



# **Standards for Family-School Partnerships Webinar Series**

## **Standard Four: Speaking Up For Every Child**

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Department of  
**Education**

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# **Standards for Family-School Partnerships**

# Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- Tennessee's Family Engagement Standards were enacted by Senate Bill No. 293 in 2009.
- These standards are based on the [PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#) and were formally adopted by the State Board of Education beginning in the 2010-11 school year.



Reference to any resource, organization, activity, product, or service does not constitute or imply endorsement by the Tennessee Department of Education.

# Monthly Webinar Series

- TDOE will host monthly webinars focused on the standards.
  - **Feb. 25, 2019; 11:00 a.m. CST** - Introduction and Standard One: Welcoming All Families
  - **March 22, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Two: Communicating Effectively
  - **April 30, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Three: Supporting Student Success
  - **June 27, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Four: Speaking Up for Every Child
  - **July 31, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Five: Sharing Power
  - **August 30, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Six: Collaborating with Community
  
- All webinars will be recorded and posted in the “Parent and Family Engagement” folder in [TDOE Resources](#).



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# **Standard Four: Speaking Up For Every Child**

# Objectives

- Explore strategies to help families learn how the school system works.
- Explore strategies to help empower families to support their own and other children's success in school.

# Questions for Reflection

- What is an advocate?
- Why should we encourage and empower families to be advocates for their own and other students?



# Speaking Up for Every Child

- Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, ensuring that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

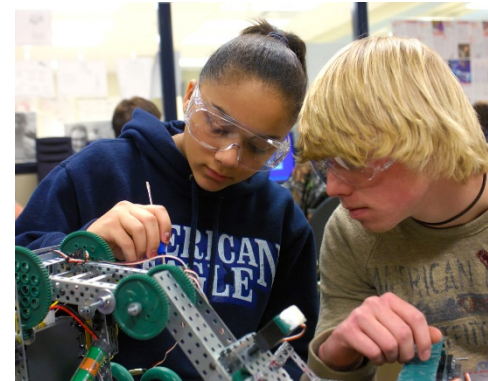


# Speaking Up for Every Child

- What is an advocate?
  - A person who speaks up for another.
  - A person who is committed to be in the child's life over the long haul.
- Advocates can:
  - Set high expectations and monitor student progress.
  - Help set goals and plan for the future.
  - Guide the student through the system, helping to select courses to align with goals.
  - Intervene if necessary.
  - Ask for support and assistance (tutoring, medical support, counseling).
  - Identify and monitor out-of-school time activities.

# Speaking Up for Every Child

- In elementary school, advocates should focus on making sure that students are learning at a proficient level.
- In middle and high school, the focus should shift toward steering students toward graduation and postsecondary education



Source: Henderson, A.T., Mapp, K.L., Johnson, V.R., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school-partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

# Speaking Up for Every Child

- Teachers and school leaders may be initially hesitant to increase advocacy through family engagement.

*"It's in the school's interest to work with families in this way. Think about how much easier it would be for educators if every child had an effective advocate. Our country has the most complex educational system in the world. Navigating it without consistent, caring guidance would be almost impossible for many students."*

*-Beyond the Bake Sale*

- An **empowering culture** is a key component that supports the effective instruction of students.

# Speaking Up for Every Child

| Good Advocacy IS   | Good Advocacy IS NOT   |
|--|--|
| Questioning a student's placement in a program, such as a remedial program.                                  | Pushing for an award, honor, or position that the student had not earned.                        |
| Requesting that a student be moved to a higher level group, program, or class with extra support to succeed. | Demanding that a student's grade or test score be changed without a well-documented reason.      |
| Talking to the principal about problems with a teacher, policy, or program.                                  | Yelling at or threatening teachers and school staff with physical harm                           |
| Suggesting that curriculum or instruction be modified to meet a special need.                                | Doing their child's homework or writing their college essays.                                    |
| Questioning discipline policy or methods and requesting a hearing with an impartial advocate.                | Refusing to accept a teacher's word or criticizing classroom discipline in front of their child. |

# Speaking Up for Every Child

## ■ Goal 1: Understanding how the school system works

### – Ask yourself:

- Do parents know how the local school and district operate and how to raise questions or concerns about school and district programs, policies, and activities?
- Do they understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state law as well as local ordinances and policies?

### – Indicators:

- Understanding how the school and district operate
- Understanding rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws
- Learning about resources
- Resolving problems and conflicts



# Speaking Up for Every Child

- **Goal 2: Empowering families to support their own and other children's success in school**
  - Ask yourself:
    - Are families prepared to monitor students' progress and guide them toward their goals through high school graduation, postsecondary education, and career?
  - Indicators:
    - Developing families' capacity to be effective advocates
    - Planning for the future
    - Smoothing transitions
    - Engaging in civic advocacy for student achievement



# Questions for Reflection

- What is an advocate?
- Why should we encourage and empower families to be advocates for their own and other students?



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**Strategies for  
Speaking Up for  
Every Child**

# Questions for Reflection

- Are families offered opportunities to learn how to make the best choices for their children's education?
- Are families provided with the information and training they need to monitor students' progress and guide them toward their goals?
- Are families engaged in decision-making around their own student and the district/school as a whole?

# Speaking Up for Every Child

- Many family and community members need opportunities to learn and practice advocacy skills before they will feel comfortable speaking up.
- How can you help empower families at your school to speak up for every child?



# Speaking Up for Every Child

## What conditions must be in place for families to be engaged?

- Family role construction:
  - Families must believe that they *have* a role.
- Family sense of self-efficacy:
  - Families must have the confidence that they *can* play a role and succeed.
- Families must feel *invited* to be engaged by the school and/or their student.

Source: Hoover-Dempsey, K., Walker, J., Sandler, H., Whetsel, D., Green, C., Wilkins, A., & Closson, K. (2005). [Why Do Parents Become Involved? Research Findings and Implications](#). *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(2), 105-130. doi:10.1086/499194

# Speaking Up for Every Child

What do families need to be effective advocates?

- Families need to know **how the district and school systems work.**
- Families need to know **how to resolve problems** that they or their students are having with school.
- Families need to **feel empowered** to support and advocate for their own and other students.
- Families need to be engaged as **decision makers.**

# Know How Systems Work

Help families know how the systems work

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

-Alice Walker

# Know How Systems Work

## Help families know how the systems work:

- Offer **workshops** for family members to build understanding of school and district programs, policies, resources, and family/student rights.
  - Take advantage of your annual [Title I meeting](#). Use it to share programmatic information, inform families of their rights, and gather family feedback.
- Publish a **catalog of all the programs** in the school. Describe the program, who is eligible, and provide contact information.
  - Include: Title I, special education, RTI<sup>2</sup>, gifted/honors programs, EL programs, vocational/career education, tutoring programs etc.
- Help families become familiar with **education acronyms and jargon**.

# Know How Systems Work

## Help families know how the systems work:

- At a back-to-school or orientation event, **introduce** the entire school staff.
- Include the **school's organizational chart** in your family handbook.
- Share **contact information** for school leaders, teachers, and other school staff in multiple ways.
- Create a **staff bulletin board** in or near the front office, featuring staff names, titles, and pictures.
- Run a “**who's who**” feature in your school newsletter, featuring different staff members in each issue.





# Know How Systems Work

## Help families know how the systems work:

- Post information on the **school website** about school staff, with their pictures and what they do.
  - Add a section for the school district – the superintendent, school board, and key district staff.
  - Include a link to the district website and a list of district- and school-level committees families can join.
- Provide families with information about **curriculum and state standards**.
  - What should students be able to do at each grade level?
  - How are report cards connected to standards?
  - What does the state assessment measure and how are results used?

# Know How Systems Work

## Help families know how the systems work:

- Develop **transition programs** that help families feel connected and remain involved as their children progress through school.
- A well-designed **transition program** should have the following goals:
  1. Students and families will be familiar with the new school staff and facilities.
  2. School staff and families will know each other and develop relationships.
  3. Students will feel safe and connected to the school-they will know their way around the building, know other students, meet the teachers and understand the courses they will be taking.
  4. Families will feel welcome, know their way around, and know who to contact to discuss how their children are doing.

Source: Henderson, A.T., Mapp, K.L., Johnson, V.R., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school-partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

# Know How Systems Work

## Help families know how the systems work:

- Transition program and practice **examples:**
  - Formal visits to feeder school
  - Tours of the “new” school
  - Create a “buddy system”
  - Home visits
  - Neighborhood or community walks
  - Welcome letter and phone calls



Source: Henderson, A.T., Mapp, K.L., Johnson, V.R., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school-partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

# Know How Systems Work

## Help families know how the systems work:

- Help **prepare families *and* students** to connect career interests with course selection and academic programs.
- Provide **all incoming middle school families** with information about:
  1. Courses that are required for college admission or other postsecondary programs
  2. What students should take each year to complete the requirements by the end of their senior year.
  3. How to navigate the process of applying for college or other postsecondary programs – and how to pay for it.
- Explain to all families why **participation in advanced courses is important** and how they can support and actively encourage their child's efforts.

Source: Henderson, A.T., Mapp, K.L., Johnson, V.R., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school-partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

# Know How to Resolve Problems

## Help families **know how to resolve problems**:

- Develop a clear and **transparent process** for resolving complaints that is communicated to families.
  - Your problem solving process should address:
    - What is the chain of command – whom should they contact if there's a problem?
    - Where do families go next if the problem isn't settled at that level?
    - How can families work with teachers to define and solve problems and ensure students' rights, opinions, and needs are respected?
- Provide **conflict resolution training** for both families and school staff.

# Know How to Resolve Problems

## Help families know how to resolve problems:

- When conflict occurs, implement **restorative practices** with families. The process involves:
  - Bringing together all those affected by conflict,
  - Providing a safe environment for the expression of emotion,
  - Allowing participants to come to a shared understanding,
  - Identifying creative ways to deal with conflict,
  - Providing opportunities to rebuild and strengthen relationships.



# Help Families Feel Empowered

Help families to **feel empowered** to support and advocate for their own and other students:

- Communicate clearly that **all** families have an important role to play in children's school success.
  - Create explicit, positive school assumptions about the importance of family contributions to student success.
  - Emphasize that all families, regardless of education level, can support students' school success.
    - Even when student learning tasks surpass families' knowledge, families' interest in child's schooling, encouragement, reinforcement for learning, and modeling continue to support student learning and school success.

Source: Hoover-Dempsey, K., Walker, J., Sandler, H., Whetsel, D., Green, C., Wilkins, A., & Closson, K. (2005). [Why Do Parents Become Involved? Research Findings and Implications](#). *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(2), 105-130. doi:10.1086/499194

# Help Families Feel Empowered

Help families to **feel empowered** to support and advocate for their own and other students:

- **Provide regular information and updates** on curriculum, learning goals, and student performance.
  - Offer information (by grade or course level) on learning goals and students' progress being made towards those goals
- Provide opportunities for families to participate in regular **two-way communication** regarding their student's individual needs.
- Provide families with information on how to ask the right **questions** about their child's academic progress.
- Provide families with **leadership and advocacy training programs.**



# Help Families Feel Empowered

Help families to **feel empowered** to support and advocate for their own and other students:

- Regularly share information to all families about **community services** that can provide assistance:
  - Tutoring programs
  - Mentoring programs
  - Recreation/enrichment programs
  - Health and social services



# Help Families Feel Empowered

Help families to **feel empowered** to support and advocate for their own and other students:

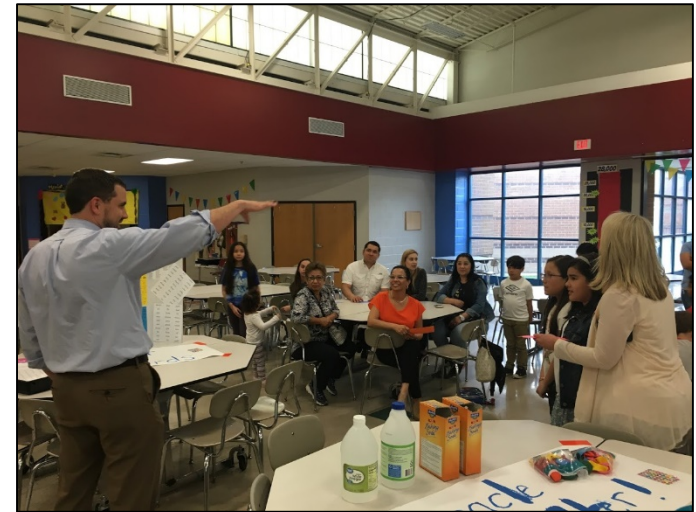
- Provide links and information to **current legislation** that affects students or education on your school website.
- Conduct **needs assessments, satisfaction, and feedback surveys** on a variety of topics:
  - Bullying
  - Trauma
  - Safety
  - Curriculum
  - Finances
  - School climate



# Help Families Feel Empowered

Help families to **feel empowered** to support and advocate for their own and other students:

- Create systems and procedures for parents/guardians to **ask questions, voice concerns, and offer suggestions for improvement** (e.g., suggestion box, appointments with staff, parent forums).



# Become Engaged as Decision-Makers

Help families become engaged as **decision-makers**:

- Engage families in **developing and supporting district and school-wide policies and improvement plans**. Include family members on:
  - District and school improvement teams
  - [Parent and Family Engagement Policy](#) teams
  - [School-Parent Compact](#) teams
  - Academic standards and curriculum committees
  - Staff hiring committees
- Include parent leaders from **all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups** on advisory councils, action teams, and committees.

# Become Engaged as Decision-Makers

Help families become engaged as decision-makers:

- Encourage and facilitate **family participation** in PTA or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- Provide families with user-friendly **information for voting** in local, state, and federal elections on issues that affect education.



# Questions for Reflection

- Are families offered opportunities to learn how to make the best choices for their children's education?
- Are families provided with the information and training they need to monitor students' progress and guide them toward their goals?
- Are families engaged in decision-making around their own student and the district/school as a whole?

# Reflection

What are some ways that your school, district, and families speak up for every child?

Please send your promising practices to [Brinn.Obermiller@tn.gov](mailto:Brinn.Obermiller@tn.gov)



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# Resources



# General Resources

- [PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide](#)
- [National PTA: Advocacy Resources](#)
- [Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships](#)
- [Engage Every Family: Five Simple Principles](#)
- [Why Do Parents Become Involved? Research Findings and Implications](#)
- [Schools Involving Parents in Early Postsecondary Planning](#)
- [Restorative Justice Council](#)
- [Restorative Circles](#)
- [Statewide Parent Advocacy Network \(SPAN\)](#)

Reference to any resource, organization, activity, product, or service does not constitute or imply endorsement by the Tennessee Department of Education.

# Resources for Families

- [Tennessee State Report Card](#)
- [Tennessee Legislators](#)
- [Find Your Congressional Representative](#)
- [Tennessee Voices for Children](#)
- [Parent 2 Parent Tennessee](#)
- [IDEA Parent Guide](#)
- [Support and Training for Exceptional Parents](#)
- [PACER Center: Champions for Children with Disabilities](#)
- [Questions to Ask Before and During Your Child's IEP Meeting](#)
- [5 Important Things to Do After an IEP Meeting](#)
- [Understanding ESSA: A Parents' Guide to the Nation's Landmark Education Law](#)

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# Resources for Families

- [10 Ways to Be an Effective Advocate for Your Child at School](#)
- [How Parents Can Be Advocates for Their Children](#)
- [Reading Rockets Video 1: Fighting for Your Child](#)
- [Reading Rockets Video 2: Emiliann's IEP Team](#)
- [Video: Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy](#)
- [EL Family Tips for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences at Your Child's School](#)
- [A Middle School Parent's Guide College Prep Guide](#)
- [College Prep Guide](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education: College Preparation Checklist](#)

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# Webinar Series

- Our next webinar will be held **July 31 at 10:00 CST.**
- Log-in information for all of the webinars can be found [here](#) or you may sign up for reminder emails [here](#).
- Recordings of all webinars will be posted in the “Parent and Family Engagement Resources” folder in [TDOE Resources](#) in ePlan.

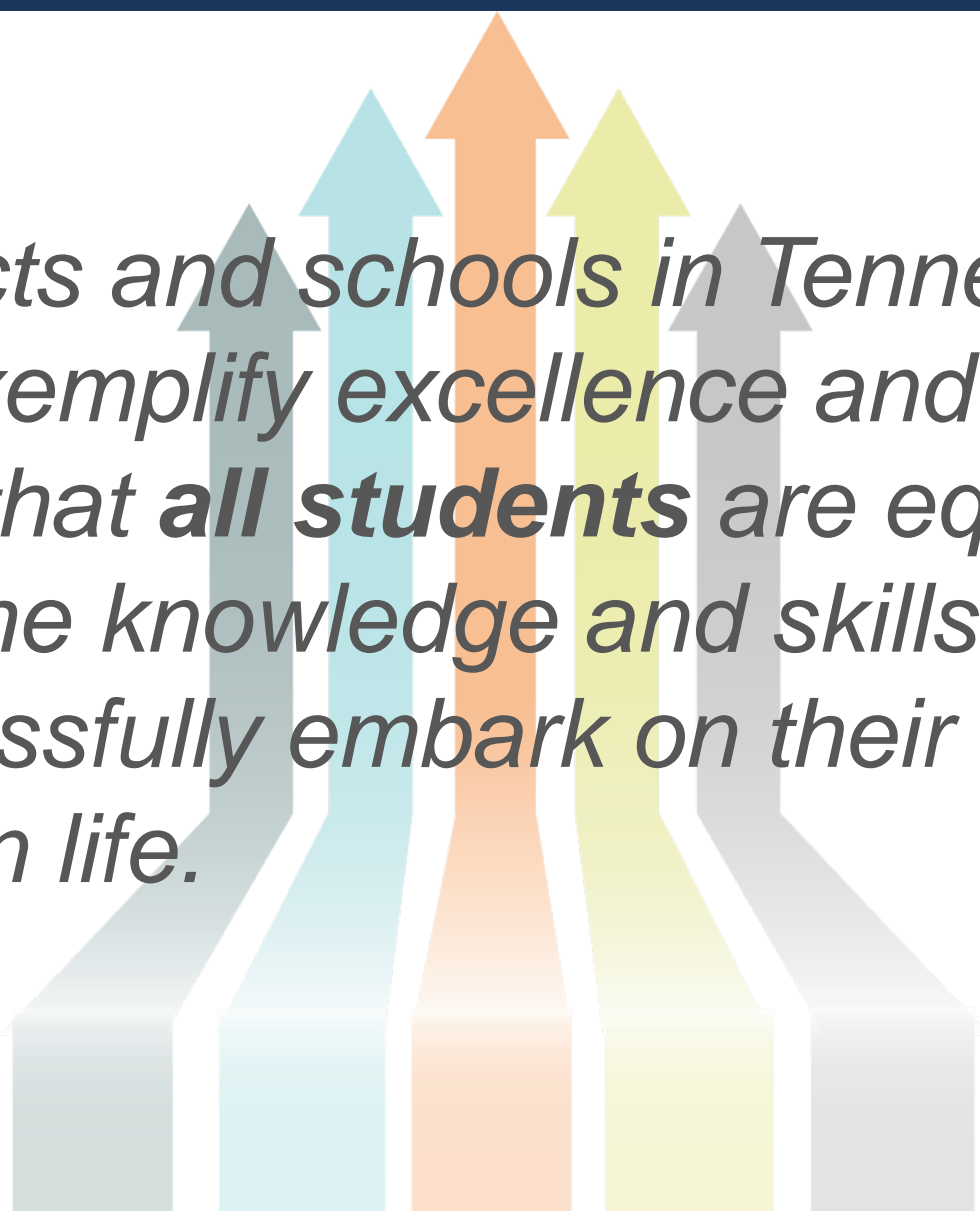


# Questions? Feedback?



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# Our Vision



*Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that **all students** are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.*

# FRAUD, WASTE, or ABUSE

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**1-800-232-5454**

Notifications can also be submitted electronically at:

**<http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline>**

