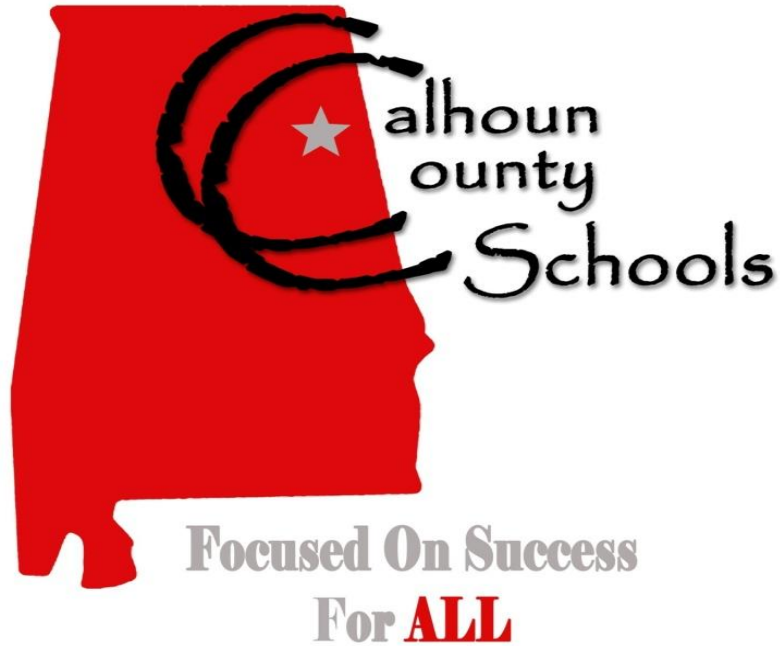


Calhoun County Schools

Parent and Family Engagement



Joe Dyar, Superintendent

Calhoun County Schools

Parent/Family Engagement

Involvement Policy Overview:

The Calhoun County School System has an on-going commitment to parents and family members. Parental/Family involvement is defined as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. Our goal is to ensure that parents/family members and their children receive extraordinary services and assistance that will lead to improved academic achievement. The district recognizes that parents are an integral part of a child's success in school, starting with the concept of being the child's first teacher. As a conduit for their children's success, the district will assist parents of all socioeconomic levels in solidifying their ongoing commitment to their child's success.

Calhoun County Schools will provide opportunities to improve parent engagement to support student learning that will ensure students are college and career ready. CCS values the contributions and involvement of parents in order to establish an equal partnership for the common goal of improving student achievement. This plan describes the different ways that our school will support parent engagement and how parents can help plan and participate in activities and events to promote student learning at school and at home.

Calhoun County Schools believes that parent and family involvement means the participation of parents and family members in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. We fully support the following ideas:

- Each parent/family member wants the best for his or her child;
- Parents/Family Members are the child's first and most important teacher and play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
- Parents/Family Members are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
- Parents/Family members are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and are invited to sit on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child and other children.

As partners, schools must connect with family members by showing respect and value to the many contributions they make, providing a welcoming school environment that is considerate and supportive to supporting family members' needs and educating staff on how to reach out to family members and communicate effectively. Schools also have the opportunity to provide trainings, activities and resources for supporting family members that make an impact on student achievement. Schools also have the responsibility to identify barriers and implement strategies to make positive changes. Data such as family involvement surveys and student assessments can be used to link strategies to family involvement trainings. Schools should also monitor and evaluate successes and challenges in providing quality family involvement models during the school year.

Why is it important to have Family and Community involvement in schools?

Schools, parents, and the community should work together to promote the health, well being, and learning of all students. When schools actively involve parents and engage community resources they are able to respond more effectively to the health-related needs of students. Family and community

involvements foster partnerships among schools, family and community groups, and individuals. These partnerships result in sharing and maximizing resources. And they help children and youth develop healthy behaviors and promote healthy families.

Research shows that students whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to:

- Adapt well to school
- Attend school more regularly
- Complete homework more consistently
- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Graduate and go on to college
- Have better social skills
- Show improved behavior
- Have better relationships with their parents
- Have higher self-esteem

Additionally, linking community activities to the classroom

- Improves school-related behaviors
- Positively impacts academic achievement
- Reduces school suspension rates

What We Will Do:

Calhoun County Schools recognizes that parents and family members form an important part of the foundation of a successful education program. Each school will do some of the following ideas to promote and support parents in order to strengthen our school and reach our school's academic goals as well as help students reach their individual goals:

- Communicate on a regular basis regarding school wide events and activities through school and classroom newsletters, flyers, email blasts, school website, Facebook page, Twitter and signage on campus in English and Spanish.
- Help parents understand what their children should be learning, how the state evaluates progress, how parents can monitor their child's progress and tips for working with educators.
- Provide necessary materials for parents at conferences, meetings, and school events to help parents work with their child to improve their child's achievement.
- When possible, host parent/family workshops at the district Parent/Teacher Resource Center, to familiarize parents/family members with the materials available.
- Conduct staff development on parent involvement practices and effective strategies for staff to communicate and build partnerships with parents.
- Provide information for parents on individual student assessment results and the interpretation of those results with report cards and at parent-teacher conferences.
- Partner with early education programs to invite families and preschool children to take a tour and share school information about parent engagement activities that will help prepare parents and their children for kindergarten and improve school transition.
- Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is published in both English and Spanish, whenever possible, and posted on the school website and included in the monthly school newsletter for all parents.
- Collaborate with community leaders and business groups to increase participation and awareness of the school parental involvement plan and activities. Listen and respond to parents'

requests for additional support for parental involvement activities and do our best to overcome any obstacles or barriers to involvement.

- Conduct community field trips for school members to visit families and host workshops in their neighborhoods and develop relationships.
- Have open house events at the school.
- Conduct parent workshops.
- Conduct parent make and take sessions.
- Invite parents to speak with school staff and faculty to share a parent perspective and personal experience.
- Create parent guides that align with the classroom instruction to bridge student learning at school with parent support at home.
- Establish accessible and convenient resource centers that parents can visit to obtain resources and materials.
- Conduct Parent Data Meetings.

“When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002).