

GES NEWSLETTER

Dr. Stamps

Principal

TITLE 1 NEWS

We would like to remind all parents that Gordo Elementary School is a Title 1 Schoolwide Project School. GES receives federal funds based on the school’s student free and reduced lunch count. These funds help our school provide services and materials to help our students achieve the goals outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act. A public meeting was held in your school at which time the Title I program and parents rights and responsibilities were explained. The GES Title I Plan and the LEA Title I plan can be reviewed by the public at anytime. If you wish to review the plan, please call the school or the central office and make an appointment to do so. If anyone has questions about Title 1, Mrs. Anthony or Miss Ball will be happy to answer them. They can be reached at the Board of Education central office at 367-2080.

Due to federal requirements, there are items that the Pickens County Board of Education must make available to the parents/guardians of our students. These items are in this newsletter. If you have any questions about any of these items, please call Mrs. Anthony at the Board of Education.

GES TITLE I PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY

A major goal of Gordo Elementary School’s Title I program is to encourage greater involvement of parents in the education of their children in partnership with Title I and their school. As mandated by Department of Education regulations and in accordance with Gordo Elementary School’s philosophy of nurturing parents toward recognizing and fulfilling that responsibility, the following actions will be taken to facilitate parental involvement.

1. Will involve parents in an organized and ongoing way in the development and updating of the schoolwide program plan.
2. Will involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs.
3. Will convene an annual meeting to inform parents of their school’s participation in Title I, Title I requirements, and their right to be involved. The goals, objectives, and activities of the Title I program will be discussed at this meeting.
4. Will distribute and explain to parents their child’s student assessment results, as well as explain the state’s expectations/requirements of high performance for all students.
5. Make available to parents the schools’ performance profile (state report card) from the state assessment. The report will also be published in the newspaper.
6. Will provide a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. This will be done through meetings, conferences, and newsletters.
7. Will schedule parent meetings and workshops throughout the year at varied times, so all parents will have the opportunity to attend and improve their parenting skills and participate in decisions relating to the education of their children if parents express an interest in doing so.
8. Will provide information to parents during the school year, through reports and conferences, of their child’s progress in meeting his instructional goals.
9. Will provide opportunities for parents or guardians to participate in parent-teacher conferences to insure understanding and cooperation among parents, students, and school personnel.
10. Inservice training for Title I staff, classroom teachers, and other school representatives will be directed toward more

effectiveness in working with parents of participating children and toward building home-school partnerships.

11. Will provide ongoing communication with parents through newsletters, notices, phone calls, conferences, and home visits.
12. Will provide timely response to parents’ recommendations, requests, questions, or suggestions that have been offered in meetings held for parents.

LEA TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

As mandated by Title I Guidelines and the No Child Left Behind Act, the Pickens County Board of Education intends that parents or guardians of children being served by its Title I program have an adequate opportunity to participate in the planning and implementation of the program and an awareness of the child’s instructional status and progress in the program.

It is a goal of the Pickens County Board of Education to develop a strong partnership with the home. When parents and schools work together, student achievement increases and both parents and students develop a positive attitude about school. The intent of this policy is to result in consciously employing proven parenting activities in a more efficient, consistent, and effective manner as well as generating new ways of strengthening the partnership.

The Pickens County School System:

1. Will involve parents in an organized and ongoing way in the development and updating of the Title I plan and in the process of school review and improvement.
2. Will utilize a parent involvement coordinator who will assist schools in the coordination and implementation of effective parental involvement activities.
3. Will build the schools’ and parents’ capacity for strong parental involvement through workshops and professional development activities.
4. Will coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies and practices with the parents of other agencies, such as, Head Start and the BEE Program.
5. Will conduct an evaluation in the spring of each school year regarding the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy to determine whether there has been increased parent participation and to determine if there are any barriers that are hindering parent participation.
6. Will use the results of the evaluation of the parental involvement policy when revising the schoolwide project plans at the district and school levels.
7. Will provide timely response to parents’ recommendations, requests, or questions relating to the Title I program.
8. Will have each school’s BLT and administrator conduct a self-study of parental involvement practices using the following seven basic principles considered essential to home-school partnerships.
 - a. Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful and friendly.
 - b. Communications with parents (whether about school policies and programs or about their own children) are frequent, clear and two-way.
 - c. Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children’s school learning and behavior.
 - d. Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and to share in the decision making.

- e. The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnerships with all families.
- f. The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community at large.
- g. The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available.

Anyone who wishes to review the school’s Title I Plan may do so by calling the school principal.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Gordo Elementary School provides a curriculum that is mandated by the Alabama State Department of Education. The Alabama Course of Study is followed in all applicable subjects. GES is an Alabama Reading Initiative School.

Notification of Rights Under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal (or his/her designee) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal or principal’s designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate.

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- (3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

- (4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors (“eligible students”) certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student’s family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of—*
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use—
 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 2. Instrument used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

The Pickens County School System will protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Pickens County School System will directly notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Pickens County School System will also directly notify parents and eligible students, such as through U.S. Mail or email, before conducting the following activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Notice for Directory Information**

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that the Pickens County School System, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, the Pickens County School System may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the System to the contrary in accordance with System procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Pickens County School System to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student’s role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets such as for football, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories—names, addresses and telephone listings—unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want the Pickens County School System to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the System in writing. The Pickens County School System has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Email address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

**Parent’s Right-to-Know
NCLB Act of 2001**

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 at the beginning of each school year, the Pickens County Board of Education will notify parents that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teachers. The Pickens County Board of Education will provide this information in a timely manner and in a format and language parents can understand. The requested information will include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
4. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and if so, their qualifications.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 also requires each local school in the Pickens County School System to provide the following information, without parental request, to the parents of the students enrolled in that school:

1. Information on the level of achievement of the parent’s child in each of the state academic assessments as required under this part; and
2. Timely notice that the parent’s child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 further requires that the local LEA shall, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, inform a parent or parents of a limited English proficient child identified for participation or participating in, such a program of:

1. The reasons for the identification of their child as limited English proficient and in need of placement in a language instruction educational program.
2. The child’s level of English proficiency, how such level was assessed, and the status of the child’s academic achievement.
3. The methods of instruction used in the program in which their child is, or will be participating, and the methods of instruction used in other available programs, including how such programs differ in content, instructional goals, and the use of English and a native language in instruction.
4. How the program in which their child is, or will be participating, will meet the educational strengths and needs of their child.
5. How such program will specifically help their child learn English, and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation.
6. The specific exit requirements for the program, including the expected rate of transition from such program into classrooms that are not tailored for limited English proficient children, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school for such program.
7. In case of a child with a disability, how such program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child.
8. Information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance
 - a. detailing the right that parents have to have their child immediately removed from such program upon their request
 - b. detailing the options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available
 - c. assisting parents in selecting among various programs and methods of instruction, if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity

If you have any questions regarding any of the information in this newsletter, you may contact your local school principal.

How Important is Parent Involvement?

Research is clear on this subject. Parent involvement in education makes a huge difference in your child’s school success. So even if your child seems unconcerned about your presence, he’s surely affected by it.

In fact, many home tasks are associated with higher student achievement. The National Education Association (NEA) strongly suggests talking about school, helping with homework and monitoring your child’s time.

According to the NEA, studies also show that the earlier you get involved, the better. You will see improved attendance, behavior and grades. So find simple ways to be involved. Talk with the teachers. Stay connected throughout the school years. Small investments now will yield a lifetime of rewards

GES AND THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY

Students of Gordo Elementary School and citizens all across Alabama are fortunate to have the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) available for their use. The AVL is an online resource that includes encyclopedias, magazines, dictionaries, atlases, and almanacs plus many specialized sources such as African-American History and Culture and Poemfinder. The AVL provides a safe, reliable collection of web sites for our children to use both at school and at home. It is a very useful tool for homework and other school projects. This collection of resources is funded by the State of Alabama.

If your child wants to use the AVL away from school, you must have access to a computer connected to the Internet along with the password you are given when you receive an AVL card. Cards are being issued to students upon request through the GES Library Media Center and to adults through the public libraries.

If you have questions about the AVL, please call Mrs. Christie Eatman, the Gordo Elementary School’s media specialist at 373-2783.

**Pickens County Board of Education
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