

WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Parent Involvement Beliefs

Westminster Community Charter School (WCCS) believes that education is the shared responsibility of the student, parents, family, school and community and that the academic achievement and success of our students depend on the strength of the partnerships developed among these stakeholders. For the purpose of this policy, parent is defined as any parent, guardian, and/or person in parental relation to a child or children. All parents in the district will be encouraged to become involved in the educational processes of their child(ren).

Students, who are at the center of these partnerships, have unique skills, talents and learning styles and ultimately are responsible for their own academic achievement. Parents and families provide their children with the foundation of their values, and aspirations. Parents' knowledge of their children's unique histories, traditions, experiences, learning styles, resources and challenges is a valuable resource which is critical to their children's successful achievement in school.

To ensure success for all of our students, WCCS will support parent involvement by providing a continuum of opportunities including all six of the following types taken directly from the Joyce L. Epstein model of the National Network of Partnership Schools at John Hopkins University:

“Parenting: Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

Volunteering: Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

Learning at Home: Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

Decision Making: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

Collaborating with the Community: Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups and provide services to the community.”

Parent/Family Organizations

WCCS has established a parent group. The goal of establishing this organization is to increase parent involvement to assist in meeting the needs of our students and parents. Our parent group allows for independent parent input into school-based decisions, and ensures a partnership with the school administration and staff to implement the school’s goals for parent involvement. Our parent group involves all parents (including parent, guardian, and/or person in parental relation to child or children) of students in WCCS who wish to participate.

The principal must call at least one business meeting of our parent group each year, in order to encourage the involvement of new parents in the School. Our parents are involved in a variety of school activities, including fundraising events, field trips, and promotion of the charter school throughout the community. The parent group also will be involved in the governance of the school, selecting a delegate to work with and advise the Principal and Board of Trustees on policies and practices of the school, plans for providing information to parents, and strategies for arranging staff interaction with parents.

A parent of a student in the school shall fill at least one seat on the Westminster Community Charter School’s Board of Trustees. The parent group will select the parent to serve on the Board of Trustees. At each regular meeting of the charter school’s Board of Trustees, the parent representative shall be allotted a set amount of time to present any issue to the Board, if the parent group so desires. From time to time, as the Board of Trustees or Principal requests, the parent group will be asked to participate in or comprise advisory committees to study or implement a specific policy or action of the school. For example, committees may be formed to study and advise the Board on building expansion plans, budget issues, and school programs to help the Board determine how the charter school should best proceed.

Participation in the parent association is voluntary and open to all parents, and a parent need not formally belong to or participate in the parent association to participate at public meetings of the Westminster Community Charter School, serve on ad hoc committees, or meet with or make recommendations to the school’s Board of Trustees or administration.

References

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, developed by the National PTA, January 1997
School, Family, and Community Partnerships by J L Epstein et al, Corwin Press Inc, 1997

Parent Associations and the Schools. (“The Blue Book”), New York City Board of Education Policy Statement adopted June 1993
Partnership Policy, Syracuse City School District, (December, 1998)
Title 1 – Parent involvement policies
“What Research Says About Parent Involvement, “Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, July 24, 1997
Student Learning Improves When Families Get Involved, “Tools for Schools, Family Matters April 2005

WCCS Participation

In order to strengthen our partnership with parents and focus on family involvement and school improvement goals, WCCS will provide support to parents in the school. Support will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Creating an atmosphere at the district and building level that invites, promotes and encourages the participation of all parents
- Creating rules, regulations and protocols that are non-discriminatory and inclusive of all parents
- Creating rules, regulations and protocols that are parent friendly
- Creating an atmosphere conducive to collaboration
- Ensuring technical assistance
- Ensuring parent leadership development
- Providing staff development on how to effectively involve parents
- Establishing a Parent Organization
- Aligning policies and practices
- Providing comprehensive information on school policies and activities in a timely fashion through newsletters or other appropriate means; holding parent information meetings and/or workshops; and ensuring that regular, uninhibited communication occurs between parents and instructors of their children.
- Encouraging volunteerism in every facet of the educational program

Parent/Guardian Participation

Through our parent group, ACES, our parents provide security for our students (Parent, Patrol), volunteers, chaperons, and tutors. Parents also plan their own parenting classes (EPIC, and child-support in-services), and “family nights.” Parent support of the child and the school community will include, but not be limited to:

- Parents will participate in school report card night and teacher conferencing days.
- Parents will volunteer throughout the school year.
- Parents will support our homework policy and assure that homework is done accurately and completely on a regular basis.
- Parents will read to their children at least 15 minutes per night.
- Parent will assure that their children report to school everyday and on time, appropriately dressed, and prepared to learn.