

East Grand Preparatory & Buckner Preparatory



Pre-Kindergarten Family Engagement Action Plan

2019-2020

Introduction

Cityscape Schools has two campuses within its district, East Grand Preparatory located at 6211 East Grand Avenue, Dallas, Tx and Buckner Preparatory at 8510 Military Pkwy, Dallas, TX.

East Grand Preparatory opened in the fall of 2008 and was originally referred to as Reconciliation Scholar's Academy. However, it changed its name to East Grand Preparatory in 2014. The charter school is a twelfth generation open-enrollment charter school that its founders created to offer an oasis for at-risk children in the geographical area of East Dallas. Buckner Preparatory opened in the fall of 2019, located in the Pleasant Grove area of Dallas. Both campuses are strategically located to be a center of information and opportunity for families within the community.

Cityscape Schools' *mission* is to work in an educational partnership with families to provide a distinctive environment of educational opportunity for all children and young people within their communities. Students are expected to have the opportunity to become well prepared, life-long learners possessing the character, knowledge, and wisdom necessary to succeed, lead, and contribute to their community and to their fellow man.

The charter's *vision* is to work in partnership with families to prepare children and young people to fulfill productive leadership roles in society. With the philosophy of education that is grounded in the belief that *every* student can learn, Cityscape works together with parents, to

ensure success for each student. The overriding goal is, in partnership with families, to meet the academic, intellectual, social-emotional, spiritual, physical, and creative needs of its diverse population of students.

The overriding goal is to provide students with the opportunity to be well-prepared for success in college and other postsecondary opportunities. East Grand Preparatory and Buckner Preparatory attempt to meet the students' interpersonal needs by providing opportunities to develop strong character, integrity, and a commitment to community service. Intellectual needs are meant to be satisfied by providing students with instruction across the full range of intellectual abilities: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Academic needs are met by assessing, placing, and providing educational services for all students accepted into the charter schools. Social-Emotional needs are meant to be achieved by fostering a secure environment that creates and reinforces a cultural awareness for students that maximizes their potential for academic growth. Physical needs are met through providing students with appropriate fitness activities. Creative needs are met through providing students with fine arts opportunities intended to awaken, cultivate and develop the student's talents, creative gifts, and abilities.

Set forth below are the *core values* stated or implied by the district's mission, vision, and philosophy:

- Families are charged with the primary responsibility for the comprehensive well-being of their children and the district must therefore work in partnership with the family.
- The greatest need of the students is to know that they are loved and respected by all staff in all circumstances.

- The primary assumption of the district is that all students are college bound.
- Cityscape Schools will provide students with developmentally appropriate opportunities to acquire the knowledge and values necessary for success throughout their school years up to and including college.
- Cityscape Schools will provide students with developmentally appropriate instruction that addresses the spiritual, academic, intellectual, social, emotional, physical and creative needs of its students.
- All students have the potential to serve their community and their fellow man as leaders and role models.
- All students deserve a high-quality college bound education regardless of their zip code.

The expected *student outcomes* stated or implied by the district's vision, mission and philosophy is that students will:

- Model their lives after adults exhibiting wisdom, character and a love of learning.
- Acquire basic academic skills.
- Take advantage of advanced academic opportunities.
- Develop a strong work ethic.
- Be motivated.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Develop self-discipline.
- Develop the skills to acquire knowledge independently.
- Develop a love of learning.

- Learn to use the full range of their intellectual abilities: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
- Develop healthy relationships.
- Know that they are loved and respected by all faculty and staff.
- Recognize the importance of the human body, with the implications this brings regarding health, fitness and lifestyle choices.
- Cultivate and develop students' creative talents while guiding them to use and apply those creative gifts and abilities in service to their community and their fellow man.
- Remain faithful to the values learned at Cityscape Schools in the face of pressure to compromise.

Action Plan

There is growing scientific evidence that investing in keeping young children healthy leads to bountiful rewards throughout their entire lives. A strong foundation can help put a child on the path toward positive achievement in school, career, and community. This includes a high-quality educational foundation, positive learning experiences, and a safe environment that can have a beneficial long-term impact on a child's development.

In the spirit of continuous quality improvement, this plan is intended to be a living document—one that will be used to mark progress and highlight where corrections are needed based on data-based evidence. It is intended to complement existing strategic plans, support existing efforts affecting young children not reflected in the action plan, and increase alignment among those efforts under the rubric of the plan's six components. A team of educational administrators at East Grand Preparatory and at Buckner Preparatory will be responsible for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on progress made on the strategies and actions in the

plan. However, this plan belongs to the entire community of East Dallas. As with the premise of *It Takes a Village*, every member of society has a role in making the strategies of this plan a reality. The six components listed below are designed to achieve those conditions of success for all young children, ages three to five, at both East Grand Preparatory and Buckner Preparatory and their families.

Component One: *facilitate family to family support.*

Early childhood administrators and staff at Cityscape Schools will create safe and respectful environments in which families can learn from each other, both individually and in group settings; invite members of the local community to share educational and real-world experiences; and ensure opportunities for continuous participation in learning events designed for families, including family leadership training.

Specific strategies:

- Social events for families (e.g. Meet the Teacher, Holiday Carnivals, Storybook Parade, Daddy-Daughter Dance, Coffee with the Principal)
- Parent/Family Workshops
- Staff/Parent Communication
- Parent-Teacher Organization

Component Two: *establish a network of community resources.*

Early childhood administrators and staff, in collaboration with the families of Pre-Kindergarten students, will develop and support a family advisory council; utilize community resources to augment social, intellectual, and personal development; develop, adopt, and implement strategic goals within the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) to target family engagement opportunities within the community of East Dallas and beyond; engage families in

interlocal activities, both social and educational; and use appropriate tools such as surveys and/or focus groups to gather family feedback on various school components.

Specific strategies:

- Develop interlocal agreements with local libraries, churches, and institutions of higher learning for the ultimate benefit of EGP families
- Educational field trips for students and family members
- Implementation of Parent Square, Facebook, Twitter, and School Status as private means of social media between parents and Cityscape Schools staff for the express purpose to ease communication on important educational activities and school calendar events, including inclement weather notices

Component Three: *increase family participation in decision-making.*

As previously mentioned, East Grand Preparatory and Buckner Preparatory administrators will develop and support a family advisory council; engage families in shaping program activities and cultivating the expectation of two-way communication; and provide each family with the opportunity to review and provide input on programmatic practices, policies, procedures, and events in order to ensure the Pre-Kindergarten program is responsive to the needs of our families.

Specific strategies:

- Monthly meetings of Family Advisory Council
- Opportunities through the PTO for family members to serve as advocates and leaders on various campus and district committees and groups to further the educational benefits for Pre-Kindergarten students and the Pre-Kindergarten and Kinder programs

Component Four: *equip families with tools to extend and enhance learning.*

The Pre-Kindergarten program will provide family engagement opportunities to support the family/school partnership through educational resources that strengthen learning at home. Administrators and staff will also provide opportunities for family members to receive informative training on creating a home environment connected to extending learning experiences. There will be resources provided to assist parents in helping their Pre-Kindergarten children through the transition of starting school by allowing families to visit the school in advance of the first day of school. Further, home learning exercises will be provided in which families can engage together at home through social media, computerized technology, and newsletters. Finally, teachers and staff will collaborate with parents to teach appropriate responses to their children's behavior in non-punitive, positive, and supporting methodologies.

Specific strategies:

- Offer PreK Orientation sessions for parents in English and Spanish
- Implementation of Parent Square, Facebook, Twitter, and School Status as private means of social media between parents and Cityscape Schools' staff for the express purpose to ease communication on important educational activities and school calendar events
- Approach parents as equal partners in the child's education while emphasizing the parent as the child's first teacher
- Provide parents with CIRCLE academic and social-emotional development data & developmentally appropriate activities to support student learning at home
- Offer Parent Workshops
- Meet the Teacher night will be scheduled before the first day of class

- Provide all parental communication in both Spanish and English languages

Component Five: *develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks.*

Cityscape Schools, Inc. is dedicated to providing essential professional development for our faculty and staff to support communication and engagement with families, both Pre-Kindergarten and beyond. Furthermore, the Director of Early Childhood Education and the staff will attend conferences, trainings, and professional learning opportunities to learn more about the latest research and developmentally appropriate practices in Early Childhood Education for the purpose of improving pedagogical practices.

Specific strategies:

- CLI Engage Pre-K (CIRCLE) and Kindergarten (TX-KEA) assessment platform training for new teachers
- CIRCLE Best Practices 2 day training (through Region 10)
- Learning centers and small group training for Pre-K teachers, Instructional Aides, and Teacher Assistants
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to help teachers create a safe and positive school climate to cultivate student success
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) training for PreK and Kindergarten teachers, PreK Instructional Aides, and PreK Teacher Assistants
- CLASS observations in PreK and Kindergarten classrooms executed to measure and improve student-teacher interactions

Component Six: *evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continued improvement*

As with the Parent Square portal, the campus will continue to develop data collection and communication systems to monitor family engagement to narrow achievement gaps. The campus will also utilize data to ensure proper alignment between family engagement activities and successful learning outcomes at the Pre-Kindergarten level. Finally, campus administrators will ensure this action plan is a living document open to change and one that is an initial component for continuous improvement and adjustment.

Specific strategies:

- Implementation of Parent Square, Face Book, Twitter, and School Status as private means of social media between parents and Cityscape Schools staff for the express purpose to ease communication on important educational activities and school calendar events
- Utilize surveys at the end of each Parent/Family Workshop (both Spanish and English) to assess effectiveness and value from the perspective of the parent

Conclusion

This action plan focuses on addressing the educational needs of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children at East Grand Preparatory and Buckner Preparatory, ages three to five years. The plan is only one element of a continuum of interventions to address the connection of family and school for the ultimate educational benefit of the child. A further element of this continuum is the ongoing professional development of faculty and staff to include training on integrating the family unit into educational design and extended learning opportunities for all Early Childhood students.

The action plan is based on the conviction that 1) every child deserves an equal chance to access, partake in and benefit from education, no matter their zip code; 2) every child should

have the opportunity to reach his or her full educational capacity for personal, social and financial reasons; and 3) education is a significant aspect in promoting social inclusion and economic development. The appropriate environments, experiences, and investments in our young children can produce a lifetime of benefits. Failure to appropriately support young children combined with the hardships that all too many children face today can lead to academic failure, problematic lives, lower salaries, and health issues in later years. Thus, this plan is the outlay to better prepare these children to succeed in school and, therefore, have the opportunity for success later in life.