

**Title I Parent Involvement Policy**  
**Parkers Prairie Schools**  
**ISD #547**

**Developed December 2007**  
**Revised June 2010**

**1. Purpose**

Parkers Prairie Public School District #547 is committed to providing a quality education to every child in the district. In order to do this we must establish partnerships with parents and the community. It is only when the school and the home work together that we promote the highest achievement for our children. As their first and most constant teachers and role models, parents play an essential and extremely important role in the education of their children. Support from the home for both the child and the school is critical component to the success of the children.

Grade level goals and standards for the children of District #547 will be developed and distributed to all parents in the district. All students will work toward these goals. All adults, including parents and school district staff, will be expected to support children's attainment of these goals. We recognized that all students will be positively impacted with availability of extra assistance through the Schoolwide Program (SWP) plan. District #547 intends to include parents in all aspects of the district's Title I program. The goal is a school-home partnership that will help all students in the district to succeed.

**2. Implementation of Parent Involvement Components**

**Involving parents in the joint development of its district wide parent involvement plan:**

- A. School Report Card** – Parents in the district will be informed of the NCLB School Report Card through the principal's newsletter at both the elementary and high school as well as in the local newspaper, the Parkers Prairie Independent, as part of the superintendents commentary. These activities will take place in the month following the release of these results.
- B. Identifying Students who Qualify for Title I Services** – Parents will be informed of a students eligibility for participation in Title I services by the classroom teacher. Because we are a SWP all students are eligible for title I services. Guidelines for determining the need for support through Title One will give consideration to students who are performing below grade level and have standardized test scores below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or more on measures including but not limited to the NWEA Map Assessment, AIMSWEB Universal Screener, or Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II. As a part of our SWP plan all students will be Title students, and have access to services. Parent notification will continue so that parents are aware of what type of intervention, if any, their child(ren) are receiving.

- C. Parent Involvement in Writing the Plan** - Parents will be invited to participate annually in reviewing the district's Title I Parent Involvement Policy. The plan will be distributed to all parents through our parent group, Panther Parents, in the spring of the year. Panther Parents will act as an advisory. They will network with other parents for additional input from a wider group of parents. The Panther Parents group will also be invite feedback from parents for a plan review meeting which be held annually during early June.
- D. Notification of Qualification for ELL Services** – We currently do not have any students in our district who qualify for or require ELL services.

**Involving parents in the process of school review and improvement:**

- A. Notifying Parents that the School as Been Identified as Being in Need of Improvement** – If the school is identified through the AYP process as being in need of improvement, parents will be notified through the principal's monthly newsletter that is sent to each household through the mail. Parents will also be notified through the district's website. If it is the district that is identified as being in need of improvement this correspondence will take place through the superintendents' office.
- B. Notifying Parents of Choice Option** – If necessary, as part of the notification sent to parents that the school is in need of improvement, parents will be informed of their right to transfer their child to another school in the district not on AYP.
- C. School Support Team** – If the school is identified as being in need of improvement, parents of the subgroup/s identified will be given the opportunity to be part of the school support team. They will be notified of this opportunity through a mailing informing them that their child is part of the subgroup identified and offering them the opportunity to become part of the school support team.
- D. Conducting Staff Development** – A component of the school review and improvement process will be staff development for all teaching staff in the area of implementing effective strategies for parental involvement. If the district was identified as being in need of improvement one building in-service training day would include this topic.

**3. Planning and Implementation of Effective Parental Involvement Activities**

**In order to coordinate technical assistance and other support in the pursuit of effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance in our school the following actions will be taken:**

- A. Title I Coordinator** – The Title I coordinator will engage in professional development activities to enhance understanding of the Title I program and increase awareness of best practice in Title I parent involvement. This will be accomplished through reading, utilizing available state and federal web resources, and attending appropriate professional development opportunities on Title I parent involvement, and networking with other Title I program coordinators/administrators.

- B. Title I Staff** – As a part of our SWP plan, all teachers are Title 1 Teachers. The Title I staff members will engage in professional development activities to enhance understanding of best practice in Title I parent involvement. This will be accomplished through reading, utilizing available state and federal web resources, attending appropriate professional development opportunities, and networking with other Title I program staff members.
- C. Regular Teaching Staff** – Title I Coordinator and staff members in the district will work together to share ideas for best practice and innovation in parent involvement with other teaching staff in the building through formal staff development, professional learning communities, newsletters, and informal conversation.
- D. Parent Involvement Planning Team** – Panther Parents will act as the Parent Involvement Planning team will be established annually, with representation from regular education, Title I staff members, Title I parents (minimum of 3), special education, and Family Outreach Program. This group will meet at least 4 times annually and plan a minimum of three building wide parent involvement activities throughout the school year. This group will also endorse additional parent education offerings in the region and communicate pertinent information to parents.
- E. School Newsletter** – The principal’s school newsletter will be used to keep parents informed of parent involvement activities in the school and community, as well as strategies, activities and routines that can be implemented by parents in the home to increase student academic achievement.

#### **4. Coordination and Integration of Parent Involvement with Other Programs**

**Parkers Prairie believes that a collaborative and coordinated approach to service delivery and parent involvement benefits all children and families. A number of programs are administered out of the Parkers Prairie Elementary School that have strong parent involvement components. These programs are integrated with Title I Part A parental strategies in the following ways:**

- A. Head Start** – Parkers Prairie does not currently have enough income eligible families to host a Head Start site. We stand ready to serve in this capacity should this change in the future.
- B. Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)** – This is a Minnesota program that is an absolute model of ideal parent involvement and education. The ECFE program is located in our Elementary building and is available to all families in the area who have children from birth through school age. The program is built upon that belief that the parent is the first and foremost teacher for every child. We will work closely with the ECFE program to learn from their success with parents and to build our school age activities around their family fun nights and activities throughout the year. Also, ECFE staff members will be involved in staff training, sharing with school aged staff strategies for successfully working with parents and doing parent education.

- C. School Readiness** – School Readiness is located in our building. Families of students in School Readiness are offered parent conferences during the same time as school age conferences happen, at times convenient to the family. Parents of school readiness students are invited and encouraged to participate in school wide parent involvement activities. These families also included in the monthly school newsletter, informing them of parenting tips and parent involvement activities and opportunities.
- D. Family Outreach** – The Family Outreach Program in District #547 is program that is available to all families who wish to have support in working on building dealing with issues that put children at risk of school failure. This includes difficulties related to family issues, divorce, separation, grief and loss, truancy, chemical addiction and abuse, incarceration, and domestic violence. Students in Title I programs, like all students in the District, can access these services with parent permission. The Family Outreach facilitator serves on the Student Assistance Team in our building as a means of becoming aware of students who may benefit from these services. All teachers in the building are aware of this service and know how to access it. The Family Outreach Program provides some direct service to students in the school setting, but also includes home visiting and outreach to families during non-school hours, such as evenings and weekends. The Family Outreach Facilitator is available at all building wide family events. Information about services are provided to all families in the district through written communications and mailings.
- E. School Age Child Care** – Parkers Prairie makes school aged childcare available to parents onsite in the elementary school from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm on school days, during the summer, and on most school holidays. This program provides a safe alternative to being home alone. Students who need to access this program, whose parents cannot afford the hourly rate, are offered scholarships. This program offers another opportunity for school staff to connect with parents as they pick up and drop off their students. The school age care program staff is invited to all staff development opportunities on parent involvement.

## **5. Annual Evaluation of the Content and Effectiveness of Parent Involvement**

An annual evaluation will designed by the Title I Coordinator. It will be distributed to all Title I parents during April. The language of the survey will be as clear and succinct as possible. The survey will ask parents about the following areas.

Participation in:

- Each of the building wide parent involvement events
- Parent –teacher conferences
- Reading the building newsletter
- Parent education activities in the community
- Family activities suggested by the school

In each area where there was not participation by the family being surveyed, the survey will be designed to help parents think about what the barriers to participation were as well as what supports would have helped them to participate at a greater level.

The results of this survey will be made available at the parent involvement policy meeting during June, when the Parent Involvement Policy is being reviewed. Findings of the survey will be used to develop strategies for more effective parental involvement. All Title I parents will be invited to participate in this process, with particular emphasis placed on securing participation from families who are economically disadvantaged, disabled have limited English proficiency, limited literacy, or members of a racial or ethnic minority.

## **6. Building Capacity for Strong Parental Involvement**

In order to support academic success it is essential that parents understand what is expected of children at school, including content of both academic content standards and academic assessments. The school also needs to assist parents in developing strategies for monitoring progress and working with educators. In order to support their children in school, parents also need support in understanding the various compacts that exist between the school and home, including the Family Handbook, and the Title I Parent/School Compact. In order to support families in developing these skills the a variety of activities will be implemented.

### **A. Actions to assist parents in understanding relevant topics:**

- **Back to School Night** – Each year, in the week before school starts, a Back-to-School Night event will be sponsored by the school. This event will give families the opportunity to come into school and meet the teachers. This is the first point of relationship building for parents and teachers. A free pizza supper is offered as part of this event in an attempt to draw more families in. At this event, teacher begin to communicate grade level expectations for the year.
- **Parent Forums** – Parent forums will be offered by the school throughout the year. Specific topics identified by parents as being high interest will be addressed. These could include, but are not limited to such things as understanding the standards, preparing for the MCAII, helping your child with homework, sleep and healthy eating, etc.
- **Informational Materials** – Informational materials will be sent home to parents with the newsletter that address topics related to academic success.
- **Parent Teacher Conferences** – Two times during the school year, parent teacher conferences will be offered. At these conferences, parents can meet with classroom teachers and Title I staff members and ask questions about their child's academic progress. Teachers are expected to be prepared to offer concrete suggestions to parents of how to support learning in each area in which a student is struggling.
- **Classroom Newsletters** – Classroom newsletters are sent at least monthly to parents, informing them of specific projects and activities in their

child's classroom and offering suggestions of how parents can help support the learning of their children.

**B. Actions to assist parents in working with their children to improve academics:**

- **Parent Resource Library** – A parent resource library is available to all parents in the district. It is located in the parent resource room of the elementary school. Parents are able to browse and borrow books on a variety of parenting topics.
- **Internet Access/Training** – Training on how to use the internet to search for information will be provided to any interested parents in our computer lab at school, at least one time per year. Access to the internet is also made available to all patrons of the district through the school library. Specific information and web addresses for Minnesota state standards and other sites that provide help with homework and study skills will be provided to all parents.
- **MRC Parent Trainings** – Parkers Prairie will utilize the expertise our Minnesota Reading Corps member. She will provide multiple trainings afterschool in behaviors and strategies for parents to utilize when reading with their child(ren) at home.
- **Kiwi Packs** – All students in K-2 grade will have “Kiwi Pack” book bags provided in the fall of each year which are carried between home and school with appropriate “**at level**” reading materials. Parents commit to read the books with children at home before sending the Kiwi pack back to school.
- **Waterford Reading Videos and Take Home Books** – All families of kindergarten and first grade students in our district will be provided access to either a VHS or DVD copy of the Waterford Reading training materials about supporting young readers. Families will also be provided with an access to a set of the Waterford reading mini-books. These books are supported by the time that each individual child spends on the computer at school using the Waterford Reading program. This program is a supplement to the core reading program used in the district.

**C. Actions to assist staff in reaching out to build strong relationships with parents:**

- **Staff Training** – Annually, all staff will receive in-service training on best practices for parent teacher conferences as well as strategies for communicating successfully with all parents.
- **Title I Conference** – Title I staff and coordinator will attend the at least one MASFP conference each year, and will select at least one breakout session each time on the topic of parent involvement.
- **Parent Phone Calls** – Throughout the year, teachers are encouraged and supported in making frequent contact with parents in a variety of ways. Phone calls are an important means of communicating with parents and are used to acknowledge success as well as provide suggestions about how a parent might provide additional support to a child at home. A private phone with long distance access is available to all teachers in the

conference room of the elementary school. Teachers also have direct lines into and out of their classrooms.

- **Email/Website Access** – All teachers have web based e-mail access that can be utilized at home or school. This allows for easier contact with some parents who prefer this mode and have access themselves. Teachers also have the option of developing a classroom website which is associated with the district website and supported by district technology staff. This is another means of reaching out to parents.
- **Parent Communications Training** – Each year, at least one staff development topic will be devoted to improving parent communications. This training will be for all teaching staff including regular classroom staff, Title I staff, and special education staff.
- **Professional Resources** – Professional resources, such as books and other media materials, will be purchased annually and made available through the teacher resources library located in the staff work room. Staff members spending time with these materials will be encouraged to share either formally or informally with other staff members the suggestions and ideas that they gained from the materials. Teachers who come across articles related to parent involvement in professional journals are encouraged to make other staff members aware of them.

#### **D. Actions to ensure that information is sent to parents in a uniform and understandable format:**

- It is important to recognize that families are busy and many family systems are stressed by the demands of meeting basic survival needs. By recognizing that parent involvement is the most difficult for some of the families that we most want to reach will challenge us **to be creative in our efforts to support families in meaningful ways rather than judging or disempowering them.**
- Design **written communications to parents that are clear, concise and easy to understand.** Making them visually appealing with photographs and other clip art is a strategy for increasing the likelihood they are read.
- When important parent meetings or educational opportunities are publicized, it is essential that the **information is shared in a variety of ways over time,** rather than just one notice.
- A **regular mailing** to all families will be combined with **flyers** posted in the school, and reminders sent with children about important parent events.
- When there is a question about the literacy skills of parents, it is essential that staff members place a **phone call to the home** to provide the information verbally, rather than depending only on the written word.
- **Talking to children about upcoming events** and asking them to remind parents is another strategy that can be successful, especially for school wide events when children wish to participate.

- Although we currently do not have any ELL families in our district, this could certainly change at any time. If we were to have one or more families whose first language was something other than English, we would secure **translation services** for all written documents so that they could be presented to the family in their home language. We would also have **interpretation services** available for all parent conferences and other meetings in which these parents were in attendance.