



GAP CREEK ELEMENTARY
Family Engagement Plan
2026-27 School Year



Parental and community involvement is a key component for the success of all students. Research has shown that programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to improved student achievement. To enhance & refine the parent involvement at Gap Creek Elementary, the following plan has been developed collaboratively with members of Gap Creek's community. The plan aligns with the ***Tennessee Standards for Family-School Partnerships*** and is divided into six corresponding sections. These standards were originally developed by the National PTA and were adopted by the TN State Board of Education in 2010.

The ***Tennessee Standards for Family-School Partnerships*** are:

- **Standard 1:** *Welcoming all families into the school community*
- **Standard 2:** *Communicating effectively*
- **Standard 3:** *Supporting student success*
- **Standard 4:** *Speaking up for every child*
- **Standard 5:** *Sharing power*
- **Standard 6:** *Collaborating with community*

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community.

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class and school.

- A reliable and welcoming system has been implemented to ensure the safety of our students when they arrive and are dismissed at the end of the day.
- Visitor parking is conveniently located near the main door for visitors to access and enter the building. The building is decorated in a welcoming manner.
- Activities are planned throughout the year to engage families in their child's education, such as:
 - Annual Title I Parent Meeting
 - Community Meals (Grandparents Day & Thanksgiving Meal)
 - Parent Conference Night
 - PTA Events
 - Music Performances (Veterans Day program, winter holiday program)
 - Family Engagement Nights (STEM Night)
 - Read-a-thon

- One Book, Read City
- Field Day
- Teachers make positive contact with all students' parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year.

Standard 2: Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.

- ParentSquare is a key tool used by the school staff to communicate with parents. Families can request other ways to receive important communication, if needed. The school provides support for families to access ParentSquare on their personal devices.
- Teachers communicate weekly with their parents about what the class is learning, special events taking place, classroom expectations, and any relevant news that needs to be communicated.
- The principal sends out a weekly ParentSquare newsletter providing important school, district, and community news, events, and resources.
- The school maintains a website that includes an up-to-date public calendar for parents to access.
- Parent/Student handbooks are sent home at the beginning of the year, which contains school policies and expectations. The handbook can also be found on the school website.
- Title I Parent Handbooks are sent home at the beginning of the year.
- Parents are given student progress reports every 4.5 weeks and can request a conference with the teacher at any time to discuss their child's progress.
- A parent conference night is scheduled during the school year in the fall semester when the first 9-Week report card is sent home.
- Staff will respond to all parent phone calls or written inquiries within 36 hours of the request during the work week.
- A marquee sign is maintained manually and is used to communicate upcoming school-wide events.

Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously work together to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

- Gap Creek has a Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program that provides incentives for students or student groups who meet and/or exceed expectations.
- All students and staff are members of a multi-grade "family." Each Gap Creek family meets on a regular basis throughout the school year to celebrate accomplishments, encourage students to reach for their goals, and discuss character building behaviors.
- The Whole Child Support Team (WCST) meets once each month. The team members include school social worker, counselor, psychologist, nurse, administrators and other

relevant staff, as needed. The purpose of the meetings is to review student data, discuss the academic, health, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of students, develop action plans/next steps for students, and discuss PBIS supports for all students.

- An intervention program for students consistently working below average on their reading and math skills provides extra support when no new learning is taking place. These interventions are teacher directed and may involve teaching assistants.
- Support Teams (S-Teams) are used to develop plans of support for students with specific concerns that can range the full spectrum of needs. Parents and teachers can refer students for an S-Team to be convened. The work of S-Teams can lead to formal referrals for assessment to consider eligibility for 504 Plans or special education services.
- Parents have open access to their child's grades on the Parent Portal (Aspen). The school provides support for families to access Aspen on their personal devices.
- Backpack snack programs are provided weekly throughout the year for students to supplement their food at home for the weekend. The food is supplied by Second Harvest.
- "Gap" the eagle is awarded each week to the class with the top attendance from the previous week.
- Perseverance awards are given for students nominated by their teacher.

Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are informed and enabled to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

- The Annual Title I Parent meeting is held at the beginning of the year to inform parents about the benefits and requirements of Title I, the rights parents have to be involved in their child's education, and the expectations teachers have for their students in the classroom.
- The school produces a Parent/Student Handbook which outlines the school's expectations for students and the processes in place for parents to advocate for their children, such as classroom visits and S-Teams.
- Through ParentSquare and email, parents can communicate directly with their child's teacher.
- Parents will be given opportunities for volunteering at school, such as field trips, reading in the classroom, Field Day, PTA, etc.
- Parents can request to observe their child's classroom by contacting their teacher in advance. Observations will be limited to a two-hour time frame.
- A Parent Conference Night will be scheduled when the 1st 9-Week report card is distributed (October).
- Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time throughout the year. The school will work to schedule a time convenient for all participants, including virtual meetings if necessary.

Standard 5: Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners with equal representation in decisions that affect students and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

- Parents will be invited to be involved in an organized, ongoing, timely, and collaborative manner in the planning, review, refining, and implementation of Title I programs.
- The Annual Title I Parent Meeting, a parent conference night, parent engagement events, the School-Wide School meeting provide opportunities for parents to offer suggestions and participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- The Family Engagement Plan is updated annually at the beginning of each school year by the school community. The plan will be revised to address feedback received from survey information data to meet the changing needs of parents, the school, and the community.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns, first with their child's teacher through a variety of means (ParentSquare, email, phone, in person) and then with the school principal if the concern cannot be addressed at the classroom level.
- Parents will be given reasonable access for volunteering, participating, and observing in their child's classes.
- Gap Creek staff will inform and clearly explain the Support Team, 504, RTI2, and Special Education services and process to parents.

Standard 6: Collaborating with Community

Families and school staff work together with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

- The school & PTA work to develop a network of community partners that support the school through a variety of ways, including volunteering, working with specific programs, and fund raising.
- Local churches, businesses, and community members provide backpacks, school supplies, clothing, Angel Tree supplies, Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, and snack food for students at different times during the school year.
- Johnson University provides opportunities for their students to interact with Gap Creek students through Marvelous Math Day.
- The Knox County Sheriff's department provides the DARE program for 5th graders and injury prevention programs to kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd graders.
- The Knoxville City Fire Department provides fire safety training through their Fire Safety House program to all Gap Creek students.
- Organizations, such as the Knoxville Symphony, Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts, American Museum of Science & Energy, and Gov. John Sevier Home, provide field trip opportunities for students to expand their learning.
- Local businesses, such as Freddy's provide student incentives for reading and academic achievement.