

**STATE OF DELAWARE**



**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
DOVER**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER  
NUMBER FIFTY-FOUR**

**TO: HEADS OF ALL STATE DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES AND  
AUTHORITIES, AND ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS AND  
GOVERNMENTAL UNITS OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

**RE: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, ensuring a proper education for all children is a top priority of the Carper-Minner Administration; and

WHEREAS, the Administration and the General Assembly are working to improve accountability in our schools; and

WHEREAS, it is a fact that education, especially early learning, begins in the home; and

WHEREAS, studies have demonstrated that children who live in homes with positive learning environments achieve at higher academic levels; and

WHEREAS, it is important for parents and care-givers to initiate and nurture the learning process for their children; and

WHEREAS, it is equally important for families to be welcomed into schools by teachers and administrators; and

WHEREAS, in many instances parental and care-giver involvement in education is hindered by their own lack of education and knowledge about how to be involved; and

WHEREAS, the Lieutenant Governor has for many years been a leading advocate of governmental and private-sector efforts to improve adult literacy; and

WHEREAS, there is a natural link between adult literacy and family literacy; and

WHEREAS, the Carper-Minner Administration has established a goal of finding 10,000 mentors to help Delaware students who need tutors and positive adult role models; and

WHEREAS, this effort is well on its way with well over 5,000 mentors recruited; and

WHEREAS, as important as mentors and good teachers are, there is no substitute for the involvement of caring, committed parents, care-givers, and families in a child's educational career; and

WHEREAS, the Carper-Minner Administration is therefore committed to stimulating a complementary effort that would recognize the importance and value of parents and care-givers and assist in giving them the ability and opportunity to make the commitment to "mentor" their own children, help their children learn, be able to work in partnership with classroom teachers, and place a high priority on education.



NOW, THEREFORE, I, THOMAS R. CARPER, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Delaware, do hereby declare and order that:

1. The Committee to Improve Parental And Family Involvement in Education (the "Committee") is hereby established.
2. The Lieutenant Governor shall chair the Committee, which shall consist of representatives from the Department of Education; the Delaware Congress of Parents and Teachers; the Delaware State Parent Advisory Council; the Education Committee of the Delaware NAACP; the Delaware Chief School Officers' Association; the Delaware Association of School Administrators; the Delaware School Boards Association; the Delaware State Education Association and the business community. The Committee shall consist of no more than fifteen members. The members shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
3. The Committee shall promote the use of best-practice parental and family involvement strategies within Delaware schools and work with other groups to create and improve parental involvement initiatives. Such strategies shall include those designed to make parents feel more welcome in schools, valued as their child's advocate, and involved in the shared decisionmaking process, as well as those which are designed to encourage a commitment by parents and families to support the education of their children and their children's schools in specific ways.

4. The Committee shall find ways publicly to support and encourage parents and care-givers to rededicate themselves to their children's education by initiating and fostering the learning process through positive reinforcement and by providing a suitable learning environment within the home. To this end, the Committee shall develop an outreach strategy to engage parents and families through community centers, places of worship, public housing communities, fraternal organizations, and neighborhood and civic associations. The Committee shall reach out to and work with communities and families which, for various economic, cultural, or historical reasons, have not felt welcome or been active in Delaware schools.

5. To ensure that parents have the information they need to become involved in their children's education in a meaningful way, the Committee shall review and adapt the Parent Handbook developed by the Delaware Congress of Parents and Teachers to produce a clearly written and user-friendly guide for parents. This guide shall be available for distribution by local school districts to parents as soon as possible in the Fall of 1998 and by September 1 each subsequent school year. This guide shall: 1) identify those critical tasks which parents and care-givers can perform to help their children succeed in school work and which parents and care-givers can perform as volunteers to improve their children's schools; 2) identify the responsibilities of the education community to assist parents and families



with these tasks; 3) identify the communication tools which can be used by parents and care-givers to most effectively interact with school teachers and administrators, enabling them to become active partners with their children's schools; 4) identify the responsibilities of the education community to include parents and families in the school improvement planning process; 5) include a glossary of terms; and 6) include resource information that will assist parents and families in obtaining support for their children.

6. The Committee shall promote family literacy as an important factor in a successful home learning environment.

7. The Committee shall encourage parents not to be intimidated by their own lack of education and shall promote existing adult literacy, English As a Second Language, and Parents As Teachers programs as tools to assist parents in providing educational support for their children.

8. The Committee shall promote public recognition of successful school initiatives including, but not limited to, the awarding of an annual "State of Delaware Family School Partnership Award" to schools with exemplary parental involvement programs.

9. The Committee shall develop a plan to provide incentives and recognition for businesses with parent-friendly policies that promote parental involvement in education. The plan shall incorporate a program to

provide an annual "State of Delaware Business/Family/School Partnership Award" to businesses which do an outstanding job in promoting parental

involvement by their employees and which assist their employees in making such involvement possible. Such award program shall be established no later than November 15, 1998.

10. Recognizing that the skills and resources provided to mentors can help parents improve their children's learning success, no later than January 15, 1999, the Committee shall, in consultation with the Department of Education, develop a plan for implementation in the 1999-2000 school year to ensure that parents who wish to mentor their own children can receive appropriate training and guidance such as is received by other mentors in schools.



Approved this 5<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1998

Thomas R. Carpe  
Governor

Attest:

Edna Paul  
Secretary of State