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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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September 30, 2016

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance
State Superintendent of Education

RE: October is Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month

October is the time of year when we hold a statewide campaign to raise awareness of the importance of parental engagement and the key role that parents play in their child's education. It is a time for local school systems to make that extra effort to invite parents to visit their local school and learn how they can become partners in their child's education. This year's theme is ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning.***

Each year Alabama hosts a very successful parent visitation month, but it requires each of you to make it happen locally. To assist you, we have posted materials and tools for your use on the Alabama State Department of Education Web site. Please go to www.alsde.edu, Department Offices, Instructional Services, Announcements. Included under announcements is the *Guide for Schools*, which contains a wealth of information on how to make plans for local parent engagement meetings and activities.

Please take the time to work with your staff on the importance of this effort. Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an excellent way to establish partnerships with parents that can be sustained throughout the school year.

Should you have any questions about parent visitation month, please feel free to contact Dr. Carolyn E. Townsend by telephone at (334) 353-1191 or via e-mail at ctownsend@alsde.edu.

MS:CET:SMR

Attachments

FY16-2111

ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

Home and School Partnerships

Breaking Barriers to Learning

GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

October 2016

STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

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This document and other resources for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month are available online at www.alsde.edu.

OVERVIEW

Rationale:

Because parent engagement—now more than ever—is such a critical factor in determining the success or failure of students and schools, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) recognizes the need for ongoing, meaningful parent engagement. The Department is promoting Statewide Parent Visitation Month in October. It is intended as a community effort—a time for schools, businesses, community agencies, churches, and government to turn their attention to the important role of parents in the education of their children. We extend an invitation for all schools and school systems to become a part of this important statewide event.

Date: October is Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama public schools.

Suggested Times: Specific dates and times will vary with each school/community.

Suggested Meeting Topics: Some topics are appropriate for all grade levels.

- Elementary - School/System Report Cards and Alabama's PLAN 2020 (www.alsde.edu); Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; Response to Instruction (RtI); Getting Involved with Homework; Discipline Techniques; Continuous Improvement Plan (Including the Parental Engagement Section); School-Parent Compacts; School Safety Issues; Health and Nutrition Tips; After-School Programs (*Lights on After School* October 20, 2016, www.afterschoolalliance.org); and Internet Safety.

- Middle/Junior High - School/System Report Cards and Alabama's PLAN 2020 (www.alsde.edu); Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; Making Middle Grades Work; Laying the Foundation; Response to Instruction (RtI); Preparing for Graduation; Continuous Improvement Plan (Including the Parental Engagement Section); School-Parent Compacts; Parenting of Adolescents; Drug-Free Awareness; Health and Nutrition Tips; School Calendars and Menus; and Internet Safety.

- High School - School/System Report Cards and Alabama's PLAN 2020 (www.alsde.edu); Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; High Schools That Work; A+ Advanced Placement Initiative; Graduation Requirements; Parenting of Teens; How Parent Engagement Impacts Academic Achievement; School-Parent Compacts; Drug-Free Awareness; Health and Nutrition Tips; School Policies; and Internet Safety.

Remember, these topics are just a starting point. You will have many creative ideas of your own. After all, you know the needs of your school and community. Consider contacting other schools for ideas, too.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Why is parent engagement important?

Over thirty years of research have proven parent engagement is one of the largest determining factors related to school success. Research has demonstrated when parents are engaged in their children's education in positive ways, children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education.

What are the benefits of parent engagement?

The most important benefit of parent engagement is better educated, more informed parents who have a direct impact on children and their success in school. Other benefits include greater community awareness, appreciation for a job well done, increased interest, and meaningful engagement from parents.

- Student success hinges on parent/family engagement.
- School quality depends on parent/family engagement.

(Source: National PTA's National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, **www.pta.org**)

Why should we participate in Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month?

Your school system will benefit from the collective efforts of a statewide event. These events provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to become familiar with students' parents and to solicit sustained, year-round parental and family engagement. Community members can prove to be a valuable resource for the classroom and the school. Furthermore, the school will receive positive news coverage and business support while offering community outreach.

Who should be involved in the community?

The more that people are involved and feel ownership of the event, the greater the chance of success. Business leaders, church leaders, the media, parents, transportation services, and childcare centers are among many services you can include in your planning.

How long should the event last?

Event schedules and formats will vary. Assess your community's needs to determine the best time to schedule sessions relative to occupations in the community, businesses and their hours of operation, etc. Invite parents and others to visit their child's school. Offer some form of informational format and/or interesting activities to promote attendance.

What are some activities that can be offered?

This event is an opportunity to share the programs offered in your school with your community and to emphasize a shared responsibility for student success. Highlight your successes but do not hide your problems. Seek input from parents, grandparents, and the community on needs and solutions. Use this opportunity to expose parents to the benefits of the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); career technical education; arts education; and technology. Open your classrooms, labs, and libraries for parents to visit. Involve students and showcase their work to increase participation.

This occasion also affords the school an opportunity to provide beneficial workshops, such as increasing awareness on health issues or parenting tips, discipline strategies, or helping children with homework. Door prizes and refreshments that are donated by local merchants add additional incentives for parents to attend events.

How can we ensure that parents will attend?

Utilize all community resources, such as the media and local businesses, to help ensure success. Ask the local media to advertise the event to parents and businesses. Suggest that businesses allow employees time off to visit their child's school or extend the activities into the evening for those parents who work late. Request support from local leadership, such as the mayor and city council. Perhaps they might adopt a resolution endorsing the local parenting activities and encourage parents to attend.

Make your event as convenient as possible for all parents (i.e., working, non-working, non-English speaking, those without transportation and childcare, and those with disabilities). Make your event fun and informative. Keep information sessions brief and interactive. Consider a carnival-type arrangement in the gymnasium that allows visitors to move from station to station at their own pace and according to their particular interests.

What does the research say about parent engagement?

The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not family income or social status, but the extent to which the student's family is able to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and (3) become involved in their children's education at school and in their community.

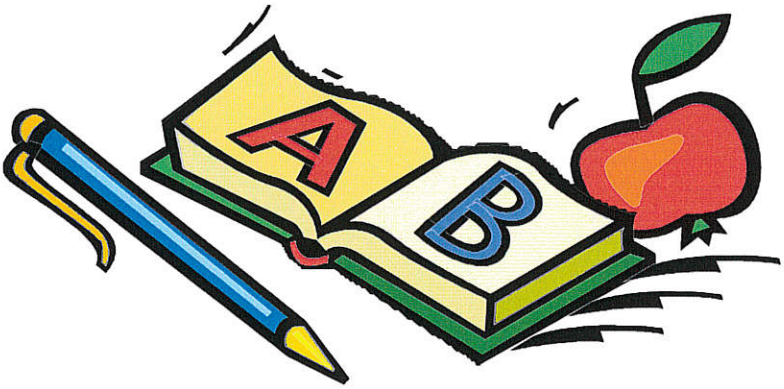
Students whose parents are actively involved in their education:

- Achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' educational level.
- Reach higher levels of achievement, receive higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, and complete homework assignments more consistently.
- Exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
- Have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.

(Source: National PTA's National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, **www.pta.org**)

What are the goals of Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month?

- To have a unified/coordinated event.
- To serve as a catalyst for year-round parental and family engagement.
- To seek parental input at the school level.
- To raise awareness of state initiatives such as the Statewide Accountability System, the Alabama Student Assessment Program, ARI, AMSTI, and Alabama's PLAN 2020.
- To allow local schools and school systems to highlight their own successful programs and initiatives such as technology and career tech opportunities, arts in the schools, reading and math achievement, after-school programs, etc.
- To assist local schools and school systems with the media and business support.
- To have parents visit schools, feel welcome while there, witness firsthand what schools offer their children, and leave feeling that they have contributed to the school as well as gained from their experience.



PLANNING TIPS

This guide is designed to assist you in planning activities for ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. We hope you will review the suggestions/guidelines and use them to design an event that fits the needs of your school and community. This planning guide also includes the 2016 logo, letterhead template, samples (correspondence, invitation, news release, etc.), and parent and school/school system evaluation forms. Use the logo in publicizing your event. Customize the template and samples to suit your needs.

NOTE: ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month materials are available online at **www.alsde.edu**.

Keep in mind that the suggestions offered in this guide are merely examples of topics, activities, or handouts that you can share with parents. You will know of others that apply to your school, but may not be mentioned here. For example, a useful session for your school might be "How to Conduct a Successful IEP meeting" or other special education issues. Any of the suggested handouts can be displayed on tables or distributed in bags or folders for parents. You can implement other creative ideas and sessions to engage parents. Adapt these guidelines specific to your school and community. You may decide to hold a one-day event, a week or weekend of open house, or a series of events throughout the month of October.

This is an occasion to seek input and support from parents, community leaders, partners in education, PTAs, PTOs, and other volunteers. Everyone can share in the planning of your event. Remember to include parents AND grandparents, guardians, older siblings, and other relatives.

Have students create welcome banners with the 2016 theme for Statewide Parent Visitation Month: ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning.*** Create "I Have Visited My Child's School Today" recognition certificates, stickers, pencils, etc., for parents. These items make parents feel important and special. In addition, parents become "walking advertisements" for your school!

Good luck with your event. Again, we remind you that the activities should be representative of your community and your school. What's important is what works for your school and community. ***Be creative and have fun!***

Your Notes for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month:

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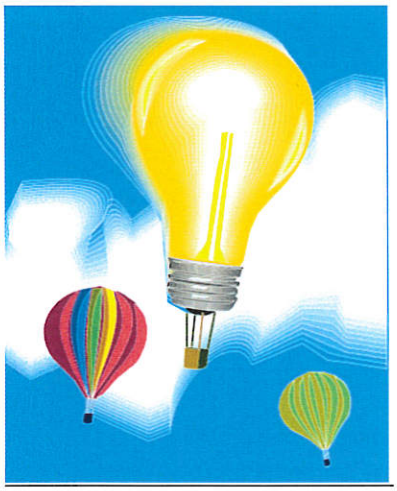

CHECKLIST

- **Form a planning committee.**
  Include everyone—faculty, support staff, parents, students, public information officers, parent engagement coordinators, community members, etc. Partner with PTAs, PTOs, businesses, civic groups, higher education, etc.

- **Assess the needs of your parents by asking students and parents for their input.**
  Survey parents on programs they would like to see and other needs they may have. Are they concerned about violence in schools? Do they need transportation or childcare? Would they be willing to serve on the planning committee?

- **Design format(s) and choose convenient time(s) that fit the needs of your parents.**
  Decide what works best for parents in your community. Vary activities, formats, and schedules. You may choose to have a general session that leads into concurrent sessions, or you may want to give parents a choice of ongoing activities. You might decide to invite parents to stop by for school visits on their way home from work. Activities could revolve around a sack lunch or supper. Some schools have had successful results with morning and late afternoon sessions that last two hours each.

- **Send "Save the Date" announcements early.**

- **Call on community members.**
  Ask for speaker suggestions, volunteers, refreshments, and door prizes.

- **Give parents a reason to attend–add an element of fun.**
  Distribute door prizes. Involve children in the activities. Combine Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month events with previously scheduled activities, such as fall festivals, homecoming, *Red Ribbon Week,* or Open House.

- **Keep parent-teacher conferences positive if planning them during this month.**

- **Provide transportation and childcare.**
  Work with your system's transportation and community education coordinators or contact community organizations.

- **Provide services for non-English speaking parents and those with disabilities.**
  Federal Programs and Special Education staff can assist you.

- **Showcase student art and school work with displays, exhibits, and performances.**

- **Distribute Parent Month Evaluation Forms.**
  Have a central collection point. Compile forms and use them to design next year's format.

- **Keep the media informed before, during, and after the events.**

- **Publicize school events at local malls, supermarkets, restaurants, doctors' offices, etc.**

- **Mail your School/School System Evaluation Form following your event but no later than November 21 to Dr. Carolyn E. Townsend, Alabama State Department of Education, Gordon Persons Building, Room 3345, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130- 2101.**

- **Thank all of those who helped make your event a success and start planning now for next year's Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month!**

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- Schedule parent-teacher conferences.
- Showcase student art, work samples, science projects, writing portfolios, etc.
- Incorporate other events such as fall festivals, open house, homecoming, etc.
- Celebrate school anniversaries/milestones.
- Celebrate *Lights on After School* on October 20 (www.afterschoolalliance.org).
- Celebrate National Community Education Day.
- Hold a systemwide open house.
- Open the school library after school hours for students and their families.
- Feature school successes and advertise future events.
- Distribute school information packets and student handbooks.
- Set up a carnival-type event in the gym so parents can rotate through stations.
- Update parents on Alabama's PLAN 2020. Please go to www.alsde.edu > Home page > Special Links > Alabama PLAN 2020.
- Create newsletter/calendar to send home that advertises October schedule of events.
- Take events to other venues outside of school, such as malls and community centers.
- Serve refreshments and give door prizes.
- Give class reunion-type awards: parent or grandparent of the day, parent with most children attending your school, parent who came the farthest distance from work, etc.
- Ask for mayor's proclamation for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month.
- Host a variety of sessions to appeal to a wide range of interests and academic levels: CPR training, adult basic education/GED, community education class schedules, etc.
- Invite local dignitaries, former students, local celebrities, etc.
- Feature a faculty art show, in addition to student work.
- Publicize student and faculty honor rolls for awards, grants, scholarships, etc.
- Display banners made by the students.
- Recruit student volunteers to register attendees, serve refreshments, act as guides, babysit younger students, etc.
- Have a "Make-and-Take" art station for parents and children.
- Feature a story-telling time for younger children.
- Make Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month a class project for a certain grade or discipline (English, drama, journalism, art, music, photography, graphic design, technology, etc.).

Your Ideas for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month:

- _____
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- _____

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Remember transportation and childcare needs to enable more parents to attend events.
- Collaborate with other agencies such as the county extension service and churches to provide transportation, parenting workshops, childcare, etc.
- Make provisions for non-English speaking parents and parents with disabilities.
- Contact county public health departments for health and nutrition handouts.
- Remember that many agencies and Web sites offer free, low-cost, and bilingual services (see **Internet Resources** on page 26).
- Contact other schools for ideas.
- Recruit ideas from students. Students can help with planning, publicity, registration, and technology demonstrations. Older students might babysit younger students.
- Vary hours of school events to accommodate schedules of working parents.
- Contact local businesses to donate refreshments and door prizes.
- Ask businesses to give employees time off from work to attend this event.
- Follow up with parents as appropriate.
- Work with your local PTA or PTO.
- Be prepared to create signs or add name tags for last-minute visitors.

MAKE THE NEWS

- Notify local news media about Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month as soon as possible (see **Sample News Release** on page 24).
- The ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month logo is included in this guide for use on all printing and presentations. Logo and other materials are available online at www.alsde.edu.
- Keep the media informed of key developments including:
  - Schools participating.
  - Employers agreeing to cooperate.
  - Programs and activities being planned.
  - Invitations being sent to parents.
  - Companies that are supporting the event.
- Use media to keep parents informed about Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month developments, speakers, schedule changes, etc.
- Publish ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month schedule of local events in your area newspaper.
- Post notices throughout your community (malls, restaurants, supermarkets, other businesses, etc.).
- Write an editorial about what your school has done, is doing, or could be doing with more parent engagement.

FOLLOW-UP

- Not only will evaluations and follow-up with parents contribute to the future success of Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month, but they are very important aspects of continual parent engagement.

- A sample **Parent Evaluation Form** is provided on the next page to copy and distribute to parents. Be sure to collect evaluation forms from parents before they leave your event. Participants are more likely to complete evaluations if they do so before they leave the event.

- The **School/School System Evaluation Form** on page 17 may be mailed following your event but **no later than November 21, 2016,** to Dr. Carolyn E. Townsend, Alabama State Department of Education, Gordon Persons Building, Room 3345, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101. **Submit *only one copy* per school/system.**

- Say **"THANK YOU!"** to all of those who helped in making your event a success and start planning for next year's event.

Your Notes for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month:

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ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

PARENT EVALUATION FORM

Thank you for visiting today. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation of your experience today with ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month's events. We hope to have this event again next year and would like your comments to help us with our future planning.

1. **What did you expect from the *Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning* through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month event?**

2. **Did our program meet your expectations? Why or why not?**

3. **What did you like most about the event?**

4. **What was your least favorite part of the event?**

5. **Did the event help you understand what your child has learned and will be learning during this school year?**

6. **What element or session would you like added to next year's program?**

7. **We want to keep you involved in the school's effort to educate your child. Do you have any suggestions on how we can keep working together?**

8. **Other general comments, feedback, or suggestions?**

Thank you for your feedback. Together we can provide your child with the best education possible. Please return this form before you leave to **(GIVE LOCATION)**.

ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

SCHOOL/SCHOOL SYSTEM EVALUATION FORM

Thank you for participating in ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation form to reflect your experience. We plan to continue this event and your comments will help the ALSDE in future planning. Please submit ONE per school/system.

1. **If you did not participate in Statewide Parent Visitation Month, please give reason(s) and answer Questions 3 and 9 through 12.**

2. **How many schools/parents participated in your system's Statewide Parent Visitation Month event?**

3. **Please give us the name and contact information of your Parent Engagement Coordinator.**

   _____ _____

   Parent Engagement Coordinator **School/School System**

   _____/_____/_____

   Telephone **Fax** **E-mail**

4. **Please give an overview of the kinds of activities that took place in your community during Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Please check all that apply.**

   a. _____General Assemblies
   b. _____Concurrent Sessions
   c. _____Refreshments
   d. _____Drawings/Giveaways
   d. _____Speakers
   e. _____Student Engagement
   f. _____Parent/Teacher Conferences
   g. _____Other (please describe)_____

5. **Did your schools receive support from local businesses? _____Yes _____No**
   If yes, please describe what type of help was received.

SCHOOL/SCHOOL SYSTEM EVALUATION FORM (Continued)

6. **What resources did you use to assist in the planning process?**

   a. _____Banner
   b. _____Video
   c. _____Stickers
   d. _____Local business and community leaders
   e. _____PTA/PTO
   f. _____Local education foundation
   g. _____Handouts
   h. _____Other (please describe)_____

7. **How did you advertise Statewide Parent Visitation Month?**

   a. _____Radio
   b. _____Television
   c. _____Newspapers
   d. _____Letters/Fliers to Parents
   e. _____Billboards
   f. _____Banners
   g. _____Other (please describe)_____

8. **We would like to compile success stories and photos to share statewide. Please e-mail your Statewide Parent Visitation Month success stories and photos to Dr. Townsend at ctownsend@alsde.edu.**

9. **How can the Alabama State Department of Education help you in your planning process?**

10. **What suggestions do you have for next year's Statewide Parent Visitation Month?**

11. **Please give suggestions for next year's theme for Statewide Parent Visitation Month.**

12. **Other general comments, feedback, or suggestions?**

Thank you for your feedback. The success of Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month depends on you. Please mail your School/School System Evaluation form following your event but no later than November 21 to Dr. Carolyn E. Townsend, Alabama State Department of Education, Gordon Persons Building, Room 3345, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101.

(Sample Memo from Superintendent to Principals)

ALABAMA STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

M E M O R A N D U M

September____, 2016

TO: Principals

FROM: Superintendent

RE: ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month

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October is Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Our school district has an opportunity to take a leadership role in encouraging and enhancing parent engagement in their children's education by participating in ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. This is a time when employers are encouraged to give working parents time off to participate in partnership programs for parents developed by each of our schools. This month is an opportunity for parents and the community to show their support for public education—our schools, teachers, students, and learning.

It is an opportunity to build partnerships with parents and new ways to work together throughout the school year. It underscores the fact that it takes more than our schools to educate our students—it takes parents, families, and communities. There is no better way to involve the community than to invite them into our schools.

We all know parent engagement in children's education means children learn more, and that is what we all want. In fact, we have worked for years to get greater parental engagement in their children's education. Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an opportunity to make this happen!

It is critical that you and our teachers be actively involved in this program to make it a success. Please advise your teachers of this program and work with them in ensuring that we make it happen at our schools. Thank you for your anticipated support and participation in this statewide initiative!

(Sample Memo from Principals to Teachers)

ALABAMA STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

M E M O R A N D U M

September _____, 2016

TO: Teachers

FROM: Principal

RE: ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month

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You may have already heard about ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month and that it is scheduled for October 2016. This event is an opportunity for schools to take leadership roles in building, reinforcing, and improving relationships among parents, teachers, and students.

For years, we have held parent-teacher conferences and have attempted to involve parents in the learning process. However, those meetings usually occur later in the school year when the environment may not be as comfortable for a first meeting. We also know there are some parents who are uneasy about school meetings and choose not to attend.

Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an opportunity for us to open our doors to parents early in the school year. It's a chance to change for the better the ways in which teachers, parents, and students communicate and work together. It has been stated before—it takes more than schools to teach today's students—it takes parents, families, and communities.

This event also encourages the community to show support for our school system and provides teachers and parents with the opportunity to build the basis for a positive relationship throughout the school year. I'd like (***name of school***) to take a leadership role in bringing ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month to our community. The success of this program depends on all of us—especially you, our teachers. I hope that you will sign up to participate and show your support for our school.

Please join me at a planning meeting on (***date, time, and location***) so we can discuss how we will make this happen in our school to the benefit of us all. Thank you for your support and cooperation in this matter.

(Sample Invitation to Parents)

PARENTS AND FAMILIES—YOU ARE INVITED!!!!

October is Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month, and you are cordially invited to join teachers, administrators, and other parents at (***name of school***) for ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** events. This statewide celebration is planned especially for you and will give you an opportunity to see what your child is learning and to meet your child's teachers. Additionally, you will have fun!

You will enjoy art displays and science projects created by your children, demonstrations in our computer lab, and a skit by our drama club. We will have door prizes from (***give credit to sponsors***) and refreshments. **Mark your calendar!**

Date: **October____, 2016**
Time: _____
Place: _____

Please complete and return the following reply form to let us know if you will be attending. **We are looking forward to seeing you!**

_____
Student's Name and Grade

_____
Name of Student's Teacher

____ Yes, I will take part in ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month by visiting my child's/grandchild's school event on October_____, 2016.

____ I would like to help. Please contact me at _____
(Phone number/E-mail)

_____ _____
Signature Date

(Sample Letter from Schools to Employers)

ALABAMA STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

September_____, 2016

Mr. John Doe
XYZ Company
123 Maplenut Drive
Happyville, AL 00000

Dear Mr. Doe:

October is ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. This special event is being planned for parents to strengthen the home/school connection. Schools across the state are inviting parents to join as partners with teachers to strengthen student learning. Parents will visit their child's school to become more aware of Alabama's educational standards as well as innovative programs taking place in (***name of school***).

You, as an employer, also have an opportunity to get involved. It is no secret that today more parents work outside of the home than ever before. Due to their work schedule, many parents may not have an opportunity to participate in ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month unless their employers support it.

That is where your company comes in! Supporting ***Home and Schools Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month is an opportunity for your company to take a leadership role in the community as well as to demonstrate the value of employee responsibility outside of the workplace. I am sure you will agree that investing in the education of today's students means a more highly educated workforce for tomorrow.

I hope this means your company will allow parent-employees time off from work to attend ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month at (***name of school***) on October_____at (time).

Thank you for considering your company's role in ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Please contact me at (**phone number/ e-mail**). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith, Principal
Thomas Jefferson High School

(Sample Vendor Letter from Schools)

ALABAMA STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

September_____, 2016

Ms. Freeda Charity
Super Tom's Discount Store
100 Giveaway Drive
Pleasantville, AL 00000

Dear Ms. Charity:

October is ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. Schools across the state are inviting parents to join as partners with teachers to strengthen the home/school connection. Parents will use this event to visit their child's school and become more aware of Alabama's challenging educational standards and innovative programs taking place at (***name of school***).

We would like (*Super Tom's)* to join us in sponsoring this event. We want to encourage parents to participate by offering door prizes and refreshments. We are asking (*Super Tom's*) to help support this event by donating_____for ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month. In addition, every parent who attends will receive a bag filled with parenting tips and other information.

(Super Tom's) will be listed as an event sponsor in our ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month publicity. If you have any items such as notepads, pencils, mints, etc., we can include these in the parent bags. I will be calling you within the next week to see how we could better strengthen our partnership between (name of school) and (*Super Tom's)*. Thank you for your continued support of our school. We look forward to working with you on this exciting event.

Sincerely,

John Smith, Principal
Jamestown Elementary School

(Sample News Release)

ALABAMA STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE

CONTACT: (insert name)
(give contact's phone number/e-mail)

OCTOBER IS ALABAMA'S STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning (Name of School/System)

City of Origin, Alabama. - October is Statewide Parent Visitation Month in Alabama and (***name of school/system***) is inviting parents and others to ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** by attending a special school event on October_____.

With research that shows students achieve more when parents are involved in their education, (***name of school/system***) will participate in the Alabama State Department of Education's Statewide Parent Visitation Month on October _____. While the event is referred to as "Parent" Month, anyone responsible for raising school-aged children is welcome to attend. The theme for the event is ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning.***

(Insert quote from local superintendent, principal, or other school official here.)

(***Name of school/system***) has planned special events as a way of informing adults of the importance of their engagement in their school-aged children's education. October has been set aside for special activities aimed at getting parents and others to invest in their children's education and to learn more about what goes on in their children's lives while they are at school.

(***Name of school/system***) will join with Alabama public schools/systems across the state in hosting ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** Statewide Parent Visitation Month events. The goal is to connect home and school better. Parent engagement—now more than ever—is a key factor to student success in school year-round. By setting aside a specific month, public schools can focus on the importance of parent engagement and investment in their children's education.

Scheduled sessions include local and state initiatives such as the Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; school policies; and safety issues.

To learn more about ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** and parent engagement opportunities throughout the school year, contact your local school or school system (***include school/system Web site address, if available***).

(Sample Public Service Announcement)

ALABAMA STATEWIDE PARENT VISITATION MONTH

A Program Sponsored by Your School and the Alabama State Department of Education

For Broadcast at Football Games, Schoolwide Assemblies, etc.

Ask Local Radio & TV to Use PSA.

Tailor PSA to Reflect Individual System/School Plans.

Target Audience: Parents

Visit your child's school on October _____and be part of ***Home and School Partnerships: Breaking Barriers to Learning*** through **Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month**. Join thousands of other parents visiting schools across the state during October to participate in fun activities, learn more about state and local education programs, and find out how you can help your child succeed in school. Call your child's school for more information.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Disclaimer of Endorsement:

The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the ALSDE of the linked Websites, or the information, products, or services contained therein. The ALSDE does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. Furthermore, the ALSDE bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality, or content of the external sites or for that of subsequent links. All links are provided consistent with the educational mission of the Website.

ENGLISH AVAILABLE

- A+ Education Foundation: http://www.aplusala.org/index.asp.
- After School Alliance Lights on After School, October 20: www.afterschoolalliance.org.
- Alabama Arise: www.alarise.org.
- Alabama Department of Children's Affairs: www.dca.state.al.us.
- Alabama State Department of Education: www.alsde.edu.
- Alabama Department of Public Health: www.adph.org.
- Alabama Education Association (AEA) Web Resources: www.myaea.org.
- Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX): www.alex.state.al.us.
- Alabama Official State Web Site: www.Alabama.gov.
- Alabama Parent Information and Resource Center: www.AlabamaParentCenter.com.
- Alabama PTA: www.alabamapta.org.
- Alabama Public Television: www.aptv.org.
- Alabama Scholarships/Financial Aid: http://www.college-scholarships.com/alabama.htm.
- Alabama Virtual Library: www.avl.lib.al.us.
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA): www.aasa.org.
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT): www.aft.org.
- "A Parent's Guide to Good Schools": www.sedl.org/pubs/family31/welcome.html.

Internet Resources for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month (continued)

- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD): www.ascd.org, 1-800-933-2723.
- Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships: www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm.
- Children's Trust Fund: www.ctf.state.al.us.
- Communities in Schools: www.cisnet.org, 1-888-371-3606.
- Connect for Kids: www.connectforkids.org.
- Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS): http://www.clasleaders.org.
- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO): www.ccsso.org.
- Education Commission of the States: www.ecs.org.
- Family Education Network: www.familyeducation.com.
- Family Friendly Schools: www.familyfriendlyschools.org, 1-800-658-6082.
- Families and Work Institute: www.familiesandwork.org.
- "Family Engagement in Children's Education: Successful Approaches, An Idea Book": www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve.
- Foundation for Excellent Schools: www.fesnet.org.
- George Lucas Educational Foundation: www.glef.org.
- Governor's Office: www.governor.state.al.us.
- Learning First Alliance: http://www.learningfirst.org.
- National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education: www.ncpie.org.
- National School Safety Center: http://www.nssc1.org.
- National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA): www.nspra.org.

SPANISH AVAILABLE

- Alabama Cooperative Extension System: www.aces.edu.
- ASPIRA Association Inc.: www.aspira.org.
- FirstGov (U.S. Government's Official Web Portal) for Parents: www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Parents.shtml.
- Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA): www.ed.gov/essa.
- Security Online for Kids and Families: www.ssa.gov/kids.
- U.S. Department of Education (USDE): www.ed.gov.

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONTACTS

(This document and other resources for Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month are available at www.alsde.edu.)

- **Alabama's Statewide Parent Visitation Month, 334-353-1191:**
  Dr. Carolyn E. Townsend, ctownsend@alsde.edu
- **Federal Programs, 1-888-725-9321 or 334-242-8199:**
  Parental Engagement: Mrs. Amanda Gann, agann@alsde.edu
  Community Education: Mr. Mark Ward, mward@alsde.edu.
- **Career/Technical Education, 334-242-9960**
- **Child Nutrition, 334-242-1988**
- **Instruction, 334-353-1191**
- **Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, 334-242-8165:**
  At-Risk Programs
  Safe and Drug-Free Schools
  School Safety
- **Special Education, 1-800-392-8020 or 334-242-8114**
- **Teacher Certification, 1-800-723-6841 or 334-353-8567**
- **Teacher Education, 1-800-723-6841 or 334-242-9935**
- **Education Technology, 334-242-9594**

Alabama State Department of Education, Michael Sentance, State Superintendent of Education

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