

# Charlton County School System

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## What are the ways to get involved?

### *Epstein's Six Standards of Involvement*

Joyce Epstein, a leading national researcher of family, school, and community partnerships, reinforces the importance of school, homework, and activities that build student skills and feelings of success. The National Parent-Teacher Association (<http://www.pta.org/>) adopted Epstein's principles as their National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement.

- **Communication:** Communication between school and home should be consistent, two-way and meaningful. School personnel and parents should be respectful of one another and accept that each has an important, but different, expertise about the student. Communication should be two-way and provide meaningful information to each. Problems are definitely worth discussing but so are the strengths and goals of the student. Schools should create welcoming environments where the parent's input is valued.
- **Parenting:** Schools are encouraged to support parenting skills by offering workshops on a variety of topics interesting to today's parents. In addition, a parent center can be located within the school building where parents can check out books and other informational materials. Schools should also be aware of community resources that may assist parents.
- **Student Learning:** Student learning increases when parents are involved in the process by helping their children at home. Most parents are willing to assist their child in learning but may not be sure how to go about it. Parents should have a good understanding about what is expected at each grade level. Grade level standards are available at each school and can be accessed online at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org). Children's homework should require discussion and interaction with their parents. Schools can offer workshops to teach parents about the various methods that are used to teach specific subjects such as mathematics.
- **Volunteering:** The presence of parents at the school sends a message to children that, "We care about what you do here." When parents volunteer, families and schools benefit. Volunteer work should be meaningful to the parents and when possible capitalize on the strengths of the parent. Even if a parent can't volunteer during the day, there are many ways parents can assist after school and on weekends, after-school programs or even helping out at the school carnival.
- **Decision Making and Advocacy:** Studies show that schools where parents are involved in decision-making and advocacy have higher levels of student achievement and greater public support. Schools and programs actively seeking parent participation and input communicate that parents are valued as full partners in their child's education. Schools should include and give equal representation to parents on decision-making and advisory committees. Parents should be provided current information regarding school policies, practices and how the school is performing. Parents should be involved in legislative actions involving education at the local, state and even national levels, and schools can promote ways for parents to learn how to be involved.