

WHY FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PLAN?

Schools make the difference in reaching parents who have not typically been actively involved in their children's education. Involving families in the education of their children has a positive effect on student achievement and student behavior. Family involvement is most beneficial when it is well-planned, systematic, long lasting, and when parents play many roles. Listed below are some suggested ways to involve more families in helping to ensure the maintenance of safe and orderly environments that are conducive to learning.

Remember the importance of parent/guardian involvement

- Parents/guardians care about their children and want to help them.
- Parents/guardians want their children to learn and all children can learn.
- Social, emotional, and academic development of children is enhanced when school, family, and neighborhood find positive ways to communicate, join forces, and become partners in the children's interests.
- Families should be educators' partners, not competitors. Therefore, we must find ways to share overlapping roles and responsibilities in positive ways.
- Educators and families working together to solve problems address the needs of all stakeholders.
- Social, emotional, and academic development of children can be enhanced when educators and parents work together as partners.
- Educators should assist students and families in obtaining needed support services.
- Parents regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic levels, and cultural backgrounds can contribute in positive ways to their children's education.

Use existing parent groups to develop a collaborative team approach to encourage parent/guardian involvement

Major Functions of the Parent Team

- To be an essential partner in developing a plan for positive behavior.
- To serve in the capacity of decision-makers on subcommittees.
- To act as advocates in the safe and orderly learning environments.
- To serve on all appropriate school teams or committees, for example, on the School Improvement Team or the Positive Behavior Committee.
- To be actively involved in systematically assessing and addressing needs of the larger community.
- To develop outreach strategies for participation of hard to reach parents/guardians.
- To provide ongoing parent education and involvement opportunities.

STANDARDS FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Based on the research of Dr. Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University, the National PTA adopted the Six Standards of Parent Involvement as a framework for encouraging and implementing parent involvement in their children's education. The Maryland State Department of Education's *Bridge To Excellence Master Plan* and the Baltimore County Public Schools' *Blueprint for Progress, Focused on Quality: Committed to Excellence* performance goals and indicators for family involvement aligns with these Six Standards of Parent Involvement.

Standard I: Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful

- MSDE Family Involvement Goal 1: In partnership for student success, schools and families will communicate more frequently and clearly about academic opportunities, school performance, student progress, and school-family partnerships.
- BCPS Performance Goal 6: Engage parents/guardians, business, and community members in the educational process.

Standard II: Parenting skills are promoted and supported

- MSDE Family Involvement Goal 1: In partnership for student success, schools and families will communicate more frequently and clearly about academic opportunities, school performance, student progress, and school-family partnerships.
- BCPS Performance Goal 6: Engage parents/guardians, business, and community members in the educational process.

Standard III: Parents and family members play an integral role in assisting student learning

- MSDE Family Involvement Goal 3: In partnership for student success, families will support academic achievement at home by reading with children, helping them with homework, and engaging them in educational activities.
- BCPS Performance Goal 6: Engage parents/guardians, business, and community members in the educational process.

Standard IV: Volunteering – Parents are welcome in the school; their support and assistance are sought

- MSDE Family Involvement Goal 4: In partnership for student success, parents and community members will volunteer in support of school improvement and student success.
- BCPS Performance Indicator 6.2 for Goal 6: Increase the number of volunteers and tutors in support of student achievement annually by 10 percent per school.

Standard V: Parents are full partners in school improvement processes, school advocacy, and leadership

- MSDE Family Involvement Goal 5: In partnership for student success, parents, schools, and community members will collaborate on educational decisions that affect children, families, and school improvement.
- BCPS Performance Goal 6: Engage parents/guardians, business, and community members in the educational process.

Standard VI: Community Collaboration

- MSDE Family Involvement Goal 2: In partnership for student success, schools and communities will work together to support families' parenting skills and developmental activities that prepare young children for school and promote ongoing achievement.
- BCPS Performance Goal 6: Engage parents/guardians, business, and community members in the educational process.

CONSIDERING THE PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRIBUTION

It is important for parents'/guardians' contributions to be embedded in all aspects of school improvement planning. The following questions should be used as a guide to gain parent/guardian perspectives in the development and implementation of the school's positive behavior plan:

- How will parents/guardians be involved in all phases of planning?
- How will parents/guardians be involved in all phases of implementation?
- How will input be gathered from a large, representative group of parents/guardians?
- How can the positive behavior plan be communicated effectively to all parents/guardians of students in the school?
- How will the school get feedback from parents/guardians on the positive behavior plan?
- How will use of the Positive Behavior Parent/Guardian Survey results be used in developing and implementing the positive behavior plan?

When developing documents/newsletters that will be shared with parents/guardians, consider the following:

- Readability
- Parent-friendly language (Limit the use of educational jargon, acronyms, etc.)
- Information to be conveyed (Use of more visuals as opposed to overly wordy text)
- Length of documents/newsletters (Remember... 80 percent of people will spend just 30 seconds reading what is sent home.)
- Special considerations:
 - Are the documents/newsletters available in other languages?
 - Will interpreters be needed to communicate information effectively?
 - Will people with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds understand the content in documents/newsletters?

Because English is not the first language in many families and sign language is used in some families, some parents/guardians might need the help of a foreign language or a sign language interpreter. The Office of World Languages should be contacted for support when a foreign language interpreter is needed. The Office of Special Education should be contacted for support when a sign language interpreter is needed.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PLANNING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The mission of the Office of Transportation is to provide safe and efficient transportation services to students in a positive atmosphere. The intent is to transport students in an environment that protects students from harm inside the school bus as well as from outside sources and in an atmosphere that delivers students to school on time and ready to learn and back home safely.

Positive behavior on the school bus is the key to a safe ride and a positive atmosphere. Positive behavior on the school bus requires a cooperative effort among school staff, transportation staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members.

The following guidelines are intended to provide administrators with a “roadmap” for creating and maintaining positive behavior on the school bus:

Students

- Create expectations for positive behavior by establishing the relationship between the school bus rules and safety.
- Expect the same positive behavior on the school bus that is expected in any non-classroom setting, such as hallways, cafeteria, and auditorium.
- Recognize positive behavior on the school bus in the same ways that students are recognized for academic achievement and other accomplishments within the school.
- Utilize transportation staff as instructors for school bus safety programs and seminars.

Parents/Guardians/Community Members

- Provide parents/guardians and community members with school bus safety literature, such as the school system’s crossing policy.
- Utilize transportation staff at PTA sponsored events to share safety information with parents/guardians.
- Include positive school bus tips or stories in the school newsletter.

Transportation Staff

- Include input from bus drivers in the development of the Positive Behavior Plan.
- Regard the school bus as a part of the school building.
- Provide the school bus staff with the resources to model positive behavior for students and to illicit positive behavior in return from students.
- Utilize the resources available to the school from the Office of Transportation and the Transportation Manager to help manage the school’s transportation program.
- Recognize positive support received from school bus staff.