

# **East Providence School Department Silver Spring Elementary**

East Providence, Rhode Island  
[www.epschoolsri.com](http://www.epschoolsri.com)

## **Parent Involvement Policy and Informational Handbook**

Adapted from the District Parent Involvement Policy  
Adopted by the East Providence School Committee  
11/12/13



Silver Spring Elementary School is a Title I school with approximately 260 students in grade kindergarten through grade 5. There are 12 regular education classrooms, one special needs classroom, and 3 therapeutic classrooms with 31 full and part time faculty members. All students participate in school wide Title I services. In addition, qualifying students receive English as a Second language instruction, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and special education services. Silver Spring, a close knit neighborhood institution, is proud of its strong and diverse learning community.

Silver Spring Elementary School, in partnership with families and the community, is committed to providing a comprehensive inclusive program of academic excellence in a safe, nurturing environment. Through the implementation and use of available resources and best teaching practices, student growth will be monitored with fidelity and reflection to ensure all students' needs are met.

Silver Spring Elementary School recognizes that parent and family involvement is essential to educating our students and preparing them for life-long learning. Schools, families, and the community must all be actively involved in developing strong programs and policies that support the academic success of every student in the East Providence Public Schools.

To this end, Silver Spring Elementary School will strive to involve parents and family members of children of all ages and grade levels by developing and implementing systemic and school-based strategies and programs based national standards, indicators and suggested activities for successful parent/family involvement programs:

### **Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful**

Use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis seeking to facilitate two-way interaction.

- ◆ Newsletters and school calendars
- ◆ Student planners
- ◆ Signage outside schools
- ◆ Informational newsletters
- ◆ Open houses
- ◆ Home visits
- ◆ Interpreters and translations
- ◆ Phone calls and emails
- ◆ East Providence School Department's Web Page

- ◆ Silver Spring School's web site
- ◆ Silver Spring PTC web site
- ◆ Open House Event
- ◆ Home-School Compacts
- ◆ Telephone Message System
- ◆ School and District Title I Events

Establishing opportunities for parents and educators to share partnering information such as students' strengths and learning preferences

- ◆ Personal Literacy Plans (if needed)
- ◆ Parent/Teacher conferences
- ◆ Assist parents in acquiring techniques to support their students' learning and develop tools to help establish those areas where support is needed.
- ◆ Response to Intervention Plans (if needed)
- ◆ Individualized Education Plans (if needed)

Provide clear information regarding course expectations and offerings, student placement, school activities, student services, and optional programs.

Provide report cards and regular progress reports to parents. Provide support services and follow-up conferences as needed.

- ◆ Progress reports/report cards
- ◆
- ◆ Telephone and on-line communication

Disseminate information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals, and include parents in any related decision-making process.

- ◆ Student Policy/Informational Handbook
- ◆ Mission Statements
- ◆ School Improvement Plans
- ◆ District Strategic Plan
- ◆ School Report Night
- ◆ Parent Involvement and Informational Handbook
- ◆ Parent Letters
- ◆ District/School Web site

Conduct conferences with parents, with follow-up as needed.

Encourage immediate contact between parents and teachers when concerns arise.

Distribute student work for parental comment and review on a regular basis.

Translate communications to assist non-English speaking parents.

Communicate with parents regarding positive student behavior and achievement, not just regarding misbehavior or failure.

- ◆ Response to Intervention Policies and Procedures
- ◆ *PBIS (Positive Intervention Support Plans) plans*

Provide opportunities for parents to communicate with principals and administrative staff.

Promote informal activities at which parents, staff, and community members can interact.

- ◆ Family Fun Nights
- ◆ Science Fair and Non-Fiction Night
- ◆ Math Night
- ◆ Literacy Nights
- ◆ Fundraisers
- ◆ Field Trips & In-House programs

Provide staff development regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of regular two-way communication between the school and the family.

### **Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning**

Seek and encourage parental participation in decision-making that affects students.

Inform parents of the expectations for students in each subject at each grade level at Open Houses, Curriculum Nights, and Report Nights.

Provide information regarding how parents can foster learning at home, giving appropriate assistance, monitor homework, and give feedback to teachers.

Sponsor workshops or distribute information to assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and perform well on assignments.

Provide opportunities for parental involvement in setting student goals and in planning for post-secondary education careers.

Provide opportunities for staff members to learn and share successful approaches to engaging parents in their child's education.

### **Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are encouraged**

Encourage office staff greetings, signage near the entrances, and any other interaction with parents to create a climate in which the parents feel valued and welcome.

Survey parents regarding their interests, talents, and availability, then coordinate the parent resources with those that exist within the school and among the faculty.

Encourage parents who are unable to volunteer in the school building the option to help in other ways, at home or place of employment.

Organize an easy, accessible program for utilizing parent volunteers, providing ample training on volunteer procedures and school protocol.

Develop a system for contacting parents to assist as the year progresses.

Provide opportunities for those with limited time and resources to participate by addressing child care and work schedule needs.

Establish volunteer activities that are meaningful and built on volunteer interests and abilities.

### **Parenting skills are promoted and supported**

Communicate the importance of positive relationships between parents and their children.

- ◆ Inform parents of current research findings investigating Parent Involvement and student success.
- ◆ Assist parents in acquiring techniques to support their student's development socially and academically.

Link parents to programs and resources within the community that provide support services to families.

Support policies that recognize the variety of cultural traditions and religious diversity.

## **Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families**

Provide a process for addressing issues and/or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems.

- ◆ Student Policy and Informational Handbook
- ◆ Encourage the formation of parent groups to identify and respond to issues of interests to parents.
- ◆ Work closely with the PTC in supporting parent and family initiatives that support academic achievement.

Include parents on decision-making and advisory committees, and provide training for such areas as policy, curriculum, budget, school reform initiatives, safety, and personnel.

Encourage parents to participate as partners when setting school goals, developing or evaluating programs and policies, or responding to performance data.

- ◆ School Improvement Teams
- ◆ Development of Parent Involvement Policy and Informational Handbook
- ◆ Annual evaluation of Parent Involvement Policy and Informational Handbook

Encourage active parent participation in the decisions that affect students such as student placement, course selection, and individual personalized education plans.

Treat parental concerns with respect and demonstrate genuine interest in developing solutions.

Promote parent participation on school district, state, and national committees and issues.

- ◆ School Improvement Teams
- ◆ Special Education Local Advisory
- ◆ Title III Local Advisory

Provide training for staff and parents on collaborative partnering and shared decision making.

### ***What is No Child Left Behind?***

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools. With the passage of *No Child Left Behind*,

Congress reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA)* – the principle federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. In amending ESEA, the new law represents a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education in the United States. Every state will test all students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 in math and reading, and students in grades 4, 8, and 11 will be tested in science.

### **What is a Title I School?**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) targets federal funds to high-poverty communities to provide compensatory educational services to low-achieving students. These funds are distributed by a poverty-based formula to approximately 90 percent of the school districts in the nation.

Parent involvement has always been an integral part of Title I. Under the new Law, *No Child Left Behind*, one of the new purposes of Title I is to ensure that funds are used to promote parent involvement. Parents should take full advantage of the opportunities for involvement that the law provides.

Every district receiving Title I money is required to:

- ◆ Develop with parents a written parent involvement policy that is then distributed to parents and made available to the local community.
- ◆ Convene an annual meeting of parents to inform them of the policy and their right to be involved.
- ◆ Offer flexible parent involvement meetings, if necessary, with Title I money to provide child care, transportation, or home visits.
- ◆ Involve parents in an organized and ongoing way in the planning, review, and improvement of school programs.
- ◆ Develop with parents a Home-School Compact that outlines actions to be taken to improve individual student academic achievement.
- ◆ Increase opportunities for parent involvement in the school by helping parents understand academic content standards and state achievement standards and assessments.
- ◆ Provide materials and training for parents, teachers, pupil services personnel, and other staff to foster greater parent involvement.
- ◆ Integrate activities with other programs: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), English as a Second Language (ESL), etc.

**([www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org), 2013) Family School Partnerships  
(Dreambox Blog 2013) How Parental Involvement Affects Student  
Achievement;  
(Henderson A. & Berta N: *The Evidence Grows* (1981);  
*The Evidence Continues to Grow* (1987); and *A Generation of  
Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement* (1995). An  
analysis of more than 85 studies.**

Research shows that **family involvement** promotes student success. Students with involved parents are more likely to

- Earn higher grades and pass their classes,
- Attend school regularly and have better social skills,
- Go on to postsecondary education.

When families, schools, and communities work together,

- Student achievement improves,
- Teacher morale rises,
- Communication increases,
- Family, school, and community connections multiply.

#### *Parent Involvement and Student Success*

- When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' educational level.
- The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.
- When parents are involved in their students' education, those students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
- When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
- Students whose parents are involved in their lives have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.
- Different types of parent /family involvement produce different gains. To have long-lasting gains for students, parental involvement activities must be well-planned, inclusive, and comprehensive.
- In programs that are designed to involve parents in full partnerships, student achievement for disadvantaged children, not only improves, but also can reach levels that are standard for middle-class children. In addition, the children who are farthest behind make the greatest gains.

- Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.
- Students are more likely to fall behind in academic performance if their parents do not participate in school events, fail to develop a working relationship with their child's educators, or keep up with what is happening in their child's school.
- The benefits of involving parents are not confined to the early years; there are significant gains at all ages and grade levels.
- The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to 1) create a home environment that encourages learning; 2) communicate high, yet reasonable expectations for children's achievement and future careers; and 3) become involved in their children's education and in the community.

#### *Parent Involvement and School Quality*

- Schools that work well with families have improved teacher moral and higher ratings of teachers by parents
- Schools where parents are involved have more support from families and better reputations from the community.
- School programs that involve parents out perform identical programs without parent and family involvement.
- Schools where children are failing improve dramatically when parents are enabled to become effective partners in their child's education.

#### *Parent Involvement and Program Design*

- The more the relationship between parents and educators approaches a comprehensive, well-planned partnership, the higher the student achievement.
- When parents receive frequent and effective communication from the school or program, their involvement increases, their overall evaluation of educators improves, and their attitudes toward the program are more positive.
- Parents are much more likely to become involved when educators encourage and assist parents in helping their children with their schoolwork.
- Effective programs are lead by a team of administrators, educators, and parents, and have access to financial resources.
- When they are treated as partners and given relevant information by people with whom they are comfortable, parents put into practice the involvement strategies they already know are effective, but have been hesitant to contribute.
- One of the most significant challenges to conducting an effective program is the lack of instruction on parent and family involvement

that educators and administrators receive in their professional training.

- Collaboration with families is an essential component of a reform strategy, but it is not a substitute for high-quality education programs or comprehensive school improvement.

While student success largely relies on factors like study habits, school attendance, test-taking abilities and more, research is showing that parental involvement also has a large impact on student achievement in the classroom. In fact, according to the Academic Development Institute, parents who get involved with their child's education tend to demonstrate good parenting skills, volunteer their time in the school, communicate with faculty and take an active role in school-related decision-making.

The Harvard Family Research Project concluded that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement. They found that student success was higher in a variety of areas including standardized test scores, grades and teacher ratings. Students are also more likely to enroll in higher-level programs, pass their classes, attend school regularly, have better social skills and move onto post-secondary education. The types of parental involvement that had the greatest impact on student success were reading and communicating with one's child, as well as holding parental expectations.

### **SEDL: The National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools**

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/>

- [\*The School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture - A Review of Current Literature\*](#) (PDF file: 1.3MB) These studies explore a wide range of family involvement programs, challenges, needs, strategies, and contexts.
- [\*Readiness: School, Family, and Community Connections\*](#) (PDF file: 940K). This synthesis explores children's abilities as they make the transition to kindergarten, factors associated with these abilities, and implications of these abilities, and implications of these factors on later success.  
[Print copies are available](#) from the SEDL Store.
- [\*Diversity: School, Family, and Community Connections\*](#) (PDF file: 840K) is the third in a series of reports to help local school, community, and family leaders obtain useful research-based information about key educational issues.  
[Print copies are available](#) from the SEDL Store.

- [\*A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement\*](#) (PDF file: 1.2 MB) This is a synthesis of 51 studies about the impact of family and community involvement on student achievement, and effective strategies to connect schools, families and community. **Print copies are available** from the SEDL Store.
- [\*A New Wave of Evidence Key Findings\*](#) (PDF file: 28k) This short handout lists the eight key findings from *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*.
- [\*A New Wave of Evidence Family and Community Engagement Self-Assessment\*](#) (PDF file: 12k) This simple tool can help you assess where your school or school district is in relation to the report's recommendations. It is designed to be used as a supplement to presentations or discussions about *A New Wave of Evidence*.
- [\*Emerging Issues in School, Family, & Community Connections\*](#)(PDF file: 531K) is the first in a series of research syntheses that will examine key issues in the field of family and community connections with schools. You may also view this document in [HTML format](#). **Print copies are available** from the SEDL Store.

**Ways Families and Communities  
Can Help Children Succeed in Our Schools**

- ◆ Talk to your child about homework
- ◆ Talk with your child about school activities
- ◆ Let your school know you are available to help
- ◆ Take your child to the library
- ◆ Establish daily “quiet time” at home for study
- ◆ Praise your child’s efforts
- ◆ Participate in educational task forces and advisory councils
- ◆ Attend school programs
- ◆ Accompany students on field trips or other extracurricular activities
- ◆ Attend school committee meetings
- ◆ Participate in your child’s school’s PTC

## **Silver Spring Parent Handbook Review**

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| ◆ Kathleen Caffrey | Principal          |
| ◆ Jessica Daly     | Teacher            |
| ◆ Sarah Yassine    | Reading Specialist |
| ◆ Doreen Silva     | Parent             |
| ◆ Kelly Iacavone   | Parent             |

This policy will be reviewed annually and distributed to parents.