

**Administrative Procedures for Policy #8123(Community)
Regarding Parent/Caregiver/Community Involvement**

I. Core Beliefs

- A. Parents want what is best for their children.
- B. Parents, regardless of ethnic group, socioeconomic status, or educational background, are a key resource in their children's education.
- C. All children can learn.
- D. Together as partners, schools, family caregivers and communities can succeed in educating children to be able to lead happy, healthy, and productive lives.

II. Definitions

- A. Advocate – a person who writes or speaks on behalf of someone or something
- B. Community – the society at large with an interest in the education of children. This includes, but is not limited to, Calvert County residents; advocacy, non-profit, parent- or community-based organizations; business, civic, and non-government organizations; local post-secondary educational institutions; state, local and federal agencies; and cultural, ethnic, racial and religious groups.
- C. Family caregiver – a child's primary care-giving unit
- D. Involvement – participation in the education and development of children from birth to adulthood, including shared responsibilities for decision-making about education, health and well-being, and participation in organizations that reflect collaborative aspirations for all children.
- E. Mentor – a volunteer who works with student/s providing advice and support for vocational and educational outcomes
- F. Parent – for the purpose of this policy, parent means: a biological or adoptive parent; a guardian; a person acting as a parent of a student, including a grandparent, stepparent, any other relative with whom the child lives, a foster parent, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare
- G. Partnership – association of two or more parties taking part in some activity in common with one another or others, working toward the same outcomes
- H. Visitor – a person (not a student of the school involved, a volunteer, or an employee of the school system) who has legitimate business to transact, such as a conference with a staff member, and whose conduct is not disruptive or disturbing to the normal operation of the school. Visitors may include, but are not limited to, parents, community members, and agency representatives.

- I. Volunteer – a person who provides service without receiving any payment for work done or time contributed, who is at least twenty-one years of age unless he/she is the parent of a child in school.

III. Guidelines

- A. Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) endorses meaningful partnerships among schools, parents, family caregivers and community.
- B. CCPS will involve parents in their children’s education in mutually supportive relationships among students, parents, and staff that will guide and enhance the intellectual and social development of students.
- C. CCPS will ensure the ideas, interests, and concerns of its stakeholders are considered and valued in decision-making processes and that input and involvement are sought and encouraged from a broad spectrum of the diverse community.
- D. CCPS is committed to the maintenance and monitoring of ongoing collaborative and productive communication processes with the community to create an environment where diverse views can be heard and considered in an atmosphere of respect.
- E. CCPS seeks to ensure that the breadth of interests and values from across the community are heard and considered by the Board of Education, superintendent, principals, and other educational leaders, thereby enhancing the decision-making process.

IV. Critical Areas to Support Effective Parent Involvement

- A. Practices that support effective parent involvement include: communication, parenting skills, student learning, volunteering, decision-making and advocacy, and collaboration with the community. Noted below are the roles and responsibilities related to centralized and building level implementation of effective practice.
 1. Communication – The Superintendent or designee will:
 - a. Communicate with parents about school system policies, practices, regulations, and other general information;
 - b. Provide, to the extent possible, interpretation services and translations of important information about school system programs, services, policies, procedures, and issues as needed to support native language speakers, parents with diverse literacy levels, and those requiring sign language;
 - c. Inform parents about the organization and function of the CCPS system;
 - d. Identify and publicize promising programs and practices related to parental involvement; and
 - e. Help parents with school-related issues, resolving problems and finding resources.
 2. Each principal or designee will:

- a. Provide an inviting and welcoming environment where parent involvement is respected and valued;
- b. Ensure that school staff take the initiative to reach out to parents in a variety of ways to encourage parent participation;
- c. Ensure that staff members are accessible for parent-teacher communications;
- d. Establish and maintain regular and effective ongoing two-way communication with families, parent groups and the community to provide information and solicit feedback through a variety of traditional and non-traditional means such as, but not limited to, newsletters, school-parent orientation programs, checklists, web sites, and list serves;
- e. When communicating with parent groups, provide, to the extent possible, information in the native languages of members of the school community; and
- f. Provide appropriate staff development and support to work effectively with parents.

V. Student Learning

A. The Superintendent or designee will:

- 1. Ensure Effective Parental involvement activities;
- 2. Support positive home and school relationships by working together learning.

B. Each principal or designee will:

- 1. Work with teachers to develop or sustain effective parent teacher relationships that support learning;
- 2. Suggest ways that parents can enrich and support curricular requirements.

VI. Volunteering

A. The Superintendent or designee will:

- 1. Distribute the expectations for the system regarding volunteering;
- 2. Provide a volunteer enrollment program and screen all applicants prior to the start of service as a volunteer;
- 3. Support schools and facilities in the use of a visitor and volunteer sign in and sign out process;
- 4. Provide background check assistance for identified volunteers who may work directly with students in settings where the teacher is not present, during extracurricular and athletic activities and for volunteers serving as chaperones on overnight field trips;
- 5. Update and support training information for volunteers on the website.

B. Each principal or designee will:

1. Welcome parents in schools; seeking and supporting their assistance;
2. Approve volunteers and mentors using the designated volunteer enrollment program;
3. Notify volunteers and mentors of their acceptance into the program;
4. Maintain and use the visitor and volunteer sign in and sign out process and assist parents and volunteers with the process;
5. Assure parents and families access to schools, their child's classroom, and school-sponsored activities subject to policy #8105 which pertains to school visitation;
6. Encourage parental volunteer opportunities, including the participation of parents with special needs or limited English proficiency, and parents of students with special needs or limited English proficiency, both in the classroom and in other areas of the school including attendance at local school programs and events;
7. Provide information for staff use in the development of jobs for volunteers;
8. Provide orientation and training that addresses guidelines for volunteers in Calvert County Public Schools seeking support from central office personnel when appropriate;
9. Identify a member of the school staff to work cooperatively with the PTA, and other parent groups to encourage parent participation.

VII. Decision-making and Advocacy

A. The Superintendent or designee will:

1. Ensure parent participation on district and school committees;
2. Develop methods to accommodate and support parental involvement for all parents, including those with special needs, limited English proficiency, limited financial resources and disabilities;
3. Support the development of parent leadership through PTAs and other recognized groups.

B. Each principal or designee will:

1. Work with PTA, other parent organizations, and parent outreach personnel to ensure parental input from a broad range of culturally and linguistically diverse groups;
2. Develop parental involvement in educational advocacy through PTAs and other organizations, including school system task forces and advisory committees;

3. Solicit and consider parent comments and concerns, and use the data obtained from a variety of sources, including parent surveys to support school improvement;
4. Support and encourage diverse parental participation in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of school improvement plans;
5. Respect the right of parents to serve as advocates and support this advocacy by ensuring that people understand issues and have information about the processes for addressing these issues, including due process rights.

VIII. Collaboration with the Community

A. The Superintendent or designee will:

1. Provide access and opportunity for broad segments of the community, representing the wide variety of interests and diversity within the community, to participate in decision-making processes;
2. Integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development;
3. Seek and support the involvement of local organizations, particularly organizations representing new or traditionally underrepresented communities, in the school system;
4. Work with businesses, organizations, and other government agencies which by their policies and activities can provide support and assistance for parental involvement efforts; and
5. Collaborate with businesses, organizations, and other government agencies to gain support and assistance for parent involvement efforts.

B. Each Principal or designee will:

1. Encourage the growth and development of parent groups, PTAs, and other community groups that reach out within the school community;
2. Seek involvement from the community and provide opportunities to strengthen the home/school connection by providing and respecting a variety of types and degrees of involvement, while recognizing diverse needs;
3. Access community services and resources to support and foster academic achievement and positive development for all students;
4. Inform school staff of the resources for families available in the community;
5. Involve community members in school volunteer and mentor programs;
6. Provide information to families and staff about community agencies that provide family support services and adult learning opportunities; and
7. Develop partnerships with local business and service groups to advance student learning and to assist schools and families.

IX. Reports

- A. Data relative to volunteers in all schools will be collected, compiled, and reported to the Board of Education annually.