

The board recognizes the critical role of parents in the education of their children and in the schools. The board directs school administrators to develop programs that will promote and support parental involvement in student learning and achievement at school and at home and encourage successful progress toward graduation. Each parent is encouraged to learn about the educational program, the educational goals and objectives of the school system, and his or her own child's progress. The board also encourages parents to participate in their children's education and in activities designed by school personnel to involve them, such as parent conferences, in order to foster effective teacher and parent communication. Parents are responsible for cooperating with school employees to facilitate their children's compliance with board policies concerning homework, school attendance, and behavior.

For purposes of this policy, "parent" includes parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians of students who are under 18 years old and who have not been emancipated.

A. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PLANS

1. Parental Involvement Plan as Part of the School Improvement Plan

The board directs each principal to ensure that the school improvement team develops a plan for the school's parental involvement program as a part of the school improvement plan. The principal shall publicize drafts of the parental involvement plan prior to finalization and solicit input from parents of students in the school. This plan must include, at a minimum, efforts to enhance parental involvement by promoting the following priorities:

- a. regular, meaningful, two-way communication between home and school;
- b. responsible parenting;
- c. involvement of parents in student learning;
- d. parental volunteering in the school;
- e. involvement of parents in school decisions that affect children and families;
- f. parental training based on parents' informational needs;
- g. collaboration with community agencies and other organizations to provide resources to strengthen school programs, families, and student learning; and
- h. student health awareness among parents by addressing the need for health programs and student health services, which are linked to student learning.

2. Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan

Each school participating in the Title I program must develop, with parents and family members, a school-level written parent and family engagement plan that involves parents in the planning and improvement of Title I activities and describes the means for carrying out school-level policy, sharing responsibility for student academic achievement, building the capacity of school staff and parents for involvement, and increasing accessibility for participation of all parents and family members of children participating in Title I programs. See policy 4021, Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

3. Parental Involvement Component of a School Plan for Managing Student Behavior

Each school's plan for managing student behavior should include parental involvement strategies that address when parents will be notified or involved in issues related to their child's behavior. See policy 4302, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior.

B. PARENT COMMUNICATION, PARTICIPATION, AND CONFERENCES

1. Communication with Parents

The board encourages school personnel to have regular contact with parents for informational purposes as well as for commendation of students and notification of concerns. School personnel shall communicate with parents about student behavior issues in accordance with requirements of policy 4341, Parental Involvement in Student Behavior Issues, and about student attendance as described in policy 3480, Attendance. In addition, parents will be notified promptly if school personnel suspect that a criminal offense has been committed against the parent's child, unless notification would impede an investigation by law enforcement or the child welfare agency.

The principal must effectively communicate to parents the manner in which textbooks are used to implement the school's curricular objectives. Any parent interested in learning more about their child's course of study or the source of any supplementary instructional materials should contact the principal for more information. If a parent would like to inspect and review particular instructional materials, the parent should make such a request in accordance with policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials.

The principal also shall ensure that information about the nature and purpose of all clubs and activities, curricular and extracurricular, offered at the school is available at the school's main office. Any parent who would like information about such clubs or activities should contact the school's main office.

The principal or designee shall strive, through oral or written communication or other means, to include the parents of students identified as at-risk in the implementation and review of academic and/or behavioral interventions for their children, in accordance with policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure.

The principal or designee shall provide the parent of each student in kindergarten, first, or second grade with written notification of the student's reading progress. The notice will be provided three times a year, following each benchmark assessment and will include: (1) assessment results, (2) whether the child may not reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade, and (3) instructional support activities for use at home.

2. Parent Participation at Schools

The board encourages parents to engage in activities in their children's schools. Parents are welcome to visit schools in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools, and, if interested, are urged to participate in school volunteer programs as described in policy 5010, School Volunteers. In addition, opportunities exist for parents to participate on school advisory councils, such as the school health advisory council (see policy 3530, Student Wellness), school improvement teams (see policy 3430, School Improvement Plan), school media and technology advisory committees (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials), and the business advisory council (see policy 2670, Business Advisory Council).

3. Conferences

Teachers are responsible for scheduling conferences or meetings with parents. The board encourages the superintendent to work with local business leaders, including the local chambers of commerce, to encourage employers to adopt, as part of their stated personnel policies, time for employees who are parents or guardians to attend conferences with their child's teachers.

C. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

1. Title I Notifications

Each principal or designee of a Title I school shall effectively notify parents of all parental rights and other required information regarding Title I schools and programs, in accordance with federal law. Parents of students in Title I schools shall receive a copy of the system-wide Title I parent and family engagement policy (policy 4021) and the school-wide parent involvement plan.

2. Parent Guide for Student Achievement

Each year, the superintendent or designee shall create a parent guide for student achievement that meets the requirements of state law and the State Board of

Education. All parents will receive a written copy of the guide, and information in the guide will be discussed at the beginning of each school year in meetings of students, parents, and teachers.

At a minimum the guide will include the following:

- a. information for parents regarding the following as it pertains to their child: (1) requirements for promotion to the next grade, including the requirements of the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program as set forth in Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C; (2) the course of study, textbooks, and other supplementary instructional materials and policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials, which provides for the inspection and review of those materials; (3) the child's progress toward achieving State and unit expectations for academic proficiency, including policies for student assessment, and the child's assessment results, report cards, and progress reports; (4) qualifications of the child's teachers, including licensure status; and (5) school entry requirements, including required immunizations and the recommended immunization schedule;
- b. parental actions that can do the following: (1) strengthen the child's academic progress, especially in the area of reading as provided in the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program; (2) strengthen the child's citizenship, especially social skills and respect for others; (3) strengthen the child's realization of high expectations and setting lifelong learning goals; and (4) place a strong emphasis on the communication between the school and the home;
- c. services available for parents and their children, such as family literacy services; mentoring, tutoring, and other academic reinforcement programs; after-school programs; and college planning, academic advisement, and student counseling services (see policy 3600, Counseling Program);
- d. opportunities for parental participation, such as parenting classes, adult education, school advisory councils, and school volunteer programs;
- e. opportunities for parents to learn about rigorous academic programs that may be available for their child, such as academically and/or intellectually gifted programming, honors programs, Career and College Promise and other dual enrollment opportunities, advanced placement, Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses, International Baccalaureate, North Carolina Virtual High School courses, and accelerated access to postsecondary education;
- f. educational choices available to parents, including each type of public school unit available to residents of the county in which the child lives and nonpublic school options, educational choice options offered within the

school system, and programs for scholarship grants for nonpublic schools (Part 2A of Article 39 of Chapter 115C) and for personal education student accounts for students with disabilities (Article 41 of Chapter 115C);

- g. rights of students who have been identified as students with disabilities, as provided in Article 9 of Chapter 115C;
- h. contact information for school and unit offices;
- i. resources for information on the importance of student health and other available resources for parents, including the following information on available immunizations and vaccinations: (1) a recommended immunization schedule in accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations; and (2) information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza, including the causes, symptoms, and vaccines, how the diseases are spread, and places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children as required by G.S. 115C-375.4; and
- j. this policy (policy 4020, Parental Involvement); policy 4021, Title I Parent and Family Engagement; policy 2670, Business Advisory Council; policy 3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials; policy 3430, School Improvement Plan; policy 3520/6150, Comprehensive Health Education Program; policy 3480, Attendance; policy 5010, School Volunteers; policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools; and policy 3530, Student Wellness.

3. Additional Annual Notifications

The principal or designee shall annually notify parents of the following information to the extent that it has not already been provided to parents as part of the parent guide for student achievement:

- a. parental rights related to student records (see policy 3470, Student Records);
- b. parental rights related to student surveys (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- c. the approximate dates of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance, (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration, and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- d. the schedule of pesticide use on school property and their right to request notification of nonscheduled pesticide use (see policy 9235, Pest

Management);

- e. student behavior policies, the Code of Student Conduct, and school standards and rules (see policies in the 4300 series);
- f. the permissible use of seclusion and restraint in the schools (see regulation 4304-R, Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools);
- g. policy 4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited;
- h. policy 4030, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure;
- i. the dates of the system-wide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year, how the results from the tests will be used, and whether each test is required by the State Board of Education or by the local board;
- j. grading practices that will be followed at the school and, for parents of high school students, the method of computing the grade point averages that will be used for determining class rank (see policies 3400, Evaluation of Student Progress, and 3451, Class Rankings);
- k. available opportunities and the enrollment process for students to take advanced courses and information explaining the value of taking advanced courses;
- l. if applicable, that their child will be provided advanced learning opportunities in mathematics or will be placed in an advanced mathematics course;
- m. when a student initially creates a career development plan, that the plan has been created and information on how to access the plan;
- n. a clear and concise explanation of the North Carolina testing and accountability system that includes all information required by federal law;
- o. a report containing information about the school system and each school, including, but not limited to:
 - i. the following information both in the aggregate and disaggregated by category: student achievement, graduation rates, performance on other school quality and/or student success indicators, the progress of students toward meeting long-term goals established by the state, student performance on measures of school climate and safety, and, as available, the rate of enrollment in post-secondary education;

- ii. the performance of the school system on academic assessments as compared to the state as a whole and the performance of each school on academic assessments as compared to the state and school system as a whole;
- iii. the percentage and number of students who are:
 - 1. assessed,
 - 2. assessed using alternate assessments,
 - 3. involved in preschool and accelerated coursework programs, and
 - 4. English learners achieving proficiency;
- iv. the per pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funds; and
- v. teacher qualifications;
- p. the grade earned by the school on the most recent annual report card issued for it by the State Board of Education if the grade was a D or F;
- q. if the school and/or the school system is identified by the State Board of Education as low-performing, the notifications required by G.S. 115C-105.37(b) and/or G.S. 115C-105.39A(c);
- r. supportive services available to students, including health services;
- s. for parents of students in grades 5 through 12, information about cervical cancer, cervical dysplasia, and human papillomavirus, including the causes and symptoms of these diseases, how they are transmitted, how they may be prevented by vaccination, including the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination, and places parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children;
- t. how to reach school officials in emergency situations during non-school hours;
- u. information about and an application form for free and reduced-price meals and/or free milk (see policy 6230, Free and Reduced-Price Meal Services);
- v. information about the school breakfast program;
- w. information about the availability and location of free summer food service program meals for students when school is not in session;
- x. for parents of children with disabilities, procedural safeguards (see also policy 7220, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);

- y. information on the availability of the asbestos management plan and planned or in-progress inspections, re-inspections, response actions, and post-response actions, including periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities;
 - z. education rights of homeless students (see policy 4175, Homeless Students);
 - aa. the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy (see policy 3530, Student Wellness);
 - bb. their right to take four hours of unpaid leave from their jobs every year in order to volunteer in their child's school as stated in G.S. 95-28.3 (see policy 5010, School Volunteers);
 - cc. that the school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, and that the school system provides processes for resolving discrimination and harassment complaints (see policies 1710/4023/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law, 1720/4031/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, and 7220, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities);
 - dd. that the school system provides equal access to its facilities, programs, and activities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups (see policy 1710/4023/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law); and
 - ee. the availability of and the process for requesting a waiver or reduction of student fees (see policy 4500, Student Fees).
4. Opportunities to Withhold Consent/Opt Out Notifications

As a part of the annual notification described above, parents will be effectively notified that they may opt out of any of the following:

- a. release of student directory information about their child for school purposes or to outside organizations (see policy 3470, Student Records);
- b. release of their child's name, address, and telephone listing to military recruiters or institutions of higher education (see policy 3470, Student Records);
- c. their child's participation in curricula related to (a) prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; (b) avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy; or (c) reproductive health and safety education, as provided in policy 3520/6150, Comprehensive Health Education Program. A copy of

the materials that will be used in these curricula will be available in the school media center during the school year and at other times that the media center is available to the public. To meet any review periods required by law, materials also may be made available for review in the central office;

- d. their child's participation in academic or career guidance or personal or social counseling services of a generic nature offered to groups of students (e.g., peer relations strategies offered to all sixth graders). However, parents do not have the right to opt out of: (a) short-duration academic, career, personal, or social guidance and counseling and crisis intervention that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment; (b) student-initiated individual or group counseling targeted at a student's specific concerns or needs; and (c) counseling if child abuse or neglect is suspected (see policies 3600, Counseling Program, and 4240, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety);
- e. their child's participation in any protected information survey given as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey or the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
- f. their child's participation in any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is: (a) required as a condition of attendance; (b) administered and scheduled in advance by the school administration; and (c) not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students;
- g. the collection, disclosure, or use of their child's personal information for marketing purposes (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students); and
- h. release of their child's free and reduced-price meal information to State Medicaid or State children's health insurance program (SCHIP).

Any parent or legal guardian who wishes to opt out/withhold consent must do so in writing after receiving notice. Otherwise, consent to the programs or activities is presumed. After the annual notification, the school is not required to provide further notice to the parent or legal guardian as to the manner in which student directory information is used, the curriculum is provided, or guidance programs are made available.

D. PARENTAL PERMISSION REQUIRED

Written parental permission is required prior to the following activities:

1. the administration of medications to students by employees of the school system (see policy 6130, Administering Medicines to Students);

2. the release of student records that are not considered directory information, unless the release is allowed or required by law (see policy 3470, Student Records);
3. off-campus trips;
4. students' participation in high-impact or high-risk sports or extracurricular activities, such as football or mountain climbing (see policy 4220, Student Insurance Program);
5. all decisions or actions as required by the IDEA with regard to providing special education or related services to students with disabilities (see policy 3500, Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities);
6. certain health services, as required by law;
7. participation in a mental health assessment or mental health services under circumstances prescribed by federal law;
8. students' participation in programs or services that provide information about where to obtain contraceptives or abortion referral services;
9. students' participation in any protected information survey other than those given as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System or National Youth Tobacco Survey or the North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (see policy 4720, Surveys of Students);
10. disclosure of students' free and reduced price lunch eligibility information or eligibility status; and
11. students' access to school system technological resources, including the Internet, as described in policy 3230/7370, Technology Responsible Use.

E. PROCEDURES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT HEALTH**1. Parent Notifications Regarding Student Physical and Mental Health**

At the beginning of each school year, the principal or designee shall notify parents of (1) each health care service offered at their children's schools and the means for parents to provide consent for any specific services; (2) acknowledgement that consenting to a health care service does not waive the parents' right to access their children's educational records or health records or to be notified of changes in their children's services or monitoring; and (3) the procedures to exercise the parental remedies for concerns related to student health provided by G.S. 115C-76.60 and described below in subsection E.6.

Before any student well-being questionnaire or health screening form is administered to students in kindergarten through third grade, the principal or designee shall provide parents with a copy of the questionnaire or form and shall inform parents of the means for parents to consent to the use of the questionnaire or form for their children.

The principal or designee shall notify parents of changes in services or monitoring related to their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for their children prior to or contemporaneously with the changes being made. In addition, the principal or designee shall notify parents before any changes are made to the names or pronouns used for their children in school records or by school personnel.

No school system policy, procedure, or form will expressly or otherwise prohibit school employees from notifying parents about their children's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring, nor will any school system policy, procedure, or form intentionally encourage or be designed in a manner that is reasonably likely to have the effect of encouraging any children to withhold from their parents information about their mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being or a change in related services or monitoring. School personnel shall not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.

2. Discussions Related to Student Well-Being

In accordance with the rights of parents provided in Chapter 114A of the General Statutes, when issues of a student's well-being arise, school personnel shall encourage the student to discuss the issues with his or her parent. As appropriate, school personnel may facilitate discussions of such issues with parents.

3. Parent Access to Student Records

Parents will not be prohibited from accessing any of their children's education and health records created, maintained, or used by the school system, except as permitted by law. See policy 3470, Student Records.

4. Student Support Services Training

Student support services training developed or provided by the school system to school personnel will adhere to student services guidelines, standards, and frameworks established by the Department of Public Instruction.

5. Instruction on Gender Identity, Sexual Activity, and Sexuality

Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality will not be included in

the curriculum provided in kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties. For purposes of this subsection, curriculum includes the standard course of study and support materials, locally developed curriculum, supplemental instruction, and textbooks and other supplementary materials, but does not include responses to student-initiated questions.

6. Remedies for Parental Concerns Related to Student Health

If a parent has a concern about the school or school system's procedure or practice under Part 4 of Article 7B of Chapter 115C, as described here in Section E of this policy, the parent should submit the concern in writing to the principal. The principal shall schedule and hold a meeting with the parent within five days after the concern was submitted. The principal shall conduct any necessary investigation. If possible, the principal should resolve the concern within seven days after the concern was submitted. If the principal cannot resolve the concern within seven days, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall assist, as needed, in resolving the concern.

If the concern has not been resolved within 15 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the superintendent or designee shall schedule a board hearing to be conducted pursuant to policy 2500, Hearings Before the Board, to occur within the next 15 days. If the concern is not resolved 30 days after the parent initially submitted the concern, the board will provide a statement of the reasons for not resolving the concern.

If the concern is not resolved within 30 days of initial submission, the parent has the right to pursue additional remedies as provided in G.S. 115C-76.60(b).

F. PARENT REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

A parent may request in writing from the principal any of the information the parent has the right to access under Part 3 of Article 7B of Chapter 115C. The principal, within 10 business days, shall either provide the requested information to the parent or provide an extension notice to the parent that, due to the volume or complexity of the request, the information will be provided no later than 20 business days from the date of the parental request.

If the principal (1) denies or fails to respond to the request for information within 10 business days or (2) fails to provide information within 20 business days following an extension notice, the parent may then submit the written request for information to the superintendent, along with a statement specifying the time frame of the denial or failure to provide information by the principal.

If the superintendent denies or does not respond to the request for information within 10

business days, the parent may appeal the denial or lack of response to the board no later than 20 business days from the date of the request to the superintendent. The board will place the parent's appeal on the agenda for the next board meeting occurring more than three business days after submission of the appeal.

The information in this Section F will be posted on the school system's website along with the list of parents' legal rights for their child's education as described in G.S. 115C-76.25.

G. COMMUNITY SERVICES AVAILABLE

A variety of community services are available to provide parents and families of students in the school system with needed information, support, and resources. Parents are encouraged to utilize applicable community services such as the following:

<https://www.unitedwaygaston.org/partner-agencies/>

H. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

By September 15 of each year, the superintendent or designee shall report to the State Board of Education parental involvement information as required by State Board of Education Policy PRNT-002 and G.S. 115C-76.70.

Legal References: Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35; Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, 15 U.S.C. 2641, *et seq.*; Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. 7905, 34 C.F.R. 108.9; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 200; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, 34 C.F.R. pt. 99; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, *et seq.*; McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; National School Lunch Program, 42 U.S.C. 1751 *et seq.*, 7 C.F.R. 210.12, 7 C.F.R. pt. 245; Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. 1232h, 34 C.F.R. pt. 98; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 705(20), 794, 34 C.F.R. pt. 104; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 100; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. pt. 106; 20 U.S.C. 7908; G.S. 90-21.1, -21.10B; 95-28.3; 114A-10; 115C-47(47), -47(51), -47(54), -47(58), -76.1, -76.20, -76.25, -76.30, -76.35, -76.40, -76.45, -76.50, -76.55, -76.60, -76.65, -76.70, -81.25, -81.30, -81.36, -105.37(b), -105.39A(c), -105.41, -109.1, -158.10, -174.26(d), -307(c), -375.4, -390.2, -391.1, -402.15, -407.16; 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0307, 6G .0701; State Board of Education Policies KNEC-002, PRNT-000 and -002, TEST-001

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