



WVFEC

Small School, Big Impact for Families

Pickens School

Summary

Pickens School holds one monthly family engagement activity focusing on different disciplines, targeted audiences, and scheduled at various times to capture as many families as possible. Some family engagement activities are now community-wide events.

Pickens School



Pickens, Randolph County



9 Full time staff members



28 Students



100% Students on Free or Reduced Lunch



The mission of Pickens School is to educate all students in a secure environment which encourages intellectual and moral development; where all students, educators, parents, and community members are valued stakeholders.



[Website URL](#)

CHALLENGES



Pickens School is a small, rural school nestled in the Appalachian Mountains of central West Virginia and serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grades. Family engagement for 28 students poses its own challenges with the largest being geographic location of parents working outside of the community.



Challenge #1

Parents commute from outside Pickens, making it challenging for families to attend school and family engagement events.



Challenge #2

Establishing a sense of ease among families when visiting the school and engaging in activities.



Challenge #3

Transportation to the school can be difficult for some families due to the large rural landscape.

SOLUTIONS



Christine Long, principal and math teacher at Pickens School, has found success in hosting a wide range of events in order to provide families with a time and activity that works for them. Pickens School, in collaboration with the local community, has transformed family engagement activities into a community-wide initiative, pooling resources to better serve families.

Top Priorities Related to Family Engagement



**Connection
for
Families**



**Participation
and
Involvement**



**Value
Realization of
Education**



ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS



Key Initiatives

Pickens School has found success in increasing family engagement by encouraging families to participate in one activity a month. Events have included: movie night at the 1960s community theater, STEM night, a grandparents' luncheon, Fall Festival, board game night, an annual picnic, book bingo, and take-home activities. Through these initiatives, Pickens School continues to build a strong, supportive network that not only enhances student achievement but also strengthens the bonds between families and the school.



Key Stakeholders Engaged

- #1 Families and Community
- #2 Students
- #3 Staff Members

Lessons Learned

This year, facilitators have been able to use grant funding to purchase a popcorn machine that can be used during several different events and gatherings throughout the school year. It has taught the team that a small investment can have a positive long-term impact.

OUTCOMES



Quantitative Impact

1

Most activities have witnessed nearly 100% family participation.

Qualitative Impact

2

"The kids are bursting with excitement to introduce their parents to the teachers and staff," says Long. She explains how a child's outlook plays a big part in their success.

Unexpected Outcomes

3

The school did not anticipate the overwhelming community turnout and engagement at the Fall Festival.

CONCLUSION



By offering a wide-range of activities for families, Pickens School is able to reach all of its parents and caregivers. Providing families the ability to choose what works best for their schedules and lifestyle is a win for the school and the parents/caregivers. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of community. The diverse array of programs caters to various interests and availability, making it easier for families to participate and support their children's education.

Community Fall Festival

Fall food, Halloween games and prizes, a Trunk or Treat, bounce house, pumpkin painting, and more are organized to foster family participation within the school environment.



Activity Goal

Work as a collaborative community to foster parental involvement in their children's education.

Key Actions

- Encourage families to attend and participate through clear and regular communication.
- Offer a variety of activities at a free and/or affordable cost.
- Create a positive environment for attendees.



Activity Outcomes

Pulling together resources for maximum engagement for students, parents/caregivers, and community.

