

Family-School Partnership Awards Application

Standard II – Communicating Effectively

Communicating effectively with all members of the Whitesburg community is a top priority for the Whitesburg School PTA. Over the past academic year the PTA has taken major steps to maximize communication both within the immediate Whitesburg School community as well as to the larger community of which the school is a part. To this end we have implemented several changes in how and to whom we communicate.

First, our PTA made a few changes to our monthly newsletter. We began by including events over a rolling three-month period so that parents receive plenty of advance notice of upcoming events and can plan accordingly. This newsletter is sent out monthly to all parents and teachers as well as to the president of our local civic association. This way the civic association is aware of events and needs at our school. It also helps us strengthen the bond we have with our civic association. Since we have several students whose parents who speak Spanish only, we have also begun translating our newsletter into Spanish. A list of students who might need this service was compiled with the help of the teacher who works with English Language Learners and the newsletter is sent home with the student in paper format.

Second, our PTA uses a Facebook group to communicate with parents and teachers. This helps us send out brief messages, requests for volunteers, links to newspaper articles that may be of interest to the school community, links to order forms for items and events, and reminders about upcoming events. We also share information about the successes of our students on this page. These can be accessed by anyone who has joined our Facebook page.

Third, we work closely with the school administration and staff to send out automated phone messages to our parents. These are used to notify parents of upcoming events, remind them of upcoming deadlines or to seek volunteers. The PTA president meets with the support staff at the beginning of each month to review the schedule of PTA and school activities for the upcoming month to ensure that both are informed about the nature of each activity and to avoid any conflicts. This also helps staff answer any questions parents or teachers may have about upcoming PTA events.

Finally, we have moved our monthly PTA board meetings to the evenings. All parents, teachers, and staff are invited to attend these meetings. Reminders are included in the monthly newsletter and posted on our Facebook group. Further, our head room parents extend a special invitation to all room parents as well. This has resulted in higher attendance at our board meetings. Since this change makes it possible for classroom teachers as well as working parents to attend our PTA meetings, it has helped widen our pool of potential volunteers as well as our pool of potential teacher representatives to our board. It has helped make it possible for our principal to attend all of our board meetings in their entirety as well. Ultimately, it helps us keep all our stakeholders informed.

Thus, our PTA uses multiple channels of communication both within the school community and with the larger community. This has helped us keep our parents informed and also resulted in tangible benefits for our school. Thus open communication has given all stakeholders an opportunity to be involved in the school in some way. They also give the PTA, administration, and faculty a chance to communicate with and inform even the busiest of parents.