

Forest Heights STEM Academy



Parent and Family Engagement Plan 2023-2024

Barbara Kirkpatrick, Principal
Marie Boone, Assistant Principal
Brandon Randle, Assistant Principal
Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator

History of Forest Heights STEM Academy

Forest Heights STEM Academy began as Forest Heights Junior High School in September 1955, serving students in grades 7 through 9. It later became a middle school with a focus on students in grades 6 through 8. The school was remodeled in 2008 and 2009, adding two additional wings to accommodate the growing population. In 2014, the Little Rock School District transformed the middle school into a STEM school serving students in grades K-8. The current, newly renovated school is now a new source of pride for the Little Rock School District. It offers students with interests in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) school-wide enrichment experiences, project-based learning, real-world applied learning, career awareness, and other STEM specific activities. Courses align with Common Core state frameworks and content standards and provide students with in-depth learning opportunities in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Programs also encompass higher level engagement of humanities, the arts, communication skills, and social studies concepts needed for students to develop into global citizens. Forest Heights STEM Academy is located at 5901 Evergreen Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas.

School Mission: The mission of Forest Heights STEM Academy (FHSA) is to prepare students to compete in our global economy by equipping them with skills that are not confined and isolated within one discipline, but are found between and across the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Students will participate in STEM projects acting as scientist, engineers, and mathematicians as they design and conduct learning projects and then communicate their results.

Parent and Family Engagement Committee Members:

1. Barbara Kirkpatrick, Principal
2. Marie Boone, Assistant Principal and Parent
3. Brandon Randle, Assistant Principal
4. Laura Gowan, Parent and Family Engagement Facilitator
5. Charla Rice, FHSA Technology Specialist
6. Patrick Wilson, Elementary PLTW and Parent
7. Katrina Chisley, Secretary and Parent
8. Lynnette Rancifer, PTSA President

Forest Heights STEM Academy Parent and Family Engagement Plan recognizes that communication between home and school promotes instruction, increases understanding, and is meaningful. Forest Heights STEM Academy supports the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of its Parent and Family Engagement Program to involve parents in the decision practices of the Little Rock School District. The principal has designated one certified staff member to serve as a parent facilitator. The parent facilitator organizes meaningful training for staff and parents to help promote and encourage a welcoming atmosphere for parent and family engagement at Forest Heights STEM Academy. The parent facilitator ensures

that personal participation is recognized as an asset to the student and the school. The person serving as the Parent Facilitator receives supplemental pay for the assigned duties as required by law. The Parent Facilitator will upload the informational plan through our school app and website and notify parents using the app and social media devices. Copies of the information packet and engagement plan will also be available in the parent center and well as conferences for parents to sign-off on. Communication will be provided to parents in their language using our school website which offers 15 language options. Contact person Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2700.

School-Parent Compact

As a component of the school/teacher/parent/student involvement policy, Forest Heights STEM Academy asks all parties involved to sign a compact. This compact outlines how parents, school staff, and students share the responsibility for improving student academic achievement. A Student Success Plan will be developed for eighth (8th) grade students. The FHSA handbook is included in our student agenda books. Forest Heights STEM Academy provides reasonable access to staff through multiple communication tools including but not limited to email, phone, face to face, FHSA app, and teacher selected forums. Parents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer and attend conferences to provide frequent reports on progress throughout the school year. Forest Heights STEM Academy offers a variety of opportunities for families and community members to become involved in student learning through concerts, Appalalooza, STEM Night, Fall Fest, Science Fair, Winter Baazer, and much more. Contact Person: Barbara Kirkpatrick, Principal 447-2700; Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2761.

Resources for Parents

To promote and support responsible parenting, Forest Heights STEM Academy encourages parents to take advantage of the Parent Center. The Parent Facilitator maintains the Parent Resource Center which is located on the first floor of the main building. The Parent Center is open from 7:40 – 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Information available for review or check out in reference to home-school family activities includes:

- Parenting Books and Magazines
- Math and Literacy Information and Recommendations for Games
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Parenting Tips (available in English and Spanish)
- Nutrition/Healthy Lifestyles Information
- Work Force Opportunities
- Community Resources Information
- Home and Safety Tips
- School Readiness Materials
- Reading area for parents and children
- Handwriting area

- School Technology Guides
- Website: <http://forestheightsstem.com>

These and other relevant parenting materials will be available pursuant to Act 397 of 2009 to assist parents in building skills to provide the knowledge necessary to successfully assist students in the learning process. FHSA will coordinate with businesses and partners including Bright Futures and St. Vincent to provide resources and support for parent engagement.

Parent Involvement Evaluation

Forest Heights STEM Academy will engage parents in an Annual evaluation of the Title I, Part A Program. A comprehensive needs assessment will be filled out by teachers, parents and school staff. The Title I committee, made up of teachers, parents, and school staff, will determine the effectiveness of the parental involvement plan and make changes if warranted. The collection of evidence will provide helpful information on the (1) growth in number of parents participating in workshops and meetings; (2) specific needs of parents; (3) effectiveness of specific strategies; and (4) engagement of parents in activities to support academic growth. Contact person: Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2761.

Parental Involvement Surveys

At Forest Heights STEM Academy parents will participate in a parent interest survey. The survey provides information concerning the activities parents feel are most beneficial in supporting their child. The information is also used to plan parent and family engagement activities for the year. Surveys are given in October, February, and May to retrieve parent's perspectives at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

Each year informational packets are distributed to parents that include: a copy of the school's parent and family engagement, a survey for volunteer interests, recommended roles for parents/teachers/students and the school, suggestions of ways parents can become involved in their child's education, and information about the system that is used to allow parents and teachers to have an open line of communication, via, notes, phone call, e-mail and HAC. Contact person: Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator, 447-2761. To encourage communication FHSA has developed a school wide web site, individual teacher websites, and a PTSA web site. On our website, (<http://www.forestheightsstem.com/>) parents will be able to check events, and view the parent and family engagement plan.

Annual Title I Meeting

Forest Heights STEM Academy is a school-wide Title I school that serves K-8th grades. Forest Heights STEM Academy conducts an Annual Title I meeting for parents of the students who participate in the Title I, Part A Program. The school's Annual Title I meeting is separate from any other meetings or activities to ensure ample time to provide a description/explanation of

Title I reservation of funds, school curriculum, information on forms of academic assessments that are used to measure student progress, and information on proficiency level students are expected to meet. The agenda, sign-in sheet, and the minutes for this meeting are generated separately from any other events and kept on file in Title I Facilitator's office. Contact persons: Amy Cooper, Principal 447-2700; Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2761.

Communication Strategies

Classroom teachers will utilize a variety of methods to maintain effective two-way communication with parents, such as the school website, PTSA website, classroom teacher websites, e-mails, classroom teacher newsletters, class dojo, agenda books and Google Classroom. Also, parents can access their child's grades through HAC using a PIN number they received at the beginning of the school year. Parents may use e-mail to communicate with members of the school staff. Each classroom teacher is responsible for maintaining their classroom website. Charla Rice and Laura Gowan, are responsible for the school's website and our HAC information contact is Latoya Lamb. You may contact her at 447-2728.

Forest Heights STEM Academy teachers will send home a folder containing student papers and work each week. Some teachers may decide to alter the return times of homework given in class, but will communicate their individual policy by letters and in conferences. Parents will be asked to sign the folder and send it back to school. For more information you may contact your child's classroom teacher at 447-2700.

The teachers of Forest Heights STEM Academy will provide parents with grades (interim report/report card) regarding their child's academic progress. HAC is used for checking grades and retrieving attendance information. Each student will be given an HAC log-in. For more information contact the school at 447-2700.

Forest Heights STEM Open House/Eagle Extravaganza is held in August and an NWEA/ACT Aspire Parent event is held in March. For more information contact: Charla Rice at 447-2700.

Forest Heights STEM Academy will plan various meetings to be held at different times during the day or evening to better accommodate parents.

Forest Heights STEM Academy teachers will schedule individual conferences with parents of children in their classrooms. Parents will be given a summary of the student's test scores and an explanation of the interventions teachers are using to assist the child in reaching achievement goals. Parents will be asked to engage in discussion of how they can support these efforts. Conferences for this school year are scheduled for October 19th and 20th, 2023 and February 15th and 16th, 2024.

Forest Heights STEM Academy will conduct an ACT Aspire Night/NWEA event each year to provide an explanation of the statewide assessment system, standards, and other

accountability measures. This session will be facilitated by Laura Gowan (test coordinator) in coordination with the Testing and Evaluation Department. For more information call 447-2700.

Developing, Implementing and Evaluating Title I, Part A

Forest Heights STEM Academy has parent representatives who attend the monthly PTSA council meetings. Parents are involved in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review and improvement of the school's Title I program, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental and family engagement policy and the joint development of the school-wide program plan. To support this process parents are provided timely information about Title I programs. Parents are asked to serve on curricular and instructional review committees. To support this process, the school provides a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet. Contact person: Barbara Kirkpatrick, Principal 447-2700; Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2700.

Parent Volunteer Opportunities

Forest Heights STEM Academy is committed to providing opportunities for the maximum growth and development of each student. Parents have reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class and daily academic life, and observation of classroom activities. Volunteer sign-up sheets are available during registration, PTSA meetings, and Family nights and in our main office. Opportunities for parent and family engagement are integrated and coordinated through the parent facilitator, administrative staff, teachers, and the PTSA. Parents volunteer to assist with field trips, honors award incentives, Eagle Extravaganza, celebrations, main office duties, concerts, sporting events and other areas as needed. Ms. Rancifer serves as our PTSA President. She may be contacted by calling 501-447-2700. Dues are \$10.00 and may be paid online. You may also contact our Parent Facilitator, Laura Gowan at 447-2700.

ESSA requires professional development to be "on-going", however ESSA does not state a specific number of hours. Review ADE-DESE new statement for parent & family engagement highlighted below (ACT 548) Staff development opportunities, as required by the State Board of Education's Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools, are offered every other year. Two hours of professional development is designed to enhance the understanding of effective parent and family engagement strategies. Three hours of professional development are also offered to our school administrators. This professional development is designed to enhance an understanding of effective parent and family engagement strategies and the importance of school leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation. Contact Person: Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2700.

National Network of Partnership Schools

Forest Heights STEM Academy is a member of Johns Hopkins University National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). The NNPS School, Family and Community Partnership model is designed to enhance parent participation and involvement in the school and community. The model is research based and references six types of involvement: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Student Learning, Decision-Making and Collaborating with the Community. To support the six types of involvement, Forest Heights STEM Academy participates on the LRSD NNPS Forest Heights STEM Academy West Cluster Team. Contact Person: Laura Gowan, Parent Facilitator 447-2700.