

Case Study: Tennessee

Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, Tennessee law began requiring the state department of education to develop parental involvement standards in public schools and to report compliance information for each LEA and public school on the Tennessee Department of Education Report Card. The standards adopted are based on the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) standards for Family School Partnerships.

The formalized Tennessee Parental Involvement Standards are:

1. Welcoming All Families: 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.
2. Communicating: Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.
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.
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.
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.
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.

Tennessee's plan is based on studies showing links between parental involvement and each of the following outcomes: improvement of student attitudes and behaviors, increased student attendance, higher homework completion, higher grades and test scores, fewer placements in special education, decreased drop-out rate, higher graduation rate, greater enrollment in post-secondary education, and positive parent-child communication.

Among the strategies encouraged by the plan are providing training and two-way communication at schools and family resource centers; providing handouts, a website and newsletters to parents to create a home learning environment; designing homework to promote collaboration between student and parent; providing weekly assignment sheets with space for parent feedback; and sharing information about school events and school policies.

To assess progress on this issue, Tennessee conducted two surveys. The district survey is to be completed by the Federal Programs Director or district Parental Involvement Coordinator and the school survey is to be completed by the school Parental Involvement Coordinator or designee for each public school. On the surveys, respondents are asked to indicate which documents were used

to implement the state parental involvement standards from a list including the District Strategic Plan, the District Parental Involvement Policy/Plan, parent surveys, Title I School ESEA Comprehensive Parental Involvement Monitoring Evidence, National PTA Standards Assessment Guide, and the District Title I Needs Assessment.

Respondents are then asked to rate the current level of practice for each of the six standards on a scale ranging from 0 to 3. Each of the six standards is divided into ten goals for the purpose of the surveys.

This document was prepared by Healthy Schools Campaign and Alliance for a Healthier Generation to support the resource State ESSA Plans to Support Student Health and Wellness: A Framework for Action. Learn more at healthyschoolscampaign.org/state-essa-framework.