

GSISD PK-K Family Engagement Plan

Purpose

Grand Saline ISD is dedicated to providing quality education leading to a high school diploma for every student in our district. To accomplish this objective, we seek to partner with parents and provide opportunities for them to take an active role in their child's education. This partnership begins in the Pre-K years. Research shows that students achieve more when their parents are supportive of education, participate in decision-making at school, communicate regularly with teachers, engage with their child in learning opportunities at home, school, and in the community.

Learning objectives will be shared with parents of Pre-K/K during face-to-face conferences with teachers. These conferences will give parents the opportunity to provide information about their child's strengths and skills and to partner with teachers in preparing for a successful school year.

Grand Saline ISD expects each student to master the learning objectives. Support for all Pre-K/K students is available through the Title 1 program, the High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant program, and various other educational services provided through the district.

Family Engagement Components

The components and strategies of the Grand Saline Elementary Campus Plan for Family Engagement contain the following elements: creating a foundation for collaboration of mutual partners; embracing the individuality and uniqueness of families; promoting a culture of learning that is child-centered and family driven; the plan does establish and articulate expectations; the plan provides for annual surveys to evaluate program effectiveness to improve family engagement efforts. The plan provides for Family Engagement to facilitate family-to-family support: provide a parent room that allows parents to network, work on continuing education, etc...; encourage adult males to be involved in planning and participating in annual male involvement event; have monthly parent meetings and base topics on parent needs or requests as dictated by parent survey; ask parents to speak at parent meeting who can share about a given topic; elect parent committee members with various roles in conducting monthly parent trainings.

The plan establishes a network of community resources: display a parent board in the hall with job openings, local sport registrations, bulletins, local family events; school liaison to build relationships with local businesses-EX. bank re comes to parent meeting and discuss finances, local dentist gives lesson caring for teeth, etc...; work with local churches to provide school supplies or food backpack program; mental health staff provides resources to parents to help child behavior or family crisis; staff works with parents to find a dental home, medical home, apply for Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, etc...

To increase family participation in decision making: parents are elected annually from parent committee to become a member of the Policy Council; include parents on site base team; liaison will develop goals with each family based on needs assessment and work with them at least monthly on the progress toward meeting the goal.

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To equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning time: will provide GED study materials to parents; have a lending library for parents; monthly parent letters; provide transition meeting opportunities to assist children moving to kindergarten - tour the school, invite kindergarten teachers to parent meeting.

To provide ongoing professional development opportunities for educators on culturally responsive, evidence based strategies that support the education of the child: intentional coaching, professional opportunities to further enhance knowledge which include classroom management skills, language development, CLI Engage, Conscious Discipline and School Readiness.

The plan will evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous support. It is the goal of the district to involve all parents in all school activities. Family Engagement is the key to children's school readiness.

The Grand Saline ISD PK/K Family Engagement Policy will:

1. Increase family participation in decision-making;
2. Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning;
3. Establish a network of community resources for families;
4. Facilitate family-to-family support;
5. Strengthen staff skills in supporting families
6. Evaluate family engagement efforts and work for continuous

improvement. Family Engagement Strategies

1. Increase family participation in decision-making:
 - a. Because parents are “the experts” on their own children, two-way communication in conferences with the teachers and school staff is critical to the development of individualized instruction, assessments, and strategies to connect learning at home and school. Parent conferences will be scheduled at times that are suitable for parents to insure high levels of participation. Translators will be provided when needed.
 - b. An Advisory Council will be created and will include parents, school staff, and community representatives. The Council will contribute to the development and implementation of family engagement goals within the campus and district improvement plans. The Council will solicit input from all PK families through surveys and focus groups to use in the development of a family engagement program that is responsive to the needs of families. The Advisory Council will review policies, procedures, and evaluation data related to PK family engagement and will make recommendations regarding continuous improvement.
 - c. Parent training opportunities will be scheduled to build capacity for family leadership, problem solving, decision-making, and to advocate for their own children’s learning and development.
 - d. Parents will be asked to sign an agreement to attend a minimum of 10 Family Engagement Events throughout the school year. Awards will be presented at a recognition event in May.

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2. Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning:
 - a. Conduct a PK Roundup over several days in the Spring for the purpose of making connections with families, establishing the expectation for family participation in school and for two-way communication, and facilitating a supportive transition to school for students and parents. Families will have the opportunity to meet school staff, learn about the PK program, provide input regarding their specific needs, complete registration paperwork, learn about school-wide policies and procedures, ask questions, and connect with other families. Class visits will be scheduled for the purpose of building understanding of the design of the PK classroom and schedule and for establishing familiarity that will help with the transition to school.
 - b. A webpage will be maintained for PK Families where they will be able to get information regarding learning at home and strengthening the family/school partnership, including helpful websites for family learning activities, curricular links, and adult learning opportunities. In addition, families will find links to information related to health and community resources, and links to information that will assist families to implement best practices in meeting the needs of the child in areas such as age-appropriate developmental expectations, attachment and nurturing, positive behavior strategies, non-punitive discipline strategies, and activities that families can do together.
 - c. Newsletters, Year-at-a-Glance calendar, conferences, phone calls, online resources, and social media will be utilized for communicating with parents regarding ways to engage in home learning activities, the school calendar, family engagement events, and community offerings.
 - d. Opportunities will be provided throughout the year for parents to observe the classroom teacher to learn age-appropriate methods for reading to their child and building comprehension skills at home, creating awareness of environmental print, writing words and dictating stories, and applying basic mathematics to everyday life.
3. Establish a network of community resources for families:
 - a. Continue strategic partnership with Head Start to assist with family engagement activities, communication of program goals, transition planning for students from early childhood settings, culturally relevant resources, translators, and in monitoring and evaluating the policies and practices of the PK program to stimulate innovation and creative learning pathways.
 - b. Leverage community resources through Tri-County Action Agency, Boys & Girls Club, and other business, faith-based and community agencies for providing for family needs, including healthcare, childcare, counseling, weekend backpack meal program, clothing, and emergency services.
4. Facilitate family-to-family support:
 - a. Provide multiple opportunities for families to engage with and learn from each other as individuals and in groups about topics such as parenting, adult education, and career experiences.
 - b. Ensure continuous participation in family events by engaging parents and former participants in the planning and implementation of events relative to

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current families.

5. Strengthen staff skills in supporting families:
 - a. Conduct on-going professional development to strengthen educators' understanding of the research in support of family engagement and of specific strategies for promoting and developing family engagement in order to improve teaching and learning.
 - b. Prepare educators to respond in a culturally responsive manner when communicating with families and implementing family engagement activities.
 - c. Prepare educators to address challenges in a problem-solving manner and to effectively communicate information to families in crisis.

6. Evaluate family engagement efforts and work for continuous improvement:
 - a. The Advisory Council will participate in collecting data on a cyclical basis to monitor family engagement, continuous participation, and to evaluate results for continuous improvement and adjustment of the Family Engagement Plan. Collection will include data related to specific populations for the purpose of narrowing the achievement gap and data that demonstrates the alignment between the Family Engagement Plan and the campus/district improvement plan.
 - b. Teachers will be an integral part of the evaluation process by participation on the Advisory Council. They will also conduct goal-oriented home visits to collect information regarding strengths, interests, and needs of families to be used for improvement and adjustment of the Family Engagement Plan.

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