



Division of Student Services

# Department of Family and Community Outreach



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## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**Happy New Year and Welcome Back to School.** As we enter the New Year with hope and high expectations, let us continue to work together to ensure the academic success and positive social development of our youth. We know that research has shown that when parents, families, and community stakeholders are involved in the education of children, outcomes such as higher grades and reading scores, higher self-esteem, increased motivation to succeed, and higher quality work habits are realized.

Our staff is always available to assist parents, families, and community stakeholders in establishing meaningful engagement.



## PARENT PARTICIPATION ON THE RISE!

Parent participation in school events, workshop attendance, conducting classroom observations, and volunteering in schools has exploded. During the first quarter of the 2008-2009 school year, the intensity and amount of parent involvement in schools has surpassed the total amount of parent/community participation for the 2007-2008 school year. To date, 102,000 parents participated in events or activities sponsored by schools. This is in comparison to 89,000 parents participating in school events for the entire 2007-2008 school year. At the current rate of participation, it is projected that upwards of 180,000 parents will participate in school sponsored events by the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year. The new initiative Men Make A Difference has attracted local and national attention from other school districts and organizations. On October 13, 2008, over 9,000 fathers and significant males in the lives of Prince George's County Schools students visited schools, observed in classrooms, met with Parent Liaisons and other school staff, and joined their children for the day.



## Parent Liaisons Reach Out to Parents

A major component in the parent/community engagement program is the Parent Liaison initiative. Through the utilization of Parent Liaisons, parent engagement has become synonymous with Prince George's County



Public Schools. By reaching out to parents and facilitating their visits to schools, parent liaisons have assisted over 12,000 parents in observing their child's class during August through October. Of that 12,000, 4,870 were men. The 4,870 men who observed during the first quarter are 45% of the total number of parents, male and female, who observed classrooms during the previous school year. The collaboration of the Department of Family and Community Outreach with the Prince George's County Government to sponsor the 4th Annual Bring Your Child to School on the First Day resulted in 32,000 parents escorting their children to school on August 25, 2008. Parent Liaisons coordinated this event, ensuring that schools got off to a smooth start and any questions parents had were addressed.

Robert Goddard Montessori School Parent Liaison, Candace Gunn, engages a parent, Michael Kramer, during 'Men Make a Difference Day'.

## A Pledge of Engagement

Prince George's County Public Schools acknowledges that parents play a vital role in the academic success of students. We believe that parents are their child's first and most influential teacher, and we also understand that the success of our students rest in creating an unbreakable partnership between home and school. So, as we start the second half of the 2008-2009 school year; Prince George's County Public Schools is asking parents and significant adult role models to support the academic success of your child (ren) by pledging to:

- Observe your child's classroom
- Attend a non-sports related school event
- Visit your child's school website for information
- Join and participate in a school's formal parent organization (PTA/PTO)
- Volunteer in your child's school
- Attend an informational workshop held at your child's school
- Attend a school board meeting
- Assist your child with homework assignments
- Review and understand requirements for High School graduation
- Review and understand the expectations of the next grade your child will be promoted to
- Participate in at least one Parent Teacher Conference and or Individual Learning Plan



### **Classroom Observations**

There are several simple things parents can do to support their child and the school. We would like to encourage you to visit your child’s school and conduct a classroom observation. Spending as little as 20 minutes observing class will enable you to glean what the students are learning, how the classroom is set up, and strategies used by teachers to instruct students. Continue to check your child’s homework assignments on a daily basis, review his/her journals and notebooks, looking to see growth and progress in work. If you suspect that your child is in need of assistance, contact the Teacher, Counselor, or Parent Liaison immediately. When students recognize parents have high expectations and an ongoing interest in their day-to-day school work, they are more inclined to make academic achievement a priority.

### **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**

If you haven’t already met with your child’s Professional School Counselor to have a face-to-face Individual Learning Plan (ILP) meeting, contact him/her as soon as possible and schedule this meeting. This is your opportunity to have a personal conversation with the Counselor and your child to discuss current progress and future goals and aspirations for your child. Meeting annually with the Counselor and your child will help ensure that your student is college ready upon graduation from High School.

### **Volunteering**

Schools need volunteers to assist in the classroom, mentor and/or tutor students and help with administrative related tasks. If you are interested in volunteering, contact the Parent Liaison at your child’s school and he/she will assist you in getting started. In line with volunteering, if you have not already done so, join your child’s school parent organization (PTA, PTO, PTSA, etc.). Supporting this parent group will enhance the goals and programs of the school and provide you with a means of sharing your skills, talent and input to help students.

### **JANUARY 2009**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**January 2009**

- 1-2 Holidays\* – New Year’s Day (Schools and offices closed)**
- 19 Holiday\* – Martin L. King Jr. Day (Schools and offices closed)**
- 20 Inauguration Day\* (Schools and offices closed)**
- 29 End of Second Quarter (48 days)**
- 30 Grading/Teacher Planning (Schools closed for students)**

