

School-Family-Community Partnerships

Policy

The Torrington Board of Education defines school-family-community partnerships as the continuous planning, support and participation of school personnel, families and community organizations in coordinated activities and efforts at home, in the school and in the community that directly and positively affects the success of all children's learning. Each partner is viewed as an equally contributing member, maintaining certain independence while acknowledging shared responsibility.

Therefore, the Torrington Board of Education recognizes the education is a shared responsibility. Schools, families and communities all contribute to the student success, with the best results coming when all three work together. A comprehensive, well-planned partnership between family, school and community should result in higher student achievement. Research indicates that school-family partnerships result in specific benefits for students, families and schools. Students in schools where there is a strong component of family involvement perform better than those in schools with less involvement. Students tend to have higher grades and test scores, better attendance and higher rates of homework completion and fewer placements in special education and they stay in school longer. The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status but the extent to which families are involved in education. Families also benefit; they develop a greater understanding of their role in their children's education, a sense of effectiveness, stronger social ties and a desire to continue their own education. Schools and communities benefit. Teachers report that their work with students is more effective when they receive help from families and families that are more involved have more positive views of teachers and their work. Increased involvement also results in families feeling more ownership of their school and being more willing to support school and community initiatives.

The Torrington Board of Education recognizes that schools must take the lead in developing and sustaining effective partnerships. In order to encourage comprehensive partnerships, the Board recommends that schools develop programs related to the following six standards:

- Parenting- promotes and support parenting skills and the family's primary role in encouraging children's learning.
- Communicating- promote clear two-way communication between the school and families about school programs and children's progress.
- Volunteering- provide appropriate training and involve families in instructional and support areas both in and out of school.
- Learning at Home- involves families in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked or enrichment activities.

- Decision Making- provides opportunities for all to develop and strengthen their leadership role, enabling them to become full partners in the decision that affect children and families.
- Collaborating with the Community- provide coordinated access to community resources for children and families and serve as a resource to the community.

Role of the School

Every school can develop effective strategies to involve all families in the education of their children. The Board of Education believes that local schools should engage in specific actions to develop and sustain strong partnership programs; develop structures for systematically and comprehensively implementing the six standards of school-family-community partnerships and assess the effectiveness of their implementation on a regular basis.

Role for Families

Families can make critical contributions to student achievement by providing a home environment conducive to lifelong learning. They can take advantage of opportunities offered by the school to become involved in activities related to the six standards of school-family-community partnerships. They can also let the school know how they would like to contribute. Families can use and contribute to community resources and help connect other families to the school and community.

Role for Communities

Service organizations and agencies, religious groups, business and individuals can develop networks for communicating with school and families about information and services that support family involvement in children's education. Community agencies can collaborate to provide integrated family support services that build upon existing community resources and linkages with public schools. Community members can serve as volunteers, role models and mentors, providing more individualized attention for students and demonstrating to both children and staff members that others in their community support education. Business can sponsor school-family-community partnership activities and encourage their employees to play an active role in education.

Role for the PTO

Each school has the ability to develop a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Board of Education recognizes the important role of parent/teacher involvement in the education process. The role of the PTO will not be limited to only fund raising but also to work in collaboration with the school and the district to provide the best opportunities for all children to meet with academic and social success.

Policy 7020: School-Family-Community Partnerships
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In an effort to promote the role of the PTO in each school the Torrington Board of Education has developed the following relationship with each PTO:

1. By July 1, 2010, all of the following must be in place and remain in place for each school based PTO.
 - a) Each school based PTO shall amend its Bylaws to include approved Board of Education policy.
 - b) Each school based PTO will operate under the financial review of the BOE (inclusive of the BOE Tax Identification Number)
 - c) All PTO's shall maintain the following Insurance Policies:
 - i. General Liability Insurance- \$1,000,000 per occurrence. The Torrington Board of Education would be listed as the additional insured. Any claim would be paid jointly to the PTO and the Torrington Board of Education.
 - ii. Fidelity Bond Coverage- \$25,000 Annual Limit
 - iii. Directors & Officers Liability Insurance- \$1,000,000 per occurrence
 - iv. The Board of Education recognizes that in 2010-2011 the Torrington High School reestablished a Parent Teacher Organization (THS PTO) that has contributed to the success of the school. As with any new organization there is a limitation of funding available for this startup. For FY 11-12 and 12-13, the board of Education permits the administration to contribute \$175 to cover the cost of required annual insurance with the understanding that the THS PTO will be self-sufficient for FY 13-14.
 - d) Monthly each PTO Group will submit to the PTOC President a uniform reconciliation (see attached sample) and a copy of their bank statement.
 - e) Monthly the PTOC President will submit detailed financial along with a detailed financial of all the districts PTO's in the same format to the district Business Manager.
2. Each PTO will work with the Principal and have cabinet at each school located in a mutually agreeable area.
 - a) Each PTO will fill by month a copy of their reconciliation, a copy of their bank statement and all corresponding back up documentation i.e. receipts, check requests, deposit worksheets
 - b) At the end of each school year these copies will be gathered and given to the Business Manager as part of the districts permanent records.
3. All checks written by PTO's will have an approved "Check Request Form" and appropriate backup prior to any check being written. Check Request

Forms must be approved by the PTO President and the school Principal.
(Form attached)

4. Each School shall have two people on the checking account that are able to sign checks. These authorized signors shall not be anyone that is able to approve checks.
5. All monies coming in shall be opened and counted before being removed from the school. No monies shall be opened and/or counted without at least two members of the PTO and/or parent volunteers. A tally sheet must be completed and signed by all present before monies are removed from the school for deposit. Tally sheet shall be turned over to the Treasurer with deposit. Treasurer will check totals and sign before the deposit is made. (Form attached)
6. Individual PTO Presidents will have the responsibility to receive, review and sign off on the reporting from their respective Treasurer on a monthly basis to provide to PTOC President for reporting to the Business Manager. It is responsibility of the President of each PTO to ensure that all back up documentation is in place. Each PTO President will file the data in the office on a monthly basis. The cabinet will be locked with a key to be given to the Principal the Business Manager.