



BEACON
CHARTER
SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Art Culinary Drama
Parent and Family
Engagement Guide
2009-2010

TO BE AN ARTIST IS
TO BELIEVE IN LIFE

Beacon Charter High School
for the Arts

Helping Your Child to Succeed

WELCOME TO BEACON CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS!

At Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, we believe that every child, at every level of academic performance, can achieve excellence. It is our goal to provide students with the skills, knowledge, tools and support they need to excel both in and out of the classroom, and to provide them with a strong foundation that will ensure further success in life. To do this, we need the help of teachers, staff, administrators and community partners. But even more important, we need the help of parents and families who are committed to helping children succeed in every way possible by building a foundation that creates a learning environment focused on excellence.

The Beacon Charter High School for the Arts not only recognizes parents and families as key stakeholders in their children's education, but prioritizes parent and family involvement as a key component of its beliefs and shared goals as adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Declaration of Beliefs

- All children can learn at high levels.
- Teachers have a profound impact on student development and should have ample training, support, and resources.
- Education begins with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Families are an essential part of the educational process.
- A commitment from the entire community is necessary to build a culture that encourages student achievement.
- Improvement in education is guided by consistent and effective leadership.
- The school office exists to serve students and schools.

Shared Goals between the School and Family

- Maximum academic achievement for all students;
- A safe and orderly environment for all students and employees;
- Efficient and effective support operations for all students, families, teachers, and administrators;
- Efficient and equitable distribution of resources to address the needs of all students, to the maximum extent feasible; and
- Improved confidence and strong parent/community engagement.

Outlined in this guide is the Parent and Family Involvement Policy that clarifies the role of all stakeholders; ie, the Trustees, the school staff and faculty, and the parents and families, as well as the students themselves.

While the policy outlines mandated legal parental involvement provisions as stipulated by federal law, we have also included an easy reference guide to the policy that highlights the numerous opportunities available for parents, guardians and family members to become involved in Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, and as a result, in every students' success. We recognize that each child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To support this goal, we must all work together as knowledgeable partners.

We encourage you to join the staff of the Beacon Charter High School for the Arts in building a relationship that helps every child excel. We value your involvement.

HOW DOES BEACON DEFINE PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT?

The Beacon Charter High School for the Arts recognizes that there are a variety of individuals who carry responsibility for a student's development, education and well-being in school, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and community members. We also recognize that Parent and Family Involvement is more than participating in Parent Teacher Organizations (Beacon Men and Women or BMW's). Involvement includes diverse, ongoing, meaningful activities and opportunities that are designed to engage parents and families throughout the school year, not only at their child's school, but in the District and at home.

Beacon Charter High School for the Arts believes in regular, two-way, meaningful communication connecting student academic learning and other school activities ensuring:

- Parents and families play an integral role in assisting their children's learning;
- Parents and families are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's education at school;
- Parents and families are full partners in their children's education;
- Parents and families are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL?

The school is also committed to creating a welcoming environment where successful parent and family involvement can flourish. This includes examining internal structures, staff alignment, staff development, communications, programs and resources to sustain effective parent and family involvement. The District will assist parents in understanding the topics of RI's Academic Standards and school's local assessments, in monitoring their children's progress, and in working together to improve student achievement. In order to do so, the school will provide:

- A Parent Engagement Coordinator (PEC) to address specific and general parental concerns, and to keep parents abreast of all general school information. Parents and family members should feel free to contact the PEC with questions, concerns and feedback, via the Parent Helpdesk (401-671-6261, ext 402)
- A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress.
- Access to materials and training to improve their children's achievement, such as math, literacy or technology training.

- A system for reasonable access to school staff, as well as reasonable accommodations for parental involvement (flexible meeting schedules, home visits, child care, and/or transportation if necessary.)
- Four parent-teacher conferences per year, with parents and families given several time options in order to accommodate schedules. Adequate time will be allotted to discuss student progress.
- Opportunities to observe, volunteer and participate in their children's school and classroom activities
- Investment of federal, state, and local dollars to strengthen and sustain parent and family involvement in the child's school life

WHAT CAN THE SCHOOL EXPECT FROM ME?

At Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, our goal is to help parents and families become full partners in their children's educational experience through a variety of opportunities created collaboratively with the parents and the school.

This includes, but is not limited to, participation in:

- Our Parent-Teacher Organization, referred to as BMW ("Beacon Men and Women")
- School Improvement Team
- School Trustee Board and/or the District Strategic Plan Meetings
- A variety of fundraisers, workshops, and arts events throughout the year

Additionally, parents are encouraged and expected to engage in their child's academic progress through:

- Open House and Report Night attendance
- Checking for special notices or announcements from your child and online at www.beaconart.org in the parent portal
- Remember that students are never too old for checking up on their homework/assignments.

Research has proven that students of involved parents score higher on tests and go further in their educational ambitions. Remember, your involvement counts!

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

In order for our students to achieve academic excellence, strength of character, and confidence to succeed in life, we must all work together. It is vital that we all understand and share a common vision. For this reason, we created the Beacon Pledge. This pledge is our commitment to one another.

The Beacon Pledge

**“To be an Artist is to believe in life.....
And Education is the key to living to its fullest!”**

All of us – students, teachers, administrators, families, community, trustees and other civic leaders – pledge to:

- Have high expectations
- Work hard, at both the process and the product
- Keep our schools safe
- Set positive examples
- Be respectful and considerate of one another
- Listen and be open to new ideas
- Hold ourselves accountable for striving toward excellence for all!

In accordance with the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” Beacon has adopted a Home/School Compact. This compact outlines how parents, the school staff and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. Success in the Beacon Charter High School for the Arts depends upon students and stakeholders adhering closely to the agreements in this document. (See page 6)

SCHOOL-INITIATED INVOLVEMENT

School Plan for Improvement: The Consolidated Resource Plan and the District Strategic Plan

Each year, every school in the District develops a school improvement plan. The SIT concept was developed from successful practices in urban districts, state and national information, and other educational and industry research. The purpose of the plan is to focus school efforts on a few key areas that will have the greatest impact on student success. Each school improvement plan is aligned to the district-wide strategic plan and an analysis of student achievement. The school planning process is a collaborative effort involving the principal, the Deans, teachers, coaches, other staff, and parents and family members at the school.

Using school data, the SIT planning team seeks to explain the results from the past, and identify a few key strategies that will have the greatest impact on improving current student performance. Each strategy is then developed into an implementation plan that can be monitored and adjusted throughout the year. Ongoing support for and evaluation

of school improvement efforts is provided by executive directors of school management in the office of the deputy superintendent. In addition to the School Improvement Plan, Beacon also annually writes a Consolidated Resource Plan and a District Strategic Plan.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)/Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)

Parents and families have organized the BMW's group to function as a supportive educational arm, providing families with opportunities to participate in a wide array of social and academic activities. The BMW's are presently not affiliated with a local or national parent's organization.

PARENT AND FAMILY-INITIATED INVOLVEMENT

School Volunteers

Beacon Charter High School for the Arts welcomes parents and family members who want to assist in the academic achievement or school improvement process by serving as volunteers in its buildings. Volunteers are required to have a Criminal Background History check (BCI) before volunteering in schools. The Beacon Charter High School for the Arts will provide volunteers with the needed paperwork to secure a BCI check from their local police department.

Who Needs a Clearance? Volunteers who would like to participate in school district-sponsored activities must obtain clearance. These activities include, but are not limited to, tutoring, mentoring, general classroom assistance, bus monitoring, lunchroom assistance, field trips, club/group, PTO/PTA officers and school events.

How do I Obtain a Clearance? If parents volunteer in any capacity, they must obtain a letter from the school requesting a BCI check from your local police department.

How Long is a Clearance Valid? A Clearance remains valid as long as a volunteer remains active at Beacon. A list of all cleared volunteers is maintained in the Parent Engagement Office and is available upon request.

SCHOOL/DISTRICT-INITIATED INVOLVEMENT

As a district, the Beacon School is committed to involving parents and families of children within the school in all committees that are created around issues of student achievement and school improvement. Parents and families selected to serve on committees should be willing to bring the perspective of the broadest number of parents concerning an issue to the appropriate committee.

A parent or family member who is willing to volunteer to provide such a service and make the necessary commitment should signify their willingness in writing and submit it to the Office of Parent Engagement, or respond to specific requests as committees are created and the opportunity for participation arises.

2008-2009 HOME /SCHOOL COMPACT

As a student I agree to:	As a parent I agree to:	As a staff member I agree to:
Attend school daily and on time	Insist upon timely regular attendance	Maintain professional standards with regard to attendance, preparation, student and parent communication.
Arrive to all classes on time and prepared.	Talk daily with my child about classroom activities.	Provide relevant and rigorous instruction.
Follow classroom rules and help maintain an environment conducive to learning.	Hold my child accountable for following classroom rules through supportive collaboration with teachers and administration.	Provide a highly structured environment that nurtures self-respect and respect for others.
Complete my assignments neatly, on time, and to the best of my ability.	Hold my child accountable for completing all assigned work to the best of his/her ability.	Establish ongoing communication with parents and students and welcome parental involvement.
Know and follow all rules outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.	Know and support my child's adherence to the Student Code of Conduct.	Equitably enforce the Student Code of Conduct.
Respect the rights of others by holding myself accountable for my words and actions. I will be civil and decent in my interactions with others.	Help my child develop a healthy respect for self and others through guidance, positive example, and accountability.	Hold myself and my students accountable for maintaining an environment of self respect and respect for others.
Print Student Name	Print Parent Name	Print Staff Member's Name
Student Signature:	Parent Signature:	Staff Member's Signature:
Administrator Signature:	PEC Signature:	Date:

Legal language about NCLB and Parent Engagement

SECTION I—PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT GENERAL PROVISIONS, EXPECTATIONS, AND DEFINITIONS

This policy is to comply with Law 107-110, 107th Congress, signed on January 8, 2002, referred to as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA) of 1965 and commonly cited as the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.”

References to mandated provisions of ESEA are indicated in **bolded italics** with the first reference being to ESEA and the second reference to the official citation in the United States Code.

This policy shall establish the role of the Beacon Charter High School for the Arts in involving parents and families and clarifies the relationship between the school’s role in parent and family participation and the role of the parent and family. While the District’s Parent and Family Involvement Policy largely defines mandated legal parental involvement provisions as stipulated by federal law, the District also realizes that many other adults play an important role in a child’s life. The School District welcomes into its buildings all individuals who carry responsibility for a child’s development, education and well-being, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and community members. It shall not only reflect the School District’s mission of promoting the achievement of every child but shall establish a framework for recognizing the value of parents and families and for promoting meaningful parent and family participation. The Board of Education recognizes that a child’s education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To support this goal, the school, parents and families must work as knowledgeable partners. All employees of the District at each school must create a climate of respect for and cooperation with parents and family that will be evident in all parent, family, teacher, and staff interactions.

The Beacon Charter High School for the Arts not only recognizes parents and families as key stakeholders in their children’s education, but prioritizes parent and family involvement as a key component of its beliefs and shared goals as adopted by the Board of Education in its “Excellence for All” plan for student achievement.

DECLARATION OF BELIEFS

- All children can learn at high levels.
- Teachers have a profound impact on student development and should have ample training, support, and resources.
- Education begins with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Families are an essential part of the educational process.
- A commitment from the entire community is necessary to build a culture that encourages student achievement.
- Improvement in education is guided by consistent and effective leadership.
- The school’s central office (so to speak) exists to serve students and the school.

SHARED GOALS TO GUIDE ALL WORK

- Maximum academic achievement for all students;
- A safe and orderly environment for all students and employees;
- Efficient and effective support operations for all students, families, teachers, and administrators;
- Efficient and equitable distribution of resources to address the needs of all students, to the maximum extent feasible; and

• Improved confidence and strong parent/community engagement. The No Child Left Behind Act clearly states its purpose as ensuring all children the opportunity to obtain a high quality education and acknowledges that one of the primary ways to accomplish this is by “affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.” *ESEA Section 1001(12)—20 USC 6301(12)* This policy shall bring the District into compliance with No Child Left Behind provisions that specifically recognize parent and family involvement as a research-based educational practice that yields high results. This policy shall cover the involvement of all parents and families across any federal, state, or local programs being implemented in the District. The District recognizes and respects the wide variety of ways in which parents/families can be involved—whether District-initiated, school-initiated, or parent-initiated. This policy shall serve as written documentation of the Beacon Charter High School for the Arts’s commitment to ensure parents and families are welcomed, engaged, and valued as stakeholders in the education of their children. The District will incorporate this Parent and Family Involvement Policy into its Local Education Agency (LEA) plan which is the required plan submitted to the state in its application to obtain Title I and other federal funding. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act shall be referred to as ESEA. The United States Code shall be referred to as USC. A local education agency shall be referred to as LEA, which indicates a School District for this policy.

The term “parent” refers to a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare). *ESEA Section 9101(31)—20 USC 7801(31)* This definition of “parent” shall be used as reference for this policy. The Beacon School District also believes in the importance of “families” as other adults who play an important role in a child’s life.

The District recognizes the definition of parent involvement as provided for in the No Child Left Behind General Provisions Section: *ESEA Section 9101(32)—20 USC 7801(32)* The term “Parent Involvement” means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

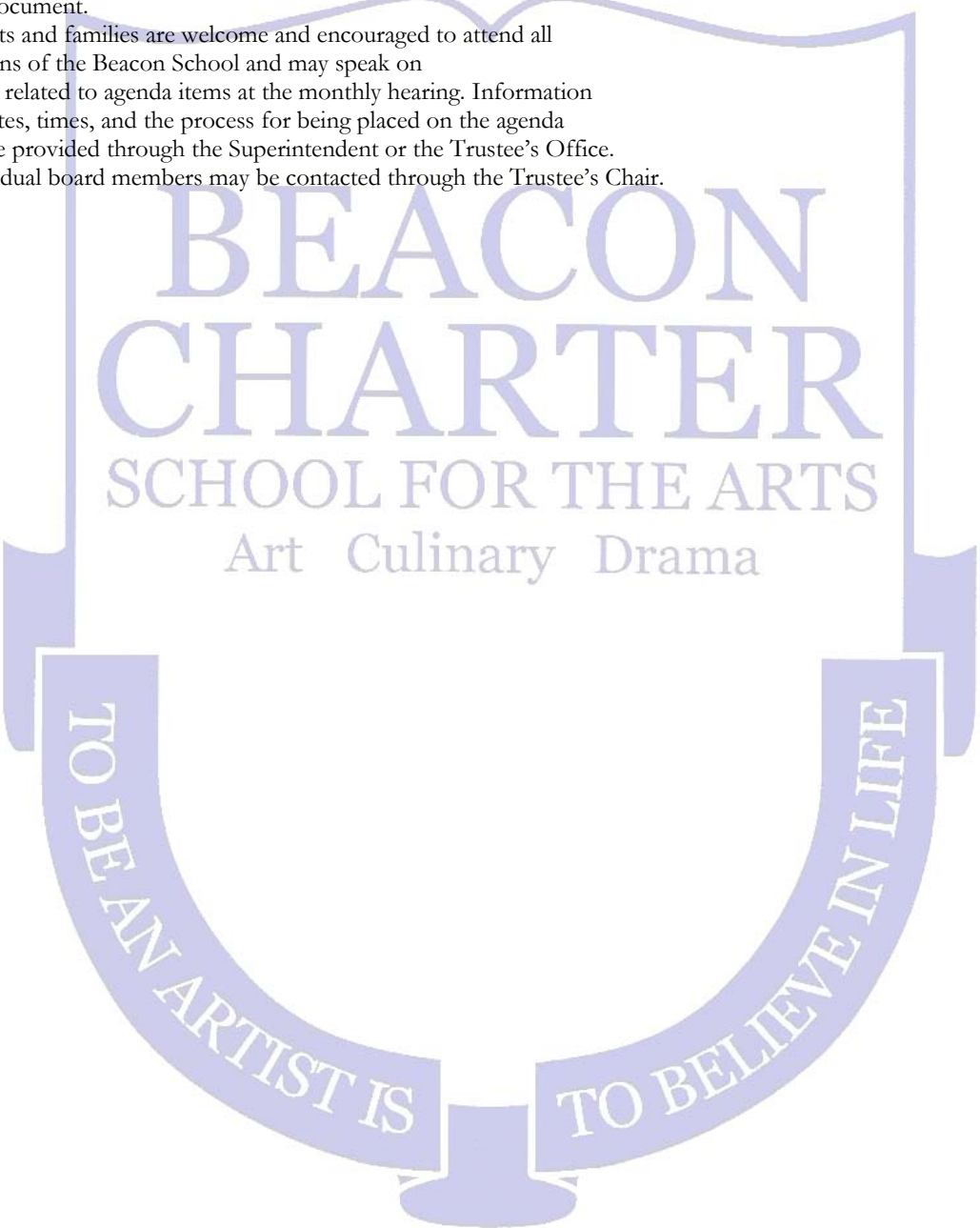
- That parents play an integral role in assisting their children’s learning;
- That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s education at school;
- That parents are full partners in their children’s education; and
- That parents are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

The Beacon Charter High School for the Arts not only embraces the definition of parent involvement as defined in the No Child Left Behind Act, but further expands that definition to include diverse, ongoing, meaningful activities and opportunities that are designed to engage a range of parents and families throughout the school year. Some of these activities shall be focused on helping parents and families help their own children succeed academically, while others engage parents and families in the process of school improvement.

All efforts in the District shall be guided by extensive research that consistently links parental and family involvement with student success. Grounded in research and practical experience and

around which programs will be implemented are six (6) components framed as the national PTA's National Standards for Parent Involvement Programs: Communicating, Parenting, Student Learning, Volunteering, School Decision Making and Advocacy, and Collaborating with Community. These national standards have been endorsed by the National School Boards Association and will be endorsed by the Pittsburgh Board of Education upon adoption of this document.

Parents and families are welcome and encouraged to attend all sessions of the Beacon School and may speak on issues related to agenda items at the monthly hearing. Information on dates, times, and the process for being placed on the agenda can be provided through the Superintendent or the Trustee's Office. Individual board members may be contacted through the Trustee's Chair.



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