

Engaging Parents

a newsletter from the Spring ISD Family and Community Engagement Department

January 2016



Greetings and Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a restful winter holiday and are now ready for a successful new year! This is a time filled with hope and possibilities, a time to start fresh and begin anew. So as we begin this new year and new semester of school, let us resolve to continue making our student's academic success a top priority.

Tranita Carroll, Parent Engagement Coordinator

January is National Mentoring Month

Support Spring ISD's Mentor Program

The Spring Forward: Supporting Our Scholars Mentor Program is a program that provides enriching experiences to students through positive relationships with adult mentors. The purpose of the program is to educate and encourage students to reach their full potential by providing mentors for each student.

We are currently seeking mentors for our high school students. Please contact Tranita Carroll at tcarroll@springisd.org to become a mentor.



Please consider supporting a student in other ways. Below are a few suggestions.

January 14 – I Am a Mentor Day

Sign up to become a mentor through an organization, and encourage your friends and colleagues to become mentors as well.

January 18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

This day provides an ideal opportunity to highlight the importance of mentoring. Use the day to volunteer in your community with your mentor or mentee.

January 21 – Thank Your Mentor Day

This is a day to reflect on the ways we have all benefitted from a mentor. Be sure to thank your mentor for all they have done for you.

“A mentor empowers a person to see a possible future, and believe it can be obtained.”

Shawn Hitchcock

PARENT PROFILE

Meet Kenneth Friels



Kenneth Friels is a proud Spring ISD parent who has children attending McNabb Elementary School, Spring High School and the Wunsche daycare. He currently serves as president of the McNabb Elementary School PTO. As PTO president, his goals are to increase volunteerism at school and make sure parents know they are welcome at the school. The McNabb PTO has hosted Pastries with Parents, a chili cook-off and Cookies with

Santa. They are currently planning the McNabb Talent Show and Spring Festival. When Kenneth is not volunteering in school, he spends time at Uncle Wankies, the restaurant he owns with his wife Lisa.



5 Ways to Encourage Organic Thinking in Your Children

Organic thoughts are born out of interaction with the world and with people. They're created when the mind has the freedom and space unencumbered by electronic devices. Here are five ways to encourage organic thinking in your children.

- 1. Let them speak their mind** – Allow your children to dialogue with you. Some parents expect their children to do what they're told without any discussion. While this is necessary in some parts of parenting, the rule should be to let your children respectfully discuss their opinion and wishes with you.
- 2. Expose them to new things and ideas** – Make life an exploration. Visit art exhibits, go see live musical performances, and share interesting things you've read with your children.
- 3. Ask questions** – When you're reading to or with your children, ask questions such as, "So why do you think that boy acted in that manner?"

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4. Let them figure it out – Resist the urge to help or instruct your children at every turn. Let them figure out that it's easier to put on your pants before your shoes. Let them learn from experience.

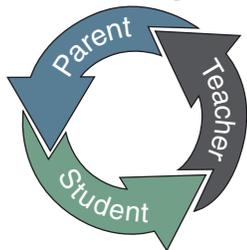
5. Go tech-free – The best way to help your kids think organically is to remove the electronic element. Let them look out of the car window when you're driving and discuss what they see. Talk about food items and food packaging when you're grocery shopping. Spend more time talking with your children.

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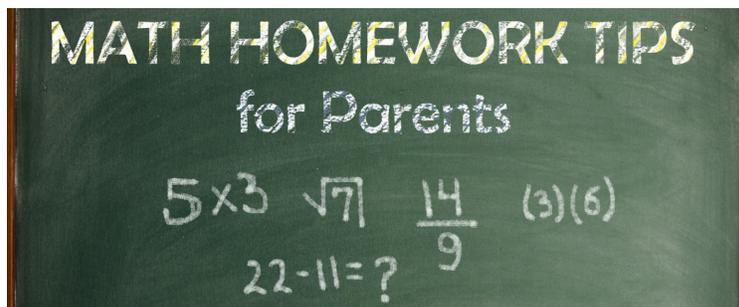
What Is a Parent Involvement Policy?

A parent involvement policy explains how the school district and the school itself supports the important role of parents in the education of their children. It describes how schools and parents will work together to help Title I students achieve the district's standard of learning. The policy should be written by a committee that includes parents. Please contact your school's parent engagement liaison for a copy of the parent involvement policy.



Upcoming Events

- January 8** – Registration deadline for February 6 ACT
 - January 12** – Late registration deadline for January 23 SAT
 - January 12** – Are you a college ready parent? 6:00 P.M. Transportation Center (341 East Richey Rd., Bldg. B)
 - January 18** – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 - January 19** – Family Education Night at Chick-Fil-A (I-45 at FM 1960)
 - January 21** – District PTO Training Transportation Center (341 East Richey Rd., Bldg. B)
 - January 23** – SAT administration
 - January 27** – ESL classes begin at Former North Harris County YMCA
- Please also check district and school websites



A good parent-teacher relationship is important for making the most of the school year. Elementary school teachers reveal things every teacher wished parents knew to help you be the best parent in class.

- **Follow the progress your child is making in math.** Check with your child daily about his or her math work.
- **If you don't understand your child's math assignments,** engage in frequent communication with his or her teacher.
- **Request that your child's teacher** schedule after school math tutoring sessions if your child really needs help.
- **Use household chores** as opportunities for reinforcing math learning such as cooking and repair activities.
- **Ask your child's teacher for a list of suggestions** that will enable you to help your child with math homework.

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Reading Homework



Tips for Parents

- Have your child read aloud to you every night. As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns such as cat, pat, hat.
- Ask your child to tell you in his or her own words what happened in a story.
- To check your child's understanding of what he or she is reading, occasionally pause and ask your child questions about the characters and events in the story.
- Ask your child why he or she thinks a character acted in a certain way and ask your child to support his or her answer with information from the story.
- Before getting to the end of a story, ask your child what he or she thinks will happen next and why.

U.S. Department of Education, Ed.gov

"My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person – he believed in me."

Jim Valvano (sports broadcaster and 1993 ESPY winner)

Family and Community Engagement

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