

Family Involvement and Two-Way Engagement

The Webster Public Schools (WPS) is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality educational experience. Effective parent and family engagement at all levels is critical in making this belief a reality. We define parent and family engagement as an ongoing process that supports parents/families/caregivers effectively:

- supporting and enriching learning in the home
- promotes clear two-way communication between home and school
- involves families as leaders and decision makers at all levels concerning the education of their children

Effective connections between home and school will help to promote productive learning conditions for every child. These open communication lines will expand and enhance learning opportunities.

Families... You can influence the success of your child in school more than any teacher or federal program. By becoming an active participant in the programs at your school, you will:

- Serve as a role model, showing your child that you support his/her education
- Assure that you are aware of your child's educational progress, thereby demonstrating how important that progress is to you
- Teach your student that your input at school is appreciated and that you support its efforts

To ensure that parents and families have meaningful opportunities to engage in the education of their children and the ongoing development of the programs that serve their children.

- All schools hold regular School Council meetings where designated Title I programs can be discussed and reviewed regularly
- Student progress is communicated regularly through conferences, report cards and informal communication between school and home
- A Title I family compact is reviewed annually, revised as necessary
- Relevant and meaningful learning opportunities for families are developed, communicated and implemented annually
- Annual surveys of parents are administered and are used to gather feedback and inform programmatic decisions

Information about these opportunities will be published annually to all families via email, web, and printed communications.

Research shows that how well a child does in school depends a great deal upon how much their parents/families/caregivers get involved in their education. You can become more involved by:

- Joining local school/parent organizations (PTO, School Council)
- Supporting school extra-curricular activities
- Volunteering at school

- Attending parent – teacher conferences
- Communication with your child’s teacher regularly, by writing notes, telephoning the school, using email, etc
- Keeping your child’s teacher informed about events in your child’s life which may affect his/her performance at school
- Discussing with your child’s teacher and parent organizations other ideas for parent involvement

The Webster Public Schools recognizes that parents/families/caregivers are their children’s first and most influential teachers and that continued parental involvement in the education of children/youth contributes greatly to student achievement and a positive school environment.

When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. Research shows that parental participation in schooling improves student learning. Such participation of parents/families/caregivers is critical not only at the very beginning of the educational process, but throughout a child’s entire academic career.

A child’s education is shared by the school and family during the entire period the child spends in school. To support the goal of the school district to educate all students effectively, staff and parents must work as knowledgeable partners. The Webster Public Schools, in collaboration with parents/families/caregivers, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent/family/caregiver’s involvement and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.

To this end, the Webster Public Schools and the Parent Councils (School Councils, ELPAC, and SEPAC) support the development, implementation and regular evaluation of parental involvement in each school and at the district level, which will involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The family involvement will be comprehensive and coordinated in nature. They will include, but not limited to, the following components of successful family involvement/engagement programs:

- Communication: Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
- Parenting: Responsible parenting is promoted and supported.
- Student Learning: Parents/families/caregivers play an integral role in assisting student learning and in working with and supporting the classroom teacher.
- Volunteering: Parents/families/caregivers are welcome and needed in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- School Decision Making and Advocacy: Parents/families/caregivers are partners and should contribute to the decisions that affect children and families when appropriate.
- Collaborating with the Community: Community resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning.

The Webster Public Schools supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective parent involvement strategies. The Webster Public

Schools also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental/family/caregiver participation and engagement.

Engaging parents is essential to improving student achievement. Webster Public Schools shall foster and support active parent involvement.

Each year, there is a combined Title I and Special Education Parent Meeting, where we discuss the family plays in the participation in Title I and/or Special Education, and the overall education of all students.