

# **Successful Education Involves Families!**

Engaging Families to Support Student Progress



## **A LETTER TO PARENTS: SCHOOL IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT**

You are the biggest influence in your child's life and education. Teachers and your child's classmates are important, but you are much more important. You are the ones who have seen your child through the years. You have fed and clothed your child. You have loved and tried to teach your child right from wrong.

The difference between a good school and a great school is the involvement of its parents. It is true that students whose parents are involved do better in school. Children learn to place importance on the things that are important to their parents.

Maybe you feel you do not have much time to become involved or maybe you are not sure how to begin. It does not take a great deal of time to make a big difference in your child's education. Fifteen minutes of uninterrupted time spent with your child each day can improve study skills, build self-esteem and go a long way toward a successful school experience.

Communication with the teacher and other staff can help too. Simple, short notes to the teacher to keep him/her aware of any changes in your child's daily schedule or to thank the teacher for lessons your child has enjoyed are always good. Your time and attention given on a regular basis to your child's school work and education needs are extremely beneficial.

***When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.***

## *Students with Special Needs*

A student with special needs has one or more of the following:

- a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioral nature;
- a learning disability; or
- exceptional gifts or talents

Many students with special needs will be able to meet the standards of the NYS curriculum with adaptations to the way they are taught or their learning is assessed. For some students, the prescribed curriculum outcomes are modified to meet the students' special needs. Child specific adaptations and modifications are outlined in the student's IEP.

- The IEP is developed to meet the student's educational needs.
- The IEP is a plan to enable the student to develop his/her individual potential.

## ***What Does Special Education Provide Your Child?***

- ▶ Specifically designed, effective instructional strategies
- ▶ Highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals
- ▶ Supplementary aids and services
- ▶ Related Services – Counseling, Speech and Language, Reading Support
- ▶ Transition to Post-Secondary opportunities

## ***How Can Parents Help the School Support their Child?***

The more that parents, teachers, the principal/assistant principal and clinical personnel work together in open communication and cooperation, the more successful the child's education will be.

Parents can help by doing several things:

- ▶ Provide learning experiences in everyday life that will reinforce the formal learning taking place in school;
- ▶ Surround your child with books and other literature;
- ▶ Talk with your child about school, discussing both learning and social activities. Listen to your child; ask questions and be patient for the response.
- ▶ Support the teacher's expectations and the classroom routines and expectations by reinforcing such behavior at home;
- ▶ Provide needed supports to complete homework...but don't do it for your child!
- ▶ Monitor and limit TV viewing and computer game playing;
- ▶ Encourage curiosity, go places and see things;
- ▶ Communicate regularly with teachers, particularly if there is concern about your child's progress; and
- ▶ Participate in regularly scheduled Open Houses at the school.

***Research Findings on Parent/Family Involvement:***  
**HIGHER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

- Students achieve more, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.
- Students have higher test grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
- Students have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.
- Student achievement for disadvantaged students improves dramatically.



***Research Findings on Parent/Family Involvement:  
Student Behavior***

- Students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
- Students have more self-confidence and feel school is more important.
- Student behaviors such as alcohol use, violence, and other undesirable behaviors decrease.

## *Ensuring Access and Progress*

### Parents Can:

- ▶ Maintain high expectations
- ▶ Provide information on student strengths, needs and learning styles that can be used to master the curriculum
- ▶ Set and communicate high expectations to child and professionals
- ▶ Be familiar with curriculum standards and expectations
- ▶ Learn about effective instructional strategies
- ▶ Monitor child's progress in learning at home and school
- ▶ Communicate with school regarding child's learning
- ▶ Support participation in NYS assessments





## *What Parents Can Expect of Your Child's Teachers*

### ▶ *High Expectations*

- ▶ Information on how student's disability impacts learning
- ▶ Sufficient exposure to the NYS general education curriculum
- ▶ Effective instructional strategies, supports, and authentic assessment
- ▶ Assurance that your child will receive educational benefit that allows him/her to progress from grade to grade

