students?	Congress has passed two major pieces of legislation that generally require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to give military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they provide to postsecondary institutions or to prospective employers (If the LEA receives funds under the ESEA, all the secondary schools in that LEA are subject to the requirements in these laws.). LEAs are also generally required to provide students' names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters, when requested.
Where are these statutory requirements found?	These requirements are contained in § 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. No. 107-110), the education bill Congress recently passed. These requirements are also contained in 10 U.S.C. § 503, as amended by § 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (P.L. No. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the nation's armed forces in fiscal year 2002.
What is the effective date for these military recruiter access requirements?	While there are differences in the effective date provisions for 10 U.S.C. § 503 and § 9528 of the ESEA, both provisions apply to all LEAs receiving ESEA funds by not later than July 1, 2002
What are the requirements of § 9528 of the ESEA?	Each LEA that receives funds under the ESEA must comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for secondary students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers, unless a parent has "opted out" of providing such information. (See below for additional information.) Section 9528 also requires LEAs that receive funds under the ESEA to provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they generally provide to postsecondary institutions or prospective employers. For example, if the school has a policy of allowing postsecondary institutions or prospective employers to come on school property to provide information to students about educational or professional opportunities, it must afford the same access to military recruiters.
Under § 9528 of the ESEA, what notification must LEAs provide to parents before disclosing names, addresses, and telephone numbers of secondary students to military recruiters and officials of institutions of higher education?	Under FERPA, an LEA must provide notice to parents of the types of student information that it releases publicly. This type of student information, commonly referred to as "directory information," includes such items as names, addresses, and telephone numbers and is information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The notice must include an explanation of a parent's right to request that the information not be disclosed without prior written consent. Additionally, § 9528 requires that parents be notified that the school routinely discloses names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters upon request, subject to a parent's request not to disclose such information without written consent. A single notice provided through a mailing, student handbook, or other method that is reasonably calculated to inform parents of the above information is sufficient to satisfy the parental notification requirements of both FERPA and § 9528. The notification must advise the parent of how to opt out of the public, nonconsensual disclosure of directory information and the method and timeline within which to do so.

<p>If an LEA has not provided notice relating to “directory information,” may it release a student’s name, address, and telephone number when requested by a military recruiter?</p>	<p>As noted above, an LEA may provide a single notice regarding both directory information and information disclosed to military recruiters. If an LEA does not disclose “directory information” under FERPA, then it must still provide military recruiters access to secondary students’ names, addresses, and telephone listings. In addition, the LEA must notify parents that they may opt out of this disclosure. In other words, an LEA that does not disclose “directory information” must nonetheless provide a notice that it discloses information to military recruiters. The notice must be reasonably calculated to inform parents.</p>
<p>If a parent opts out of the public, nonconsensual disclosure of directory information (or any subset of such information), must the three data elements be released to military recruiters upon request?</p>	<p>If a parent opts out of providing directory information to third parties, the opt-out relating to name, address, or telephone number applies to requests from military recruiters as well. For example, if the opt-out states that telephone numbers will not be disclosed to the public, schools may not disclose telephone numbers to military recruiters.</p>
<p>If the school does not list one or more of the three data elements (e.g., telephone number) among its directory information, may it release that information to military recruiters?</p>	<p>If a school does not designate one or more of the three items as “directory information” under FERPA, it still must provide all three items to military recruiters upon request. Also, in that case, the school would have to send a separate notice to parents about the missing “directory information” item(s), noting an opportunity to opt out of disclosure of the information to military recruiters. An easier method, of course, would be for the school to designate all three items — name, address, and telephone listing — as “directory information.”</p>
<p>How are the requirements under § 9528 of the ESEA enforced?</p>	<p>Schools that do not comply with § 9528 of the ESEA could jeopardize their receipt of ESEA funds.</p>
<p>How does § 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 amend the former requirements under 10 U.S.C. § 503?</p>	<p>Section 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 revises Title 10, Section 503(c) in several important ways. First, the recruiting provisions now apply only to LEAs (including private secondary schools) that receive funds under the ESEA. Second, these provisions now require access by military recruiters to students, under certain conditions, and to secondary school students’ names, addresses, and telephone listings. Third, as discussed earlier, they require LEAs to notify parents of their right to opt out of the disclosure of their children’s names, addresses, and telephone numbers and to comply with any such requests from the parents or the students.</p>

<p>How are these requirements under 10 U.S.C. § 503 enforced?</p>	<p>In addition to the potential for loss of funds under ESEA noted above for failure to comply with § 9528 of the ESEA, an LEA that denies a military recruiter access to the requested information on students after July 1, 2002, will be subject to specific interventions under 10 U.S.C. § 503. In this regard, the law requires that a senior military officer (e.g., Colonel or Navy Captain) visit the LEA within 120 days. If the access problem is not resolved with the LEA, the Department of Defense must notify the State Governor within 60 days. Problems still unresolved after one year are reported to Congress if the Secretary of Defense determines that the LEA denies recruiting access to at least two of the armed forces (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, etc.). The expectation is that public officials will work with the LEA to resolve the problem. Additionally, the Department of Defense has developed a national high school database to document recruiter access. Presently, 95 percent of the nation's 22,000 secondary schools provide a degree of access to military recruiters that are consistent with current law.</p>
<p>Are private schools subject to the military recruiter requirements?</p>	<p>Private secondary schools that receive funds under the ESEA are subject to 10 U.S.C. § 503. However, private schools that maintain a religious objection to service in the Armed Forces that is verifiable through the corporate or other organizational documents or materials of that school are not required to comply with this law.</p>
<p>Where can I get more information on the requirements of 10 U.S.C. § 503?</p>	<p>The Office of the Secretary of Defense may be contacted for copies of the statute, or questions relating to it. Please contact the Accession Policy Directorate as follows:</p> <p>Director, Accession Policy 4000 Defense Pentagon Washington, DC 20301-4000 Telephone: (703) 695-5529</p>
<p>Where can I get more information on the requirements of § 9528 of the ESEA?</p>	<p>The Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) in the Department of Education administers FERPA as well as § 9528 of the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. School officials with questions on this guidance, or FERPA, may contact the FPCO at FERPA@ED.Gov or write to the FPCO as follows:</p> <p>Family Policy Compliance Office Telephone: (202) 260-3887 U.S. Department of Education Fax: (202) 260-9001 400 Maryland Avenue, SW www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpcO Washington, D.C. 20202-4605</p> <p>A model "directory information" notification for use by LEAs incorporating the changes under § 9528 of the ESEA and 10 U.S.C. § 503 is attached. The model notification may also be obtained on the FPCO's website.</p>

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Model Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that [School District], with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, [School District] may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the [School District] to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories (names, addresses and telephone listings) unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. (These laws are: Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) the education bill, and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (P.L. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the Nation's armed forces.)

If you do not want [School District] to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by [insert date]. [School District] has designated the following information as directory information: [Note: an LEA may, but does not have to, include all the information listed below.]

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- The most recent educational agency or institution
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level attended.

Student Surveys

School districts receiving funds under any U.S. Department of Education program must notify parents of their right to inspect certain student surveys and to opt their children out of those surveys and other activities that collect, disclose, or use personal information from students, including materials designed to sell or market student information to others. The types of surveys include those created by third parties (outside of the school district) and their subject matter is specified below. Parents must be notified of their rights before the survey is distributed to students. Schools must involve parents in establishing policies that annually notify parents of this right at the beginning of each school year and when substantive changes are made to related school policies. The notice to parents must state the specific or approximate dates during the school year when activities are scheduled. If a survey asks students for information in any of the following eight categories, schools must give parents the right to inspect the survey:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of students or their family.
- Mental and psychological problems of students or their family.
- Sex behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom students have close family relationships.
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of students or their parents.
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for program participation or financial assistance).

School districts must provide the survey to parents within a reasonable amount of time after the request and before surveys are distributed to students. Districts must also involve parents in developing and adopting policies that establish the right of parents, upon request, to inspect student surveys and opt their children out.

Challenges and Questions to Expect

Challenge 1: Need to notify parents of their rights concerning release of student information.

Questions to Expect

- Who does the school give information about students to?
- How and who do I contact to request that the school withhold information about my child?
- Can I request that the school withhold information about my child to military recruiters, but not to institutions of higher education (or vice versa)?

Challenge 2: Need to notify parents of their rights to inspect student surveys.

Questions to Expect

- In what student surveys will my child be asked to participate?
- What is done with the information collected from student surveys? Are survey answers treated anonymously?
- What are parents required to do to exempt their child from taking a survey?
- Can I discover from how my child's answers on the survey, if my child needs attention or help?

Ideas and Activities to Meet NCLB Requirements

Distribute policy information to parents in the school handbook at start of the school year. Highlight information that is new or changed from the previous year.

Enlist participation from the school's parent group in developing fair, understandable policies on student surveys and on access to student information.

Feature policy updates on the district/school website.

Send home with students or distribute at school parent meetings a packet of written information about the policies and parents' rights, a sample student survey, and a list of organizations who have requested student information in the past.

Sample Parental Permission Forms for Student Surveys

Passive Parental Permission Form

Our school is taking part in the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey sponsored by [name of state or local agency]. The research survey will ask about the health behaviors of 9th through 12th grade students. The survey will ask about nutrition, physical activity, injuries, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use. It also will ask about sexual behaviors that cause AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

Students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire that takes about 45 minutes to complete.

Doing this paper and pencil survey will cause little or no risk to your child. The only potential risk is that some students might find certain questions to be sensitive. The survey has been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students will not put their names on the survey. Also, no school or student will ever be mentioned by name in a report of the results. Your child will get no benefit right away from taking part in the survey. However, the results of this survey will help children in the future. We would like all selected students to take part in the survey, but the survey is voluntary. No action will be taken against the school, you, or your child, if your child does not take part. Students can skip any question that they do not wish to answer. In addition, students may stop participating in the survey at any point without penalty.

Please read the section below. If you do not want your child to take part in the survey, check the box and return the form to the school no later than [date]. Please see the other side of this form for more facts about the survey. If your child's teacher or principal cannot answer your questions about the survey, call [name of state or local agency contact] at [phone number]. Thank you.

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

My child may not take part in this survey.

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone number: _____

Active Parental Permission Form

Our school is taking part in the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey sponsored by [name of state or local agency]. The research survey will ask about the health behaviors of 9th through 12th grade students. The survey will ask about nutrition, physical activity, injuries, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use. It also will ask about sexual behaviors that cause AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

Students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire that takes about 45 minutes to complete.

Doing this paper and pencil survey will cause little or no risk to your child. The only potential risk is that some students might find certain questions to be sensitive. The survey has been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students will not put their names on the survey. Also, no school or student will ever be mentioned by name in a report of the results. Your child will get no benefit right away from taking part in the survey. However, the results of this survey will help children in the future. We would like all selected students to take part in the survey, but the survey is voluntary. No action will be taken against the school, you, or your child, if your child does not take part. Students can skip any question that they do not wish to answer. In addition, students may stop participating in the survey at any point without penalty.

Please read the section below and check one box. Return the form to the school in three days. Please see the other side of this form for more facts about the survey. If your child's teacher or principal cannot answer your questions about the survey, call [name of state or local agency contact] at [phone number]. Thank you.

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

I have read this form and know what the survey is about.

Check one:

My child may take part in this survey.

My child may not take part in this survey.

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone number: _____

Title X, Part C—Homeless Education

Homeless Children

All Kansas school districts have new responsibilities in Title X of the NCLB Act, whether or not the district receives funds under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Districts must ensure that homeless children have access to the same educational opportunities as non-homeless children, including opportunities to meet the same state academic standards.

School districts must disseminate notice of homeless children's education rights in schools; family, domestic abuse, and runaway shelters; soup kitchens; and wherever services to homeless children and families are offered. Schools are required to notify parents of homeless children (and unaccompanied youth) of the following rights:

- The availability of a local district staff person as a liaison for homeless children.
- Immediate enrollment and school participation, even if educational and medical records and proof of residency are not available.
- The availability of educational opportunities and related opportunities for homeless students (preschool to age 21), including unaccompanied youth.
- Enrollment and transportation rights, including transportation to the school of origin. "School of origin" is defined as the school the child attended when permanently housed or when last enrolled.
- Written explanation of why a homeless child is placed other than in a school of origin or school requested by the parent, with the right to appeal within the local dispute resolution process.
- Meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in the education of their children.

Challenges and Questions to Expect

Challenge 1: Need to work with community agencies to identify homeless children and families, evaluate their needs, and coordinate services.

Questions to Expect

- Where in our community can homeless youth and families be reached?
- What causes homelessness in our community? What barriers in our school and community do homeless youth and families experience?
- What services are presently provided to homeless families and youth? Where are the gaps in service?
- How can our school work with community groups and agencies to ensure that the child's basic needs and learning needs are met?
- How can our school help equip homeless parents with the job-related skills and resources they need?

Challenge 2: Need to ensure that parents and unaccompanied homeless youth understand their rights regarding school enrollment, attendance, and transportation.

Questions to Expect

- Whom can I contact with questions or concerns about my child's school or learning?
- Can I choose the school my child will attend? What can I do if I disagree with the district's placement of my child?
- How will my child get to and from school each day? How long will these services last?

Challenge 3: Need to include homeless parents as full participants in the parent involvement activities required by NCLB.

Questions to Expect

- How can we ensure that homeless parents have access to and understand the information about their child's learning, rights, and parent involvement?
- How can I help my child be a successful learner in and outside of school?
- How can the school help parents of homeless children feel welcome, needed, and appreciated as partners in their children's learning?

Ideas and Activities

Recruit and train school and community volunteers to act as intermediaries and advocates for homeless youth and parents.

Work with homeless families and community groups to identify gathering places and resources for the homeless.

Identify places where homeless children can go to study and receive academic help or other resources outside of school hours, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Ask the Partnership Action Team or other parent-teacher school committee to address questions about how homeless youth and families are welcomed, involved, and connected to their children's learning. How can the school help homeless youth and families meet basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, employment, and dignity?

Provide in-service training for staff and parents on educating and reaching out to the homeless. Provide school secretaries and receptionists with information about how families can contact the district homeless liaison.

Feature Family Learning Nights and offer other programs that allow parents and children to learn together.

Appendix for Section 2

NCLB Title Programs of Key Parent Notification Requirements

Use this table for easy reference in planning district or school efforts to meet NCLB parent notification requirements.

Topic	Parents Must Be Informed	Parents Must be Involved in Creating	Who must comply	When	Done? By whom? How? Date
Title I Teacher Information	<p>At District Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If teacher is qualified • If teacher has emergency license • Teacher's college degree(s), and field of discipline • Qualifications of any paraprofessionals <p>At School Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child is taught 20 consecutive days by a teacher not highly qualified 		Districts and Schools receiving Title I funds	Annually at start of school year	
Title I District Report Card	<p>At School and District Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student achievement at each proficiency level on state tests • Disaggregated student achievement by subgroup • Subgroup comparisons of student achievement to state objectives • Students not tested, by subgroup • Most recent two-year trend for student achievement by test and grade • AYP of students compared to state averages and standards • High school graduation rates by subgroup • Schools identified for improvement • Qualifications of teachers • Percentage of teachers with emergency licenses • Percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers 		Districts receiving Title I funds must widely inform parents and the public via media, Internet, and public agencies	Annually	

Topic	Parents Must Be Informed	Parents Must be Involved in Creating	Who must comply	When	Done? By whom? How? Date
Title I Annual Yearly Progress of Schools	For Schools Identified for Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What identification means • Reason for the identification academic achievement of school compared to others in district and state • What school is doing to improve • How district and state are helping school • How parents can be involved parents' options to transfer child or to receive supplemental services 		Schools receiving Title I funds that fail to meet AYP two years in a row	Schools must promptly notify parents	
Title I Student Transfer Options	For Schools Identified for Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option to transfer a child to another school • Which schools the child may transfer to • Academic achievement of those schools • How free transportation to the transfer school will be provided 		Schools receiving Title I funds which have not met AYP for two years in a row	Before start of the next school year after school fails to meet AYP	
Title I Supplemental Education Services	For Schools Identified for Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of services • A list of state-approved service providers in the district or nearby • Services, qualifications, and effectiveness of each provider • How parents can get help from the school in selecting a provider • Fair procedures if providers' openings are filled 		Schools receiving Title I funds which have not met AYP three years in a row	Before end of 1 st year school is place in improvement status and annually	
Title I Parental Information and Resource Centers	At School and District Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence and purpose of the Kansas Parent information Resource Center 		Districts and schools receiving Title I funds	Continuously	

Topic	Parents Must Be Informed	Parents Must be Involved in Creating	Who must comply	When	Done? By whom? How? Date
Title III Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for the LEP identification and placement • Child’s level of English proficiency • How child was assessed and how level was determined • Method of instruction to be used in LEP program • Methods of instruction used in other programs and how they differ • How program will meet child's needs • How program will help child learn English • How program will help child meet age-appropriate academic standards for grade promotion and graduation • Specific exit requirements of program, including expected transition into regular classroom • For secondary school students expected graduation • For child with disability – how program meets IEP objectives • Parent’s right to remove a child immediately from LEP program or decline enrolling a child • Other available programs or methods • How school will help parents choose another program 	<p>Outreach efforts will describe how parent of LEP students</p> <p>Will be involved in child’s education</p> <p>Will be active participants in helping child to learn English, achieve at levels, and meet academic and achievement standards to which all children are held</p> <p>Districts will hold regular meeting for parents of LEP students to offer input</p> <p>Districts will help parents choose programs and methods of instruction</p>	<p>Districts receiving Title III funds</p>	<p>No more than 30 days after start of school year</p> <p>Districts must also notify parents if program is failing to help child, no later than 30 days after failure</p>	
Title IV, A Safe and Drug-Free School Activities	<p>The contents of violence and drug-abuse prevention programs and activities. School must withdraw student from the program or activity upon the parent’s written request. Schools must also promote parent involvement in these activities.</p>	<p>Drug abuse and violence-prevention programs and activities through “meaningful and ongoing” consultation with parents.</p>	<p>Schools receiving Title IV, Part A Safe and Drug-Free School funds</p>		
Title IV, B 21st Century Community Learning Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services available for students and families in the CCLC • Results of evaluations of the CCLC 	<p>In developing and operating the CCLC, i.e., on site or advisory councils</p>	<p>School districts or Community Based Organizations using Title IV funds for a CCLC</p>		

Creating Family School Community Partnerships

Topic	Parents Must Be Informed	Parents Must Be Involved in Creating	Who Must Comply	When	Done? By Whom? How Date
Title VI, B Rural Education Initiative		Note: Districts receiving these funds may use them for parent involvement activities			
Title X, C Homeless Children (and unaccompanied youth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local liaison for homeless children • Child’s right to immediately attend school educational opportunities available to homeless students • Enrollment and transportation rights • Written explanation of why child is placed in a school other than in the school of origin or the school the parent requested, with the right to appeal • Meaningful opportunities for a parent to participate in child’s education 		All school districts whether or not they receive Title X funds	At the time child seeks enrollment in school and twice annually while the child is enrolled	
Military Recruiters	Parent’s/high school students’ right to request that student’s name, address and phone not be released to military recruiters or higher education institutions		Schools and districts receiving funds under any NCLB Title		
Student Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School policy regarding student surveys • Parents’ right to inspect certain surveys before the survey is given and parents’ right to opt child out • Dates when surveys will be given 	Policies addressing The right of parents to inspect student surveys Student privacy protection in surveys	Schools and districts receiving funds under any NCLB Title	Annually at start of school year and when changes are made	

Please note that the No Child Left Behind Act requires schools and districts to present all information for parents in an understandable language and format. The school or district must respond to parent requests in a timely manner or within a reasonable amount of time.

What should I do next?

Have the principal schedule a meeting to explain the results. School leaders should be willing to help parents understand the numbers, discuss how the school plans to improve and why they think the plan will work, and to ask for parents' help. This meeting also would be a good time for the principal to show parents how to interpret their children's individual reports on test results. Use this as an opportunity to find out what kinds of things that you can do at home to support your child's learning and academic success.



Where can I get more information?

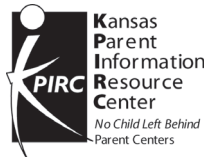
For more information, please contact any of the following:

- Your local school district, your school principal, other staff in your school or your district Title I coordinator will be able to help you.
- The **Kansas Parent Information Resource Center**, the official technical assistance center for parent involvement in Kansas, funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind. The toll free number is (866) 711-6711 and the website is www.kpirc.org. (Click on Federal Requirements Under NCLB)
- The **Kansas State Department of Education** at (785) 296-5188 and the website is www.ksde.org.
- The US Department of Education, www.nochildleftbehind.gov

Parent guides available on No Child Left Behind include:

- A Parent's Guide to Supplemental Educational Services
- A Parent's Guide to School Choice
- A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Building Level Report Card

These brochures can be downloaded at www.kpirc.org or www.ksde.org on the State & Federal Programs page.



Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
No Child Left Behind Parent Centers

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
3500 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66604
Phone: (866) 711-6711
www.kpirc.org

A project of the Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc. funded under a grant from the US Department of Education.

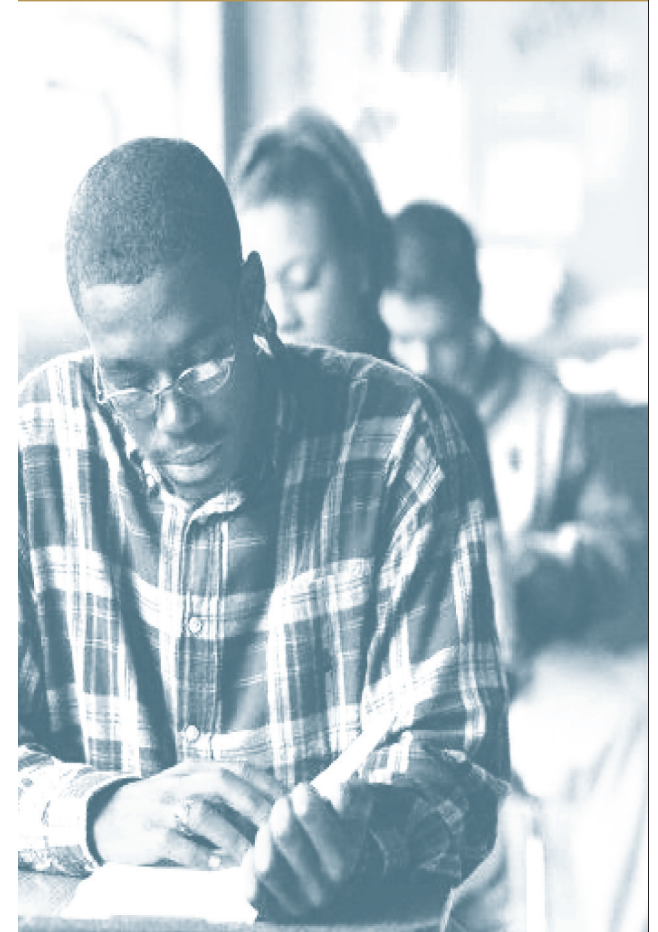


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A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Building Level Report Card



What are Building Level Report Cards?

Under the No Child Left Behind law, school districts must distribute a report card on how every school and the district as a whole are performing in reading and mathematics. This report also must include data on how different groups of students are doing in relation to meeting proficiency in reading and mathematics. While you are familiar with receiving report cards on how well your child is doing in school, the building level report card tells you how your child's school is doing – compared to last year and the year before – and compared to other schools.

What does proficiency mean?

Under No Child Left Behind, every student, regardless of ethnicity, income level, disability, and ability to speak English must be at the proficiency level by the 2013/14 school year. In Kansas proficiency is defined as “meeting standard” and is the midpoint on a five point scale that includes exemplary, exceeding the standard (both above meeting standard) and approaching and academic warning (both below meeting standard). The Building Level Report Card also reports what percentage of students are at each of these levels.

What kind of information is found in the Building Level Report Card

Under No Child Left Behind, the Building Level Report Card includes at least two years of data for reading and mathematics and must separate out the data by race/ethnicity, income level, disability status, English proficiency and migrant status. Kansas also breaks down the data by gender. The Report Card also shares “adequate yearly progress” results and identifies whether or not the school is in “improvement status.” (See the Sample Report Card)

Report cards are also required to include information on the qualifications of the school's teachers who teach in the core content areas at your school.

What is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a method for determining if schools, districts and Kansas have made adequate progress in improving student achievement. AYP is based on participation and performance on state assessments, as well as attendance rates for elementary and middle schools, and, for high schools, graduation rates. In defining adequate yearly progress, each state sets the minimum levels of improvement – measurable in terms of student performance – that school districts and schools must achieve within time frames specified under No Child Left Behind. Each year all sub-groups of students must show improvement with the goal for all students to be at 100% proficiency by the 2013/14 school year.

When will I receive the Building Level Report Card?

Report cards are posted on the Kansas State Department of Education's website at www.ksde.org. The report cards are published during the second week of October. Districts will notify their community and parents when the report cards are available.

Adapted from 10 Tips for Parent Who Chose to Stay Put. PLA Associates. (2003) <http://www.plassociates.org/ten.html>



How do I make sense of all this information?

As you look at the Building Level Report Card ask yourself questions such as:

1. Which groups of students are doing well?
2. Which groups are not doing so well?
3. What are the trends from year to year?
4. Do all students make gains, or do some groups of students stay about the same?
5. How does my school compare to the district or state average?

Then ask what is being done to address the weaknesses identified by the data. For example, if reading scores are low, what is the school doing to improve reading instruction? If English Language Learners are not making progress, how will the school modify its program for these students?

Sample of Building Level Report Card (1)

Student Group	Reading						Mathematics						
	% Tested Goal			% Proficient & Above Goal			% Tested Goal			% Proficient & Above Goal			
	Goal 100% (2)	Goal X% (3)		Goal 100% (2)	Goal X% (3)		Goal 100% (2)	Goal X% (3)		Goal 100% (2)	Goal X% (3)		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	
All Students													
Free/Reduced Lunch													
Students w/Disabilities													
English Language Learners													
African Americans													
Hispanics													
Whites													
Asian/Pacific Islanders													
American Indians													
Multi-Ethnic													

- (1) All data should be based on students enrolled for a full academic year
- (2) While the goal for percent of students tested is 100%, a state, district or school will meet AYP requirements for participation if 95% or greater of all students and all subgroups of students are assessed
- (3) X = Goal determined by the state

What can I do as a parent if I decide to keep my child at his/her present school?

Below are ten options for parents that decide to “stay put.”

1. Find out what’s going well in the school and build on that.
2. Help your child at home by setting high goals, reading together, and monitoring homework.
3. Get involved at the school.
4. Make sure that your voice is heard at school.
5. Make sure the school’s improvement plan focuses on areas where the school is not doing well.
6. Get a copy of your school’s parent involvement policy from the principal, parent liaison or head of your school’s parent group.
7. Find out what other parents think about the parent involvement policy and whether it covers their concerns.
8. Make sure your school has a school-parent compact that was developed with and approved by parents.
9. Make sure the compact outlines how the school will provide a helpful and effective learning environment for all students.

Adapted from *10 Tips for Parent Who Chose to Stay Put*. PLA Associates. (2003)
<http://www.plassociates.org/ten.html>



Where can I get more information?

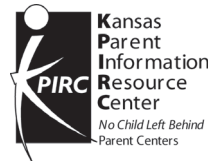
For more information, please contact any of the following:

- Your local school district, your school principal, other staff in your school or your district Title I coordinator will be able to help you.
- The **Kansas Parent Information Resource Center**, the official technical assistance center for parent involvement in Kansas, funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind. The toll free number is (866) 711-6711 and the website is www.kpirc.org. (Click on Federal Requirements Under NCLB)
- The **Kansas State Department of Education** at (785) 296-5188 and the website is www.ksde.org.
- The US Department of Education, www.nochildleftbehind.gov

Parent guides available on No Child Left Behind include:

- A Parent’s Guide to Supplemental Educational Services
- A Parent’s Guide to School Choice
- A Parent’s Guide to Understanding Your Building Level Report Card

These brochures can be downloaded at www.kpirc.org or www.ksde.org on the State & Federal Programs page.



Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
3500 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66604
Phone: (866) 711-6711
www.kpirc.org

A project of the *Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc.* funded under a grant from the US Department of Education.



Kansas State Department of Education
120 SE 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1182
Phone: (785) 296-3201
www.ksde.org

An Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity Agency

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel 120 SE 10th Ave. Topeka, KS 66612 785-296-3204.

A Parent’s Guide to School Choice Under No Child Left Behind



What is school choice?

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, parents of children attending Title I schools that are not meeting state academic standards and are in need of improvement status may be able to move their children to other public schools, including public charter schools, that are meeting these standards. The public school choice option gives parents the chance to ensure that their children are attending a school where they are getting the instruction they need to succeed academically, while at the same time, allowing school officials to make improvements in the children's regular schools.

What is Title I and what is a school "in need of improvement"?

Title I is a federal program that provides financial resources to individual schools or districts. A district's eligibility for Title I funds is based on the number of students reported as living in poverty through the census data. Schools that do not meet the minimum level performance on the state assessments and do not make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are identified for improvement. The student population as a whole, as well as certain groups of students must achieve minimum levels of progress annually.

How do I know if my child is eligible for school choice?

If your school receives Title I funding and has not made adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years and is listed as "in need of improvement," in "corrective action" or in "restructuring," then your school is required to offer all parents the option to transfer. Due to financial constraints, however, priority is given to students who are struggling academically in reading or math and who are from low income families. Choice is also an option for children who attend a "persistently dangerous school" as defined by the Kansas State Department of Education or if they have been the victims of a violent crime on the grounds of their school.

What information will I receive from my district about transfer options?

If your school is required to offer choice your district should tell you, no later than the first day of school, if you have the option to move your child to another school and should provide you with complete and easy-to-read information that:

- lists the schools in which you can enroll your child;
- describes the academic program, activities and services provided at those schools;
- lists their test scores; and
- offers you more than one choice of schools, if more than one choice is possible.

How will my child get to the new school?

If you decide to send your child to another school, your school district generally must provide or pay for your child's transportation to the school. However, the total amount your school district is required to spend for transportation is limited. Your district first should provide transportation to low-income, low-achieving student if there is not enough money to serve all students.

How long can my child stay at the transfer school?

Your school district must let your child stay at the transfer school until he or she has finished the highest grade level offered at that school.

What if there are no other schools in my district to exercise the choice option?

Many of our rural Kansas schools do not have the option of providing choice to families. If choice is not available, some schools may choose to offer supplemental education services. These services provide extra academic help outside of the school day in reading or math. Check with your principal or Title I coordinator to see if this option is available.

Can I choose to keep my child in a school that is eligible for school choice?

While the district must offer parents and their children the OPTION for choice if the school is in "need of improvement" status, you are not required to exercise the choice option. Even in those larger districts where choice is available, families can and often do decide to stay at their present school.



Do I have to use Supplemental Educational Services for my child?

While the district must offer parents and their children the OPTION to use Supplemental Educational Services if the school is in "need of improvement" status, you are not required to use these services. Be sure to attend parent-teacher conferences, parent organization meetings and other events at your child's school. You can get a lot of information, ideas and help from teachers as well as from other parents on how to help your child become more successful in school.



Where can I get more information?

For more information, please contact any of the following:

- Your local school district, your school principal, other staff in your school or your district Title I coordinator will be able to help you.
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A Parent's Guide to Supplemental Education Services (SES) Under No Child Left Behind



What is Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

Supplemental Education Services is extra help in academic subjects, such as reading, mathematics, and language arts. These services are free of charge to eligible students and are provided outside of the regular school day – before or after school, on weekends, or in the summer.

Who can get these services?

Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and are enrolled in Title I schools that have been placed on the state’s “in need of improvement” list for two or more years are eligible to receive free supplemental educational services. Students receive priority for supplemental educational services based on academic and economic need if services are limited.

What is Title I and what is a school “in need of improvement”?

Title I is a federal program that provides financial resources to individual schools or districts. A district’s eligibility for Title I funds is based on the number of students reported as living poverty through the census data. Schools that do not meet the minimum level performance on the state assessments and do not make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are identified for improvement. The student population as a whole, as well as certain groups of students, must achieve minimum levels of progress annually.

How do I know if my child is eligible?

Your school district will notify you if your child is eligible for supplemental educational services and also provide you with a list of providers that the state has approved. If you have questions about your child’s eligibility, check with your school principal or the Title I coordinator in your district.

How do I choose my own provider?

Once you receive this list, you need to select a provider from this list. There are several different types of providers available (from an individual tutor to computer-based instruction). Ask about the background and qualification of staff that will be working with your child and ask if they have experience teaching reading or math and working with children who are struggling in school. If asked, your school can assist you in choosing the best provider for your child.

What happens after I have chosen a provider?

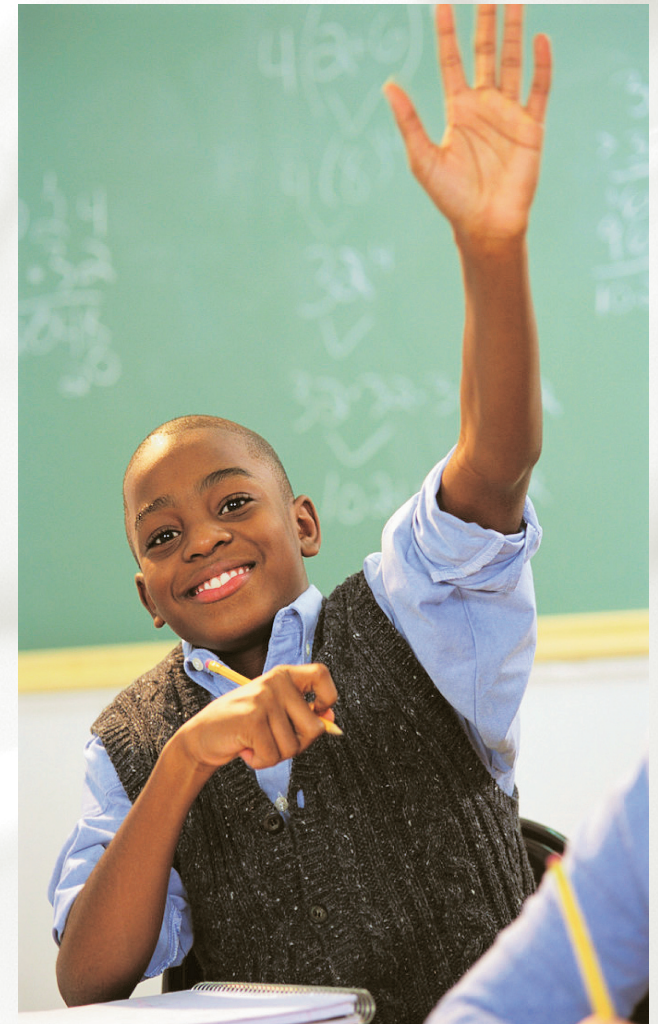
Your school will contract with the provider for services. You, the provider, and the school staff should meet to discuss and agree on specific goals for your child, set up a schedule for services, and talk about how your child’s progress will be measured. If you have questions, contact your school principal or the Title I coordinator in your child’s school district.

Who pays for Supplemental Educational Services?

The district, according to the federal law, must set aside a portion of its Title I funding to provide supplemental educational services for eligible students who choose to participate. The district signs an agreement to pay for all services with the provider chosen by the parent (up to the amount set aside for each child).

How often and how long will my child receive tutoring?

This can vary from everyday to a few times a week. Make sure you know how many sessions the provider will offer, and how long those sessions will continue. For your child to receive the most benefit from receiving these services, make sure that your child attends or participates on a regular basis.



Section 3: Parent Involvement Requirements

What is the purpose of this section?

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has many requirements that districts and schools receiving funding under NCLB are mandated to implement. In this section you will become familiar with all these requirements, especially those addressed under Title I, Section 1118 which deals with parent involvement policies, parent school compacts, and suggestions on ways to build parents' capacity to be involved in school programs and the education of their children.

Table of Contents for Section 3

School Resource:	Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
School Resource:	Title I, Part C—Education of Migratory Children
School Resource:	Title II — Part D -- Enhancing Education through Technology
School Resource:	Title III — Limited English Proficient -- Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students
School Resource:	Title IV—21st Century Schools – Part A (Safe and Drug-Free School Activities and Part B (Community Learning Centers)
School Resource:	Title V — Part A -- Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
School Resource:	Kansas Parent Information Resource Center Brochure <i>We Can Help</i> – Kansas Parent Information Resource Center bilingual parent flyer
Appendix:	KPIRC Brochure Title I, Section 1118 – Parent Involvement Sample Parent Involvement Policy for Schools and Districts Sample School-Parent Compact

Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

Parent Involvement Policy for Schools and Districts

Title I, Section 1118: Parent Involvement (found in the Appendices at the end of this section) contains many parent involvement requirements that you are mandated to implement at the school district as well as school building level if your district and/or school receives funding under No Child Left Behind. This section of the law includes requirements for: 1) developing parent involvement policies at the district and school levels, 2) what shared responsibilities for high student academic achievement look like, including the development of a school-parent compact, 3) how schools need to build capacity for parent involvement, and 4) how schools need to make parent involvement information and activities accessible for all parents.

Part (g) of Section 1118 also mandates that districts and schools must inform parents of the existence of the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center. A final requirement covered under Section 1118 mandates that the Kansas State Department of Education will review and monitor how well your school district is meeting all the parent involvement requirements specified under the legislation. To help you to meet these requirements, a rubric and scoring guide for assessing your parent involvement practices, based on all the requirements of Title I, Section 1118 is included with this toolkit. You will find this rubric to be very helpful in determining to what degree your school district and school are complying with all the requirements for parent involvement under Title I, Section 1118 of No Child Left Behind.

NCLB Requirements for the District Parent Involvement Policy

The law specifies that every district and school receiving Title I funds must develop, jointly with parents of children participating in Title I programs, a written parent involvement policy. Parents must agree to the policy, and the district must distribute the policy to parents and the community. If you already have a policy in place, your district may amend the current parent involvement policy, detailing ways the district will:

- Involve parents in developing district school improvement plans;
- Offer technical assistance and coordination to help schools plan parent involvement activities to improve student and school academic performance;
- Build school and parent capacities for strong parent involvement;
- Coordinate and integrate parent involvement strategies with other programs, such as Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and limited English proficiency programs – whichever early childhood program currently exists in your district; and
- Annually evaluate with parents the effectiveness of the policy in academically improving district schools. The evaluation must include identification of barriers to parent involvement, especially barriers to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have Limited English Proficiency, have limited literacy, or belong to a racial or ethnic minority.

Your district may establish a parent advisory council to provide advice on parent involvement programs. Your district also may work with community-based organizations and businesses to develop parent involvement activities. If your district receives at least \$500,000 in Title I funds, you are then required to use at least one percent of those funds for parent involvement activities. If you do not receive that much Title I funding, you are still required to meet all the parent involvement requirements specified under Title I, Section 1118. Parents of children served by Title I should help decide how funds are spent. A template for

creating, modifying, and reviewing your district parent involvement policy is found in the Appendix for Section 3 and you can find the template on-line, as a Word document that can be modified, at www.kpirc.org/News.htm.

Challenges and Questions to Expect about the District Parent Involvement Policy

Challenge: The school must meaningfully involve parents in developing district school improvement plans.

Questions to Expect

- How does the district listen to the ideas and needs of parents from all backgrounds and neighborhoods about their child's learning?
- How does the district communicate in multiple ways and languages so that all parents feel welcome to ask questions or give ideas?
- How does the district provide enough resources and support to integrate parent involvement in all school programs and decision making?
- How could parents be more involved at the district level?

NCLB Requirements for the School Parent Involvement Policy

If your school receives Title I funds, you must write a parent involvement policy jointly developed with, agreed to by, and distributed to Title I parents. The policy must be made available to the community and updated periodically. Your school is required to:

- Conduct an annual meeting for Title I parents to inform them about the policy, their rights under Title I, and how they can be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs in the school, including development of this policy;
- Provide parents with timely information about Title I school programs, school curriculum, assessments used by the school to measure student achievement, and proficiency levels students are expected to meet;
- Respond quickly to parent requests for opportunities to meet regularly and participate in decisions about the education of their children; and
- If parents are dissatisfied with the school's Title I program plans, include parent comments in the report to the school district.

Challenges and Questions to expect about the Parent Involvement Policy

Challenge: The school must "build capacity" or increase the quality, amount, and support for parent involvement among parents, staff, and the community.

Questions to Expect

- How do school staff establish positive, caring relationships with each student and with families?
- Does the school respond quickly and efficiently to obstacles or problems that parents perceive?
- Is the school as specific as possible in the parent involvement suggestions and opportunities it offers?
- How are parents trained to participate as school decision makers and advocates for children's learning?
- How are teachers and staff members trained about the value of and effective methods of parent involvement?
- How could parents be more involved in the schools?

The School-Parent Compact

The school-parent involvement policy must describe how your school will develop jointly with parents a school-parent compact for all children served by Title I. The compact must outline how students, parents, and staff will share responsibility for improved student achievement and how parents and the school will build and develop partnerships to achieve state expectations for student achievement. The compact must describe:

- The school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive learning environment;
- Parents' responsibility for supporting children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering at school; participating in decisions about their children's education, and positive use of time outside of school; and
- The importance of ongoing parent-teacher communication, including elementary schools' plans to offer at least one annual parent-teacher conference to discuss the parent-teacher compact and all schools' plans to report children's progress frequently to parents and communicate how parents can contact staff, volunteer in their children's classrooms, and observe classroom activities.

An example of a school-parent compact is found in the Appendices at the end of this Section.

The School-Parent Compact

Challenge: The school-parent compact must outline how students, parents, and staff will share responsibility for improved student achievement.

Questions to Expect

- Does the school staff communicate frequently, positively, and in ways that parents understand if their child is meeting learning goals? How does the school staff offer assistance to parents if the child is not meeting learning goals?
- Do parents understand their role as a child's most important teacher? Do parents know how they can help children learn at home and in school on a practical, daily basis?
- Does the school offer many opportunities during the school year for parents and teachers to interact, form relationships, and work together for children's learning?

School/District Responsibilities for Building Capacity for Parent Involvement

As part of your efforts to improve student achievement, each school and district receiving Title I funds must implement the following practices to build school capacity for parent involvement:

- Help parents understand state and local assessment of their children's progress, and how to monitor progress and work with educators;
- Provide parents with materials and training to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and use of technology;
- Educate teachers, administrators, and other school staff about the value of and methods of reaching out to parents as equal partners;
- Integrate parent involvement efforts with other school and community programs, including Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Home Instruction Programs for Preschool

Youngsters, and Parents as Teachers Programs; and

- Ensure that information about school and parent programs is in a format and language parents can understand.

The following are additional things that your school and district may implement at their discretion:

- Involve parents in developing training for teachers, principals, and other educators;
- Use Title I funds to provide literacy training if all other funding is exhausted;
- Use Title I funds to pay expenses associated with parent involvement, including transportation, child care, and training fees;
- Train parents to help involve other parents;
- Arrange parent-educator meetings at various times in your school or at other locations to maximize parent participation;
- Adopt model approaches to improving parent involvement;
- Establish a district parent advisory council;
- Involve community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and
- Upon request, provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities.

Your school and district should provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, disabilities, and for those who are migrants, in languages they can understand.

Activities and Ideas for Schools to Build Capacity in Parent Involvement

- Invite parent representative of all families to serve on the school committee and be part of the district process to develop a parent involvement policy and plan.
- Disseminate the parent involvement policy and plan to parents via the district website, at the start of the school year, and at parent meetings throughout the school year.
- Enlist the help of the community as the school strives to communicate with parents in a format and language they can understand by identifying unmet language needs; providing interpreters and translators; eliminating bureaucratic language; and being culturally sensitive.
- Include in the policy creation of a school improvement monitoring team to ensure parent involvement strategies and activities are implemented. The team should include community members and should meet with teachers and other school staff periodically to identify areas of progress and need. Inform parents and staff of the team's actions.
- Invite parent ideas for a policy and a compact at school-sponsored parent forums. Ask parents, teachers, and students to agree to the compact during parent-teacher conferences.
- Contact and work with the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center to provide parents with the skills and resources they need to be advocates for their children and participants in school decision making.

The Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC)

Part (g) under Title I, Section 1118 specifies that if your school and district receives Title I funding you are then required to inform parents of the existence and purpose of the federally funded parental information and resource center (PIRCs) in your state. Title V of No Child Left Behind establishes these centers that are to provide training, information, and support to parents and those who work with parents, districts, and schools. In Kansas, your PIRC is the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC).

The KPIRC is a consortium of ten statewide organizations that include parent advocacy and educational organizations as well as early childhood and K-12 educational organizations. The KPIRC website is www.kpirc.org and contains hundreds of resources, downloads, and links on parent involvement in a variety of content areas including No Child Left Behind, General Parent Involvement, Middle and High School Parent Involvement, and Parent Involvement in Reading, Math and Science. The KPIRC toll free number 866-711-6711.

The goals of the KPIRC are to:

- Provide a seamless system of support, resources, and training to families with children from birth through high school;
- Build capacity of parents to become an integral part of their children's educational success; and
- Develop parent advocacy and leadership skills.

These goals are met through technical assistance and direct training to schools and districts as well as to parent groups. The KPIRC supports parents in helping their children meet the Kansas QPA academic standards. A brochure about the KPIRC and its services is found in the Appendix at the end of this Section, as well as a bilingual parent flyer that you can make available to parents in your school and district, notifying them about the KPIRC.

Title I, Part C—Education of Migratory Children

Parent Involvement Under Title I, Part C

Title I, Part C provides supplemental resources to school districts to provide supplemental instructional and support services for migrant students and their families, as well as to conduct identification and recruitment of migrant families, data collection and records transfer, as required by law. In addition to program services for students, monies under Title I, Part C can be used for parent involvement activities for parents to attend migrant conferences, such as the Kansas Annual Migrant/ESOL/Bilingual/Refugee Education Conference, held in June every year or to send migrant parents to the national migrant conference. Title I, Part C funds may also pay for transportation and provide refreshments to migrant parents who attend parent involvement meetings at the district.

While all parent involvement requirements under NCLB, previously discussed, are also applicable to all migrant parents, an additional requirement under Title I, Part C is that a school district that receives migrant funding must clearly document that migrant parents are involved in an actively functioning Migrant Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The law requires that the PAC meet on a regular basis and that there are officers, meeting agendas, and written minutes from all meeting.

What is the purpose of the Parent Advisory Council?

The PAC is a formal group that is made up of migrant parents that advise the school district on concerns of migrant parents related to the education of their children. The PAC consults with the district on the assessment of migratory children's needs and the design of the comprehensive service delivery plan for migrant children. The PAC's advisory role includes but is not limited to program planning, operation and evaluation of the district's migrant education program.

Challenges and questions to expect from parents include:

Challenge 1: Migrant parents' understanding of what the migrant education program is.

Questions to Expect

- What is migrant education?
- How can the migrant education program help my children?
- What special services are offered?
- How can the migrant education program help my family?
- How do I qualify to participate?

Challenge 2: The formation of a local Migrant Parent Advisory Council.

Questions to Expect

- What is the migrant parent advisory council?
- How does it benefit my family and my children?
- What if I don't have transportation?
- Who can be involved?

Just as with parent involvement, in general, involving migrant parents in their children's education is an essential component in the educational success of migrant children. The following are ideas and activities that your school can do to meet the federal requirements concerning migrant parent involvement and that take into consideration the mobile way of life and culture of migrant families.

- Bilingual community liaisons can help bridge language and cultural differences between home and school (i.e., they can train parents to reinforce education concepts in the native language and/or English).
- Child care, transportation, evening and weekend activities, and refreshments can increase the likelihood of migrant parent participation.
- Curriculum that reflects the culture, values, interests, experiences, and concerns of the migrant family can enhance learning – parents can more easily relate to such “homework” and will be more inclined to help their child with subjects that affirm their experiences (also increasing their confidence and self-esteem).
- Multiple, coordinated “second-chance” opportunities for education and training – at work sites, community centers, churches, and school sites – can be made available for both students and families.
- Partnerships with the agriculture industry can help cultivate potential collaborative activities that allow schools to tap into parents’ knowledge, skills, and talents through “flex time,” (allowing parents to attend school activities during work hours).
- Parent-teacher conferences can give migrant parents an opportunity to express ways they believe they can contribute to their children’s education.
- Social and health outreach efforts can be coordinated with local school community involvement activities, making them less threatening to migrant parents who are hard to reach.
- Bilingual and Spanish language books in schools and public libraries can help promote family reading at home.
- Transcribed library collections of oral family histories or experiences provide parents, grandparents, and other family members with links to school and community.
- Parent programs can include workshops or retreats at colleges and universities, which would also provide an early orientation to the postsecondary education process.
- Parent workshops that include such activities as “sharing secret talents” help to expose untapped parent skills that can be tapped to benefit students and schools.
- Thinking “family” rather than just “parent” when planning involvement activities will help ensure program effectiveness.

Title II — Part D

Enhancing Education through Technology

School districts applying for Title II, Part D, funds must have in place a process for effective use of technology to promote parent involvement and increase home-school communication. The process must include efforts to regularly inform parents about technology used in the educational program.

Title III — Limited English Proficient

Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students

If your district uses Title III funds to provide a language instruction educational program to limited English proficient (LEP) students, you must also implement an effective means of outreach to parents of these children. Included in this outreach are efforts to inform parents about how they can be active participants in assisting their children to learn English, achieve at high levels in core academic subjects, and meet the same challenging Kansas academic content and student academic achievement standards as all other children are expected to meet.

Title IV — Part A

Safe and Drug-Free School Activities

Districts receiving safe and drug-free school funds must inform and involve parents in violence and drug abuse prevention programs and activities. Your school and district should make a reasonable effort to inform parents of the content of such programs or activities and have “meaningful and ongoing” input from them in developing drug and violence prevention activities. Parents should also be involved in these activities. If a parent submits a written request, students must be withdrawn from the program or activity.

Title IV – Part B

21st Century Schools

A school district, private school, or community-based organization using Title IV funds to operate a 21st Century Community Learning Center should meaningfully involve parents in the development and administration of the center, for example, as members of the site council or advisory council that oversees center operation. Schools or community-based organizations using Title IV funds to operate a 21st Century Community Learning Center must inform parents of the services available for students and family members. The school or organization also must inform parents about the results of evaluations of the center.

Title V — Part A

Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs

School districts receiving Title V funds under Part A, Innovative Programs, must systematically consult with parents of elementary and secondary students attending district schools on the spending of these funds and in planning, designing, and implementing innovative assistance programs.

Appendix for Section 3

No Child Left Behind Act, Title I, Section 1118: Parental Involvement

(a) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY POLICY-

(1) IN GENERAL- A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs assisted under this part consistent with this section. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

(2) WRITTEN POLICY- Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy. The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establish the agency's expectations for parent involvement, and describe how the agency will —

(A) involve parents in the joint development of the plan under section 1112, and the process of school review and improvement under section 1116;

(B) provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;

(C) build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement as described in subsection (e);

(D) coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as the Head Start program, Reading First program, Early Reading First program, Even Start program, Parents as Teachers program, and Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs;

(E) conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this section; and

(F) involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part.

(3) RESERVATION-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each local educational agency shall reserve not less than 1 percent of such agency's allocation under subpart 2 of this part to carry out this section, including promoting family literacy and parenting skills, except that this paragraph shall not apply if 1 percent of such agency's allocation under subpart 2 of this part for the fiscal year for which the determination is made is \$5,000 or less.

(B) PARENTAL INPUT- Parents of children receiving services under this part shall be involved in the decisions regarding how funds reserved under subparagraph (A) are allotted for parental involvement activities.

(C) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS- Not less than 95 percent of the funds reserved under subparagraph (A) shall be distributed to schools served under this part.

(b) SCHOOL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY

(1) IN GENERAL- Each school served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed on by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements of subsections (c) through (f). Parents shall be notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. Such policy shall be made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

(2) SPECIAL RULE- If the school has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such school may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

(3) AMENDMENT- If the local educational agency involved has a school district-level parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such agency may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

(4) PARENTAL COMMENTS- If the plan under section 1112 is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the local educational agency shall submit any parent comments with such plan when such local educational agency submits the plan to the State.

(c) POLICY INVOLVEMENT- Each school served under this part shall —

(1) convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain the requirements of this part, and the right of the parents to be involved;

(2) offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;

(3) involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children;

(4) provide parents of participating children —

(A) timely information about programs under this part;

(B) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet; and

(C) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible; and

(5) if the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

(d) SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HIGH STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

As a component of the school-level parental involvement policy developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. Such compact shall —

(1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the State's student academic achievement standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and

(2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum —

(A) parent teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement;

(B) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; and

(C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.

(e) BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school and local educational agency assisted under this part —

(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, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement;

(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;

(6) may involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;

(7) may provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the local educational agency has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training;

(8) may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;

(9) may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;

(10) may arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation;

(11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement;

(12) may establish a districtwide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section;

(13) may develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and

(14) shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request.

(f) ACCESSIBILITY

In carrying out the parental involvement requirements of this part, local educational agencies and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

(g) INFORMATION FROM PARENTAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTERS –

In a State where a parental information and resource center is established to provide training, information, and support to parents and individuals who work with local parents, local educational agencies, and schools receiving assistance under this part and is located in the State shall assist parents and parental organizations by informing such parents as organizations of the existence and purpose of such centers.

(h) REVIEW

The State educational agency shall review the local educational agency's parental involvement policies and practices to determine if the policies and practices meet the requirements of this section.

Template for Developing Your Own District Parent Involvement Policy

DISTRICT TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Pursuant to federal law, the district and the parents of students participating in Title I district programs have jointly developed the following parent involvement policy. The policy shall be implemented by the superintendent or designee according to the timeline set forth in the policy and incorporated in the district's Title I plan.

INVOLVEMENT WITH TITLE I PLANNING

The district shall hold an annual meeting for parents of students in Title I programs, as well as school Title I staff, principals of schools receiving Title I funds and other interested persons to discuss the Title I program plan, review implementation of the Title I plan, discuss how Title I funds allotted for parent involvement activities shall be used, and invite suggestions for improvement.

DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The district shall provide coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist participating schools in building the capacity for strong parent involvement to improve student academic achievement and school performance.

This coordination, assistance and support shall include: *[insert here a jointly developed description of support for parent involvement the district will provide.]*

Some ideas for support might include:

- *designation of a District Parent Involvement Coordinator and the creation of a District Parent Advisory Council to provide advice on all matters related to parent involvement in programs supported by Title I funds*
- *development of district protocols for appropriate roles for community based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities*
- *adoption of district model approaches to improving parent involvement at the school level*
- *allocating district resources to parent involvement activities, beyond minimum legal requirements*
- *designating other district support for parent and teacher development and training*
- *requiring a Parent Involvement Coordinator at each Title I school*

The district, with the assistance of parents, shall develop and implement a district professional development plan to enhance the skills of teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff in:

- the value and utility of contributions of parents
- how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners
- implementing and coordinating parent programs
- building ties between parents and the school

[Though the professional development plan does not need to appear in policy, it must be developed and implemented by the district with parent input.]

COORDINATION OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER DISTRICT PROGRAMS

The district 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 (HIPPY), the Parents as Teachers Program (PAT), and district 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 students. *[Insert here a jointly developed description of how the district will accomplish this. This might include requiring quarterly meetings of staff involved in these programs, coordination of written materials to parents regarding these programs, etc.]*

STUDENT LEARNING

The district shall coordinate and integrate Title I parental involvement strategies with those of other educational programs in the district. The purpose of this coordination shall be to improve the academic quality of the schools served, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by law, particularly by parents who:

- are economically disadvantaged
- have disabilities
- have limited English proficiency
- have limited literacy
- are of any racial or ethnic minority background
- are parents of migratory children

[Insert here a jointly developed description of how the district will accomplish this. The specifics of this description will depend heavily on the specific barriers being experienced by parents in your district.]

The district shall provide to parents, as appropriate, information to help them understand the state's academic content and achievement standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I, how to monitor students' academic progress and how to work with school staff to improve the achievement of students. The district shall develop written materials and training for staff to help parents work with students to improve student achievement.

[Insert here a jointly developed description of how the district will accomplish this. The district could provide support for school-level training for parents in literacy, using technology, and other areas that will foster parental involvement.]

SCHOOL-BASED PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

[Insert here a jointly developed description of how parents will be encouraged to become involved in the activities of schools with Title I programs.]

[There are many resources you can access to help provide researched-based ideas on parent involvement – your Kansas Parent Involvement Resource Center (www.kpirc.org) has resources on its website or call 1-866-711-6711). Another excellent resource is the parent involvement framework developed by Joyce Epstein and colleagues in 1997 and subsequently translated into standards by the National Parent Teacher Association, with new revisions in 2007 that include:

- Welcoming all families into the school community
- Communicating effectively
- Support student success
- Speaking up for every child
- Sharing power
- Collaborating with community

These standards could be re-framed as expectations for how parents will be involved in activities at Title I schools.

METHOD OF COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

All information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities shall be sent to parents in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

ANNUAL EVALUATION

The district shall conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy. Effectiveness shall be measured in part by improvement in student academic achievement and in school performance.

The evaluation shall specifically address barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by law, particularly by parents who:

- are economically disadvantaged
- have disabilities
- have limited English proficiency
- have limited literacy
- are of any racial or ethnic minority background
- are parents of migratory children

The district shall use the findings of the evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise, if necessary, this policy.

The district shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request.

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL-LEVEL TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Each school receiving Title I funds shall jointly develop with and distribute to parents of students participating in the Title I program (hereafter referred to as “parents”) a written School-Level Title I Parent Involvement Policy agreed upon by the parents in accordance with the requirements of federal law.

The policy shall contain a school-parent compact or agreement that outlines how parents, school staff and students will share the responsibility of improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help students.

Developed by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center, federally funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind. Adapted from Colorado Department of Education “Template for Developing Your Own District Policy.”

Sample Parent Compact

The school-parent compact is a written agreement between teachers and parents. It is a document that clarifies what families and schools can do to help children reach high academic standards. The compact is a written commitment and serves as a clear reminder of everybody's responsibility to take action at school and at home so that children can learn what is required of them.

The purposes of this agreement are to help parents and teachers come to a consensus on the responsibilities of the individuals influencing student achievement. If the compact is taken seriously and implemented effectively it will assure that there will be support for the academic success of the student by enhancing effective communications between school and the home.

As a Parent – I promise to:

Let the teacher know if my child has any problems with learning
Use reading and math materials the school sends home each week to help my child
Read to my child 20 minutes a day
Keep a list of new words, and link letters to sounds
Play number games with my child every week
Help my child see how to use reading and math to pursue his/her interests and goals

As a Student – I promise to:

Let my teacher and family know if I need help
Read on my own and with my family every day
Work on my math and reading skills at home, using the materials my teacher sends home
Write down assignments, do my homework every day, and turn it in when it's due
Write a report each week about a TV program I watch

As the Teacher – I promise to:

Create a partnership with every family in my class
Monitor student progress in reading and math and update parents monthly
Make sure all students get help as soon as it's needed
Send home learning materials in math and reading
Explain my approach to teaching, expectations, and grading system to students and their families
Continually work on my teaching strategies so that I can successfully teach all children
Assign work that is relevant and interesting
Make sure students understand the assignment and what they'll learn from it, and grade it promptly

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Teacher Signature

Source: School-Parent Compact: Action Guide for Parent and Community Leaders, Public Education Network

KPIRC Goals

- ONE** To provide a seamless system of support, resources, and training to families with children from birth through high school.
- TWO** To build capacity of parents to become an integral part of their children's educational success.
- THREE** To develop parent advocacy and leadership skills.

KPIRC Objectives



Establish a statewide network of parents, pre K-16 school educators, business and community leaders, and faith and community organizations to work with, and support families and their children.

Provide families with *No Child Left Behind* information and help them to understand state and local report cards, opportunities for public school choice, SES and other parents' rights under *No Child Left Behind*.

Work with the Kansas State Department of Education to provide necessary technical assistance to districts and schools to implement parent involvement policies and all other *No Child Left Behind* Title I, Section 1118 requirements.

Work with pre-K-16 school-based/school-linked programs to increase educators' understanding of diverse families, to enable more effective communication between parents and professionals, and to increase parent involvement in children's learning.

Ensure that parents have access to literacy training and resources to more effectively enable their children's academic growth and achievement.



KPIRC Services

Consultation and workshops concerning *No Child Left Behind*, Title I parent involvement practices, and family-supported literacy, math, and science.

Assistance to district schools in the development of Parent/School Compacts and Parent Involvement Policies and other *No Child Left Behind* parent involvement requirements.

Technical assistance and professional development to schools, parent organizations, early childhood programs, higher education, and professionals who interface with families.

Consultation with businesses and industries, faith and community-based organizations to distribute and share parent involvement resources and information.

KPIRC Partners and Collaborators

With the Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc., a network of ten statewide organizations including:

- ❖ Kansas Parent Teacher Association
- ❖ Kansas Parents As Teachers Association
- ❖ Kansas Head Start Association
- ❖ Families Together, Inc.
- ❖ Kansas National Education Association
- ❖ Kansas Learning First Alliance
- ❖ Kansas Migrant Parent Advisory Council
- ❖ Kansas State Library
- ❖ Kansas Head Start Collaboration Office
- ❖ Kansas State Department of Education-State and Federal Programs

What are your parent involvement needs?

Name _____

School/Organization: _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

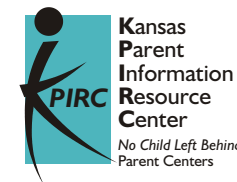
I am: a Parent School Staff

Other _____

Please add my name to your mailing list and listserv (training announcements, newsletters, etc.)

Contact me about training or technical assistance.

My parent involvement needs are:



Fax or mail to:
 KPIRC
 3500 S.W. 10th Avenue
 Topeka, KS 66604
 Fax: (785)

What are parent information resource centers?

Title V of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *No Child Left Behind*, authorizes establishing federally funded parental information and resource centers that provide training, information, and support to parents, schools districts, and other organizations that carry out parent education and family involvement programs. A major goal of the KPIRC is to support parents in helping their children meet the Kansas QPA academic standards.

Parent involvement policy, as defined in *No Child Left Behind* builds on the National PTA Parent Involvement Standards that advocate involving parents and families in six areas:

- ◆ Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- ◆ Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- ◆ Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- ◆ Parents are welcomed as volunteers in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- ◆ Parents are full partners in school decision making and advocacy.
- ◆ Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

On October 8, 2002 the Kansas State Board of Education voted to endorse the National PTA Parent Involvement Standards.

KPIRC Kansas Parent Information Resource Center

Funded by Title V - Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

KFAST Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc.

3500 S.W. 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66604
866.711.6711 (Toll Free)

Visit us on the Web at:
www.kpirc.org

Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc. (KFAST) is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation whose mission is to solicit, receive and provide resources for the benefit and support of public and community education throughout the State.



Kansas
Parent
Information
Resource
Center

Helping you
understand
your Title I
and parent
involvement
needs under
**No Child
Left Behind**



Training/
Professional
Development

Technical
Assistance

Networking

Resources



Section 4: Families and Schools Working Together to Improve Achievement

What is the purpose of this section?

You can use the research and resources provided in Section 4 to assist parents and educators in promoting increased student success through partnerships. The research represented is undeniably clear and convincing with regard to the importance and value of parent involvement when connected to student performance. This section is designed to support you in meeting these requirements and becoming familiar with parent involvement research and the National Family School Partnership Standards in order to build strong parent involvement policies in all Kansas schools.

Table of Contents for Section 4

School Resource:	A Research Synthesis of Parent Involvement
School Resource:	National Standards for Family School Partnerships
School Resource:	An Overview of Each of the Six Standards
School Resource:	A Review of How Each Standard Addresses the Kansas Professional Education Standards
Teacher Tool:	Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric on Each Standard
Teacher Tool:	Teacher Reflection on Each Standard
School and Parent Tools:	Practical Examples of Ways that Schools Can Implement the Standards

Research Synthesis

Benefits of Parent Involvement

In a synthesis of 51 studies on the impact of parent involvement, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Henderson and Mapp (2002) conclude that there is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, income levels, or parents' level of education. To put it another way, when families are involved in their children's learning both at home and at school, their children do better in school. As a matter of fact, effectively engaging parents and families in the education of their children has the potential to be far more transformational than any other type of educational reform. Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that students with involved parents were more likely to:

- Have higher grade point averages
- Have higher scores on standardized tests
- Be involved in more challenging school programs
- Complete homework on a more regular basis
- Have higher graduation rates, lower dropout rates
- Enroll in educational programs after high school

They also found that when parents are involved:

- Attendance is better
- Students are less likely to use alcohol, engage in violent behavior and other antisocial behaviors decrease
- Students have greater self-confidence, feel school is more important, and do better in school
- High school students are able to make better transitions, maintain high quality work, and develop realistic plans for their future

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Practical Barriers	Personal Barriers	Institutional Barriers
Lack of time Economic constraints Lack of transportation Neighborhood safety Lack of child care Language/Communication barriers	Fears and frustrations Anxious about child's performance Anxious about school expectations Reminders of past negative experiences Mistrust of the educational system Don't know how to become involved Lack of support from partner/spouse Limited education – unable to help child Limited finances	Negative attitudes/beliefs by staff Unaware of how to involve parents Belief this is too time consuming Teachers think parents are troublesome/lack necessary skills Equate parents' involvement with lack of interest Lack of school resources/time No policies supporting parent involvement

Source: Wandersman, Stone, Lindsay, Snell-Johns, Ford and Amaral (2002)

Given the barriers, perceived and real, the research also indicates that such barriers are not insurmountable. Fostering continued parent involvement needs to be the responsibility of teachers and schools – as the research confirms that the extent to which schools encourage and facilitate participation is a greater predictor of involvement than family characteristics that include parents’ level of education, parents’ socioeconomic status, and marital status (Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998) and that parent involvement is higher when schools welcome parents and make it easy for them to be involved (Nord, Brimhall, & West, 1997).

Given the impact of parent involvement and the research on barriers, the following are suggestions from Henderson and Mapp (2002) on specific types of involvement and the benefits on children’s academic success which provide a framework for strengthening parent/family involvement programs:

Findings	Suggestions/Activities
<p>The more parent and community activities focus on improving student learning, the more student learning improves.</p>	<p>Parent involvement programs should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family nights on math or literacy – use scoring guides while making craft projects • Family-teacher conferences that involve students • Family workshops on planning for college • Including information on standards and exhibitions of student work at open houses and back-to-school nights • Use the school newsletter to discuss test results and what students are doing to meet higher standards • Use the annual school and district Report Cards as a chance to have focused conversations with parents and community members about each school’s strengths and weaknesses – and how to work together to make improvements
<p>Children whose parents are advocates for them at school are more confident during schools and take on and achieve more. The more families advocate for their children and support their children’s progress, the longer their children stay in school and the better their children do.</p>	<p>Families should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become knowledgeable about the operations of schools and the laws that govern those operations • Be confident about their ability to work with schools • Expect only the best from and for their children • Join the PTA/PTO
<p>All families can contribute to their children’s success. For involvement to happen, however, principals, teachers, and parents must believe that all parents can contribute to their children’s success in school.</p>	<p>Parents can promote their children’s academic success by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching their children the importance of education • Finding out what their children are expected to know and to be able to do and reinforcing lessons at home • Sending their children to school ready to learn every day <p>Principals and teachers must support parent involvement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making parent involvement a priority • Recognizing and removing barriers to parent involvement • Sharing decision-making power with parents and community members • Working to understand class and cultural differences
<p>Engaging community members, businesses, and organizations as partners in children’s education can improve the learning community in many ways.</p>	<p>Community partners may be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide expanded learning opportunities • Build broad-based support for increased school funding • Provide quality after-school programs

When designing parent involvement programs, especially those that focus on linking to gains in children's learning, it is a good idea to match practices to grade levels and to take children's age and developmental needs into consideration.

1. Families with young children

- Home visits from trained parent educators with cultural backgrounds similar to their own or with knowledge of their culture
- Lending libraries that offer games and learning materials to build skills at home
- Discussion groups with other families about children's learning
- Classes on how to stimulate their children's mental, physical, and emotional development

2. Families of elementary and middle school students

- Interactive homework that involves parents with their children's learning
- Workshops on topics that parents suggest, such as building their children's vocabulary, positive discipline strategies, and supporting children through crises
- Regular calls from teachers, not just when there are problems, about how their children are doing in class
- Learning packets in reading, science, and math, with training in how to use them
- Meetings with teachers to talk about their children's progress and what they're learning

3. Families of high school students

- Regular meetings with teachers and counselors to plan their children's academic program
- Information about program options, graduation requirements, test schedules, and post-secondary education options and how to plan for them
- Information about where to find academic support, such as help with homework, tutoring, after school programs, and special classes. Include subject areas covered and associated costs
- Explanations of courses students should take to be prepared for college or other post-secondary education
- Information about financing post-secondary education and applying for financial aid

Facilitating transitions for children. Children of all ages do better when they make a solid adjustment to school. Students feel comfortable and respected, feel they belong at school, and feel supported by teachers. Here are some practices that research suggests help students adjust as they enter a new school:

- Offer families and students tours of the school and opportunities to visit and observe in the classrooms.
- Meet with students and families at the feeder schools or programs to introduce staff, explain the school's programs, and answer questions.
- Make home visits the summer before school starts to begin building a relationship with each family.
- Work with families to prepare children for the next level and help them plan for postsecondary education and a career.

Practical Ideas for Families and School Staff

Develop families' sense of confidence and power. Researchers call this “efficacy.” Studies find that when parents have a sense of confidence and power, their children do better in school. For example, parents should feel they can help their children do well in school, and be happy and safe. Parents should also feel that they can overcome negative influences on their children (such as violence and drugs), and have a positive impact on the school and neighborhood. Many practices that help empower families, such as these listed here, are required by the No Child Left Behind law.

- Engage families in planning how they would like to be involved at school.
- Consult a representative sample of parents and families, not just the PTA/PTO leadership, about school policies and proposed actions.
- Involve families in action research. Ask them to develop and conduct surveys of other families. Invite them to observe in the classroom, review books and materials, and visit other schools to gather ideas.
- Make it easy for parents to meet and discuss concerns with the principal, talk to teachers and guidance counselors, and examine their children's school records.
- Invite families to attend staff development sessions and faculty meetings.
- Facilitate families' connections with youth groups and programs for young people.
- Work with families to help them monitor their children's activities. Create a school directory, so they can connect with other parents.
- Offer workshops on communicating with their children about topics they suggest, such as, talking with children about drugs, dating, problems with friends or family, and values.

Support families' efforts to improve the school and community. When parents feel they have the power to change and control their circumstances, their children tend to do better in school. Parents are also better equipped to help their children. (When schools work with families to develop connections, families become powerful allies of the school and advocates for public education.)

- Give families information about how the education system (and local government) works. Make field trips to district offices and school board meetings.
- Keep voter registration forms and information about local government agencies in the school office or family center. Develop a student-run voter registration drive.
- Invite candidates for school board and other local offices to speak to families at the school.
- Open the school to community meetings.
- Go with families to press local officials about needed funding, programs or law enforcement.
- Work with families to develop action research skills to document problems in the neighborhood.
- Invite local banks and businesses to talk with families about their services, loan programs, and employment opportunities.

Develop the capacity of school staff to work with families and community members. All school staff, from the principal to the custodian, need opportunities to learn more about working effectively with parents and community members. Design educational opportunities for all school staff that:

- Help staff recognize the advantages of school, family and community connections.
- Explore how trusting and respectful relationships with families and community members are achieved.
- Enhance school staff's ability to work with diverse families.
- Enable staff to make connections with community resources.
- Explore the benefits of sharing power with families and community members.

Work with local after-school programs and supplemental service providers to link their content to what students are learning in class.

- Form a partnership between after-school program staff and teachers. Encourage them to share ideas and knowledge about the students, observe each other at work, and attend staff development sessions to update and build their teaching skills.
- Inform supplemental service providers about the school's curriculum and learning programs (especially math and reading).
- Share textbooks and other learning materials with program staff.

National Standards for Family School Partnerships

In October, 2002 the Kansas State Board of Education endorsed the PTA National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement programs (http://www.ptaonline.org/kspta/national_standards.pdf). Each of the six standards includes quality indicators for successful programs. The standards are available to all schools on the National PTA website, www.pta.org.

In June of 2007, the PTA National Standards were updated to reflect recent research and improve parent and community involvement practices. The new standards shift the focus from what schools should do to involve parents to what parents, schools, and communities can do together to support student success. To reflect this change, the standards have been renamed the National Standards for Family School Partnerships. The standards are a comprehensive guideline that schools can use to determine how successfully they are implementing family school community partnerships. The new and updated PTA National Standards for Family School Partnerships are:

1. Welcoming all families into the school community

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

2. Communicating effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.

3. Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

4. Speaking up for every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

5. Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs.

6. Collaborating with Community

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

The National Standards for Family School Partnerships provide a foundation from which to build strong parent involvement policies and partnerships for all Kansas schools. As you complete the exercises included in this Toolkit, we are confident that you will begin to build and strengthen partnerships with families in your community.

Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Overview

This chapter focuses on helping schools welcome, honor and connect with families to create a school community in which everyone says they feel like "members of a family." Parents respond to this culture by becoming loyal members of the school community, and by taking part in their children's education in ways they had never envisioned.

Research Link

Parents report that feeling welcome and being treated with respect by school staff is the number one key to their connection with a school. When school staff construct caring and trustful relationships with parents, treating parents as partners in their children's education, parents are far more likely to become involved and stay involved. (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

Bryk and Schneider's (2002) definition of trust is based on four qualities that people see in one another:

- Respect
- Competence
- Integrity
- Personal Regard

The chart below uses these qualities to show how school staff might describe school relationships where people trust each other.

Element of Trust	How School Staff May Describe a High-Trust School
<p>Respect: Mutual esteem that recognizes the important role each person plays in a child's education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People listen genuinely to one another. • Parents can talk with teachers and feel they have a say in what happens to their children. • Teachers can voice their concerns and feel that administrators will heed what they say. • Principals feel that teachers care about school and will seriously consider their proposals.
<p>Competence: A feeling that colleagues work together to create an effective working environment and get the job done.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our colleagues work hard, control their classrooms, and provide challenging teaching. • Administrators provide an orderly, safe building. • Parents provide for their children's basic needs and support education at home.
<p>Integrity: A feeling that colleagues keep their word and do what they say they're going to do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's words and actions are consistent. • Our school places the highest priority on children's best interests, and this is the highest purpose of the school.
<p>Personal Regard: A feeling that colleagues care about one another and are willing to go out of their way to help.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers stay after hours to meet with parents. • Teachers go the extra mile to help each other and advise a new teacher. • Teachers are willing to give students extra help. • School staff get involved in local community matters.

Teaching Practices to Promote Welcoming All Families into the School Community

- All the staff greet students, families, visitors, and each other in a genuinely friendly way
- At the beginning and end of the school day, teachers are outside greeting students and their families as they come and go
- Class meetings, grade-level socials are broken down into smaller events that are more inviting and less intimidating
- One-to-one interactions, such as informal conversations on the school grounds and home visits by staff can build personal connections
- Provide an accessible parent/family information and resource center
- Make regular positive phone calls home
- Include activities for students to do with families that link to learning
- Survey parents on their connectedness to the school and their children's learning
- Hold parent nights that involve parents in their child's learning (e.g. Homework Help, Math Night, etc.)
- Find out which ethnic groups are represented in each school. Provide translation, be sensitive to cultural differences and find appropriate ways to communicate acceptance and respect
- Hold student-led parent teacher conferences
- Explain to parents the standards and assessments for your school
- Friendly signs (in all major languages spoken by your families)
- Assign buddies for new students and their families
- Brightly colored walls are decorated with student artwork
- Give tours for new families
- Establish a family center
- Offer workshops and classes for families about what their children are learning, how to help them at home and how to have productive meetings with teachers
- Focus every family involvement activity, from school plays to open houses, on educational achievement

Kansas Professional Education Standards

This module, *Welcoming All Families Into the School Community*, addresses Kansas Professional Education Standards 3, 7, 10, and 13. The professional education standards are based on adaptations made by Kansas to the standards developed by member states of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The professional education standards are used by schools, colleges and departments of education as they build their professional education coursework to accompany all the endorsement areas. Every teacher preparation program in Kansas is responsible to ensure that all teacher candidates are competent in the knowledge and performance of the professional education standards.

Standard 3: The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.

Knowledge

4. The educator understands how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, **family**, and **community** values.
5. The educator has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and **community** diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and **community** resources into instruction.

Performance

5. The educator seeks to understand students' families' cultures, and **communities**, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (drawing explicit connections between subject matter and **community** matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures).
6. The educator brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and **community** experiences and cultural norms.

Standard 7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.

Knowledge

2. The educator knows how to use contextual considerations (e.g., instructional materials; individual student interests, needs, and aptitudes); and **community** resources in planning instruction to create an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences.

Standard 10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all student's' learning and well-being.

Knowledge

1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger **community** context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.
2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., **family** circumstances, **community** environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

Performance

2. The educator consults with **parents**, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other **community** agencies.
3. The educator identifies and uses **community** resources to foster learning for all students.
4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and **community** situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.

Standard 13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Knowledge

4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher's interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and members of the **community**.
6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and **parents**.

Performance

1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and **community** members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.

Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric

Use this rubric to help evaluate your efforts to welcome all families into the school. Think about where you see yourself in the process and strategies you use to improve welcoming families by marking the box that most clearly matches what you are doing now.

Welcoming All Families

Collaborating With the Community			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Parents are welcomed, honored and connected within the school and their child's learning.</p>	<p>I ask for family support when the student is experiencing difficulty.</p> <p>I offer information on how to address student difficulties.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I routinely offer information about how parents can help their child learn at home.</p> <p>I take advantage of opportunities to learn more about students and families.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I welcome and create opportunities to understand and affirm families' strengths with the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I am a resource for families in child development and learning. — I ask parents for input regarding their child's strengths/needs. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Teacher welcomes, honors and connects with families through a focus on the children and their learning.</p>	<p>I do not fully understand the importance of connecting families with their child's education.</p> <p>I do not often connect parents with their children's learning.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I understand the importance of linking families with their children's learning at school.</p> <p>I focus on linking home and school through including parents as often as possible.</p> <p>I keep parents informed on what their child is learning at school.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I respect diverse cultures and focus on helping families build on their strengths. I am able to adapt materials and efforts to involve diverse families in their children's education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I welcome families by ensuring that family/teacher communication is offered in the families' language as often as possible. — I support school policies that support family engagement in education. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Collaborating With the Community			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>School staff members participate in ongoing staff development about welcoming, honoring and connecting with families and using resources in the school and community.</p>	<p>I have had limited experience with staff development about family engagement/parent involvement issues.</p> <p>I participate in professional development activities to promote family engagement/parent involvement to a limited extent.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I seek out information on family engagement.</p> <p>I am aware of school and community resources that promote family engagement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively participate in professional development and make systematic efforts to promote family engagement/parent involvement by integrating the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I link families to support services and resources in the community. — I share information on children's learning with all families. — I assist in developing schoolwide parent support programs. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Both formal and informal strategies to understand families and their cultures and incorporate that knowledge into student learning experiences are used schoolwide.</p>	<p>I am aware of the various cultures represented in school.</p> <p>I have a limited understanding of families and their cultures and am limited in my ability to apply that knowledge to lesson planning.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I recognize the importance of informal strategies to understand families and culture.</p> <p>I make positive phone calls and create informal interactions with students and families. I incorporate family and community members in curriculum activities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I reach out to families informally and utilize more formal strategies to understand family and culture, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Surveys — Interviews during conferences — Class projects and interactive homework — Attendance at cultural events in the community — Study of students' cultures and family strengths and how they inform classroom learning experiences. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Parent-teacher conferences are used to better welcome, honor and connect families.</p>	<p>I do most of the talking at conferences and am focused on providing information to parents.</p> <p>I make a limited effort to provide information about the value of parent involvement/family engagement in their child's education.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I allow time in conferences for parent comments and concerns.</p> <p>I make an effort to allow parents the time to voice questions and concerns.</p> <p>I provide parents with some information on standards and assessments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I view conferences as an opportunity to improve my relationship with parents and share useful information by planning the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I provide parents with tools to prepare for conferences and make sure the parents and I have opportunities to direct the conversation about student learning. — I collect information from parents about their interests and needs related to their child's learning and follow up with pertinent support. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Teacher Reflection

What will I do to welcome all families into the school?

Reflect on your current practices in each of the elements highlighted in the left column. Develop a plan for improvement that includes support needed, how strategies will be implemented and how you, the teacher, will know if each element has been accomplished (Evidence of Mastery). Use the resources provided in this module to support your efforts.

Welcoming Elements	Plans for Improvement	Evidence of Mastery
I welcome, honor and connect with families and see their involvement as crucial to their child's success.		
I recognize and honor a variety of families and their strengths based on cultural differences, individual needs and preferences.		
I participate in ongoing staff development to promote family engagement in their children's learning.		
I communicate with families including informal and formal efforts to understand the family and to link them to their children's learning.		
I incorporate this information into student learning experiences.		
I use parent-teacher conferences to better connect families and involve them in their children's education.		

Respecting Family Cultures and Traditions

Use this checklist to assess your awareness and acceptance of diverse families and to plan activities that can promote welcoming all families into the school.

Schools and programs must be culturally sensitive to increasingly diverse student and family populations. Appreciating the traditions and parenting styles of families from various cultures requires an awareness and acceptance of their diversity.

Effective Practices of Our School Staff:	Yes	No	Examples and Plans for improvement
Ensures that all activities provide for effective communication with parents who speak a language other than English or have limited English skills.			
Intervenes immediately when a student disparages another student's culture or language.			
Values the broad and varied experiences that students and families bring to class as resources.			
Establishes policies that recognize and respect families' cultural and linguistic diversity.			
Is knowledgeable about students' and families' diverse modes of learning and communicating.			
Knows that it is important to understand how family background can affect relationships with teachers.			
Varies methods of instruction to accommodate the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students.			
Communicates to families that the same level of excellence is required of all students.			
Finds and uses successful role models in school and classroom activities by personally inviting parents.			
Avoids segregating students or families by cultural groups and does not allow students to segregate themselves.			
Recognizes that some cultural protocols may discourage some students and/or families from active participation in activities.			
Provides information on social services, health, family counseling, adult education and community resources.			

100 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR SCHOOL FAMILY FRIENDLY

1. Create a policy for family involvement in your school.
2. Use the word family instead of parent when communicating with families.
3. Make sure family involvement is part of your school mission and vision statements.
4. Celebrate the cultures in your community with specific school programs and practices.
5. Celebrate families of the month or week.
6. Create a family or parent center with your school.
7. Designate special family parking to make access to your school easy.
8. Make sure school entrances/directions are clear and in languages spoken within your community.
9. Train teachers, administrators, and students about the importance of family involvement in schools.
10. Involve families in staff development programs.
11. Give positive feedback to families through notes, telephone calls, and special events.
12. Approach all families with an open mind and positive attitude.
13. LISTEN.
14. Learn children's strengths, talents, and interests through interactions with families.
15. Explain expectations to families in a manner they can understand and support.
16. Set appointment times that are convenient for working families.
17. Make family conferences student-led and mandatory at all grade levels.
18. Understand the best ways families receive information from the school and then deliver it that way.
19. Explain school rules and expectations and ask for home support.
20. Create opportunities for informal dialogue with families.
21. Address concerns honestly, openly, and early on.
22. Show support for PTA and other parent and family organizations by attending as often as you can.
23. Create classroom, grade-level, and school newsletters.
24. Maintain and update your web page.
25. Publish and post your school and office hours.
26. Create a family handbook similar to your student handbook.
27. Have all information available in languages spoken within your school.
28. Use available technology to promote your family involvement goals.
29. Work with families to understand cultural practices that will promote better communication.
30. Listen to family perceptions of how they feel when they visit your school.
31. Listen to family perceptions of how families feel they are treated at your school.
32. Modify school climate based on family and student input.
33. Know the students in your school and their various peer groups.
34. Provide programs on topics of interest to families.
35. Evaluate all of the family meetings you have and move two from the school into the community.
36. Provide family support programs or groups to help families work with their children.
37. Keep abreast of parenting issues to offer assistance to families.
38. Offer parenting classes in child development, discipline, and similar topics.
39. Create and attend fairs and events especially designed to bring all families together.
40. Create a database of families and their special talents, interests, and ways in which they can support school activities. Use this database when calling families to assist in school.
41. Start a family book club.
42. Be available before and after school, and in the evening at specified times and dates.
43. Help teachers understand the importance of family involvement.
44. Evaluate and spruce up the exterior and entrances to your building.
45. Evaluate and repaint areas that need repainting.
46. Remove all graffiti and vandalism with twenty-four hours.
47. Suggest your school be used as a polling place on Election Day.
48. Provide displays and information when community groups are using your school.
49. Create bookmarks with important school information and pass them out to visitors.

50. Evaluate and create a plan for appropriate lighting for evening activities.
51. Allow all families access to your school computer labs and library.
52. Make sure the "reduced speed" signs in the school zone are visible.
53. Allow family members to be involved in the governance of your school.
54. Train parents to participate in school planning and decision making.
55. Provide biographical information about the principal and administration.
56. Publish important telephone and fax numbers in at least five different places.
57. Publish names of administrators with phone numbers in newsletters and on the school website.
58. Publish a monthly newsletter.
59. Place all printed information on the school website.
60. Increase the number of events geared to limited-English-speaking families.
61. Promote your school logo or mascot on all publications.
62. Create a "brag about" promoting your school/programs with copies in every visitor area of school.
63. Provide all staff with business cards.
64. Provide all teachers with telephones in their classrooms.
65. Ensure all students have opportunities to be involved in clubs and co-curricular activities at school.
66. Increase the percentage of students in clubs and student activities.
67. Schedule a club fair during the school day.
68. Create a plan to articulate more closely with your feeder schools.
69. Find five ways to celebrate and promote your school's diversity.
70. Identify all of the peer groups in your school. Have lunch with each of them monthly.
71. Create a program to bring diverse students together.
72. Ensure school governance opportunities are open to students.
73. Publish a school calendar with pictures that promote activities about your school.
74. Evaluate all of your school publications for school "jargon."
75. Create classes that help families understand school curriculum.
76. Promote visitation days for families.
77. Publish your school safety and security plan.
78. Train security personnel in family friendly concepts.
79. Establish a non-threatening sign-in or entrance policy.
80. Send letters home to all families the same day as a problem or negative occurrence in school.
81. Use telecommunications technology to send messages home about school activities.
82. Create family invitations to school functions.
83. Provide incentives for extra pay to increase the number of school staff involved in students activities and family programs.
84. Provide opportunities to expose students to school activities within the school day.
85. Celebrate the history of your school by providing information to all students and families.
86. Ask families to share their experiences if they attended your school.
87. Involve grandparents in school functions.
88. Ask families to share their cultures with students during the school day.
89. Create experiential learning opportunities by using families in the process.
90. Fill the walls of your school with motivation to families and students.
91. Always thank families for their involvement in your school.
92. Handwrite five thank-you notes to families per month.
93. Create opportunities to recognize and reward all students, staff, and their families.
94. Allow students to organize and implement new student orientation programs.
95. Ask businesses to help you promote family involvement.
96. Find ten business persons to provide mentorship to your school.
97. Make sure your school governance council has a business liaison.
98. Create a budget for all school assemblies.
99. Increase by 20 percent the number of opportunities for families and teachers to communicate.
100. Believe that family involvement improves the achievement of every student.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

This tool can be used to develop an action plan, to plan activities for staff and families, and to set priorities for the school improvement team, school council, or other committees.

Dear Families:

We want our school to be the best it can be. Please fill out this survey and tell us what you think are the school's strong points and what you think could be better. Your comments and ideas will be very welcome. If you would like to help tally and analyze the results, please let us know.

---The Family and Community Involvement Action Team

Caring Environment

1. When I walk into this school, I feel welcome.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
2. I am treated with respect at this school.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
3. This school respects my cultural heritage.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
4. Students at my child's school are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
5. I feel welcome at PTA/parent group meetings.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
6. I have a good working relationship with my child's teacher.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
7. I can talk to the school principal when I need to.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
8. This school has a clear process for addressing my concerns.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never
9. If the school can't help me, I know they will refer me to someone who can.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

Communication

10. My child's teacher lets me know right away if my child is having a problem with (circle all that apply):
Behavior Fitting in with other students Homework Special projects Tests
11. It's easy to get a translator if I need one.
 Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

12. Staff at my child's school consult me and other families before making important decisions.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

13. I understand the rules and requirements about student dress, language, and behavior.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

Student Progress

14. My child's teacher keeps me well informed about how my child is doing in school.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

15. I understand the standards my child is supposed to meet.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

16. My child's teacher and the school give me useful information about how to improve my child's progress.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

17. At this school, students feel challenged to do their best.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

Satisfaction

18. I am very satisfied with the quality of this school.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

19. I would recommend this school to family and friends with children.

- Always Almost always Sometimes Rarely Never

What grade is your child in? List all if you have more than one child in the school.

My child is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian/White | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin American/Hispanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native American | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

What is the school doing that is most helpful to you as a parent?

Share one thing that you wish the school would do to improve the learning experience for you and your child.

Thank you for your participation.

Please return this survey to: _____

Survey Credit to Anne Henderson and Scott Broetzmann

Building Family-Friendly Schools

“Schools must become places where families feel wanted and recognized for their strengths and potential.”
(Ballen & Moles, 1994)

Family-friendly schools create a climate in which every characteristic of the school is open and helpful. These family-friendly schools make every effort to build partnerships with all families, not just those that are most involved. Use this checklist to determine how family-friendly your school is, as well as how you can increase its friendliness in a way that is reflective of the cultures and languages it serves.

Practices for creating a family-friendly school environment	Yes	No
Create and publicly post a family-school-community partnership policy or mission statement that provides the philosophical framework for all family-school-community activities.		
Establish policies and practices that acknowledge and support traditional and nontraditional families, as well as those with differing schedules and commitments.		
Create an open-door policy and climate that is responsive to parents and their concerns. (If for safety reasons it is necessary to lock some doors, be sure that families understand this and know the procedure for calling and being met at the front door.)		
Set school calendars, when possible, to accommodate major community events, activities and ceremonies.		
Create a front office atmosphere that makes people feel welcome		
Greet families with a smile and warm welcome.		
Have parent friendly information available in English and translated into other languages as necessary.		
Create a comfortable, clean place to sit, meet and access resources.		
Hire bilingual staff to serve as interpreters.		
Recognize that families have different learning styles and require that you vary the way information is shared.		
Arrange for flexibility in routine tasks such as registration and orientation (on-line options, telephone options, day and evening hours etc.)		
School staff who are successful in engaging family members share the following qualities		
Recognize that parent’s play a crucial role in their child’s learning.		
Always treat parents with respect.		
Demonstrate professionalism and confidence.		
Demonstrate concern for students in all interactions with parents.		

How Can We Improve? _____

Adapted from Ballen and Moles (1994)

Standard 2: Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.

Overview

This module emphasizes the value of communication between home and school that is ongoing, two-way and meaningful. It also points to communication as the foundation of solid partnerships and the fact that when parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved and students make greater progress.

Research Link

Research suggests that communication is effective when educators:

- communicate with families about school programs and student progress in thoughtful, clear and productive ways; and
- create two-way communication from school to home and from home to school, so that families can easily keep in touch with teachers, administrators, counselors and other families. (Epstein, 2002)

The quality of teacher and parent interaction contributes to student achievement:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Make it Positive: | Teachers most often communicate with parents when the student misbehaves, yet parents also want to know when their child is doing well. This helps parents be more responsive when extra effort or modifications need to be made. |
| Make it Practical: | By helping parents understand the curriculum, they will be better able to support their child's academic achievement. Make specific suggestions about what parents can do to help their child manage difficulties they are having with schoolwork and help them build their child's strengths. |
| Make it Personal: | Collaboration between parents and teachers is enhanced when parents read or hear something personal about their child. Include specific examples and be as detailed as possible. |
| Make it Accessible: | By meeting families in their own natural environment, rather than only at the school, educators are seen as reaching out to families and acknowledging them as partners. |

Teaching Practices to Improve Communication

Epstein (2002) suggests the following ideas about effective school-home communication.

- Make sure that memos and notices are written so that all parents can read and understand them.
- Communications from school to home should be:
 - simple and readable
 - jargon-free and
 - in the language spoken by the family.
- Communications can be done:
 - in print form
 - via e-mail, by phone
 - through TV, radio and newspaper
 - at extra curricular activities, and
 - in other creative ways.
- Sponsor program or community events that allow educators and parents to interact socially in addition to standard parent-teacher conferences or school/program meetings.
- Implement feedback opportunities for parents and family members such as surveys on current program issues or special parent guest columns in the school newsletter.

Kansas Professional Education Standards

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5. The educator has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and **community** diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and **community** resources into instruction.

Performance

5. The educator seeks to understand students' families cultures, and **communities**, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (drawing explicit connections between subject matter and **community** matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures).
6. The educator brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and **community** experiences and cultural norms.

Standard 7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.

Knowledge

2. The educator knows how to use contextual considerations (e.g., instructional materials; individual student interests, needs, and aptitudes; and **community** resources in planning instruction to create an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences.

Standard 10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all student's' learning and well-being.

Knowledge

1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger **community** context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.

2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., **family** circumstances, **community** environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

Performance

2. The educator consults with **parents**, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other **community** agencies.

3. The educator identifies and uses **community** resources to foster learning for all students.

4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and **community** situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.

Standard 13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Knowledge

4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher's interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and members of the **community**.

6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and **parents**.

Performance

1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and **community** members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.

Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric

Use this rubric to help evaluate how well you communicate with families. Think about where you see yourself in the process and strategies you use to improve communication by marking the box that most clearly matches what you are doing now.

Improving Communication			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Communication with families includes one-way and two-way communication processes.</p>	<p>I am not aware of strategies for two-way communication.</p> <p>I communicate with families primarily through one-way communication such as memos, newsletters and sign-off sheets.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of strategies for one-way and two-way communication.</p> <p>I make an effort to communicate with families. I ask for parental input to enhance instruction and I avoid educational jargon.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively seek opportunities for one-way and two-way communication by integrating the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I create a welcoming and safe environment where parents feel comfortable to discuss issues of concern. — I use different forms of communication (e-mail, chapter house/community meeting presentations, newsletters, telephone, weekly folders, home visits, surveys, public service announcements, newspaper ads). — I ask for parental input to enhance instruction. — I avoid educational jargon. — I encourage immediate contact between home and school when issues (positive and negative) arise. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Communication is varied and honors family differences, individual needs and cultural preferences.</p>	<p>I have limited knowledge of the varied communications styles of the families served at the school.</p> <p>I seldom consider linguistic and cultural preferences of families when communicating with them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I use a variety of strategies that are sensitive to the needs of diverse families.</p> <p>I make an effort to honor family differences, individual needs and cultural preferences when communicating and interacting with families.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively build my knowledge of families' cultural differences, individual needs and preferences, by integrating the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I encourage parents to share information such as student strengths and learning preferences. — I survey families, ask pertinent questions and utilize information gathered. — I provide information in native languages as appropriate. — I make connections to students' cultures and solicit ideas from families. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Improving Communication			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Communication practices are part of ongoing staff development, addressing effective communication with diverse families and using resources in the school and community.</p>	<p>I have limited experience with staff development on communication issues with diverse families.</p> <p>I participate in limited professional development activities and seldom apply new communication strategies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I seek out opportunities for professional development to enhance my communication skills with all families.</p> <p>I attend professional development with an open mind and attempt to integrate new strategies for communicating with families.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively participate in professional development and make systematic attempts to effectively communicate with families by integrating the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I participate in staff development regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of regular, two-way communication with families. — I develop an understanding and sensitivity to changing families and cultural differences. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Information exchange involves families when setting student expectations and goals, using the Kansas Content Standards and Benchmarks.</p>	<p>I provide families with minimal information about the school's instructional program or individual student needs.</p> <p>I seldom disseminate information to parents about the Kansas Content Standards, the school's instructional program, individual student strengths and needs or the Kansas Standards-Based Assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I regularly communicate with families about student progress and ways that school initiatives can help, while being available to respond to parent questions and concerns.</p> <p>I communicate with parents and provide explanations on a regular basis about Kansas Content Standards, instructional programs, specific student needs and the Kansas Assessments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I communicate with families regarding student progress on a regular basis, eliciting and responding to parent questions and concerns by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I engage families by discussing the Kansas Content Standards. — I share and discuss Kansas Standards-Based Assessment results. — I work with parents to establish academic goals and outcomes for student learning. — I distribute student work for parental review on a regular basis. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Effective communication practices enhance parent-teacher conferences.</p>	<p>I provide information on student progress at parent-teacher conferences.</p> <p>I schedule parent-teacher conferences with parents, but make limited or no effort to involve students or reach out to families who cannot attend.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am prepared and conduct parent-teacher conferences as a joint venture.</p> <p>I work with each family to schedule parent-teacher conferences and am prepared to share and discuss information on topics such as testing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am well prepared and maintain two-way communication with families during parent/teacher conferences by using the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I conduct parent conferences and accommodate needs such as varied schedules and language translation. — I explain the purpose of the conference and goals for parent participation. — I provide opportunities to meet with families who cannot attend conferences. — I follow up in a timely manner as needed. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Teacher Reflection

What will I do to improve my communication skills?

Reflect on your current practices in each of the elements highlighted in the left column. Develop a plan for improvement which includes support needed, how strategies will be implemented and how you will know if each element has been accomplished (Evidence of Mastery). Use the resources provided in this module to support your efforts.

Communication Elements	Plans for Improvement	Evidence of Mastery
I communicate with families in a meaningful way, using one-way and two-way methods.		
I communicate with families in ways that honor family differences, individual needs and cultural preferences.		
I inform families of student expectations, including the Kansas Content Standards and Benchmarks.		
I communicate with families regularly and obtain feedback from students and families in a way that enhances student learning and understanding.		
I carefully plan parent-teacher conferences.		

Examining Assumptions about Families

Effective communication between home and school is the foundation of a solid partnership. When families and educators practice effective communication, positive relationships develop and students make greater progress. Effective communication does not happen by accident. Teachers and administrators must be diligent in making sure communication is meaningful and positive and that teachers practice communication skills such as good listening techniques, kindness, tact, empathy and a true understanding of parent-child relationships.

Positive Assumptions Yield Positive Results

It is important to examine assumptions about families and understand that for the home/school partnership to be effective, the following concepts must be adopted.

- ***Assume all parents and families love their children.***
Many family structures exist and all are legitimate. Parents or guardians may be absent from home or school for a variety of reasons, but this does not diminish their love and caring. Acknowledge the changes in what was once known as the traditional family structure.
- ***Assume all children can and will learn and that all families have strengths to share.***
Also assume that parents can learn new techniques in working with their children.
- ***Assume all families want a positive school experience for their children.***
Trust them and assume that they will work to ensure positive experiences from their end. Both parents and educators are committed to the nurturing, development and progress of children. Teachers must believe that parents and families play a critical role in a child's development.
- ***Respect parents and families and communicate that respect.***
Tone of voice, body language, a teacher's enthusiasm, facial expressions, word choice and how long we make people wait all communicate respect or lack of it. Many family members have personal, work, health or other problems that we know nothing about. Avoid being judgmental and give parents the benefit of the doubt.
- ***Recognize that schools and homes have shared goals.***
Parents and families have important perspectives of their children. Expect all parents and families to partner with you in the educational process. Clarify your expectations from the beginning. Help parents to understand their role in the educational process by:
 - asking parents what they want or need from their relationship with the school;
 - determining together, what you both need and expect from the student;
 - defining what those high expectations are; and
 - inviting them to attend professional development activities.
- ***Make sure parents feel welcome when they come to school.***
Ensure that the school has a parent handbook or volunteer manual, training procedures, parking spaces and a parent room so that parents can be welcomed and know they have an important place and role in the school.
 - Be specific about parent roles, tasks and schedules.
 - Thank and recognize parents regularly.
 - Enlist parents to help reach other parents, but don't abdicate responsibility to one group.

Respect and Celebrate the Diversity that Students and Families Bring to School

Cultural differences are valuable to student learning and should be celebrated at school.

1. Make use of local expertise, especially elders as co-educators, whenever local language and cultural knowledge is addressed in the curriculum or local skills are used as examples.
2. Make every effort to utilize locally relevant curriculum materials with which students can identify, including materials prepared by local Native authors.
3. Participate in local and regional language immersion camps to learn and hear traditional language, cultural ways and their meaning in contemporary life.
4. Ask a parent, elder or community member to help you create a language immersion environment in your classroom.
5. Recognize and validate all aspects of the knowledge students bring with them and assist them in personal and cultural affirmations.
6. Provide enough flexibility in scheduling family participation so everyone is able to fully share. Provide enough advance notice for family members to make the necessary preparations to attend.
7. Be patient when students make mistakes speaking English and encourage their efforts.

Don't Teach Me My Culture, Use My Culture to Teach Me

Making Parent-Teacher Conferences Meaningful

Parent-teacher conferences are a good time to share information, develop personal relationships and welcome families into their child's school life. Being prepared and having goals for the meeting can help the conference run smoothly for everyone.

Use these questions to gather information from families prior to the parent-teacher conference.

Should conferences be student led?

Teachers in Kansas are beginning to have students lead parent-teacher conferences. Students are taught how to talk about what they have been working on, share their best work and improvement goals and address what assistance they need to make specific improvements in their schoolwork or behavior.

Should parents come prepared?

A parent-teacher conference can flow smoothly if parents know what to expect and what their role is. It is helpful for them to identify questions they want to ask and what kind of information they can share that would be helpful to the teacher. Parents should involve their children in this planning process.

What preparations should I make?

It is helpful to have at least two positive remarks to share about each student, actual student work, detailed information on grades and how the student can improve, specific feedback on student skills that need support and handouts on what parents can do at home to help. Prepare about two or three questions you would like to ask the family that would support the child. Ask about strategies they know work at home that you could apply in the classroom. Families often appreciate information about topics of interest or concern to them. For example, middle school years are often challenging for parents and information on student self-perception, changes in the adolescent brain and what kinds of boundaries parents need to set may be helpful for parents.

Planning for Parent-Teacher Conferences

On the following pages are some sample forms you can share with families at least two weeks before parent-teacher conferences. They can be used as a springboard for planning and discussion. Adapt them to suit your needs.

Our Parent-Teacher Conference

Child's Name: _____ Parent's Names: _____
Teacher's Name: _____ Grade Level: _____
Conference Date: _____ Time: _____

Things I Want To Talk About

Please fill this out this form before our meeting and bring it with you.

A. What I think my son/daughter does well at home:

B. What I think my son/daughter does well at school:

C. Questions I would like to ask:

D. One issue I would like to discuss:

About My Child

Ask your child what he or she would like to have you talk about or what he or she would like you to know.

1. Important things in my child's life I think you should know about:

2. Talk to your child. Ask him/her questions like: What do you like about school?

What do you dislike about school? _____

Is there anything you would like me to ask or tell your teacher?

3. Other questions or concerns my spouse, partner or family members and/or I have:

After the Conference

1. Talk about it with your child. Praise your child's strengths.
2. Decide how you will follow through with any plan that you and your child have agreed upon with the teacher.
3. Start a folder about your child. Include in it:
 - Report cards
 - Samples of work
 - Notes from the teacher
 - Test scores
4. Make a calendar and mark:
 - Meetings
 - Important events
 - Social events at your child's school
5. Check your child's class work and homework every day.
6. Keep talking with the teacher to discuss your child's progress.

Action Plan: Ways we can work together to ensure my child's success. (Complete this form with the teacher at the conference).

A. What the teacher will do at school:

B. What we will do at home:

C. How we will check our progress (notes, telephone call, e-mail, follow-up conference, etc.):

Parent and Child Rights in Special Education

Use this information, from the Kansas State Department of Education's Special Education website, www.kansped.org to review the rights of children in Special Education.

What Is Special About Special Education?

Special education is instruction designed specifically to meet the unique needs of children with exceptionalities—those who have one or more disabilities as defined by federal law *, or in the state of Kansas who are determined to be gifted. It is important to note that not all students who have a disability or who are struggling qualify for special education. To be eligible for special education or related services, the child must meet two requirements. First, he or she must be found to have a qualifying exceptionality. In addition, the nature of the exceptionality must be such that it directly affects his or her opportunity or ability to learn and progress in the educational program or environment provided for the general student population. Special education and related services are designed to help a child learn the information and skills that other children are learning.

An Overview of the Special Education Process

Every child is special because he or she is a unique individual. In the United States, we provide a free, public education to every child. Schools provide a general curriculum designed to meet the needs of most children and prepare them to function independently as adults and participate in their community. Special education services are provided to those students who, because of exceptionalities, need additional support in order to learn and attain these same goals. It is also the goal of special education to provide services and supports to students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) along side students without disabilities. Decisions about a child's program and/or placement are not made lightly or easily. It takes a team using their combined knowledge and expertise to make decisions that are in the best interest of the child. A specific process is followed and you, the parent, are an essential part of the team. The child is also included whenever possible and must be invited to participate if he or she is 14 or older. In order to better understand your role and your rights in the decisions made about your child, it may be helpful to first take a look at how the special education process works in general.

Step 1 - Pre-referral/Referral Interventions

The child is referred for consideration of the possible need for special education and/or related services. Referrals can come from the school or parents. Local school districts must provide screening and appropriate interventions through a Student Assistance Team (SAT) child study process before referring a child for a full special education evaluation unless a student has an obvious disability or a serious and urgent problem.

Step 2 - Initial Evaluation

The child is evaluated. This may involve formal testing, observations or even outside specialists. Written parental consent must be given before an initial evaluation or a re-evaluation.

Step 3 – Determine Eligibility

Based on all the information gathered, a group of qualified professionals and the parent decide whether the child is eligible for special education or related services. A student may be found to be eligible because he or she has a defined exceptionality that directly affects learning or found to be ineligible because either the exceptionality does not directly affect learning or there is no concrete evidence that an exceptionality exists.

Step 4 – IEP Development

If the child is found eligible, a team is assembled and a meeting held to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is the master plan for the child's special education and any related services, such as speech therapy or physical therapy that the child needs to benefit from instruction. Parents must be invited to the meeting and to participate as members of the team.

Step 5 – IEP Implementation

Parental consent is required before beginning any special education or related services.

Step 6 – IEP Review/Revision

The IEP must be formally reviewed at least once a year, more often if necessary, or as requested by the school or parent.

Step 7 – Reevaluation

The child must be re-evaluated at least every three years (unless you and the school agree that a specific reevaluation is not necessary).

Step 8 – Determine if Eligible

Eligibility must be reexamined and re-determined after a re-evaluation as in Steps 2 and 3.

Step 9 – Exit from Services or Continued Services

If the child is found to still be eligible, the team begins again at Step 4. If not, he or she exits the program.

*Federal law (IDEA-Part B 34 CFR Sec.300.7) defines thirteen categories of disability: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disability orthopedic impairment, other health impairment (including ADD, ADHD), serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment, including blindness.

Progress Report Template

Districts, schools or classrooms might like to consider using this template to develop progress reports that can enhance parent-teacher communication by providing parents with a record of their child's performance. Progress report formats need to be teacher friendly and easy to complete for an entire class. Parents and students appreciate this information and can use it as a guide towards improvement or encouragement.

Teacher's Name:		
Student's Name:		Date:
Core Subjects	Grade	Missing Assignments
Reading	_____ % A...B...C...D...F	
Language Arts	_____ % A...B...C...D...F	
Math	_____ % A...B...C...D...F	
Science	_____ % A...B...C...D...F	
Comments: (All that apply are checked)		
<input type="checkbox"/> does good work <input type="checkbox"/> making progress <input type="checkbox"/> missing assignments <input type="checkbox"/> working hard <input type="checkbox"/> absences or tardiness affecting work <input type="checkbox"/> turning his/her work in late <input type="checkbox"/> works well with others <input type="checkbox"/> socializing is affecting their work <input type="checkbox"/> has had detention		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please contact me about your child's lack of progress in the following area(s)... <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> Reading Language Arts Math Science </div>		
Notes:		

Please sign and have your child return this Progress Report to me. If you have any questions or concerns please write them on the "Notes" section of this document or call me at _____. Thank you.

_____ Teacher initials

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Overview

This section will provide teachers with tools to support student success. It will also provide teachers with strategies to:

- improve homework completion;
- engage parents as partners in their child's education;
- assist students with time management;
- understand and incorporate Kansas Content Standards and Benchmarks; and
- integrate language and culture of students into instruction.

Research Link

Research reinforces the idea that valuing and supporting parents as key figures in their children's learning often provides the following benefits (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Rodriguez-Jansom and Van Norris 2002.)

Results for Students:

- Improvement in skills, abilities and completion of homework
- Development of positive attitudes toward school and self
- Cultivation of academic identity

Results for Families:

- Improvement of communication with children
- Increase in understanding of school requirements
- Increase awareness of student expectations based on Kansas Content Standards
- Improvement of communication with teachers and principals

Results for Teachers:

- Engagement of families in homework assignments
- Recognition of the many ways in which ALL parents can motivate and reinforce student learning
- Improvement of communication with families
- Increased value of student's home language and culture
- Engagement of parents as partners in the education of their children

Practices to Enhance Student Learning at Home

- Include families in learning about the Kansas Content Standards that guide instruction in their child's classroom.
- Provide clear information for families regarding expectations for students in each subject at each grade level, as well as information regarding student placement, student services and other programs.
- Regularly assign homework that requires students to discuss and interact with their parents about what they are learning in class.
- Create opportunities for families to participate in setting student goals each year and in reviewing progress toward these goals.
- Assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations and perform well on assessments.

Kansas Professional Education Standards

This module, *Supporting Student Success*, addresses Kansas' Professional Education Standards 3, 7, 10, and 13. The professional education standards are based on adaptations made by Kansas to the standards developed by member states of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The professional education standards are used by schools, colleges and departments of education as they build their professional education coursework to accompany all the endorsement areas. Every teacher preparation program in Kansas is responsible to ensure that all teacher candidates are competent in the knowledge and performance of the professional education standards.

Standard 3: The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.

Knowledge

4. The educator understands how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, **family**, and **community** values.
5. The educator has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and **community** diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and **community** resources into instruction.

Performance

5. The educator seeks to understand students' families cultures, and **communities**, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (drawing explicit connections between subject matter and **community** matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures).
6. The educator brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and **community** experiences and cultural norms.

Standard 7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.

Knowledge

2. The educator knows how to use contextual considerations (e.g., instructional materials; individual student interests, needs, and aptitudes; and **community** resources in planning instruction to create an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences.

Standard 10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all student's' learning and well-being.

Knowledge

1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger **community** context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.
2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., **family** circumstances, **community** environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

Performance

2. The educator consults with **parents**, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other **community** agencies.
3. The educator identifies and uses **community** resources to foster learning for all students.
4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and **community** situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.

Standard 13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Knowledge

4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher's interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and members of the **community**.
6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and **parents**.

Performance

1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and **community** members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.

Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric

Use this rubric to help evaluate how well you enhance student learning by collaborating with families. Think about where you see yourself in the process and strategies on how to enhance student learning by marking the box that most clearly matches what you are doing now.

Enhancing Student Learning			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Information on how to access school and community resources and how to monitor schoolwork at home is provided.</p>	<p>I am somewhat aware of parent educational needs and the challenges of involving families with curriculum related decisions.</p> <p>I am unaware of resources available in the community to support parent education, homework help and services.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of parent educational needs and strategies for designing and organizing homework schedules that involve families in their child's schoolwork.</p> <p>I am aware of some community resources to support families with educational needs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively develop and disseminate information to families on how parents can help students at home (encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring and discussing) by using the following strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I encourage and support student involvement in a range of school and community sponsored extracurricular and after-school activities <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>School and homework assignments are considerate of the cultures and languages of families.</p>	<p>I am somewhat aware of the languages and cultures of families.</p> <p>I am beginning to explore my own biases and the effect one's cultural expectations have on teaching practices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of the language and culture of families and make an effort to design homework assignments that are sensitive to the needs of diverse families.</p> <p>I recognize that regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, income or lifestyle preferences, most families have high aspirations and concern for their children's success.</p> <p>I am beginning to build trust and recognize that it takes time to build trust with families.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively build on cultural values of families and facilitate accommodations such as transportation, interpreters, cultural diversity, individual needs and preference with my awareness of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I am aware that economic conditions may affect the extent and type of involvement among some families. — I am aware of possible linguistic, cultural, economic and educational barriers affecting family involvement that minority and low-income families may have and how schools can help to overcome these barriers. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Enhancing Student Learning			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Ongoing staff development is provided which focuses on reflection and effective practices that provide information to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum related activities.</p>	<p>I have limited background training and/or professional development in the area of parental involvement.</p> <p>I am beginning to increase participation in professional development and reflection on effective parental involvement practices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I have some background in training and professional development in the area of parental involvement.</p> <p>I am implementing some practices that provide information to families that inform them about their child as a learner.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively participate as part of a school team to strengthen the capacity of school staff to work well with families by engaging in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I participate in opportunities for staff members to learn about successful approaches to engaging families in their child's learning — I regularly assign homework that requires students to discuss and interact with their parents about what they are learning. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Information is provided to families and students on required skills and expectations in all content areas based on the Kansas Content Standards and Benchmarks.</p>	<p>Standards are available to me and not visible to students or families.</p> <p>I make some effort to share information about student expectations and school, district and statewide requirements for curriculum and assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Standards and testing information have limited visibility in school and are more visible to me than to families.</p> <p>I make efforts to inform families about student expectations, testing schedules and instructional practices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I provide information about the Kansas Content Standards and they are clearly visible in the school and classroom. I also implement the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations and perform well on assessments. — I provide Information regarding expectations for students in all subjects and grade levels, including Information regarding student placement, services and optional programs. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Ongoing and specific information is provided to parents on how to assist students with skills that need improvement.</p>	<p>I maintain limited data on student strengths and needs.</p> <p>I provide occasional information to families on their child as a learner.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I maintain some data on student achievement and use this information to inform instructional practices.</p> <p>I regularly inform parents and students of student achievement progress.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I maintain and use data to inform instructional needs for students by using the following strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I regularly inform parents and students of student achievement progress through regular reports and conferences and use this information to strengthen my instructional practices. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Teacher Reflection

What will I do to guide parents in supporting student success at home?

Reflect on your current practices in each of the elements highlighted. Develop a plan for improvement which includes support needed, how strategies will be implemented and how you will know if each element has been accomplished. Use the resources provided in this module to support your efforts.

Learning at Home Elements	Plans for Improvement	Evidence of Mastery
I provide information to families on parental education opportunities and on how to help at home by encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring and discussing.		
I assign homework assignments that is considerate of the cultures and languages of families which includes appropriate interactions with the community.		
I participate in staff development and reflect on effective practices. I communicate with families about how to help students at home, other curriculum related activities, setting academic goals and selecting courses and programs.		
I provide information to families and students on required skills and expectations in all content areas based on the Kansas Content Standards and Benchmarks for grades K-12.		
I reach out to families and take extra steps to make it possible for them to get involved in school as well as at home.		

Sample Letter to Parents about Homework

Use this sample letter to support parents with student homework.

Date _____

Dear Parents or Guardians:

I am _____, your child's _____ grade teacher. I am excited about having your child in my classroom this year and I am looking forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a successful year. To help all students succeed with homework, I have developed a Homework Policy. I will allow time each day to define the homework expectations and teach the students how to do homework successfully. All written homework will be completed in class for the first _____ weeks.

During this time, your child's homework will be to bring home, share and explain these assignments to you. This will reinforce what took place during the school day.

All students will also have a reading assignment each night. I will send home details about the at-home reading assignments. If at any time you are unclear about an assignment or have questions about your child's work, please contact me at _____ in the evening. Feel free to drop into the class anytime to observe or participate. Parents and teachers working together will ensure that all students are successful learners!

As part of this new policy, I would like to encourage each student to choose a homework buddy, someone they can call if they have a question about an assignment, forget an assignment or perhaps to quiz each other. Please indicate below whether or not it is okay for your child to share his/her phone number with a homework buddy. Please return the form below.

I look forward to working with you this year.

Sincerely,

_____ has my permission to have a homework buddy. Our home phone number is _____.

Child's Name _____

Signature

Date

How Parents Can Help with Homework

Use this tool for discussion points with parents at an open house, during a telephone call or parent-teacher conference, or in a newsletter or other culturally appropriate manner to help them understand and discuss ways in which they can support their child's learning through homework

How much time should my child spend each night on homework?

Most educators agree that:

- for students in grades K-2, homework is more effective when it does not exceed 10-20 minutes each school day;
- older students, in grades 3-6, can handle 30-60 minutes a day; and
- in junior and senior high school, the amount of homework will vary by subject. Most older students will also have homework projects, such as research papers and oral reports that may have deadlines weeks away. They may need help organizing assignments and planning work times to make sure homework is ready to turn in on time.

Your children's teachers can tell you how much time they expect students to spend on homework. Teachers must assign homework that is meaningful and must be aware of the amount of time it will take when you add up all of the homework that is assigned in all of the student's subjects.

Ask your principal if your school or school district has a homework policy. If it does, make sure that you and your children know and understand that policy.

How can I help with homework?

There are several ways you can help:

- Send your children to school each day, well-rested, fed and with a positive outlook.
- Take an active interest in your child's schooling. Ask questions about what happened at school each day and how your child feels about it.
- Try not to let your own negative experiences keep you from supporting and encouraging your child's learning. Let them know how much you care about education by continuing your own learning and impress its importance upon them.
- If possible, set up a quiet, comfortable study area with good lighting and the school supplies your child needs. This can be almost anyplace in your home; you don't need a special room
- Set a family "quiet time" where you and your child can work together on homework, reading, letter writing and playing games.
- Allow your child to study in the way that helps him/her learn best. For example, some children work best when they're lying on the floor with background music playing.
- Make homework a daily activity and help your child develop good homework habits.

Can my child do homework while listening to music or watching television?

Some students can work with a radio or CD on, while others must work in silence. Television can be a big problem. Many teachers ask that the television be turned off while the student is doing homework.

Research shows that American children, on average, spend far more time watching television than doing homework. It's best to leave the television off during homework time.

How much help should I give?

This depends on the child's grade level and study habits. Younger students often need extra homework help. First, make sure the child understands the directions. Do a few problems together, then watch your child do a few. When your child is finished, check the work. Praise right answers and show how to correct mistakes.

Avoid doing your child's homework for him/her. Teachers need to see where your child is having trouble.

One of the most helpful things you can do is to show your child that you think homework is important. Many children today do their homework while their parents are at work. When you are at home, ask to see your child's homework and discuss it with him or her. Ask questions and be supportive.

What if I don't understand my child's assignment?

Today's students may have subjects that you never had or that you didn't like when you were in school. You can still help your child by praising progress, getting help from a public library or homework hot line and talking with the teachers. You don't have to be an expert in a subject to help with homework. There are many places to go for help.

Do teachers really want me to ask them questions about homework?

Teachers want children to learn and want parents and families to be involved in their children's education. When you stay in touch with your child's teachers, they can ease your worries and offer homework tips and ideas on how you can help your child learn. Meet each of your child's teachers and ask what kind of homework will be given. This is very important, even if you have children in middle or high school.

Early in the school year and regularly, ask teachers about your child's subjects and homework policies. For example, ask what books your child will be using, what kinds of assignments will be given and when the teacher is available to answer questions.

My child tries hard, but still has problems with homework. What can I do to help?

There could be a number of reasons for your child's trouble. Suggest that the child ask the teacher for extra help before or after school. Tell your child to ask the teacher about homework or anything else he or she doesn't understand. Set a time to meet with the teacher to discuss the problem. You may need to meet again during the year to check on how your child is doing.

If your child understands the work but is still having trouble, ask for a meeting with the teacher. The two of you should work out a plan to meet your child's needs.

My child seems bored by homework. Is this normal?

It's normal for students not to want to do their homework. But if your child always seems bored or unhappy, you need to try to find out the reason by talking with your child. Then talk with the teacher to come up with a solution.

Teachers want students to learn from homework. Tell the teacher if your child thinks the homework is too easy or too hard. This will help the teacher match the homework with your child's ability and skill level.

When I ask my child if she has homework, she says that it's finished or that there is none. How do I make sure my child is really doing her work?

Make studying, as well as homework, a daily habit. Students can always review lessons, read a book or work on practice exercises during quiet time, even if they don't have homework. Ask younger children to show you their homework so that you can check it, sign it and date it. Teachers like to see that adults have checked children's homework. If your child's school has a homework hot line, call it to check for the day's assignments. If your child often has no homework to do, you should let the teacher know. Encourage your child to use a daily agenda or assignment notebook even if the class, as a whole, does not use one.

Don't ask your child if he or she has homework each night — assume that there is homework or studying to do.

What if my child still isn't turning homework in?

State clearly and strongly to your child that you expect homework to be done and turned in to the teacher. Let your child know you will not tolerate homework that is incomplete.

Don't wait until grades come out to find out if the problem has been solved. You may need weekly contact with the teacher until your child develops good homework habits.

Should I reward my child for doing homework or for getting good grades?

Children like to know when they've done a good job. Your approval means a lot. Praise your child's work often. Show pride when your child does his/her best, regardless of the grade.

Be careful about giving money or gifts as rewards. Most teachers want parents to reward students' work in other ways. The next time your child does a good job on a school project, plan a special family activity as a reward.

Assisting Families in Helping High School Students

Plan for the Future

Use this tool as a guide for career planning activities in your classroom or school.

Counselors or teachers can:

- Hold monthly workshops for upper-grade-level students and their families. Each workshop topic could be devoted to a specific aspect of college planning.
- Plan a series of workshops for lower-grade-level students and their families during the spring when students are making their course selections for the next school year.
- Plan a series of events for freshmen and their families to explore future careers by working with local businesses. These events could involve job shadowing, job exploration and course selection. Students have a limited understanding of what most jobs actually entail, so it is hard for them to make informed decisions about the future. These kinds of events help them gain a more “realistic” picture of the work they think they’d like to do.
- Coordinate with the middle school counselors to hold several planning events in the spring for 8th graders and their families. These events might focus on course selection and planning for the future.

PLAN: _____

Teachers can:

- Create special assignments that require students to talk to family members, business owners or others in the community about their futures. For example, students can create research reports for a history class about the difference in work requirements for a job that existed 30 years ago and a similar position today. In math, students can interview former students or older relatives or friends who are college graduates about the costs of college and create a budget for their own goals. In language arts, students can create a special-edition newspaper featuring stories on former students who are now college graduates.

PLAN: _____

Families can:

- Talk to their children on a regular basis to discover what is actually happening in school. Children often reply with, “Nothing” when their parents ask them “What did you do in school today?” But, if asked how a specific test, home work assignment or special event went, the child will give a more informative answer.
- Work with their student to set goals each year. This will require that parents learn about graduation requirements and different graduation plans.

PLAN: _____

Preparing for Tests

Use this tool to help families understand how they can support their child with taking tests.

What should I know about the state tests?

Each spring all Kansas students in grades 3 – 8 are tested in reading and math using the Kansas State Assessments (KSA). The assessments in grades 3-8 are offered in both English and Spanish. All students in grade 10 and 11 must be tested once each in reading and math using the Kansas High School Standards Assessment (KSA). There are two purposes of the Kansas Standards Based Assessment Program: to determine the level at which Kansas students achieve the Kansas Content Standards and to measure the progress of students over time. The Kansas Content Standards tell state educators what concepts, skills, and knowledge students must know.

Why are these tests important when they don't count toward my child's grades?

Standards-based tests are required by the Federal government under *NCLB* and are used to rate each school in the state. Students who are able to show on the test that they have learned the concepts, skills and knowledge for their grade level, as explained in the Kansas Content Standards, are classified as "meets standard" or proficient. Each year schools must increase the percent of students who reach proficiency on the state tests. Federal law states that by 2014, all students are to be "proficient." If a school does not meet the required percent of students scoring at proficiency, then (after one warning year) the school is placed in the school improvement cycle and must follow state guidelines to increase the percentage of students meeting proficiency.

How Can I Help Before the Test?

These are high-stakes tests; however remind your child that these kinds of tests are part of the educational routine. You took them when you were in school and your child will probably take a number of tests throughout his or her school and post- school career. You can do several things to provide support and help create a positive test-taking experience.

- ◇ First and foremost, be sure that your child is in school during the testing sessions. Do not plan any doctor or dental appointments during the test dates. The tests are lengthy and therefore, take several days to administer. You should be informed of the exact test dates each year so that you're sure not to make any other plans during the test period.
- ◇ Most students find the tests to be challenging and some do not understand their purpose. Talk about the upcoming tests. Be positive and let your child know the tests are important and that you are sure s/he will try to do her/his best and will do fine. Let your child know that everyone gets nervous before taking important tests, so s/he is not alone. Let your child know that no one completes all questions correctly. The important thing is to try. If your child has not had experience with this kind of testing, let your child know what is likely to happen.
- ◇ Find out if your child qualifies for special test-taking accommodations. If your child has been identified for special services or has a learning disability, s/he may be allowed to test under special conditions. Your child's teacher or the school's special education coordinator can help you to understand these accommodations better.
- ◇ Know that standards-based assessments are not the type of test that your child can study for. They are a reflection of what your child has been learning during the school year. Your child's teacher, however, is helping to prepare your child with some test taking strategies or "tips" that will help him or her feel more confident and do well on the test. Some of these tips are provided in the next section.

How Can I Help During the Test?

Ideas for helping your child during the testing period:

1. Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep each night. Most children need 8 – 10 hours to be well rested.
2. Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast either at home or at school. A high protein breakfast will ensure that your child does not get hungry during the test and will be the best type of brain food for your child.
3. Some of the test tips your child is probably learning at school that s/he may be encouraged to apply are:
 - ◇ Listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and ask questions about any directions that are unclear.
 - ◇ Pace yourself so that you are sure there is time to finish all of the questions if the test is timed.
 - ◇ Read the entire question and try to answer it before looking at the choices if it is a multiple choice question.
 - ◇ If you don't know the answer, skip that question, mark it on the test paper and come back to it later.
 - ◇ When looking at difficult multiple choice questions, try to eliminate some of the choices and then choose the best answer.
 - ◇ Focus on what makes sense and much of what you have learned will be applied naturally. In math, use estimation and mental math as much as possible. In reading, think about main ideas, the relationships between characters and the flow and sequence of the reading piece.
 - ◇ Try to answer every question, especially open-ended questions.
 - ◇ When answering a question, be sure that the number on the answer sheet matches the number of the question. Keep checking to be sure you're on track.
 - ◇ Keep a positive attitude and if you start to feel nervous, take a few deep breaths.
 - ◇ For questions that are not multiple choice, be sure you answer the questions completely and with detail.
 - ◇ Do not let other test takers distract you. It makes no difference who finishes first or last.
 - ◇ If you finish early, go back and check each answer, but don't change anything unless you are sure. Studies show that the first answer you choose is usually the right one. Finish the questions that you left for last and be sure you have not skipped any.

Ideas for helping your child during the testing period:

4. Talk with your child after each day of testing. Don't let your child be discouraged and share any tips you know that have helped you in the past. Listen to your child and support his or her efforts. If talking about the test seems to add to his or her anxiety, instead think of ways to relieve the stress after each day testing. Take a brisk walk, play a game or encourage a soothing bath. Build in physical activity and downtime throughout the testing week.

How Can I Help All Year Long?

Certainly, preparing for test taking is not something that should only take place right before state mandated tests are administered. Support your child during the entire school year by asking about specific activities and work at school. Keep close contact with teachers and make sure homework and projects are completed. Ask your child's teacher for additional ideas on how you can work with your child at home. As stated above, these are not the kind of tests that one can study for so helping your child develop good work habits will pay off at test taking time.

Standard 4: Speaking Up For Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Overview

The National PTA (2004) shares, “Studies have shown that schools with parents who are involved in decision making and advocacy have higher levels of student achievement and greater public support.” Effective partnerships develop when each partner is respected and empowered to fully participate in the decision making and advocacy process.

This module provides information and ideas on how educators can help strengthen the role of parents/families as advocates in schools and to help them become active participants through collaboration. Specifically, it includes:

- The role of parent organizations, advisory councils, parent advocacy groups and networks;
- The importance of networks for family advocacy and decision making;
- The importance of parents staying informed and trained on critical issues; and
- The role parents need to play in understanding, supporting and participating in the election process.

Research Link

Research has documented that parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy can provide many benefits to all students, families, teachers and administrators. (Epstein et al., 2002).

Students

- Understand that their rights are protected
- Become more aware of families' representation in school decisions
- Benefit from specific policies enacted by parent/school committees

Families

- Gain a voice in school decisions and policies that affect children
- Become aware of school and district policies
- Feel a sense of ownership in their children's school

Teachers and Administrators

- Become aware of the contributions parents can make to school policy developments and educational reform
- Grow to accept and support the equality of parents serving on school committees
- Offer training to parents on decision making and advocacy skills

Teaching Practices to Promote Advocacy

- Make parents aware of school and district policies and practices that affect children.
- Encourage parents to voice any support or concerns on any issue that will affect their family by contacting the school and/or attending PTA, school board or community meetings.
- Encourage and support children to serve in student leadership positions.
- Work with parents to develop a parental involvement policy.
- Encourage parents to vote in local, state and federal elections for public officials that support education.

Kansas Professional Education Standards

This module, *Speaking Up For Every Child*, addresses Kansas' Professional Education Standards 3, 7, 10, and 13. The professional education standards are based on adaptations made by Kansas to the standards developed by member states of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The professional education standards are used by schools, colleges and departments of education as they build their professional education coursework to accompany all the endorsement areas. Every teacher preparation program in Kansas is responsible to ensure that all teacher candidates are competent in the knowledge and performance of the professional education standards.

Standard 3: The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.

Knowledge

4. The educator understands how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, **family**, and **community** values.
5. The educator has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and **community** diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and **community** resources into instruction.

Performance

5. The educator seeks to understand students' families' cultures, and **communities**, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (drawing explicit connections between subject matter and **community** matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures).
6. The educator brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and **community** experiences and cultural norms.

Standard 7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.

Knowledge

2. The educator knows how to use contextual considerations (e.g., instructional materials; individual student interests, needs, and aptitudes; and **community** resources in planning instruction to create an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences.

Standard 10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all student's' learning and well-being.

Knowledge

1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger **community** context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.
2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., **family** circumstances, **community** environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

Performance

2. The educator consults with **parents**, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other **community** agencies.
3. The educator identifies and uses **community** resources to foster learning for all students.
4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and **community** situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.

Standard 13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Knowledge

4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher's interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and members of the **community**.
6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and **parents**.

Performance

1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and **community** members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.

Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric

Use this rubric to help evaluate your and the school's efforts to support advocacy with families. Think about where you see yourself and the school in the process and strategies used on how to support advocacy by marking the box that most clearly matches what you and the school are doing now.

Advocacy			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Support for active parent advocate organizations (PTA, pto, PAC, other committees).</p>	<p>I rely on the PTA/pto to survey volunteers to help with schoolwide activities.</p> <p>I am aware of parent organizations but have limited involvement with them.</p> <p>I view parent advocacy organizations as meddlesome organizations.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of some of the ways parent advocacy groups help schools make decisions.</p> <p>I encourage parents to advocate for their children and participate in advocacy committees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively inform and recruit parents to serve on committees and advocate for all children by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I collaborate with families and encourage them to advocate for their/all children. — I provide information regularly on advocacy organizations. — I participate in training for staff and parents in how to be collaborative partners and provide information on how parents can become effective advocates. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Support for independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.</p>	<p>I have limited awareness of the importance of parent advocacy groups.</p> <p>I only work with other teachers to address improvements and school reform.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of some of the ways parent advocacy groups can help with school improvements.</p> <p>I solicit families to gather input and recommendations for school improvements.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively inform and recruit parents to form independent advocacy groups that address school improvements and school reform issues by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I provide parents with information about school policies, practices and both student and school performance data. — I reach out to include parent leaders from all racial ethnic, socio-economic and other groups to participate in advocacy groups and activities. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Advocacy			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Support for district-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.</p>	<p>I am unaware of why parent/family advocacy groups are important.</p> <p>I consider only those committees with educators to be important.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of some of the reasons advocacy groups need to be involved.</p> <p>I gather information and encourage parents/families to become advocates on district-level committees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I advocate for family community members to be participants in committees and councils by engaging in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I am actively engaged and participate in district-level committees. — I encourage parents to advocate for all students in decisions such as student placement, course selection, setting academic goals and participation in individualized education programs. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Information is provided on school or local elections for school representatives.</p>	<p>I provide information informally to a few select parents.</p> <p>I provide parents who are involved at the school site with information regarding elected school board officials.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I send correspondence home with students about local elections for school representatives.</p> <p>I ensure that all parents receive information about school board candidates by sending information home with the students and other communication means.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I provide information regarding school board elections by engaging in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I send information home with students asking for parents' signature notifying that information was read. — I serve as an advocate, encouraging parents to vote in school board and policy elections. — I make sure critical information about school issues is disseminated. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Support for networks to link all families with parent representatives is provided.</p>	<p>I am aware of parent advocacy networks, but do not see a supporting role for the teacher.</p> <p>I don't feel responsible for getting information out to families about parent advocacy activities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of parent advocacy networks and have informally discussed this as a way for parents/families to receive mentoring and information about key issues.</p> <p>I provide information to some families where academic and behavior issues are a concern.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am informed about various advocacy networks and link families with parent representatives by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I provide information to parents at conferences, open house events, and through school-home correspondence. — I treat parent concerns with respect and demonstrate interest in developing solutions. — I promote parent participation on school, district, state and national committees that focus on educational issues. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Teacher Reflection

What will I do to empower parents to be advocates for their own and other children?

Reflect on your current practices in each of the elements highlighted. Develop a plan for improvement which includes support needed, how strategies will be implemented and how you will know if each element has been accomplished (Evidence of Mastery). Use the resources provided in this module to support your efforts.

Promoting Advocacy

Elements	Plans for Improvement	Evidence of Mastery
I and/or the school encourage parents to serve on PTA/pto committees and attend meetings.		
I and/or the school welcome and announce meetings of parent committees and groups.		
I encourage parents/families to serve on district level councils and committees for family and community involvement.		
I and/or the school provide information on school or local elections for school representatives.		
I and/or the school distribute information to link all families with parent representatives.		

How Parents Can Be Advocates for Their Children

Share these ideas with parents who are interested in finding out more about advocating for their children.

The Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities (CCLD) has developed the following tips to help parents advocate for their child. Parents are often the best educational advocates for their children. True advocacy is a positive process, which should build on strengths and challenges of the students. Share this tips sheet with parents who may benefit from the information provided.

Know the rules

All public schools abide by specific laws and regulations, which provide special services for children with learning disabilities who qualify for such services. The criteria for eligibility varies from state to state, but all schools must adhere to a minimum federal standard. To find out the laws in your state and your rights, as a parent, contact your local school district office or the Kansas State Department of Education.

Get to know the people who make decisions about your child's education

Connect with educators and administrators in both casual and formal settings. Talk with your child's teacher on a regular basis. If possible, volunteer in the classroom and help out with school functions. If you have concerns or problems that a teacher cannot or will not address, be willing to follow the chain of command through the school and if necessary, to the district office. Remember that you as a parent have the right to request that the school evaluate your child if you think he or she may have special needs. Be sure that your request is in writing.

Keep records

Parents should maintain an organized file of educational records and assessment information. Take notes during telephone and face-to-face meetings and ask for people's full names and contact information when communicating by phone or by e-mail. In addition, keeping less formal examples of children's academic progress, such as homework papers, projects and writing samples, may be useful in establishing patterns and documenting both abilities and challenges.

Gather Information

Read books and articles on learning, attend conferences and join a parent support group or affiliate organization in your area. Get comfortable with education acronyms and jargon. Ask professionals lots of questions and don't be afraid to ask for clarification if their answers are confusing or complicated.

Communicate Effectively

Come to meetings prepared and know the specific outcomes you want. Be clear, calm and direct when speaking and put things in writing whenever possible. Listen and take time to think about pertinent information. Consider when documentation or data might help your case and present it in an orderly and readable format. While assertiveness and persistence are crucial, anger and aggressiveness can work against you and can damage important relationships.

Know your child's strengths and interests and share them with educators

By highlighting a struggling child's capabilities and talents you not only help professionals know your child as a whole person, you can also assist in identifying learning accommodations.

Emphasize solutions

While there are no miracle cures or magic bullets for all situations, it's important to stress the positive and to help identify ways to improve your child's experience. Once appropriate programs have been identified and agreed upon, make every effort to encourage follow-through.

Focus on the big picture

Simply put, don't sweat the small stuff. Knowing the specifics of a law may be important on one level, but constantly arguing technicalities can ultimately waste time and inhibit rapport. Try not to take things personally and always consider both sides of the story. Details are important, but don't let them get in the way of negotiating the best educational experience for your child.

Involve your child in decision making as early as you can

Mastering self-advocacy skills is one of the keys to becoming a successful adult. Resist the natural urge to pave every road for your child and respect and support your child's need to take informed academic risks.

Access local family advocacy groups

In Kansas, there are several advocacy groups that work to support family concerns. Contact your local PTA/PTO representative or local library for advocacy group information.

Twelve Things Parents Should Know and Expect from Schools

In order for parents to become strong advocates for their children and equal partners in the decision making process they need to know how they can help. Here are twelve things parents should know about and expect from their schools.

1. Your involvement matters a lot.

- Your child is more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher level programs, be promoted and earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills and graduate and go to college.

2. You can be involved in many ways.

- By establishing a learning environment at home for the whole family.
- By volunteering at school and taking part in school activities that promote education.
- By being an advocate for your child and others by urging state and local leaders to establish stronger programs and higher achievement standards.
- By being a decision-maker through taking part in decisions about programs, staffing and policies.

3. The children need you.

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that American students are not doing as well in school as they should.
- Less than one-third are doing well in reading, writing, math, science and other critical subjects.
- Skills needed for success in the 21st century demand that we hold higher expectations for our students.

4. The schools need you.

- One of the major challenges facing schools today is the lack of parent involvement.
- Parent involvement is needed in a variety of areas.

5. You should be told clearly what the learning standards are in each grade.

- Parents and students need to know, at the start of the school year, what is being taught in all subjects.
- Parents need to know how learning will be assessed so they can understand how to help their children.
- Parents should have access to Kansas Content Standards just as teachers and administrators do.

6. You should be told about the school's safety standards and discipline.

- Students need to feel safe in order to learn.
- Parents should know what the school's safety and discipline standards are, how problems are handled, and what the school is doing to ensure safety standards are upheld.

7. You should be informed on a regular basis how your child and your child's school are doing.

- School districts are required to publish parent-friendly report cards every year that show both how students are performing, as well as how the school is performing as a whole.

8. Middle and high school parents should be told what steps should be taken for your child to apply for college.

- Middle school is not too early to begin thinking about what kind of courses your child should be taking if he or she wants to go to college.

9. You should know your options.

- The No Child Left Behind Act has many requirements that schools must meet in order to be in compliance. Ask for this information and ask questions about it.

10. You should be able to get answers to your important questions.

- How do I know my child is safe?
- What is my child expected to know and be able to do in reading, writing, math and other subjects?
- How is learning measured?
- What will the school do to help if my child is behind?
- What can I do to help?

11. You should be treated with respect.

- Educators are hired to work for you and your children.
- You have the right to be treated as an equal partner in your child's education.

12. You're more likely to get what you want for your child if you work with other parents.

- If five parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "Let's have a meeting".
- If ten parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "We'd better listen".
- If twenty-five parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "Our dear friends...."
- If fifty parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "This is a powerful organization".

Rate Your School

“Parents and educators depend on shared authority in decision making systems to foster parental trust, public confidence and mutual support of each other’s efforts in helping students succeed. The involvement of parents, as individuals or as representative of others, is crucial in the collaborative decision making process on the issues ranging from curriculum and course selection to discipline policies and overall school reform measures,” (National PTA, 2002).

Use this checklist to rate your school on how it involves families in the decision making process. Share the results with the PTA/PTO or other parent groups.

Rating Scale

- Excellent** Activity occurs each year and is consistently implemented throughout the school year
- Good** Activity occurs sometimes during the school year, but is not consistently practiced
- Fair** Activity occurs rarely during the school year
- Poor** Activity does not occur at the school

Does the school:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Provide workshops for parents that teach them to influence decisions, raise issues or concerns and /or resolve problems?				
2. Encourage PTA/PTO or other parent groups that respond to issues of interest to parents?				
3. Include and give equal representation to parents on decision making and advisory committees?				
4. Provide parents with current information regarding school policies, practices and both student and school performance data?				
5. Encourage and facilitate active parent participation in the decisions that affect students (e.g. student placements, course selection and individualized education programs (IEPs)?				
6. Treat parent concerns with respect?				
7. Promote parent participation on school, district, state and national committees that focus on education issues?				
8. Provide training for staff and parents in how to be collaborative partners and share decision making in areas such as policy, budget, school reform safety and hiring personnel?				
9. Provide parents with an opportunity to participate in professional development activities (e.g. workshops, or technology training)?				

How Well Does Your School Support Parents as Advocates?

Checklist

Explaining the School to Families

1. The school handbook and website show how the school is organized and provide information for contacting school staff.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
2. All families get information about academic and after-school programs for students and how to apply them.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
3. There is a clear written process for resolving complaints or problems, and all families know how to use it.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
4. Teachers contact each family at least once a month with an update on their child and send graded student work home for review once a week.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
5. Parents can easily contact teachers and other staff with information and questions about their children.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
6. If your school is a middle or high school, each family knows an adult in the school they can contact about their child.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
7. At workshops and other information sessions, parents learn how to ask the right questions about their children's progress and placement.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
8. The school confers with families about which program is best for their children and gives them the information they need to make the best choice.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
9. The school actively recruits students for gifted and advanced programs and works with families to explain the program and obtain their support.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
10. Parents are part of the decision-making process about student placement in these programs.
 Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard
11. Counselors and teachers refer families to education and recreation programs in the community that

can help their children.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

TRANSITION PROGRAMS

12. The school makes personal contact with all new families before the school year begins.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

13. Teachers and students visit preschool programs and feeder schools to talk about the school and answer questions.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

14. Special events for students with families welcome them to the school, give them a tour of the building, and connect them to “buddies” or mentors.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

15. If your school is an elementary school, school staff ask families about their goals for their children and discuss how the school can prepare them for that future.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

16. If your school is a middle school, all sixth-grade parents get information about what courses are required for college or other postsecondary education and what students should take in middle school to qualify for those courses in high school.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

17. If your school is a high school, all ninth-grade families get a college or career planning handbook that contains an individual graduation plan and explains all the steps for applying to college. It also lists what courses are required for college admission.

- Already doing this Could do this easily This will take time This will be hard

Which areas are we doing well in? Which ones need more work?

How are parents involved in your school to promote constructive advocacy?

What are your concerns?

Reflection: What steps could you take to develop a program to support parents as advocates?

Right away:

Over the long term:

Standard 5: Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs.

Overview

School-home-community partnerships that are committed to shared decision making lead to a high level of parent involvement. Empowering families to help solve problems, discuss fiscal priorities and develop policies that are more child/parent friendly sends a powerful message about collaboration, equity and access.

This module provides information and ideas on:

- the role of parent organizations, advisory councils, parent advocacy groups and networks;
- building networks for families;
- keeping parents informed about critical issues; and
- participating and supporting the election process for governance.

Research Link

Sharing power with families is evident when educators “Prepare parents to actively participate in school decision making and develop their leadership skills in governance and advocacy,” (Epstein et al. 2002).

The research of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence emphasizes that parents must be equal partners in education (Henderson, Jacob, Kernan-Schloss, Raimondo, 2004) and set high expectations for effective school leaders who embrace parents as equal partners in the ways listed:

- **Sharing power** by opening up the decision making process so that all families have a voice;
- **Communicating expectations** by being clear about teacher expectations for parents and parent expectations for teachers;
- **Opening doors** by being available to meet with families and for them to observe classrooms;
- **Offering and participating in training with parents** on standards, curriculum, assessment and school performance;
- **Answering the hard questions** by sharing the school’s improvement plan with families and community members;
- **Recognizing and working with parent-led organizations** by involving a variety of groups, not just the “official” school parent group; and
- **Giving parents information about how the school system works** by sharing data and school improvement plans.

Teaching Practices to Support Sharing Power

- Share school and district annual reports of school performance and program information with families at open meetings to review current progress. Create safe opportunities for families to provide input for future goals of the school and/or district.
- Encourage and facilitate parent participation in PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- Inform families about the elected boards and circumstances that could impact school policy and reform.
- Provide training for teachers/staff and parents on how to be collaborative partners and share decision making in areas such as policy, curriculum, budget, school reform, safety and personnel issues.
- Treat parent concerns, suggestions and ideas with respect and demonstrate genuine interest in developing solutions. Follow up with families in a timely manner.

Kansas Professional Education Standards

This module, *Sharing Power*, addresses Kansas' Professional Education Standard 3, 7, 10 and 13. The professional education standards are based on adaptations made by Kansas to the standards developed by member states of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The professional education standards are used by schools, colleges and departments of education as they build their professional education coursework to accompany all the endorsement areas. Every teacher preparation program in the state of Kansas is responsible to ensure that all teacher candidates are competent in the knowledge and performance of the professional education standards.

Standard 3: The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.

Knowledge

4. The educator understands how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, **family**, and **community** values.
5. The educator has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and **community** diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and **community** resources into instruction.

Performance

5. The educator seeks to understand students' families' cultures, and **communities**, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (drawing explicit connections between subject matter and **community** matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures).
6. The educator brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and **community** experiences and cultural norms.

Standard 7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.

Knowledge

2. The educator knows how to use contextual considerations (e.g., instructional materials; individual student interests, needs, and aptitudes; and **community** resources in planning instruction to create an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences.

Standard 10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all student's' learning and well-being.

Knowledge

1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger **community** context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.
2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., **family** circumstances, **community** environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

Performance

2. The educator consults with **parents**, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other **community** agencies.
3. The educator identifies and uses **community** resources to foster learning for all students.
4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and **community** situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.

Standard 13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Knowledge

4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher's interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and members of the **community**.
6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and **parents**.

Performance

1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and **community** members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.

Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric

Use this rubric to help evaluate your and the school's efforts to support decision making and advocacy with families. Think about where you see yourself and the school in the process and strategies used on how to support decision making and advocacy by marking the box that most clearly matches what you and the school are doing now.

Decision Making and Advocacy			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Support for active parent organizations (PTA, pto, PAC, other committees).</p>	<p>I am aware of parent organizations but have limited involvement with them.</p> <p>I view parent organizations as a way to get extra supplies and materials for the classroom.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of some of the ways parent organizations help schools make decisions.</p> <p>I encourage parents to participate in PTA, pto and other committees that respond to issues of interest to families.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively inform and recruit parents to serve on committees and school/parent organizations by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I collaborate with families and encourage them to become actively involved in decision making at the school. — I participate as an active member on school committees. — I participate in training for staff and parents in how to be collaborative partners and share decision making in areas such as policy, curriculum, budget, school reform and safety issues. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Support for independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.</p>	<p>I have limited awareness of the importance of parent advocacy groups.</p> <p>I only work with other teachers to address improvements and school reform.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of some of the ways parent advocacy groups can help with school improvements.</p> <p>I solicit families to gather input and recommendations for school improvements.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I actively inform and recruit parents to form independent advocacy groups that address school improvements and school reform issues by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I provide parents with information about school policies, practices and both student and school performance data. — I reach out to include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socio-economic and other groups to participate in school decision making activities. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Decision Making and Advocacy			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Support for district-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.</p>	<p>I am unaware of why district-level councils and committees for family and community involvement are important.</p> <p>I participate in limited professional development activities and seldom apply new communication strategies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of some of the reasons councils and community members need to be involved.</p> <p>I gather information and encourage parents to become active members on district-level committees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I advocate for family and community members to be participants in committees and councils by engaging in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I am actively engaged and participate in district-level committees. — I encourage active parent participation in the decisions that affect students such as student placement, course selection setting academic goals and participation in individualized education programs. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Information is provided on school or local elections for school representatives.</p>	<p>I provide information informally to a few select parents.</p> <p>I provide parents who are involved at the school site with information regarding elected school board officials.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I send correspondence home with students about local elections for school representatives.</p> <p>I ensure that all parents receive information about school board candidates by sending information home with the students and other communication means.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I provide information regarding school board elections by engaging in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I send information home with students asking for parents' signatures notifying that Information was read. — I serve as an advocate, encouraging parents to vote in school board and policy elections. — I make sure critical Information about school Issues Is disseminated. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Support for networks to link all families with parent representatives is provided.</p>	<p>I am aware of parent networks, but do not see a supporting role for the teacher.</p> <p>I don't feel responsible for getting information out to families about parent network activities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am aware of parent networks and have informally discussed this as a way for parents to receive mentoring and information about key issues.</p> <p>I provide information to some families where academic and behavior issues are a concern.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I am informed about various networks and link families with parent representatives by using the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — I provide Information to parents at conferences, open house events, and through school-home correspondence. — I treat parent concerns with respect and demonstrate interest in developing solutions. — I promote parent participation on school, district, state and national committees that focus on education issues. <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Teacher Reflection

What will I do to ensure that parents are partners in the decisions that affect their children?

Reflect on your current practices in each of the elements highlighted. Develop a plan for improvement that includes support needed, how strategies will be implemented and how you will know if each element has been accomplished. Use the resources provided in this module to support your efforts.

Decision Making Elements	Plans for Improvement	Evidence of Mastery
I and/or the school support active parent organizations for parent leadership and participation.		
I and/or the school support independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.		
I and/or the school support district-level councils and committees for family and community involvement.		
I and/or the school provide information on school or local elections for school representatives.		
I and/or the school support networks to link all families with parent representatives.		

Family Decision Making in Schools

Openness and trust are the keys to establishing successful family involvement programs. Use the following practices that reflect on family decision making in schools to think about actions you could take to improve involvement.

Providing Knowledge/Training

1. Some ways in which I treat parents' concerns and demonstrate genuine interest in developing solutions are:

2. Some ways in which I include parents on all decision making and advisory committees and offer understandable, accessible and well publicized ways to influence decisions, raise concerns, appeal decisions and resolve problems are:

3. Some ways in which I offer training for parents on parenting, group problem solving, team building, conflict resolution, time management and shared decision making are:

Sharing Information

4. Some ways in which I use parents' native language to provide them with the current information on school policies, practices and student school performance data are:

5. Some ways in which I promote communication and provide up-to-date information on current issues by establishing interactive computer systems that electronically link school sites with the district office are:

6. Some ways in which I publish results of surveys that assess educators' or community members' satisfaction with the site-based management team's work is:

Taking Action

7. Some ways in which I encourage active parent participation in the decisions that affect students, such as student placement, course selection and individualized education plans are:

8. Some ways in which I promote parent participation on school, district, state and national issues are:

Plan for Involving families in Decision Making

Use the ideas on the following page to frame a plan to involve families in decision making and advocacy on behalf of their children.

List four benefits of involving parents in decision making.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Identify four areas in which you can involve parents in decision making and advocacy for their children or the community.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Name four guidelines to follow that will involve parents in decision making and advocacy.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

List resources that would support parent decision making about an issue that is relevant to them and to you.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Strategies for Teaming with Parents

Areas for Parental Decision Making for a Student

Parents should be involved in decisions that are made regarding whether a student:

- Needs more help than what is provided for in general education
- Is retained in a grade
- Attends public school
- Participates in extracurricular activities
- Enters an alternative school program
- Participates in a field trip or other activity away from school

Common Areas for Parental Decision Making for the School and its Programs

Parents should also be invited to serve on decision making committees such as:

- Site-based school advocacy management council
- Parent advisory committee for a program such as Head Start, a reading program, the bilingual program or the school library
- PTA/PTO or another parent organization
- Classroom committee
- Task force organized around an issue
- Search committee for a principal or program leader
- Planning committee for the school or one of its programs

Strategies That Promote Team Building with Families:

- Highly motivated individuals share a common interest
- Ownership and responsibility for tasks are shared
- Problems are solved effectively
- Team members increase communication
- Major areas of concern and community needs are identified
- Resources to achieve goals are identified

The Process for Building a Parent Committee:

- Establish a goal, identified by a needs assessment or a response to a request for funding. The committee should be made up of diverse stakeholders, including families and community members
- Be ready to explain the criteria for membership and practice inclusiveness
- Seek members from different technical, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds and strike a balance between families, staff and representatives from the community
- When the committee convenes, begin the meeting with icebreakers to help members become more comfortable. Ask the following questions: What are the specific goals and objectives of the team? Are results expected? Is the goal to stimulate discussion and dialogue?
- Establish a time frame to identify goals and make recommendations, as well as a plan to implement those recommendations
- Encourage members to agree on meeting rules. When disagreement takes place, see that ideas, not members, are the focus. Stress the values of openness, trust and mutual respect
- Have a committee member record meeting minutes
- Make decisions by consensus

Decision Making at the School Level

Use this checklist to determine how decisions are made at your school.

Does our school share power? Our school:	YES	NO	SOME- WHAT
1. Opens up the decision making process so that families have a voice.			
2. Gives parents a role in selecting administrators, including the principal.			
3. Respectfully acknowledges and recognizes all parents - including elected parent leaders, not just parents hand-picked by the school administration.			
4. Makes an effort to learn about the concerns of different groups of families in the school community and reaches out to diverse families.			
Is our school accessible? Our school:			
5. Sets a regular schedule for classroom observations.			
6. Gives families full access to the school building.			
7. Makes sure that administration and teachers set regular office hours to meet with families.			
8. Holds frequent and open meetings that support parent schedules.			
Does our school offer continuous training? Our school:			
9. Provides workshops to help parents understand the data on school performance.			
10. Provides training for teachers and other school staff about how to communicate more effectively with parents and families and includes parents and family members.			
11. Provides training for parents on the school's annual report card every year and how to interpret the results.			
12. Provides information on the school's test results and report cards and how to analyze them.			
Does our school recognize and work with parent-led organizations? Our school:			
13. Recognizes a variety of groups, not just the "official" parent advisory group.			
14. Provides information and the use of facilities and office supplies and machines such as the copier and fax.			
15. Helps arrange for food, activities for younger children and transportation.			
16. Encourages teachers and administrators to speak at meetings.			

1. Identify the activities from the list that you agree should be implemented at your school.

2. How can you demonstrate leadership to model practices which change the attitudes and behaviors to support decision making and advocacy by parents?

Standard 6: Collaborating With Community

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Overview

This module will provide teachers with tools to measure and improve school-family-community collaboration. It will provide suggestions on how to work more effectively with community resources to enhance student learning and contribute to a more viable community by:

- establishing strong communication with the community;
- developing strategies to access resources and strengthen partnerships in the community;
- using knowledge and insights from community members to enhance learning;
- creating partnerships for life-long learning; and
- assisting students to explore and become contributors to their community.

Research Link

The benefits of community-home-school collaborations are profound and wide ranging. The National PTA (2004) found that effective school, family and community partnerships can provide benefits for students, parents, educators and the community.

Results for Students:

- Increase in skills and talents from enriched curricular and extracurricular activities
- Development of positive relationships with adults
- Development of sense of value and belonging to the community
- Learn the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and building resiliency toward outside negative factors

Results for Parents:

- Gain an awareness of the community's contributions to the school
- Develop a sense of connection with other families in the community
- Gain knowledge of and use local resources to obtain services and improve their skills

Results for Teacher and Administrators:

- Gain knowledge of and become involved in the social and community service referral process for families
- Develop skills for working with business partners, community, volunteers and mentors
- Gain knowledge of and use community resources to enrich classroom instruction

Results for Community Agencies, Organizations and Businesses:

- Gain improved access to school resources
- Form connections between businesses and future employees
- Gain a greater sense of purpose by sharing strengths with students

Teacher Practices to Increase Collaboration with the Community

- Invite community business people to share information about professions, hobbies or interests with students and invite them to serve on school committees.
- Provide opportunities for students, school staff and families to serve their community (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, grounds cleaning and other activities for community members, senior citizens and others).
- Integrate information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents.
- Communicate school/program procedures for addressing parent concerns including appropriate contact persons and process for defining the problem as well as developing and implementing solutions. Publicize successful changes in the school or program as a result of parent initiation and involvement.
- Attend community events such as community meetings, fiestas and integrate these resources into the curriculum.

Kansas Professional Education Standards

This module, *Collaborating with the Community*, addresses Kansas' Professional Education Standards 3, 7, 10, and 13. The professional education standards are based on adaptations made by Kansas to the standards developed by member states of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The professional education standards are used by schools, colleges and departments of education as they build their professional education coursework to accompany all the endorsement areas. Every teacher preparation program in Kansas is responsible to ensure that all teacher candidates are competent in the knowledge and performance of the professional education standards.

Standard 3: The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.

Knowledge

4. The educator understands how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, **family**, and **community** values.
5. The educator has a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and **community** diversity and knows how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and **community** resources into instruction.

Performance

5. The educator seeks to understand students' families cultures, and **communities**, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (drawing explicit connections between subject matter and **community** matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures).
6. The educator brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and **community** experiences and cultural norms.

Standard 7: The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.

Knowledge

2. The educator knows how to use contextual considerations (e.g., instructional materials; individual student interests, needs, and aptitudes; and **community** resources in planning instruction to create an effective bridge between curriculum goals and students' experiences.

Standard 10: The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all student's' learning and well-being.

Knowledge

1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger **community** context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.
2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., **family** circumstances, **community** environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

Performance

2. The educator consults with **parents**, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other **community** agencies.
3. The educator identifies and uses **community** resources to foster learning for all students.
4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and **community** situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.

Standard 13: The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Knowledge

4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher's interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and members of the **community**.
6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and **parents**.

Performance

1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, **parents**, and **community** members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.

Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric

Use this rubric to help evaluate how well you collaborate with the community. Think about where you see yourself in the process and strategies on how to improve community collaboration by marking the box that most clearly matches what you are doing now.

Collaborating With the Community			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
Information regarding community activities and resources is provided to staff and families.	I am somewhat familiar with community services and resources, but at this time do not know how to communicate this information to parents. <input type="checkbox"/>	I provide families with information available from community resources when it is available. <input type="checkbox"/>	I provide families with information available from community resources on a regular basis through newsletters, guest speakers, school-led workshops and/or a posted calendar of community functions and events. — I also attend and participate in these functions to take advantage of opportunities to learn more about the community. <input type="checkbox"/>
Partnerships with various community entities are developed and strengthened to promote and enhance student learning, as well as serve and enhance the community.	I am aware of local businesses and their availability to our school. <input type="checkbox"/>	I locate and research opportunities for a variety of partnerships with businesses and community members. I seek opportunities that link learning to the students' community to both motivate students and to assist the community as a whole. <input type="checkbox"/>	I provide an avenue for students to research and locate opportunities for a variety of partnerships with businesses and community members including cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, commercial and faith-based entities. — I encourage students to seek activities that link learning to their community to both motivate students and to assist the community as a whole. <input type="checkbox"/>

Collaborating With the Community			
ELEMENT	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT
<p>Out-of-school learning opportunities are established both at the school and within the community.</p>	<p>I inform parents and families of some opportunities available to students at school which are offered outside of the regular school day.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I inform parents and families of learning opportunities available to students outside of the regular school day, such as after school programs, mentoring or tutoring programs, and programs provided by museums, libraries and other learning institutions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I act as a liaison between home, school and community to provide and encourage learning opportunities outside of the regular school day, such as after school programs, mentoring or tutoring programs and programs provided by museums, libraries and other learning institutions.</p> <p>— I actively reach out to the community and create opportunities for families and community members to participate in educational activities that influence student learning and development.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Integrated services between school and community are established and maintained.</p>	<p>I have limited knowledge about services provided by outside agencies that may benefit families.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I make efforts to link families, through the referral process, with available community services.</p> <p>I recognize the importance of informal strategies to understand family and community needs and link them with community resources.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I provide information to families on the integration of services available through community partnerships involving the school, such as civic, counseling, health, recreation and other agencies, organizations and businesses.</p> <p>— I also serve as a liaison in the areas where families identify needed services and assist with the referral process.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Collaborative opportunities such as community service and service learning projects are organized and monitored at the school level.</p>	<p>I utilize some instructional strategies for students to learn content in areas relevant to the community.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I support service to the community by students, families and schools such as recycling projects, activities for seniors and community beautification.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I identify community partners that would appreciate and benefit from student generated knowledge and projects. I use instructional methods that help students research and better understand their communities.</p> <p>— Students are involved in service learning projects which allow for the learning of specific academic objectives through a mutual benefit of community and academic growth.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Teacher Reflection

What will I do to make sure families are aware of community resources that may support families and children?

Reflect on your current practices in each of the elements highlighted. Develop a plan for improvement that includes support needed, how strategies will be implemented and how you will know if each element has been accomplished. Use the resources provided in this module to support your efforts.

Collaborating with the Community	Plans for Improvement	Evidence of Mastery
I distribute information about cultural, recreational, academic, health, social and other resources that serve families in the community.		
I am aware of and use local businesses and community organizations to enhance student learning and skill development.		
I contribute to the development of after-school, summer and community education programs that utilize the school facility for more than student learning objectives.		
I help bring about partnerships that provide integrated services and help to meet the needs of students.		
I coordinate education and service-related activities that support student interaction and contribution to community development and welfare.		

Understanding Partnerships

School/community partnerships are more than a one-sided relationship that provide resources and support to schools. A true partnership is beneficial to all collaborators. Use this tool to determine the level of partnership your school is at in working with community entities.

Degree of Power Sharing		
<p>Cooperating</p> <p>Using resources to assist other agencies</p>	<p>Coordinating</p> <p>Organizing or combining resources to more effectively reach a mutual goal</p>	<p>Collaborating</p> <p>Collectively applying resources toward problems which lack clear ownership</p>
<p>Contributing Resources</p> <p>School and community contribute resources to project or effort; contribution is clearly defined and usually material</p>	<p>Reconciling Activities</p> <p>School and community adjust or combine existing programs in order to deliver services more effectively; usually entails on going relationships among partners</p>	<p>Sharing Program Responsibilities</p> <p>School and community come together as a new entity to provide services or to manage a resource</p>
<p>Promoting Others</p> <p>School and community willingly share information about the work and services of others</p>	<p>Sharing Resources</p> <p>School and community, which use the same goods or service, agree to share costs often defined by a contract</p>	<p>Creating New Systems or Programs</p> <p>School and community work to create and implement a new model to deliver services or address a public problem</p>
<p>Sharing Information</p> <p>School and community share information on a formal or informal basis</p>	<p>Joint Projects</p> <p>School and community depend upon each other to produce a specific product or event; generally involves short-term commitments</p>	<p>Collective Planning</p> <p>School and community develop a collective vision (and/or study) to identify community assets and for the management of resources to alleviate social problems</p>

Promoting Community Events and Resources

Use this checklist to find ways you and your students can make the connections between home, school and community.

- Have students go through the phone book and discuss different programs and agencies in the community; for example, a blood bank, day labor office, government housing office, and public utilities office and so on.
- Have students report their participation in celebrations, grand openings, art exhibitions, fairs etc.
- Develop a community almanac with students that regularly reports on what is happening in the community. Students could take a simple monthly survey identifying seasonal changes and corresponding task, such as wood cutting, fall harvest, spring cleaning, etc.
- Create a community bulletin board with information about events, services, celebrations, etc. Make sure to place it in a busy, well-traveled area.
- Take advantage of student's family trips to discuss geography, culture and activities.
- Review course catalogs from local colleges, trade schools and other training agencies to help students become aware of career development and life-long learning opportunities.
- Use the internet to find information about community service providers and events with students and their families.
- Invite community members to school events.
- Have students participate in civic organizations (e.g. Rotary Club, Lions Club).

Add more to list as appropriate for your school community.

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Collaborating with the Community: Three Critical Questions

Use the following questions to stimulate discussions regarding community involvement. How well is your school doing? What can you do as a classroom teacher?

How Are Community Partners Useful?

To determine how community partners can best help your school, the School Improvement Planning Team should begin by reviewing the school improvement goals and by writing a one-year Action Plan for community partnerships to meet school goals. Identify goals that might be more successfully reached with community support. Brainstorm a “wish list” of in-kind donations, services, programs, partnerships and money that will help meet these goals. Then make a list of potential businesses, government entities, universities, community colleges and other partners in your community who might be able to help. Write a clear, brief plan of how the support will help reach the school goals.

Plan:

How Do we Approach A Potential Partner?

Once needs are clearly outlined, you can approach potential business/community partners with a short letter. Later, you may follow-up with a phone call or a visit. Here are some suggestions for writing an initial letter.

- Find the name and address of the owner or president of the business/community organization and address the letter accordingly.
- Include the school’s name and location.
- Describe the school’s mission/goals for high standards and success for its students.
- Briefly explain your emphasis on school, family and community partnerships.
- Describe how the partner’s support can help achieve important school goals.
- Illustrate how the partnership will benefit the community, school and/or the community as a whole.
- Specify how the business or organization will be recognized for its support.
- Note that you will call or visit in the next week.
- Include the principal’s signature and a contact person’s phone number and address.

Send letters to many potential partners because not everyone will be able to match your schools needs.

Plan:

How Do we Maintain Community Partnerships?

It is important to thank your partners and recognize their contributions. Think of creative ways to recognize the value of their support, such as artwork or letters from students, an item with the school's mascot, an appreciation breakfast or a band/chorus/drama performance. Advertise the business/community partner's support at the sponsored activity. Recognize partners in district, school, local newspapers and on the school's marquee. Ask all partners for feedback on the partnership relationship and activities. Use the feedback to improve your school-family-community partnership program each year. By reaching out to the community to meet specific school goals and recognizing their support, you will improve community involvement at your school.

Plan:

Integrating Community Partners into the School or Classroom

Look at the Community Partners list below. Use this tool to think about how you can engage some of these partners in your classroom or school.

Types of Community Partners	Examples:	Plan to Integrate
Businesses and Corporations	Local businesses, national corporations and franchises	
Universities and Educational Institutions	Colleges, universities, high schools and other educational institutions	
Health Care Organizations	Hospitals, health care centers, mental health facilities, health departments, health foundations and associations	
Government and Military Agencies	Fire departments, police departments, city councils, other local and state government agencies and departments	
Faith-Based Organizations	Churches, mosques, synagogues, other religious organizations and charities	
Senior Citizen Organizations	Nursing homes, senior volunteer and service organizations	
Cultural and Recreational Institutions	Zoos, museums, libraries and recreational centers	

Life-Long Learning and Community Education

Use this tool to assist in the identification of life-long learning opportunities.

Life-long learning includes adult education, continuing education and community education outside of what is typically considered K-16 school learning. Life-long learning serves as a community development strategy and can be of interest to local government and community development organizations. Many schools have incorporated life-long learning resources into their Parent Resource Centers. Life-long learning can be:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) Classes
- General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
- Adult Education
- Vocational training
- Community literacy
- Community research (genealogy, oral history)
- Local book club
- Arts and crafts instruction
- Foreign and heritage language courses
- Web-based courses
- Dance classes
- Recreation and sports instruction

Possible collaborators to develop and provide learning opportunities could be:

- Private industry
- Professional organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Trade unions
- Community colleges
- Government offices
- Cooperative extension services
- Health service agencies and hospitals
- Social work and human service organizations
- Media agencies
- Libraries, museums and archives

Section 5

Section 5: Resources and Bibliography

What is the purpose of this section?

There are hundreds of websites available that focus on parent involvement as well as how to build successful family, school, and community partnerships. In this section we have included select websites that you will find useful to assist parents and educators in promoting increased student success through partnerships. Also included in this resource section is the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center's website – www.kpirc.org – which contains hundreds of resources for schools and parents.

Table of Contents for Section 5

School Resources: General Web Resources for Building Family, School, and
Community Partnerships
Bibliography

General Web Resources for Building Family, School and Community Partnerships

The following is a list of research and resources supporting Family School Community Partnerships:

<p>12 Tips for Communicating with Parents</p> <p>This site offers a list of 12 tips for communicating with parents, as well as many resources for both teachers and parents. www.vtnea.org/ti-3.htm</p>
<p>14 Choices for Meaningful Student Involvement in School Decision Making</p> <p>This site includes ideas for encouraging student involvement in school decision making activities. www.soundout.org/article.105.html</p>
<p>A How-To Guide for School-Business Partnerships</p> <p>A publication by the Council for Corporate and School Partnership, this site provides information about building partnerships between schools and businesses. www.corpschool.org/pdf/coke_how_to_guide.pdf</p>
<p>Action Teams for School, Family & Community Partnerships</p> <p>National Network of Partnership Schools resource which provides information about using family and community partnership teams for school improvement. www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/action.htm</p>
<p>Alliance for Excellent Education</p> <p>Policy brief on NCLB and Middle Schools: www.all4ed.org/ Under “Publications and Materials,” click on “Issue Briefs” to download information about the difficulties middle schools face in implementing NCLB.</p>
<p>Center for Language Minority Education and Research</p> <p>This program focuses on school and community collaboration, which facilitates meaningful, cross-cultural collaborations among diverse parents, community members and educators. This site features information on professional development, school improvement, leadership and policy and civil rights issues. www.clmer.csulb.edu/projects/shcc.cfm</p>
<p>Constructing School Partnerships with Families and Community Groups</p> <p>This site is a resource from the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) on strengthening home/school partnerships. www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa400.htm</p>
<p>Diversity – School, Family, & Community Connections by Martha Boethel.</p> <p>This synthesis addresses diversity as it relates to student achievement and school, family, and community connections. www.sedl.org/connections</p>
<p>Education Trust</p> <p>This national organization works for high academic achievement of all students, pre-K through college, and for closing achievement gaps that separate low-income students of color from other youth. This website contains several resources that link parent involvement to student learning. www.2edtrust.org</p>
<p>Emerging Issues in School, Family, & Community Connections by Catherine Jordan, Evangelina Orozco & Amy Averett. www.sedl.org/connections</p>

<p>Families Together, Inc.</p> <p>Families Together is a statewide non-profit organization assisting Kansas families who have children with disabilities. www.familiestogetherinc.org</p>
<p>Family Friendly Schools</p> <p>Family engagement, parent involvement, and student achievement – these words are heard on a daily basis, but perhaps you're struggling to find real solutions for improvement. You may have discovered that few student achievement programs offer a real, measurable family engagement process that brings results—until now. Developed by educators, Family Friendly Schools is a family engagement process that provides a proven, clear path to success. www.familyfriendlyschools.com</p>
<p>Family Involvement in Children's Education</p> <p>US Department of Education website which provides information about involving families in children's education. www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/index.html</p>
<p>Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Part of the Harvard Family Research Project, this website provides information about family involvement in Early Childhood Education. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/research/earlychildhood.html</p>
<p>Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)</p> <p>FINE carries back issues of its newsletters many of which involve family engagement in education. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/announcements/04jun.html</p>
<p>Federal Guide to No Child Left Behind</p> <p>Highlights include an on-line Parents Guide to the NCLB and selected topics of interest to parents. www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml</p>
<p>Great Schools</p> <p>GreatSchools is the winner of the 2007 People's Voice Webby Awards. GreatSchools was chosen as the best Family/Parenting site in the awards, known as the "Oscars of the Internet." Most importantly, GreatSchools was found most helpful in guiding parents with their child's education. www.greatschools.net</p>
<p>Harvard Family Research Project</p> <p>The Harvard Family Research Project focuses on schools, families and communities. This website includes numerous articles and research-based tools for family and community engagement. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/</p>
<p>Helping Your Child with Homework</p> <p>US Department of Education website containing resources for families. Site provides information about parent involvement topics including homework. Resources are also available in Spanish. www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework</p>
<p>Kansas Department of Education</p> <p>This is the home page for the Kansas Department of Education. www.ksde.org</p>

Kansas Learning First Alliance

The Kansas Learning First Alliance has been instrumental in raising public and legislative awareness about the need for rigorous curriculum and high quality teaching in reading and mathematics. As part of its work, the Alliance has spearheaded a workshop series across the state on reading instruction. The Kansas Learning First Alliance has also developed materials – including a CD-Rom and handouts based on the national Alliance’s Every Child Reading: An Action Plan – to assist district and school reading educators.

www.learningfirst.org/alliances/kansas/

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center

This site offers hundreds of downloadable resources, links, research and information on No Child Left Behind and parent involvement. Many other resources are offered which contain such topics as family math, family literacy, ABC Booklet of Educational Terms for Parents, etc. www.kpirc.org

Kansas PTA has information on resources and trainings. www.ptasonline.org/kspta Trained presenters on Building Successful Partnerships (based on the standards) are also available.

Learning First Alliance

This site is stocked with practical guides for communicating with the community about schools, the No Child Left Behind Act and other issues. The “Resources for Parents” section allows families easy access to information about educational issues and practices. There are also downloadable tips and guides to help families become more involved in their children’s education. www.learningfirst.org

Media Channel

Concerned about students’ media use? Readings, resources, teaching tools and issue guides about media are featured on this site. A downloadable Teacher Toolkit offers teaching units, lesson plans, activities, and handouts for media literacy.

www.mediachannel.org/teach

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

The mission of NCPIE is to advocate the involvement of parents and families in their children's education, and to foster relationships between home, school, and community to enhance the education of all our nation's young people. The site includes a database of organizations and resources as well as Action Briefs and research reviews. www.ncpie.org/

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

NICHCY serves the nation as a central source of information on:

- disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth,
- IDEA, which is the law authorizing special education,
- No Child Left Behind (as it relates to children with disabilities), and
- research-based information on effective educational practices.

www.nichcy.org/

National Education Association

NEA presents NCLB related issues concerning teacher quality, school improvement, student testing and accountability, and implementing NCLB requirements. www.nea.org/esea/index.html

<p>National Network of Partnership Schools Established by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, the National Network of Partnership Schools brings together schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. www.partnershipschools.org</p>
<p>National PTA National PTA and its state affiliates have many resources for schools and parents. National PTA has produced a set of standards for family-community-school partnership, which schools and parent groups can use to access their own efforts. The PTA website has materials for parents on how to help their children learn. www.pta.org</p>
<p>North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) NCREL provides resources for school districts. This site links to research-based resources and includes school and family involvement surveys. http://www.learningpt.org/page.php?pageID=243</p>
<p>Parent resource for information about NCLB This website offers multiple tools for different types of parent engagement. www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.html</p>
<p>Parent Smart This website offers everything from help with homework to tips for talking with children about disasters. www.parentsmart.com</p>
<p>Parent/Community Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful Partnerships This site of the National Network of Partnership Schools explains a process to involve your community and parents in the school setting. www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes.htm</p>
<p>Parent's Right to Know Prepared for the Education Trust, this document outlines parent rights regarding their child's education. www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/pdf/nochild/NCLB_Parents_Rights.pdf</p>
<p>Reaching Out to Diverse Populations SEDL resource that provides information regarding inclusion of diverse populations in partnership activities. www.sedl.org/pubs/family29/1.html</p>
<p>Scaffold for School-Home Collaboration: Enhancing Reading and Language Development This resource for teachers of English Language Learners (ELL) is from the Center for Research on Education Diversity and Excellence (CREDE). www.cal.org/crede/pubs/ResBrief9.htm</p>
<p>Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) creates and provides research based products and services to improve student learning. www.sedl.org</p>
<p>Student-Led Conferences This site offers a handbook on planning and implementing student-led conferences, developed by parents and teachers. www.prichardcommittee.org/pubs/cat/student-led_conferences.pdf</p>
<p>Supporting Parent, Family and Community Involvement in Your School From the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, this publication provides research about family and community involvement as well as outlining types of family and community involvement. www.nwrel.org/csrdp/family.pdf</p>

<p>Teaching Diverse Learners</p> <p>Resources for the diverse classroom are the focus on this site. You will find tools for everything from elementary literacy, practical teaching and learning strategies and assessment to fostering family involvement and cultural awareness. www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl</p>
<p>The Big List on Parent Involvement</p> <p>Website provides information and innovative teaching ideas for more parent involvement in schools. www.edutopia.org/php/biglist.php?id=225</p>
<p>The Council of Chief State School Officers</p> <p>An extensive list of resources used and developed by CCSSO staff, state education agencies, and others to communicate about and implement the NCLB. www.ccsso.org/federal_programs/NCLB/index.cfm</p>
<p>The National Drop Out Prevention Center/Network</p> <p>The National Dropout Prevention Center provides knowledge and promotes networking for practitioners, researchers, policy makers and families to increase opportunities for youth to receive the quality education and services necessary to successfully graduate high school. www.dropoutprevention.org</p>
<p>TIPS, Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork</p> <p>TIPS is a program developed by Joyce Epstein, teachers, and colleagues at the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. TIPS features homework assignments that require students to talk to someone at home about something interesting that they are learning in class. TIPS homework creates a three-way partnership among students, families, and teachers. www.jhu.edu/P2000/tips</p>
<p>Tools for School Improvement Planning</p> <p>This site has everything needed to collect, analyze and interpret the data necessary for successful advocacy efforts. www.annenberginstitute.org/tools</p>
<p>United States Department of Education (USDE)</p> <p>Website for the USDE. Site includes resources regarding a variety of parent and school topics. www.ed.gov</p>

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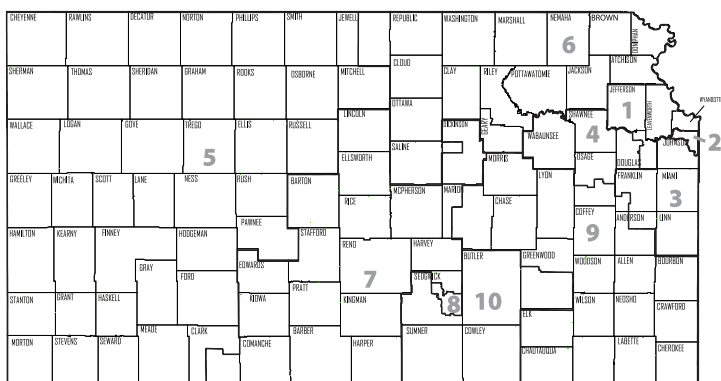
Education Priorities for a New Century

Ensure that all students meet or exceed high academic standards and are prepared for their next steps (e.g., the world of work and/or post-secondary education)

- **Redesign the delivery system to meet our students' changing needs**
 - Develop and implement policy on academic/vocational integration
 - Identify, replicate, and promote best practices that can be targeted to specific populations (e.g., high schools; middle school reading; early childhood)
 - Study and clarify regulations and identify challenges
 - Examine the definition of a classroom in a redesigned system
- **Provide an effective educator in every classroom**
 - Develop a policy on alternative compensation
 - Identify obstacles
 - Assess the effectiveness of current professional development practices
 - Identify, replicate, and promote best practice in teacher preparation and professional development
 - Improve the support system for teachers
 - Develop recruitment strategies for future teachers
 - Assess and improve the alternate licensure program
 - Promote loving, safe, supportive and nurturing environments
- **Ensure a visionary and effective leader in every school**
 - Identify, replicate, and promote best practices in preparation and performance
 - Identify and grow visionary leaders focused on learning
 - Study the impact of current leadership programs
- **Improve communication with all constituent groups and policy partners**
 - Align pre-Kdg through 16 systems of support in collaboration with identified partners (e.g., Kansas Board of Regents, Social and Rehabilitative Services, etc.)
 - Develop a structure for regularly communicating about education with the legislative leadership of both parties with a focus on areas of common interest
 - Keep the public informed on key policy areas
 - Resume focus group meetings in each board member district and periodic meetings with the media
 - Improve communication of relevant information with school faculty

Kansas State Board of Education
Adopted 9/2007

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