

Family-School Partnership Awards Application

Standard VI – Collaborating with the Community

The PTA at Whitesburg School partners with the community in many ways in order to support the school. The Partners in Action for Whitesburg School (P. A. W. S.) Committee is an excellent example of this collaboration.

Our school leadership and the PTA recognize the importance of collaborating with the larger Whitesburg community to help our students succeed. In order to streamline this process the P. A. W. S. Committee was established. Members of this committee include the principal, assistant principals, school counselors, as well as representatives from several local churches, civic association, PTA, and our Board of Education representative. The committee meets monthly to identify needs in the school and to discuss ways to meet them.

Several projects are in process due to the work of this committee. First, about 30 students were identified as needing access to food over the weekend. Several church representatives and PTA representatives are working with their churches to raise funds to provide this service. They have already received in-kind donations and one church has offered to provide storage space for the food. The youth group at that church will be packing the food for distribution as a service project beginning this spring.

Second, we have many students who ride the late bus home after school. During this time they receive additional tutoring but are often hungry and find it difficult to concentrate. Our civic association representatives volunteered to provide snacks for these students. This program has been in place over this past academic year and has been a real success.

Third, a small group of high-risk students were identified as needing additional mentoring. The school administration devised a scheduling plan in which these students are scheduled for a mentoring session on Friday mornings. Church representatives and PTA representatives work with school

administration to identify speakers who can inspire and motivate these students. These speakers have overcome great obstacles to achieve success and share their life story with this group of students during this special class period. Several church and civic association representatives also serve as mentors and work one-on-one with these students.

Fourth, several students of various grade levels have been identified as needing one-on-one tutoring in various subject areas. The PTA has designated a committee chairperson to find volunteers to provide this service. The PTA representative then works with our counselors to schedule times and match the volunteers with the students. Through this process we have dozens of tutors who are retired teachers, parents, church representatives, and civic association representatives.

Last, our PTA believes that it is important for our students to be grateful for all the help they receive from the community. In order to model this habit of gratitude, we invite P. A. W. S. members to all PTA events such as Grandparents' Breakfast, Veterans' Day Luncheon, Winter Performance, etc. Additionally, a PTA representative works with a civic association representative to identify needs in the community that our students could meet. One example was raking the leaves in the yard of an elderly couple who lives close to the school. We had 50 students and parents show up to help out that day. This exceeded our expectations and we were able to rake leaves in adjacent yards as well.

By working with community organizations we are working collaboratively to meet the wide range of needs of our students. Thus, our Partners in Action for Whitesburg School Committee is a great example of how a PTA, school administration, and the community can collaborate to support our school.