



Friday Focus

CARTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Community Involvement in Education

Calendar of Events:

West High Academy
Feb 5

Spelling Bee Feb. 6

ACTC Science Fair Feb 7

East High Academy
Feb 12

PD Day Feb. 17

Inside this Issue:

[38 Ways to Get Involved in the Classroom](#)

[Parent Involvement Activities](#)

[Teachers Need Parents](#)

[Boost Attendance - Great Link to Share with Parents](#)

[Parent Leadership Resources Round-up](#)



It takes a village to raise a child is a popular proverb with a clear message: the whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of its young people. In addition to the vital role that parents and family members play in a child's education, the broader community too has a responsibility to assure high-quality education for all students.

Parent, family, and community involvement in education correlates with higher academic performance and school improvement. When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher level programs. Researchers cite parent-family-community involvement as a key to addressing the school dropout

crisis and note that strong school-family-community partnerships foster higher educational aspirations and more motivated students. The evidence holds true for students at both the elementary and secondary level, regardless of the parent's education, family income, or background.

Parent, family, and community involvement means different things to different people. A research-based framework, developed by Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University, describes six types of involvement—parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community—that offer a broad range of school, family, and community activities that can engage all parties and help meet student needs. Successful school-parent-community partnerships are not

stand-alone projects or add-on programs but are well integrated with the school's overall mission and goals. Research and fieldwork show that parent-school-partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, build community support, and increase student achievement and success.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships



The positive impact of connecting community resources with student needs is well documented. In fact, community support of the educational process is considered one of the key characteristics common to high-performing schools.

Parent Engagement in Carter County

When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more." That's the conclusion of **A New Wave of Evidence**, a report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002). The report, a synthesis of research on parent involvement over the past decade, also found that, regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to: (1.) earn higher grades, (2.) be promoted, pass classes, earn credits, (3.) attend school regularly, (4.) have better social skills and behavior, (5.) Graduate and go on to postsecondary education. The school plays an important role in determining the levels of parental involvement in school. Specifically, schools can outline their expectations of parents and regularly communicate with parents about what children are learning.

As a result of school leadership attending *The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle Workshop*, our district Family Resource & Youth Service Center coordinators and parent representatives from each school have worked on a *Parent Engagement Action Plan*. The action plan contains strategies for schools and teachers to implement to foster parent and community involvement with the school. This committee determined that two-way communication was our biggest priority. We have numerous forms of one-way communication such as notes, newsletters, announcement sheets, progress reports, etc., going home with students. We need to work on developing and using more forms of two-way communication to keep the parents engaged with and connected to our classroom. The *Parent Engagement Action Plan* has been shared with administrators so that the applicable strategies can be included in your Comprehensive School Improvement Plan for implementation.

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement, A. T. Henderson & K. L. Mapp. (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002)