

PARENT SUPER SATURDAY

HAND MIDDLE SCHOOL
COLUMBIA, SC

Hand Middle School continues to improve its program of school, family, and community partnerships. Parent Super Saturday is a day of activities to inform, exchange ideas, empower, and inspire parents to take active roles in their child's education at school and at home. Students also attended to participate in many activities for fun and learning. Hand serves a racially and socioeconomically diverse population of over 800 students from a forty square mile attendance zone.

Last year, Hand Middle conducted a day-long "Parent University." Parent Super Saturday continued this tradition as a collaboration of the middle school, the University of South Carolina Parent Advocacy Group, and the local faith-based community. It was held at the school, but was open to parents and students from the school's "feeder" pattern of four elementary schools and high school in the Dreher Cluster.

Many community partners presented useful information to parents at Super Saturday sessions. Presenters were from the USC Parent Advocacy Group; USC Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Carolina Family Engagement Center; Save the Children Action Network; Columbia Urban League; Richland County Sheriff's Department; and Richland County School District One. Local faith-based organizations provided gift cards for parents and donated funds for lunch. They also assisted with registration, games for students, and distributing lunch to attendees.

Parent Super Saturday was advertised at Hand Middle School with posters, e-mail, phone calls, and the school website, and registration forms and reminders were sent home. A local radio station conducted an interview with the Principal and with the organizer from the Parent Advocacy Group. The elementary schools and high school in the Dreher Cluster posted information on their websites.

At Super Saturday, parents could select

sessions on Best Practices for Families of Dual-Language Learners; The Role of Parent as Advocate; and Dealing with Difficult School Scenarios. Workshops for parents and students to attend together included The Making of a College Athlete and Gang Awareness. Workshops for middle and high school students included Aiming High: Focusing on Academics and Our Character & Our Future Careers. A special session for Latino families focused on their interests and concerns. Students in grades 3-5 selected literacy or arts and crafts sessions that were hosted by the Dreher High School Teacher Cadets.

The parent organizations and other community groups shared information at tables outside the cafeteria. Music set the mood for a combination of fun and information. All participants were served lunch in the school cafeteria.

The variety of speakers introduced parents and students to important resources in the community. For example, the session on Gang Awareness enabled students to interact with law enforcement in a positive manner. Students took the spotlight at the end of the day with A Uno Tournament, Three Point Shooting Contest and a Free Throw Shooting Contest.

In their evaluations, parents requested more workshops with information on how to guide student learning at different grade levels and how to best help students with special needs. They also wanted sessions for parents who speak languages other than English at home, and whose children are English learners. Students requested information on how to handle difficult school situations, NCAA eligibility, and school academics. The parents and students were not shy about making their requests for another super Super Saturday.

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TYPE 2

CLIMATE OF PARTNERSHIPS