

# **RUSSELL COUNTY SCHOOLS PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

**In Accordance With  
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

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## **PLANNING PROCESS**

Russell County Schools formed a Federal Programs Advisory Committee, which is composed of representatives from the community, parents, teachers, and administrators involved in all Title I Schoolwide Programs (Dixie Elementary, Ladonia Elementary, Mt. Olive Elementary, Oliver Elementary, Russell Elementary, and Russell County Middle School). Committee representatives were selected because of their dedication and interest in the success of our students and school. The selected members are responsible for any programmatic and financial decisions as stated in federal and state legislation to include: developing the Title I Policy and Plan; program development, implementation, and evaluation; and distributing any information needed to their constituency groups.

Input from parents and community members is actively sought in order to ensure that both parent and student needs are identified and that all available community resources are being utilized. The focus of Russell County Schools' Parent Involvement Plan is to involve parents in the educational process of their child(ren) through professional development, communication, school activities, and volunteer programs. Goals and progress are communicated to the stakeholders through P.T.A. meetings, local school staff meetings, newsletters, and the local media so there is a shared commitment for a quality education for all students in Russell County Schools.

When Limited English Proficient parents are involved, an interpreter is available if needed, and written communication may be translated into the needed native language when feasible. An important component of the planning process is identifying the diverse needs of parents and making reasonable accommodations in order to serve the needs of all students (i.e. homeless students, minority students, economically disadvantaged, special needs students, neglected, and delinquent students) to meet state proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement on state content standards.

Implementation of the Russell County Schools Parent Involvement Plan is reviewed and monitored periodically throughout the school year by the Parent Advisory Committee. Revisions are made annually as needed. The Federal Programs Coordinator is responsible for maintaining documentation

of data sources. An annual parent evaluation will be conducted in the spring to determine if the Parent Involvement Policy has been effective in improving the academic quality of the schools.

A copy of the Russell County Schools Parent Involvement Policy and Plan will be located in the Superintendent's office, Federal Program Coordinator's office, and in each schoolwide school's Media Center for review. A copy of the Parental Involvement Policy will be distributed to parents in the schools student handbook. The descriptive procedure in the Russell County Schools' Parent Involvement Policy allows all parents to make and submit concerns about the Parent Involvement Policy/Plan or Local Education Agency Consolidated Application to the principal. If these concerns were not addressed to the satisfaction of the parent, the parent may submit in writing these concerns to the Federal Program Coordinator who will in turn forward them to the Federal Program Coordinator at the State Department of Education.

## INTRODUCTION

To support the parent-school partnership, the Federal Programs Advisory Committee designed the Russell County Parent Involvement Plan to coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies in all Title I schoolwide programs (Dixie Elementary, Ladonia Elementary, Mt. Olive Elementary, Oliver Elementary, Russell Elementary, and Russell County Middle School) to include the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 programmatic and financial regulations.

Understanding the significant impact that parental involvement has on a child's educational success, the Russell County Schools' Board of Education promotes and encourages parents, school personnel, local daycare providers, and Head Start to be involved in all aspects of their child's/students education including:

- **Parent involvement on system committees**
- **Community Involvement**
- **Communication**
- **Capacity Building**

Russell County Schools will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning, developing, and implementing a comprehensive parent involvement program to improve student academic achievement and school performance. In an effort to maintain strong school and family partnerships, additional meetings with parents at the school level will strive to help parents understand Federal Program requirements including Parent's Right-to-Know, proficiency levels of academic standards and curriculum, interpretation of state and local assessments, and methods for monitoring their child(ren)'s education at home. Appropriate school personnel will inform parents of continuing education opportunities such as Adult Basic Education classes, and will work with parents on techniques and activities to help their child(ren) achieve challenging state content standards.

## **NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS**

In recognition that the parent is the child's first and most important teacher, and that the parent's continued involvement is essential for the success of the child, the Russell County Board of Education is committed to building a strong parent-school partnership. Therefore, we have adopted the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs and their quality indicators, which are research based and grounded in both sound philosophy and practical experience. The purpose of the standards are threefold:

1. To promote meaningful parent and family participation
2. To raise awareness regarding the components of effective programs
3. To provide guidelines for schools that wish to improve their programs.

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

- A. Provide a parent handbook to provide positive, practical information about your school or program.
- B. Provide clear information regarding course expectations and offerings, student placement, school activities, student services, and optional programs.
- C. Send report cards and regular progress reports to parents. Provide support services and follow-up conferences as needed.
- D. Distribute student work for parental comment and review on a regular basis.

Standard II: Parent - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

- A. At least quarterly schedule a school or program event with workshops given by professional personnel or local parent educators to help parents deal with parenting issues based on parent surveys of issues.

- B. Reach out to all families, not just those who attend meetings.
- C. Link parents to programs and resources within the community that provide support services to families.

Standard III: Student Learning – Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

- A. Provide information regarding how parents can foster learning at home, give appropriate assistance, monitor homework, and give feedback to teachers.
- B. Regularly assign interactive homework that will require students to discuss and interact with their parents about what they are learning in class.
- C. Sponsor workshops or distribute information to assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and perform well on assessments.

Standard IV: Volunteering – Parents are welcome in school, and their support and assistance are sought.

- A. Ensure that office staff greetings, sign-in areas, and any other interaction with parents create a climate in which parents feel valued and welcomed.
- B. Ensure that parents who are unable to volunteer in the school building are given options for helping in other ways, at home or place of employment.
- C. Provide parent sign-up sheets during open house at the beginning of the school year for parents to volunteer to assist with school activities through the school year.
- D. Show appreciation for parents' participation, and value their diverse contributions.

Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy – Parents are full partners in decisions that affect children and families.

- A. Include parents on all decision-making and advisory committees, and ensure adequate training for such areas

as policy, curriculum, budget, school reform initiatives, safety and personnel.

- B. Provide parents with current information regarding school policies, practices, and both student and school performance data.
- C. Enable parents to participate as partners when setting school goals, developing or evaluating programs and polices, or responding to performance data.
- D. Treat parental concerns with respect and demonstrate genuine interest.

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

- A. Distribute information regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other resources that serve families within the community.
- B. Develop partnerships with local businesses and service groups to advance student learning and assist schools and families.
- C. Foster student participation in the families.
- D. Inform staff members of the resources available in the community and strategies for utilizing those resources.

## **PARENTS' RIGHT-TO-KNOW**

Parents will be notified at the beginning of each school year in the *Russell County Schools' Code of Conduct* (parent student handbook) that their child attends a Title I school and by Federal law, may request within the first four weeks of school information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers to include:

- Whether the Alabama State Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which Alabama State Department of Education qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether their child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Upon receipt of the request, a response is mailed to parents (see Appendix A). Russell County Schools provides information to parents in their native language either through a written translation or through the services of an interpreter for parents of English Language Learners (ELL). Home visits are made when necessary to explain educational decisions that impact their child(ren).

## **SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT**

At the beginning of the school year, parents at each Title I school will be encouraged to sign a school-parent-compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement (see Appendix B). At the first parent conference, the compacts will be discussed individually with each parent and remain assessable to teachers in working with students and their parents during the year. The school-parent compacts will be filed in the student's classroom folder.

It is the desire of Russell County Schools that the implementation of these contracts will provide a means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve or exceed proficiency on the State's high academic standards. The school-parent compacts will be reviewed annually by each school's Schoolwide Plan Advisory Committee to determine if revisions are needed.

## **SCHOOL CHOICE**

Before the first day of school, The Russell County School System will notify students by letter if the school they attend is identified by the State Department of Education for school improvement. The school system will provide all students enrolled in the identified school with the option to transfer to another public school in the school district that is in closest proximity subject to health and safety code requirements (regarding facility capacity). Concise and detailed information on the performance and overall quality of the receiving school and an opportunity to visit the potential school of choice will be available. Transferring students will be allowed to enroll in class and other activities on the same basis as other students in the school. Priority will be given to the lowest-achieving students from low-income families.

If a student exercises the option to transfer to another public school as stated in the previous paragraph, Russell County Schools will provide or pay with federal funds the student's transportation to the new school. However, Russell County Schools' obligation to provide transportation for the student ends at the end of the year if the school from which the student transferred is no longer identified by the school district for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. Parents must complete a transfer application to the superintendent no later than the first day of school or by specified date in the local newspaper and parent letter.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES**

If a school should be identified the second year for school improvement, Russell County Schools will arrange at the beginning of school supplemental education services for eligible students enrolled in the school. Supplemental education services are extra academic assistance such as tutoring, remediation, and academic intervention for students who have failed to make adequate yearly progress, as defined by the SDE, progress for three or more consecutive years. Instruction must take place outside the regular school day, such as before or after school, on weekends, or during the summer.

A list of providers, see Appendix C, approved by the State Department of Education (SDE), their availability, and a brief description of their services, qualifications, and demonstrated effectiveness will be available to parents in the Superintendent's office. Russell County Schools, the parents, and the parent selected provider will develop and identify specific academic achievement goals for the student, measures of student progress, and a timetable for improving achievement. The purpose of these services is to ensure that these students increase their academic achievement, particularly in reading, language arts, and mathematics.

If parents elect for their child to receive supplemental education services, they must complete an application and submit to the superintendent's designee no later than the fourth week of school or by specified date in the local newspaper and parent letter. If more students request services than Russell County Schools can fund, a priority will be given to serving the lowest-achieving low-income students.

## **SAFE SCHOOLS**

It is the goal of Russell County Schools that all students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning. Parents will be notified yearly by the local school the status of safety issues in Russell County Schools according to the annual system and school report card, published by the State Department of Education.

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