

Revised September 27, 2011

**Falling Creek Elementary Parent Involvement Policy
2011-2012**

- 1. Develop jointly with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written policy describing implementation of the requirements in a language that is simple, concise and jargon-free and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, and such policy is made available to the local community.**

Falling Creek Elementary School feels that parents should be an integral part of the decision-making process. The School Council, Title I Parent Involvement Committee and Parent Teacher Organization Executive Committee play a vital role in reviewing and revising plans such as the School Improvement and Parent Involvement Plan. Our Parent Involvement Policy is also sent home with all parents in our school handbook and is available to the community when needed.

- 2. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their schools' participation under Title I and to explain Title I, its requirements, and their right to be involved.**

The first Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting of each school year is designated as our Title I annual meeting. During this meeting parents are informed of Falling Creek's participation in Title I, receive an explanation of the Title I program, its requirements, and the rights of parents to be involved. Informational pamphlets describing Title I services are also provided. Parents are also invited to School Council meeting, scheduled four times a year. The School Council meetings are advertised through the local newspaper and radio station, as well as posted in the foyer of the school. The School Council is directly involved in the planning and review of the Parent Involvement Policy and School Improvement Plan.

- 3. Offer meetings using a flexible schedule, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under Title I, transportation, childcare, or home visits as such services relate to parental involvement to eliminate parent involvement barriers.**

Falling Creek realizes that the busy schedule of parents is often a blockade for them being involved in school. Flexible meeting times are offered. All afternoon meetings are held after 5:30 PM (in respect to the time that the majority of our parents are available) and are considerate of the local recreation programs that may have practice or games. All family members and children are welcome during the meetings. Mrs. Kate Johnson, school social worker, assists our school in making home visits or providing transportation for parents who may need this service. School administration, faculty, and staff and are also available through written or email correspondence and phone conferences to assist in providing needed information, to receive input, or to address concerns.

- 4. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, including the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its programs, the school may use that process if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children.**

Falling Creek Elementary parents are involved in the planning, development, and review of the School Improvement Plan and Parent Involvement Policy. The School Council has faculty members, parent representatives, and business representatives (who are also parents) who serve dual roles as council members and Parent Involvement Committee members. The plans are sent in the school handbook at the beginning of the year, council members gather input and recommendations from them, and present them during review meetings. The policies are revisited during the school year.

The first PTO meeting of the school year is also dedicated to Title I and provides an additional outlet for parent input and involvement.

- 5. Provides parents of participating students timely information on:**
- a. Title I programs in the school.**
 - b. Results of the annual school review including school performance profiles.**
 - c. Individual student assessment results and their interpretation.**
 - d. A description and explanation of the school curriculum.**
 - e. The assessments used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels the students are expected.**
 - f. Opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions, share experiences with other parents, and participate as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children.**
 - g. Provide timely responses to parent suggestions.**
 - h. Collect all unsatisfactory parent comments regarding the Schoolwide Plan and attach those comments to the Schoolwide Plan when submitted to the LEA.**

Parents receive timely information related to Falling Creek in a variety of ways. Title I program information is presented to parents through Open House, PTO and School Council meetings, and monthly newsletters. The results of the annual school review are presented to the School Council and are available to parents.

Parents are notified of all scheduled state and national assessments through a school calendar provided in the school handbook. The handbook contains a description of the assessments that students may receive throughout the school year, as well as levels of performance. The school's monthly newsletter and parent letters are also used as methods to inform parents of not only national and state assessments and test taking tips, but also of diagnostic assessments that may be used. All parents receive their children's scores and interpretations when they arrive. A summary of Falling Creek's performance on the CRCT is reviewed with the School Council, allowing parents to formulate suggestions for change or improvement.

During the school year, parents receive information concerning student progress and performance frequently. All parents are provided web access to their children's grades through a secure program called Powerschool. This program notes grades for all assignments, denotes late or modified assignments, and shows a comparison of a child's performance in relation to the class average for each assignment. Progress reports are sent home every four and one-half weeks for all students, followed by report cards every nine weeks. Third through fifth grade uses school planners to inform parents of daily assignments and homework, conferences, and academic/behavioral progress. The planner requires a parent signature nightly to indicate receipt. Kindergarten through second grade uses a "daily folder" that serves the same purpose as the planner.

A review of the school curriculum was provided via a PowerPoint presentation to our School Council and is discussed during the first PTO meeting of the school year. Open House, School Council, PTO meetings, and informal discussion are used to seek parental input regarding all facets of the school. Comments and concerns related to the Schoolwide Plan are submitted to the LEA.

- 6. Provide assistance to participating parents in such areas as understanding the:**
- a. National Education Goals.**
 - b. State's content standards and student performance standards.**
 - c. School improvement and corrective action process if applicable.**
 - d. Components of a schoolwide program, if applicable.**
 - e. Components of a targeted assistance school program, if applicable.**
 - f. State and local assessments.**
 - g. Requirements of Title I, Part A.**

h. Ways parents can monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children.

i. Ways parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.

Falling Creek provides parents with information related to National Education Goals, state content standards, and student performance standards through our annual PTO meeting dedicated to Title I, the school handbook, and parent meetings during the school year. Components of the schoolwide program, as well as ways parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children are also provided during this meeting. Parents are provided with a secure web-based program called Powerschool, progress reports, report cards, school planners, and "daily folders" as ways parents can monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children. State and local assessments are reviewed in the school handbook provided to all students. The review contains testing dates, detailed information related to performance levels and requirements for meeting standards. The monthly school newsletter reinforces this information and provides test taking strategies when applicable. The Parent Resource Center supported through Title I funds also provides parents with informational presentations and materials related to children from birth to college for checkout. All facets of Falling Creek are designed with to encourage parent involvement in the decisions relating to the education of their children.

7. Provide materials and training such as:

a. Coordinating necessary literacy training and using technology from other sources to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement.

b. Training to help parent work with their children to improve their children's achievement.

The Parent Resource Center located at 50 Laurel Drive serves a resource to assist parents and community members with literacy and technology training. Parents are provided with information, resources, materials and training to help parents improve their children's achievement. In addition to the materials available in the Parent Resource Center, the resource coordinator also provides each school with informational pamphlets to share with parents. The informational pamphlets address a variety of needs that were identified through parental input at the Resource Center. A portion of the monthly school newsletter is designated to advertise the Parent Resource Center and its available resources.

Parents are also provided online resources related to student achievement through school newsletters. Directions for accessing and properly using the online programs such as Galileo, Math Facts in a Flash, Renaissance Place, and Study Island are also included in the newsletters. The media specialist and technology support are available to address technology issues.

8. Educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between home and school.

Falling Creek Elementary School feels that overall success cannot be achieved without students, parents, and school faculty working as a team. Open communication with parents is required from all faculty members and is supported through school organizations such as our PTO and School Council. Our PTO works with the school to draw parents to meetings and activities in a way that puts parents at ease. Information on how to value, communicate, and build a bond between parents and school is presented through faculty meetings, professional development opportunities, School Council, school leadership team, and the Parent Resource Center. Additionally, the monthly newsletter and "open door" policy of school administration provides opportunities to build ties between school and home.

9. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs, activities, and strategies with Head Start, Even Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Title I-B, Migrant, Title I-C, Homeless, Vocational

Education, and Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers Program, Public Preschool Programs, and other programs, to the extent feasible and appropriate.

Falling Creek Elementary is fortunate to have Elbert County Headstart located in their parking lot and Pre-K classrooms, as well as both Elbert County Pre-K resource coordinators located in the school building. The convenient location allows us to often integrate our school events to serve both groups. We provide orientation for parents and students transitioning to our school, as well as exiting elementary schools. Our school works in conjunction with high school's vocational program to allow students interested in becoming educators opportunities to work in a school setting. Falling Creek works in conjunction with the various sectors of Title I, including Migrant Education when appropriate.

10. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organization and businesses in parent involvement activities, including providing information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools, and encouraging the formation of partnerships between elementary, middle, and secondary schools and local businesses that include a role for parents.

Falling Creek works in conjunction with its PTO to recruit "Business Friends of Falling Creek." "Business Friends" provide monetary support for classrooms and instructional purchases. Volunteers also serve the school in an instructional capacity. From our Title survey, Falling Creek recognized that more parents wanted to serve as volunteers, but were unsure where they were needed and as a result began a more integrated volunteer program.

11. Conduct other activities, as appropriate and feasible, such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parent to learn about child development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child, that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.

The Elbert County Parent Resource Center provides programs, information, materials, and resources for parents to learn about children development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child. The programs and materials chosen through the Parent Resource Center were based on needs identified through parental input or through statistical information provided local agencies. The school works in conjunction with the Parent Resource Center to inform parents of available resources and programs. The resource coordinator also works in conjunction with our Pre-K directors to provide parents with effective programs from the onset of their children's education.

12. Involve parents in an ongoing and end of year assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent involvement initiatives as a measure of performance evaluations of the school.

An annual survey is sent home with the spring progress report. Parental involvement activities, programs, and overall school effectiveness are evaluated through the survey. Information garnered through the survey is used to review and modify programs and activities. Parents are also provided with the opportunity to suggest needed workshops and activities to help them aid their children in educational achievement. Results are reviewed by the School Council, which has parental involvement, with the purpose of making recommendations for improvement.

13. To the extent practicable, provide full opportunities for the participation of LEP parents, parents of migratory children, and parents with disabilities including providing school profiles and information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in a language and format such parents understand.

Falling Creek wants all parents to be an integral part of their school. We are aware that some of our parents do not speak English as their native language. Altavista is a program that is used by Falling Creek to translate written correspondence to parents because it is able to translate into many different languages. Transact is also a program used to send translated documents to parents. During parent meetings, programs, or home visits, a translator is provided through Title fund, if needed. The school is also designed to accommodate the needs of those with physical disabilities.

14. Provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request.

Falling Creek Elementary works with parents to provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities. All activities, programs, and parent conferences are designed for parent convenience. Parents are provided with notice of meetings in advance, so that parents can notify the school of the need for additional support. For parents not able to attend meetings, minutes or information is sent home to parents for review and comment. Conference calls, email, home visits, and providing transportation to meetings are also designed to remove blockades that may impede parent involvement.

15. Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training.

Parents participate in revision of the School Improvement Plan and Parent Involvement Policy throughout the school year. These documents address professional development and training opportunities provided to teachers. The annual survey sent to all parents requests suggestions and also evaluates parents' perception of effectiveness. Input from parents from policy review and parent survey results are used in planning training for the upcoming school year.

16. Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.

The Executive Committee of the PTO and School Council work as liaison between the school and parents. Each classroom is also assigned a room coordinator who provides additional contact to classroom parents.

17. Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement.

The Elbert County School System Change team works together monthly to address a variety of issues pervading all of our schools, including improving parental involvement. The team has worked together with stockholders to create surveys that provide clear information on what parents need from the school. The information gathered from the surveys will be used to create a more effective model for improving parental involvement. District Title I employees have also held meetings with parent, business, educational/support agencies, and school administrators to develop strategies for creating better parental involvement.

Note: Paragraph concerning Study Island was removed as part of suggested revisions from October 2010 policy.