
STANDARDS FOR PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN LEARNING

Hawaii State Department of Education

Honolulu, Hawaii

Hawaii Legislative Act 238 requires that the Hawaii State Department of Education (HDOE) implement a “comprehensive system of educational accountability to motivate and support the improved performance of students and the education system. This accountability shall... include public accounting for other significant partners to the education process (including, but not limited to, parents).”

Our State Team intuitively knew meaningful standards for parents as partners must be developed by parents, for parents, and with parents. Just as teachers design their own standards, so must parents generate their own as partners in education.

We expected this initiative to result in: a list of successful family practices that had positive effects on children’s well-being and achievement; an increase in awareness and support of the parent partner’s role in educating children; a basis for writing a curriculum on what parents can do to facilitate their child’s healthy development and learning; and talking points to aid teachers and parents in forming compacts or in planning partnership activities that directly relate the children’s learning to Hawaii’s Content and Performance Standards.

With the strong support of the Superintendent, our State and District Parent Community Networking Center (PCNC) Teams

networked and engaged parents in developing Hawaii’s Standards for Parents as Partners in their children’s learning. The PCNC is a statewide network of centers funded by the HDOE and managed by a parent facilitator paid no more than 17 hours per week. Our networking partners included staff and parents. Staff of Title I programs and of English as Second Language Learners programs, ‘Ohana Groups (*‘ohana is Hawaiian for “family” or “community”*), Councils, Parent Teacher Associations, ethnic groups, faith groups, family-community agencies, and neighborhood groups offered their networks of parents.

More than 2700 parents representing urban and rural areas and all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds in Hawaii gathered and participated in 108 standards-generating sessions throughout the state. Each session featured: 1) a basic workshop on what standards are, why they are necessary, and the hope standards bring to students; 2) the interactive process involving parents identifying and sharing successful practices from their own family experiences in nurturing, coaching, and guiding their children; 3) the processes of grouping and sequencing the successful practices; and 4) the development of one standard for each group of practices or performance indicators.

Once parents experienced the process, they requested the workshop plan, formed

new groups of parents, facilitated their own sessions, and turned in the data. According to one parent attendee, “This is the most exciting and potentially productive workshop I have attended.”

Parents were assured that:

- The Hawaii Standards for Parents as Partners in Learning would be stated in family-friendly, purposeful and personal terms (“to” for purpose, “your child” rather than “the child”).
- The Standards would be shared as messages of hope and guidance rather than messages of “put-downs” and sanctions.
- The relationship envisioned in the Standards between the teacher and parent would be a partnership of respect, not one in which there is disrespect.
- Community and school resources would be made available for parents who are not able to realize the Standards.
- Schools would invite parents to review the Standards and to have the opportunity to create additional practices that may be uniquely appropriate for their children’s school.

The Hawaii Standards for Parents as Partners (HSPP) and the National Network of Partnership Schools’ Framework of Six Types of Involvement are highly complementary. Both agree that when parents and staff embrace each other as equal and valuable partners, much can be accomplished on behalf of the child, parent, and teacher.

There was no additional budgetary cost to the Hawaii Department of Education to implement this initiative. The initiative

was simply incorporated into the existing work schedules of PCNC and other parent involvement staff to invite parents and to facilitate the process. Community groups, businesses, parents, and faith groups freely contributed to the effort.

Currently, the Hawaii Standards for Parents as Partners in Learning are being shared by increasing numbers of Family Focus Teams at district and school levels. The State PCNC Teams are recruiting experienced teachers and parents to write workshops for parents of children at each grade level. Such workshops will help parents understand how to support their children at home in attaining the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards. As one principal expressed, “This is absolutely a value added activity! This is going to help all of our schools.” In addition, various community groups are offering their specialized knowledge and resources to the schools. For example, the health groups are offering workshops for parents on asthma, obesity, and diabetes—such knowledge could prevent or build resiliency to the dire consequences among our children and young people. The Hawaii Standards for Parents as Partners in Learning will indeed help us to fulfill the promise of the learning and healthy child.

*Dr. Vivian Ing, State Office Resource Teacher/
State Facilitator of HSPP
(808) 733-4476
vivian_ing@notes.k12.hi.us*

HAWAII
STANDARDS FOR PARENTS
AS PARTNERS IN LEARNING
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Parents are critical to their children's well being and success. Reflecting upon their own experiences, more than 2700 parents throughout Hawaii generated the following standards and practices for parents in helping their children learn. While the standards guide parents in supporting their children's learning, they also guide the school and community in providing the information, support, and involvement opportunities that parents desire.

A Parent Partner in Learning...

- attends to the child's physical, emotional, social, and behavioral development.
- develops the family as the child's first teacher.
- prepares the child to achieve the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards at school.
- provides home support for the child's meeting the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards.
- supports the child's school and teachers.
- is a life-long learner and teacher.

ATTAINING HAWAII PARENT PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS

A. To attend to your child's physical, emotional, social, and behavioral development:

Physical development

1. Provide your child nutritious food, adequate sleep, exercise, and a clean, healthy, environment.
2. Keep up with necessary immunizations and regular medical/dental examinations.
3. Emphasize zero tolerance for abusive language, violence, and illegal drugs.
4. Model cleanliness and safety.
5. Teach your child to dress appropriately for school.
6. Know who your child's friends are and where your child is every day.
7. Encourage casual sport activities – hiking, biking, running, swimming.

Emotional, social, and behavioral development

8. Listen to, talk and do things with your child.
9. Show and tell your child that he or she is loved.
10. Model and expect honesty and respect from your child.
11. Share your appreciation of varied cultural and learning styles among people.
12. Expect appropriate behaviors for different settings.
13. Involve your child in organizing his possessions and his activities.
14. Give guidelines on setting priorities, solving problems, caring for others, and being a responsible citizen.
15. Connect your child with others he can care for and learn from.
16. Have fun together.

B. To develop your family as your child's first teacher:

1. Share your hopes and dreams with each other.
2. Eat together daily.
3. Establish family values, rules, standards, and expectations.
4. Organize family times to solve problems, communicate, and create happy memories.
5. Give your child responsibilities and teach the skills to carry them out.
6. Volunteer, serve, and learn as a family.
7. Co-create a family legacy with your children.

C. To prepare your child to achieve the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards at school:

1. See that your child attends school regularly and is on time and ready to learn.
2. Know school rules; see that your child behaves appropriately at school.
3. Make learning your child's top responsibility; assure your child that making mistakes is an important part of learning.
4. Nurture the love of reading; give many experiences to talk, read, and write about.
5. Make reading, writing, and planning part of your child's daily routine.

D. To provide home support for your child's meeting the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards:

Support

1. Learn the standards your child must achieve.
2. Provide your child opportunities at home and in the community to apply what your child is learning at school.
3. Attend parent-teacher conferences; share how the teacher might support your child and find out how you can help your child.
4. Communicate background information that may affect your child's learning.
5. Encourage, rather than punish, your child when he is having difficulty learning.
6. Make report cards a positive and goal-setting experience.
7. Enjoy your child's achievements and let him know them.

Homework

8. Check the school's homework policy and discuss it with your child.
9. Discuss the importance of turning in all homework assignments.
10. Provide a place, supplies, tools, and a regular time to do homework.
11. Teach your child to ask questions of teachers for clarity of what needs to be done.
12. Do not rob your child of his learning experience by doing his or her homework.
13. Relate what your child is learning to life.

Guidance

14. Guide and limit your child's television viewing and video games.
15. Nurture your child's extra-curricular interests in the arts, youth groups, sports, and various family and community projects.
16. Help your child think and plan for the immediate and more distant future (summer activities and/or employment, higher education, money management, careers).
17. Honor your child's need for time to nourish the mind, body, heart, and spirit.

E. To support your child's school and teachers

1. Ask your child's teachers and school what they need and share what you can.
2. Participate in school events designed for parents and families.
3. Help make the school safe, clean, and stimulating for learning and teaching.
4. Join the school's problem-solving and decision-making process.
5. Volunteer your talents and resources as needed in the classroom and school.
6. Support education in the political process.

F. To be a life-long learner and teacher

1. Model the love of learning and have fun teaching others!
2. Learn computer skills and guide children in accessing information and communicating with others through the internet
3. Attend workshops, classes, higher education courses, community and cultural events.
4. Seek economic sufficiency, learn and teach children how to manage money.
5. Form an 'ohana with other families, give and receive help, care for each other.