

## Beginning of School Year Cookout

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*Point O' View Elementary School  
Virginia Beach, Virginia*

When Point O' View Elementary School changed to a non-traditional, year-round schedule, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) wanted to remind families of this change and provide an informal gathering for staff and families before classes began on August 1. Members of the ATP and PTA decided to host a cookout, inviting all families for a casual meal and an opportunity to mingle with school staff.

Teachers ate first and then went to their classrooms, where parents and students were invited to visit. This gave parents and teachers an opportunity to meet and get to know each other informally. It also provided a way for parents new to the school and interested community members to visit the building. This was not intended to be a formal Open House, where parents get information about curriculum, but rather a relaxed setting for staff and families to meet and ease into a year-round calendar.

Everyone pitched in to make this kickoff a success. School staff sent invitations to the parents of all registered students and community members. They also took on shopping and cooking duties, as did parents involved with the ATP and PTA. The cookout was publicized on the school's marquee, as well as its website.

The staff of Point O' View was delighted with the benefits of this event. Students, parents, and teachers met one another and established a rapport even before school started. Students also got to see their new classrooms.

"I got a feel for the school, other parents, and the kids. My initial reaction was, what

a warm and inviting school!" said one parent. Another commented, "My boys had a great time meeting their teachers and eating hot dogs; my 4-year-old daughter can't wait to start at Point O' View."

The event was so successful that Point O' View plans to repeat it this year, even though families have adjusted to the change in the school calendar.

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