**Family Engagement Plan**

**A Plan for Family Engagement at Wacoochee Elementary School**

**2017-2018**

1. **Mission and Beliefs of Wacoochee Elementary School:**

In order to understand our plan for family engagement, it is first necessary to review our school mission statement and beliefs, which were reviewed and created in 2017 by a stakeholder team including parents, students, faculty, staff, and community members. A survey of stakeholders each year will ensure that the beliefs and mission still reflect our desires for our school and its students.

* 1. Mission Statement: It is the mission of Wacoochee Elementary School to provide each student with positive experiences to become the very best they can be by focusing on learning, relationships, and community involvement.
  2. Beliefs:
     + All faculty and staff will focus on specific learning objectives for every student utilizing research based and data driven instruction to help students achieve proficient or advanced levels of learning.
     + Positive relationships will be built on a daily basis among staff, students, parents, and stakeholders to enhance quality education.
     + Collaboration will exist with internal and external communication among staff members and stakeholders to enhance student achievement.
     + All students will have a safe and secure environment for learning.

1. **Family Engagement Philosophy of Wacoochee Elementary:**

In order to fully meet the needs of the whole child, we must develop practices and strategies that will engage families and the community, creating a strong partnership between home and school that fosters communication and shared responsibility.

* 1. Policy is developed with parental input and is distributed to parents: The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is comprised of one teacher from the K-3 and one from the 4-6 grade levels, the principal, and parents. This committee designed the “Plan for Family Engagement” and meets each quarter. The PAC communicates decisions and actions through school newsletters and through the school’s website. The Plan for Family Engagement will be sent home within the first month of school.
  2. Meetings are held at different times of the day so that more parents can attend. (ex: mornings or evenings)
     + We offer our families before, during, and after school opportunities to be involved and engaged in our school operations.
     + We provide academic support to students needing remediation before school, during, and after school
     + Wacoochee administration and teachers also schedule conferences in the morning, afternoon, and evening hours.
     + The teachers communicate to parents that they are available for discussions or phone conferences during their planning time as well as before or after school any day.
  3. Parents are involved in the planning, reviewing, and improving parent involvement programs, school parental involvement policy, and the joint development of the school wide program ACIP. The PAC (Parents Advisory Committee) meets quarterly to make decisions that impact the greater school community.
  4. Parents are provided with timely information. We believe it is vital to communicate regularly with families:
     + The school calendar is part of the Parent/Student Handbook that is provided for families. The calendar reflects important state, local, and school dates and events. It also includes holidays in which our school will be closed.
     + Teachers send weekly newsletters to families.
     + Students keep folders with their work and notes from the teachers which go home weekly on a consistent day of the week so that parents are expecting them.
     + The principal sends a school newsletter monthly.  
       The school technology coordinator updates and maintains the school website to communicate with families. Each teacher has a page with information for families.
     + Daily Planners are sent home so parents can communicate to teachers and teachers can reciprocate.
  5. The school takes measures to describe the school curriculum, explain the forms of assessments (what they measure, how to understand the results, and explain student proficiency levels). Curriculum and assessment are ultimately two of the most vital areas on which to educate our families.
     + In regard to curriculum:
       - * Teachers send newsletters highlighting current curricular focus to parents.
         * The curriculum is also posted on the website, the district website, and in teacher classrooms.
     + In regard to assessment:
       - * The principal reviews the prior year’s test results in a meeting held when the school’s report card is received from the state.
         * Brochures and letters are also sent home accompanying test results prior to the first parent/teacher conference day.
         * If parents have questions about the results, they may schedule meetings with the principal or teacher.
  6. The school sets up meetings requested by parents to give suggestions and be part of the decision-making about their child (relating to the education of their child), and responds to the suggestions as soon as possible. Often, when a child is experiencing difficulty, teachers at Wacoochee call to request the parent meet and discuss how to motivate a child, offer suggestions for enrichment/remediation, and solicit help and support at home. Similarly, when a parent requests a meeting with teachers, they come together with the administrator to listen to the views and challenges faced by the parent and offer suggestions and accommodations to best meet the needs of the student. The focus of our beliefs about teaching, clearning and development at Wacoochee Elementary is always on the child.
  7. 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 achieve the state’s high standards) is discussed. This compact is distributed and discussed at the Title I Parent Meeting. The parents then take the document home to review with their children and return it to school.
  8. Communication between teachers and parents is vitally important. The following measures are taken to ensure families and the school is communicating regularly.
     + Homework sheets or folders (communicating homework, celebrations, and concerns) in grades K-6 are signed nightly by parents.
     + Newsletters are sent home weekly from classroom teachers, and monthly from the principal. Email communication can be used between parents, principal, and teachers.  
       Conferences between parents/teachers/principal occur two times during the school year as well as when the need arises.
     + The principal maintains a parent information board in the front foyer.  
       Website address was communicated to parents in the student planner and in the student handbook. The website includes information on the following:
       - * School motto, mission statement, beliefs, and vision.
         * Lee County Schools calendar link
         * Wacoochee Elementary calendar and important dates
         * School address and phone numbers
         * Roster of faculty and staff
         * Parent/Student Handbook
         * Resources for students and parent
     + Each teacher will create and update their own web page that will be linked to the school wide website.
     + Open House held to share information with families about routines, procedures, curriculum, assessment, and programs at Wacoochee Elementary.
     + Parents are invited to be involved at our school through the welcoming letter from the principal, on the website, and in the parent/student handbook.
  9. The school will build capacity for involvement to help parents understand topics such as the state’s academic content standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of parent involvement, and how to monitor a child’s progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their child. There are several venues for families to gain confidence in their level of ability to support their children.
  10. The school will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children’s achievement, such as literacy training and using technology. Wacoochee will conduct Student-Led Conferences to share with parents of his/her progress. Teachers will present information with parents that will help the parents help their students at home with reading and technology.
  11. The Wacoochee Elementary stakeholders will 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. In addition to attending staff development opportunities relating to family engagement, articles will be shared on the website, as well as ideas on how to increase and promote family participation, collaboration, and contribution.
  12. The school will coordinate parent involvement programs and activities with community organizations and public preschool programs and will provide parent resources as available. The school will conduct activities, to assist with the transition from home to school for young children, using the following measures
      + The Pre-K teacher at Wacoochee Elementary will use the Kindergarten curriculum to highlight areas that can be incorporated appropriately into their instruction. Pre-K classes provide an opportunity for these students to become familiar with the building, the staff, and school expectations.
      + The principal will attend the Pre-K parent meeting held in the spring to welcome parents to the school, discuss procedures, and answer questions.
      + Kindergarten registration is an opportunity to welcome parents to our building, gather paperwork, communicate needs, and positively begin a relationship with Wacoochee’s future parents. Many staff members are involved in this “meet and greet” opportunity.
      + Rising kindergarteners are invited to attend a summer academy for 4 half days. This grants them the opportunity to get comfortable with their new school, meet staff, and meet other children.
  13. Information about school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents in an understandable language. Information disseminated to families is sent in clear terms and in each parent’s native language.
  14. Reasonable support is given for parental involvement activities as parents may request. The faculty and staff at Wacoochee Elementary strive to provide whatever resources, flexibility, or encouragement to meet the needs of our families. Parents attend special class events, field trips, parties, celebrations, programs, and plays.
  15. We encourage and support the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in a language such parents understand. We will use translated documents to send to families of limited English proficiency. We will bring in a translator to interpret during meetings if needed. We will be sensitive to the needs of diverse families by offering to assist them in completing paperwork and reading forms.