

Cherokee Heights Elementary

Grades PreK - 5

2026-27 Family Engagement Plan

Our Mission: Together we teach and guide learners to develop academic achievement and social responsibility.

The Family Engagement Plan (FEP) is organized into four impact areas. We will be working together this year to build positive and goal-oriented relationships in each area. Families and staff developed this plan together.

Welcoming Environment	
Our school has staff member(s) available for families to discuss this plan and ask questions.	• Gina Hass, Principal • Laurel Flores, Counselor • Jessica McGraw, Family Liaison • Family-Teacher Organization (FTO)
Our school communicates with families in many ways.	• Upcoming events and important school information will be shared via school website, social media, Seesaw, classroom newsletters, and principal newsletters. • Teachers will send communication folders home in backpacks weekly. • School will send all-school phone, text and email messages and reminders through Blackboard. • Cherokee Heights staff will respond to family calls, texts and emails within a business day. • Translations of important school information will be provided for families as needed. • School will provide information to families about school, district, and neighborhood resources.
The achievement gap, or rather the “opportunity gap,” between students of color and white students in Saint Paul Public Schools is unacceptable. Our school is working to change practices and systems by identifying the barriers that make it harder for students of color to succeed and for their families to support their learning.	• Cherokee Heights staff will receive training in Restorative Practices and Culturally Responsive Teaching. • Cherokee staff and families will review student progress information through an equity lens. • For more about our work on racial equity, families may contact Cherokee Heights principal, Gina Hass.
Transitions between schools can be challenging, and we work to help families as their children start and leave our school.	For new students and families, we support the transition by: • In the fall Cherokee Heights will hold an open house for students and families to meet classroom teachers and other staff members. Families are invited to visit classrooms throughout the year. • In the spring, Cherokee Heights will host an open house for incoming students, allowing new families to visit classrooms and meet staff.

	● Pre-K staff will partner with the Office of Early Learning to share kindergarten transition information with families. ● In January 5th grade students will receive open house information for district middle school programs. ● In the spring the school counselor will provide lessons on the transition to middle school for 5th grade students. ● In the spring, representatives from local middle schools will visit 5th grade classrooms to provide transition information. ● School tours and classroom observations will be provided for new families upon request.
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Family Partnerships	
Our Family-School Compact establishes the shared responsibility for student success between the school, families, and students. Families and teachers work together to develop the Compact.	● Discussions and editing of the Title I Compact will take place at all-family meetings. ● The Family-School Compact will be updated throughout the school year, and changes will be made as necessary.
There are many opportunities for families to build connections to the school and to each other.	● Families will be invited to quarterly “Coffee with the Principal” gatherings to exchange ideas about student learning and school improvement. ● The annual Title I meeting will be held in the fall along with Family Night. This meeting will inform parents of the school’s participation in the Title I program and their right to be involved. ● Families have the opportunity to build relationships with other Cherokee families and staff through FTO, volunteering, Welcome Wednesdays, and family events. ● In January families will be invited to an open house event for current and prospective families. ● A Student Showcase event will be held in the spring. ● Home visits and welcome visits will be offered as a way to build relationships with families.
We work to make these meetings and events available for every family in the school.	● Home language interpreters will be provided for families as needed for family events, conferences, and school communication. ● Families can opt to meet virtually for parent-teacher conferences and other meetings with staff.
Our school supports families as advocates and provides opportunities for parent leadership.	● Families are invited to join the FTO, which meets once a month and provides opportunities for parent leadership. ● Families and staff will collaborate to write the Family Engagement Plan, review/edit the Family-School Compact, and review Cherokee Height’s School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP).

Teaching and Learning

Our school shares information about state standards, assessment, and student achievement with families in multiple ways.	- Families will have opportunities to learn about curriculum and assessment through newsletters, classroom visits, Seesaw, website information, conferences, and Welcome Wednesday volunteering. - Eligible students will receive additional academic support from SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) literacy and math teachers, MN Reading & Math Corps staff, and ADSIS (Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services) staff. - Report cards and progress reports are available to families online and can be printed upon request. Families will be reminded that beyond formal conferences, they can always ask to speak to teachers about their child's learning progress by calling and requesting a time to do so. - Students in PreK-3rd grades participate in the Take-Home Reading Program to build reading skills at home.
Our school will engage families in Personalized Learning as a key strategy to accelerate student achievement. Parents can get more information using many tools.	- iPads are used in the classroom to differentiate and personalize learning. Students are able to participate in digital learning experiences and use many creative tools to demonstrate and share their knowledge with families. - Families are encouraged to use the Seesaw app or Schoology, which provide a digital portfolio of student work, a real-time glimpse into the school day, and opportunities to support children's learning at home. - Parent login information can be accessed at www.spps.org/onestop or by asking Cherokee Heights lead clerk, Christine Zepeda.
Many before- and after-school enrichment and support opportunities are available for students.	- After-school Extended Day Learning (EDL) provides focused, alternative learning opportunities that support student achievement on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays after school. The ACES program provides onsite after-school programming Mondays-Thursdays until 5pm. - Families will also receive information about off-site after-school programs, which include Discovery Club, Boys & Girls Club and Rec Check at El Rio.

Community Partnerships

Our school develops community partnerships to provide additional support for students and their families.	ACES, Boys & Girls Club, COMPAS, Ecolab, Every Meal Weekend Program, Girls on the Run, Girl Scouts River Valleys, SPPS Grow Our Own School Garden program, Legal
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The 2026-27 Family Engagement Plan can be found on the Cherokee Heights school website at <https://cherokee.spps.org/families>. Printed copies are available in the office. The School Continuous Improvement Plan for Cherokee Heights can be found at <https://cherokee.spps.org/families>.