



P.I.C. Minutes-Region 3 November 3, 2010

I. Welcome

Michelle Tarbuton, Parent Engagement Program Manager, opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance, introducing the Georgia Department of Education staff in attendance and thanking Rome City for hosting the meeting. She informed everyone about the fifteen PSA's that were developed collaboratively between GaDOE and GaPIRC centered around the strategies listed on the "Play a Role" brochure. Seven out of 15 videos will be released in November, which has been declared as Georgia's Parent Involvement Month. She also mentioned that during November, the Parent Engagement Program will capture many GET INVOLVED moments by collecting stories from parents across the state which are being submitted by local schools and districts. Everyone was asked to encourage parents at their schools to submit their stories. She also stated that the parent and family resolution that would be presented for everyone to review today will be presented to the State Board of Education on November 10, 2010 for approval to use as a guiding foundation for local school officials to develop local school and district plans and policies and provide a framework for parent-school-community partnerships. The resolution was written by parents on the 2010 and 2011 Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council, and it represents how parents can play an active role in the decision making process by being leaders in our school communities. She also explained that today's agenda was structured based on the comments and recommendations that were made at the last meeting. A general overview of the meeting was given as far as what to expect, which included the learning from each other component, networking activity, a review of the parent and family engagement draft resolution, an introduction of the family-friendly school initiative, communicating with parents-module 1, middle and high school strategies snapshot, completion of evaluations and distribution of certificates at the end of the meeting.

II. Introduction Activity

Lakeita Servance, Parent Engagement Specialist, introduced the opening activity entitled "Pair Share". This activity encouraged everyone to focus on the positive aspects of parent engagement. While everyone's has had a bad experience at some point as it relates to getting and keeping parents engaged, the focus of this activity centered on how a negative experience can be turned into a positive one. In addition, participants were asked to identify a positive experience, share it with their neighbor, and discuss how they gained that outcome by identifying the strategy that was used. Participants were given 3-5 minutes to complete this exercise, and then two volunteers were asked to share their experiences. One shared how they could have turned a negative experience into a positive and the other described a positive experience along with the strategy used to gain that outcome. The key point made is that all of us will face challenges but we have to stay positive and look for innovative ways to engage our families to help students achieve.



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III. Learning From Each Other: Muscogee County P.I.C. Presentation

Pam McCoy, Title I Director welcomed everyone to Muscogee County for the Fall 2010 PIC meeting. Dr. Billy Kendall spoke about Parent Involvement in Muscogee County and how it has made a major difference. He emphasized that parents are so important in their child's life and education. Valerie Fuller and Taylor Barnhill, both media personnel, talked about the Be There Campaign and the accomplishments it's made since being implemented. There is an existing partnership between the school and TV station where the TV station goes out into the community and capture moments when parents are sharing teachable moments with their children such as in the grocery store, at the park and other everyday scenarios. They stated that they have seen a major increase in the level of parents that are able to still be involved without physically being present at the school.

Tammy Pope introduced the Art of Parental Involvement in Muscogee County by asking what kind of nut are you? Participants had a choice of almond, peanut, walnut, cashew, or pecan. Each one revealed something different about their personality. The humor in this exercise was that we're all a little nutty in some sort of way, but we all bring something valuable to the table. She stressed that we have to have that outlook of our parents as well because they all have something to contribute that's valuable in their child's education. She talked about the layout of the elementary, middle and high schools in Muscogee County then provided participants with more information about the Title I Schools. She reviewed some common myths about parents and families: *Myth I- Families don't care.* Families often need direction in ways to support the student educational experience. *Myth II- Parents do not feel it is their job to "teach" the child. It is the school's responsibility.* Studies show that the majority of parents want to know how to help their children at home and know what they can do to help their children succeed. *Myth III- The influence of parental involvement on school achievement depends on the parents' income, level of education, and employment status.* Parents' attitude toward learning is more important than other factors. *Myth IV- Communication is a problem. I send home letters but never hear back from most parents.* Seek to understand, then be understood. Ask parents for the best way to contact them and the best times for them to visit the school. *Myth V- They never come to the school.* You must have a welcoming environment and be flexible. She also stressed that teamwork is a must! Muscogee County has accomplished this by hosting monthly meetings, collaborating with the community to celebrate parents in the military, dynamic dads, literacy night, mother-daughter socials, grandparent's day, math night, promoting parents as volunteers, health fairs, grand slam in March, and many more initiatives that have proven to be successful. In closing, she read a quote from Patrick Dean "If parents are with you, they will bring the community with them. If they are not, they will stop you dead. You need their protection when hostile winds blow."



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Everyone was invited to take a tour and view the displays that highlight various Parent Involvement Initiatives at the Title I Schools during break. There were tons of displays with pictures that showed parents being involved and the many ways Muscogee County is implementing many of the best practices that were shared with the group today.

IV. Break

V. Networking Conversation Activity

Participants were asked to split into groups according to the numbers on their badge. These groups consisted of Elementary, Middle, High, and District level personnel. Based on the National PTA Standards III and IV, participants were asked to answer the following questions:

1. What are your best practices for implementing these standards in your schools and district?
2. What does it look like for your school and/or district? Are the standards being executed? How?

Standard 3: Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

The responses to this standard are as follow:

- Mentors
- Advisement Program
- Parent Workshops
- Newsletters
- Grade Level Orientation
- Math Night
- Reading Night
- "Walk In Your Child's Shoes"
- Science Fair Night
- Parent Portal



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- Open House
- History Act
- Museum Night
- GKIDS Informational
- CRCT for Parents
- Poetry Slam
- NCAA
- Tutors
- Educational Field Trips
- Read Alongs
- Parent of the Week
- Family Academic Night

Standard 4: Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

The responses to this standard are as follow:

- Parents Resource Center
- Parent University
- Parent Advisory Council
- CRCT Night
- Curriculum Night
- PEC-students becoming their own advocates
- Homework Assistance



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- Partner with Georgia Tech.
- 21st Century
- Title I Website
- 360-Degrees Program
- SIG Grant
- Annual Title I Meeting
- Parent to Be Media Program
- National Parent Involvement Day
- Meet and Greet Session with Administrators and Support Staff
- School Improvement Plan
- Local School Council
- Partners in Education
- Parent University

VI. Working Lunch: Preview State Parent Engagement Resolution

On November 10, 2010 the State Board of Education will meet to review and discuss the signing of Georgia's first Resolution and Statement on Parent Engagement. Michelle explained that this document will be the guiding foundation for local school officials to develop local school and district plans and policies, providing a framework for parent-school-community partnerships. This resolution was written by parents on the 2010 and 2011 Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council, and it represents how parents can play an active role in the decision making process by being leaders in our school communities. Participants were asked to thoroughly review the document and provide suggestions or feedback about its contents.

VII. Georgia's Family-Friendly School

Michelle Tarbuton featured a workshop that educated participants about the importance of making their school family-friendly. She stated that the Family-Friendly Partnership Schools is an initiative and virtual program created by the Georgia Department of Education and



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Georgia Parental Information and Resource Center to improve parent engagement by assisting schools with developing a more welcoming environment. Everyone was asked to take a survey that analyzed the level of family-friendliness and then participants volunteered to share the final results. Some participants realized that their school was not as welcoming as it could be. Michelle stressed that when parents don't feel welcome, they are not going to support the school or get as involved. The schools that were featured in the virtual program were a rural elementary school and an urban middle/high school. Michelle demonstrated how participants can navigate the program, going from room to room and get an idea of the many improvements they can make to their individual schools. She also showed them the many detailed features of the program and tips that they can take back to use. Michelle stated that many schools may not have the funds or budget to completely re-construct their school to be family-friendly, but perhaps they can start by focusing on one room at a time. After a demonstration of the program, Michelle invited two participants up to navigate the system for themselves. Everyone in attendance was given a personal copy of the program on a CD and Michelle also showed them where they could obtain additional materials and handouts from the Parent Engagement Program website.

VIII. Professional Development Module for Teachers and Administrators: “Communicating with Parents”

Lakeita Servance introduced the first of four professional development and training modules. Participants were told that these modules were designed for them to facilitate and deliver during faculty meetings at their local schools. The module should only be 15-30 minutes long. Lakeita referred to the outline of the workshop that was provided as a guide for participants to use as they strive to remain time-conscious. As a demonstration, the first module was presented as it should be during a faculty meeting. This module discussed the barriers to effective communication with parents and how teachers and administrators can use five keys to successfully communicate with parents. Those five keys were: be available, choose your words carefully, develop trust, assure parents that you will make contact if a concern arises, and make frequent positive contact. After a review of these five standards, participants were asked to refer to a handout that gave examples of good communication and bad communication. They were also referred to a tips sheet that was provided as a guide for teachers and administrators to use. The last portion of the presentation focused on putting what they've learned in to practice by using seven communication methods that are commonly used by psychologists and counselors. Those methods were reflective listening, paraphrasing, empathy, body language, summarizing, acceptance, open-closed questions and active listening. This workshop concluded with a role play demonstrating how various situations could be handled the wrong way and the correct way. Participants were informed that the module was available on-line.



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IX. Middle and High School Parent Engagement Strategies

Michelle provided participants with a snapshot of Middle and High School Parent Engagement Strategies. She started by listing reasons why parent engagement declines at the middle and high school level. Some of these reasons are developmental changes, school structure and expectation changes, and that the parent's perspective on their ability to help their child changes. However, parent involvement still contributes to student attributes, behavior and attitudes during adolescence. Although children want to be more independent, they still care about their parents being there to support them. Michelle reviewed the three models of high educational expectations and stressed that children are going to make education as important as their parents make it. Parents set the tone for their child's educational advancement. Families can start early by having an early and consistent emphases on post secondary planning to ensure that they are supportive and able to help their children set and reach goals of attending college or are prepared for work after high school. Participants were told that it's important to get parents involved from day one of the transition years, such as the first day of middle and high school. Parents are still worried about their children and want to be reassured. It's also important to help middle and high school teachers understand how family and community involvement helps adolescents succeed. You can start by introducing activities that will show student improvement and therefore, increase their support of these activities. Nevertheless, we cannot give up on engaging parents in Middle and High school. In closing, participants were informed that more information will be presented about Middle and High School Strategies during the Spring 2011 meeting.

X. Closing

Participants were asked to complete their evaluations and submit them in the appropriate box. Participants were also informed that the minutes and material presented would be available within a few weeks electronically on the Parent Engagement Program website. Everyone was reminded about National Parent Involvement Day on November 18, 2010. Michelle Tarbutton thanked everyone for attending and certificates were distributed to all in attendance.