

Community Involvement

Community involvement is defined as any activity between staff and Board of Education of the Cincinnati Public Schools and persons or groups in the community, which results in planning, evaluation, communication, and/or active pursuit of needs, goals, and programs of the Cincinnati Public Schools. The Cincinnati Public Schools has a commitment to seek more and better ways of obtaining maximum community involvement based on its belief that such involvement will improve the quality of educational decisions and thus improve the quality of public education in Cincinnati.

Community involvement in public education in Cincinnati is seen as taking place at three levels: involvement in system-wide affairs; involvement at the local school level; and involvement at the individual student level. Involvement at all levels is to be compatible with other policy determinations of the Board of Education, system-wide administrative procedures of the superintendent, and the Collective Bargaining Agreements.

System-Wide Involvement

Community involvement at the system-wide level is usually between groups or individuals in the Cincinnati community, and the Board of Education or central administrative staff. Voting in school board elections, attendance and participation at meetings of the Board of Education, participation in task forces, are examples of activities which are encouraged.

Involvement at the School Level

Involvement at this level is believed to be the most effective and viable type of group involvement. Community involvement at the local school level has three basic purposes, all of which will improve the process of education. First, involvement will permit staff, students, parents and other concerned citizens, under the leadership of the principal, to share in the process of arriving at decisions which affect local schools. Among the most important of these decisions are those relating to identifying needs for that school. Secondly, involvement will promote better communication between school and community, and foster mutual understanding among groups working within the school-community. Third, involvement will result in service directed toward the solution of school-community problems.

Some of these goals are now being achieved by various groups and individuals. The most involved members of the community are parents of children and other adults

Community Involvement (Continued)

directly responsible for the welfare of children who attend public school. To further achieve these goals, however, associations of school and community persons are encouraged to be formed where they do not now exist; otherwise, they should be strengthened. The effectiveness of such associations will depend on how well they reflect the range of thought, attitudes and values that exist in the school-community.\* Every effort will be made, under the leadership of the school principal, to build viable and representative associations. These associations may be formally recognized by board policy or by the school principal to share in decision making at the local school level. Every principal shall provide the leadership necessary to establish and to maintain an effective Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC).

Involvement of Individual Students

The involvement of parents is at first highly personal but should also embrace concerns of the total school. The partnership of students, parents and teachers is essential to development of an instructional program which makes the maximum contribution to the development of individual student's knowledge, skill, interests and talents. Parental understanding, support, and participation in the day-to-day work of the school for the benefit of children is to be encouraged. Reinforcement of instruction and promotion of enrichment experiences outside of school and volunteer programs in school are important contributions of parents and citizens at the individual student level. Parents are encouraged to visit classes of their children, attend open house at school, and other functions designed to achieve better understanding among teacher, student and parent. Similarly, teachers are to promote activities to improve communication on student needs and progress and are encouraged to visit homes of students where this is mutually agreeable. Staff is to develop and provide parent friendly classrooms and parent friendly schools.

Students themselves are members of the school-community and as such should play an increasingly important role in shaping their own education future as they mature. It is the responsibility of the staff to increase progressively the options available to students as they grow and mature. The student, in turn, must become increasingly adept at planning his/her own future by appropriate selection of options that meet his/her needs.

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\*A neighborhood school-community is defined as the geographic attendance area served by an elementary or secondary school and includes all members of the school staff, students, parents, and other citizens of the area. A non-neighborhood school-community for a school with an approved program focus which is open to the entire Cincinnati Public School District or a quadrant of the district is defined as the entire Cincinnati Public School District or geographic area of the quadrant as appropriate.

Community Involvement (Continued)

Community involvement for the improvement of education is to be periodically evaluated and reported to the Board of Education. Procedures instituted to implement this policy are to be examined to determine the extent to which they have a positive impact on the educational program; they promote representative involvement of staff, students, parents and other community persons; participants perceive their involvement as meaningful; the activity results in constructive programs and projects for the improvement of education.

Adopted: 2/26/73  
Revised: 9/22/75  
10/9/95