

# **Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy**

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## **Parent & Family Engagement Policy 2021-2022 School Year**

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*At the Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy we recognize that a great school has great parental support. We need the help of parents and families who are active partners in creating a learning environment that is focused on excellence, including those parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities and parents and family members of migratory children. It is our goal to create a school/family partnership to foster the success of each and every SciTech student.*

**Parent and Family Meetings & Conferences**

*Parent School Community Council Meetings*

The purpose of the Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy PSCC is to provide ongoing communication between the school and parents, guardians and community groups regarding issues that are important to the success of our students. The council meets month and meetings are open to all those who are interested in attending. PSCC Meetings will alternate between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month in the evening and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month in the morning. At in-person evening meetings childcare and dinner are provided. Title I funds may be used to pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parent engagement activities and meetings, including transportation, childcare, or home visit expenses to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.

At the beginning and end of each year, time will be devoted during the PSCC meetings or other meetings for parents and families to be involved with planning, reviewing and improving the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Compact of Understanding. In addition, parents and family members will be involved in the planning, reviewing and improving of SciTech’s Title 1 program each year. In addition, at the May PSCC Meeting attendees provide feedback for the development of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, Compact of Understanding and the Schoolwide Program Plan.

Throughout the school year there are various PSCC meetings about the curriculum at SciTech, tips and resources for families, the different STEM concentrations students can choose from, social networking safety, as well as assessment data and results. SciTech staff members assist in the planning and facilitation of these meetings. All families are invited to attend these meetings and have a right to be involved in these meetings. A survey was distributed to families in August and September of the school year to help determine the topics for the year. Topics and corresponding dates will be communicated to families after the survey results are compiled.

**2021-2022 PSCC Meeting Schedule:**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>
<b>Thursday, September 9</b> <i>5:30-6:30pm</i>	<b>Thursday, February 10</b> <i>9:00-10:00am</i>
<b>Thursday, October 14</b> <i>9:00-10:00am</i>	<b>Thursday, March 10</b> <i>5:30-6:30pm</i>
<b>Thursday, November 18</b> <i>5:30-6:30pm</i>	<b>Thursday, April 21</b> <i>9:00-10:00am</i>
<b>Thursday, December 9</b> <i>9:00-10:00am</i>	<b>Thursday, May 12</b> <i>5:30-6:30pm</i>
<b>Thursday, January 13</b> <i>5:30-6:30pm</i>	

### *Mandatory Meeting for New Students and Families*

When students are accepted to SciTech there is a mandatory meeting all new students and families must attend. During this meeting a great deal of information is shared with students and families about what they need to know as a new member of the SciTech family. Information is given in presentation form and hard copy that detail:

- Helpful School Contacts
- College and Career Preparation
- Dress Code
- Gifted Education
- Program for Students with Exceptionalities
- Grading at SciTech
- Student Handbooks
- Laptops
- Parent/School/Community Council (PSCC) Meetings
- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Technology Use
- Activity Period 4
- Transportation
- Compact of Understanding (see on next page)

This document was developed jointly by students, staff and families and is reviewed at the middle and end of each year.  
*We, the undersigned, endorse and agree to the following core values and expectations of SciTech.*

<p>As a SciTech <b>STUDENT I...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in myself and encourage others to do so too.</li> <li>• Treat others with kindness, accept who they are, and celebrate our differences.</li> <li>• Consider the impact of my actions on myself and others.</li> <li>• Give grace to others in my learning community. Assume best intentions, inquire mindfully.</li> <li>• Initiate and engage in courageous conversations.*</li> <li>• Practice accountable and restorative talk.*</li> <li>• Communicate with my teachers or other SciTech staff if I encounter barriers/ need support.</li> <li>• Use feedback from staff to grow in my understanding and revise my work to continually improve.</li> <li>• Plan/set goals for turning in assignments so that I can continue on my learning path.</li> <li>• Engage in class and the learning community to demonstrate my learning progression.</li> <li>• Acknowledge that self-care: sleep, rest, and rejuvenation are important so that I can arrive at school on time and be and do my best.</li> <li>• Bring my materials, mind, and body to the class, ready to learn.</li> <li>• Know where class resources are located.</li> </ul>
<p>As a SciTech <b>STAFF MEMBER I...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in all students’ abilities to reach their highest potential and support them in doing so.</li> <li>• Treat others with kindness, accept who they are, and celebrate our differences, and encourage students to do so.</li> <li>• Give grace to others in our learning community. Assume best intentions, inquire mindfully.</li> <li>• Practice accountable and restorative talk.*</li> <li>• Listen and affirm students’ perspectives when they communicate about barriers/ need support.</li> <li>• Provide constructive feedback in a positive manner acknowledging there is room to grow and progress.</li> <li>• Utilize data to differentiate learning to create rigorous, relevant lessons.</li> <li>• Provide equitable learning support and flexibility to students.</li> <li>• Implement socio-emotional learning and support self-care practices/skills.</li> <li>• Promote and elevate student voice.</li> <li>• Develop positive partnerships with students and families focused on student success.</li> <li>• Develop expectations collaboratively with the learning community.</li> <li>• Communicate how to access student resources and supports.</li> </ul>
<p>As a SciTech <b>FAMILY MEMBER I...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in and celebrate my student’s potential!</li> <li>• Encourage your student to treat others with kindness, accept who they are, and celebrate our differences.</li> <li>• Give grace to others in our learning community. Assume best intentions, inquire mindfully.</li> <li>• Practice accountable and restorative talk* with school community.</li> <li>• Listen and affirm students’ perspectives they communicate about barriers/ need support.</li> <li>• Support my student’s abilities to take care of social-emotional and mental health (such as healthy eating, sleep, and activities that lead to their rejuvenation).</li> <li>• Develop positive partnerships with the staff to support the success of my student.</li> <li>• Collaborate with my student and their teachers as partners in the learning process.</li> <li>• Know where to view student grades, classwork, and student resources.</li> </ul>

*\*Restorative Practices: Focuses on strengthening relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. (By using: Community circles, informal conferences, “I” statements)*

*\*Courageous Conversations: A framework to establish a safer environment to have conversations about race, equity, and social justice.*

<b>Student Name:</b>	<b>Parent/Guardian Name:</b>
<b>Student Signature:</b>	<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	

### *Welcome Back Night*

At the beginning of the school year SciTech hosts a “Welcome Back Night” for parents, family members and students. The Welcome Back Night for the 2021-2022 school year is on Monday, August 23. This event gives parents, family members and students an idea of what the school year will entail and it also gave parents and family members the opportunity to meet each one of their student’s teachers. All staff are present for this event to speak with families.

### *Title 1 Meeting*

Our annual Title 1 parent meeting is held on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 5:30pm. All information from this meeting can be found on the school’s website at [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com) under the Families section. This meeting is publicized via a hard copy invitation mailed to families in July. Below are topics covered:

- Curriculum at SciTech
- Title 1 Report
- Review of School Progress on State Academic Assessments
- Achievement Levels of State Academic Standards
- SciTech Changes for the 2021-2022 School Year
- Parent and Family Engagement
- Important Upcoming Dates

### *Comprehensive School Plan Parent Input Meeting*

Families are invited to attend this meeting Monday, October 11, 2021 at 10:00 AM to meet with the administration to review the Comprehensive School Plan for Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy. During this meeting, there will be a discussion regarding the strategies and action steps being implemented to meet the established school goals.

### *Parent Teacher Conference Day*

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Monday, October 11, 2021. Conferences will be scheduled during the hours of 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM and 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM. These conferences provide and inform parents and family members of their student’s academic progress. Students are encouraged to attend and lead this conference. The Compact of Understanding may be discussed at this time as it relates to student achievement. Conference tip sheets are sent home to parents and family members prior to the conference date in the weekly newsletter. Parents and family members can sign up by contacting the teacher directly. Contact information for staff is included in the staff directory in the weekly email.

### *Individual Conferences*

Any parent that wishes to have an individual conference throughout the school year may do so by notifying one of the student’s teachers, advisor or by contacting the main office at 412-529-7620. These conferences may occur at different times during the day, morning or evening. The school will provide opportunities for regular meetings, if requested, for parents to formulate suggestions and to participate in decision-making, as appropriate, regarding the education of their children. Staff contact information is distributed to all parents and family members via a monthly mailing and is available on the SciTech website at [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com).

## Transition Plan

### *9<sup>th</sup> Grade Nation*

At the beginning of the school year, all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students attend school one day early. During this day the 9<sup>th</sup> grade staff and upperclassmen from SciTech facilitate activities with students to get acclimated to the school, prepare for academics at the high school level and begin to build relationships with their peers.

### *6<sup>th</sup> Grade Introduction Day*

At the beginning of the school year, all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students attend school one day early. During this day students learn about technology at SciTech, the classes they will be taking, and they meet their teachers. In addition, they begin to build relationships with their peers who will be in their cohort for the next three years.

### *6<sup>th</sup> Grade Bootcamp*

During the first quarter of the school year all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in a mandatory two day per week activity called "6<sup>th</sup> Grade Bootcamp." This activity consistently reinforces proper use of the laptop, how to use the student planner, online course management systems, organization for schoolwork and much more.

### *Advisory*

Beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year students have the same advisor. At the high school level students have the same advisor in grades 9 through 12. The role of advisors is to have a consistent adult year after year that is there to support the student in monitoring their grades, academic progress, organization, building relationships, etc. Advisory is also where families can get assistance in understanding academic standards, state and local assessments and how to monitor their students' progress.

### *Laptop Orientation*

All students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade are required to participate in, with a parent or guardian, the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Laptop Orientation. This orientation shares details of the technology program at SciTech, usage guidelines and the student responsibility associated with the laptops.

### *6<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology Night*

SciTech students in grade six and their families can attend a 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology Night at the beginning of the school year. During this event families learn how to login to the online gradebook, monitor their students' progress in the online course management system, support their student at home and meet SciTech staff.

### *New Student Orientation*

All students that are accepted at SciTech and their families attend a mandatory new student orientation in the early spring for the following school year. This orientation provides families with information for the grade level of which the student is entering, specific information about SciTech and what the student and family can expect for the following school year.

## **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The Parent Teacher Organization meets bi-monthly on the same days as the PSCC from 6:30-7:30pm and the meeting is open to parents and family members, teachers, administrators and community members. There are discussions about upcoming events, volunteerism, parent questions and concerns, utilization of PTO fundraised funds, etc.

For the 2021-2022 school year the following fundraisers and events are tentatively planned:

- Fundraisers: Box Tops for Education, SciTech Gear, Hoagie Sale, Sarris Candy
- Family Events: Science and Technology Festival, Spring Cultural Dinner, Teacher and Staff Luncheon
- Student Events: Student Incentive Events Planned (for example, attendance celebrations)

## **Parent Volunteers**

Parents and family members are encouraged to become school volunteers. Volunteers are needed in the lunch room, during activity period, in the classroom as well as for field trips. The PTO will be responsible for contacting parents and family members for other events they will be holding. SciTech staff members will contact parents and family members for specific classroom needs. The FACE Coordinator will contact parents and family members for general school volunteers. Instructions on how to obtain clearances are given at the first PSCC meeting of the year. Mrs. Theuret will inform you once you have been cleared to volunteer. Information can also be found on our website at [www.pittsburghscitech.com/parents/volunteer](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com/parents/volunteer) or you can contact Mrs. Theuret at [stheuret1@pghschools.org](mailto:stheuret1@pghschools.org).

## **Family Engagement Professional Development**

Each year professional development around family engagement is provided to the SciTech Staff. Topics of the professional development are things such as: communicating and engaging families from the family perspective, parent teacher conferences, classroom resources for families, etc. Staff are educated in the value and utility of contributions of parents and family members, and in how to reach out to, communicate with and work with parents and family members as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and family members and the school.

## **Staff Professional Development**

Families are welcome to come to an annual meeting to learn about the professional development opportunities that staff participate in and share feedback on the opportunities. The meeting for the 2021-2022 school year will occur Thursday, October 14 as part of scheduled PSCC meeting.

## **Parent and Family Communication**

Below is information regarding parent and family communication. This details how the school will ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to SciTech parents and family members of SciTech students.

### *Weekly Email*

On Monday of each week during the school year a "SciTech Weekly Email" email is sent to all parents and family members that have asked to be on the email list. This email details all activities, events and important reminders for that current week. Any parent that would like to be added to that email list can go to <http://tinyurl.com/scitechemailist>. At different times throughout the year this email also acts as a resource for parents and families where different content is added to help parents and families based on the anticipated needs of the students, such as: "Khan Academy Tutorials", "3 Tips to Teach Study Habits to Teens", "English and Literacy Strategies from SciTech Teachers", and "Pittsburgh Promise Information," etc.

### *Newsletters*

Important information is mailed via hard at the start of the school year.

### *Monthly Calendar- Hard Copy*

A monthly calendar is sent home with students through advisory notifying parents and families of all events and important dates happening at SciTech. This is also included in the weekly emails and hard copies are available in the main office.

### *Online Calendar*

The online calendar that is housed on the PPS website is linked into the weekly email and can be found directly at: <https://discoverpps.org/scitech/calendar>.

### *Monthly PTO Newsletter*

A PTO newsletter is sent out via the SciTech email list to inform parents and families about what the PTO is doing and to encourage them to get involved. The newsletter details the specific focus of the PTO at that time. The newsletter also includes contact information of officers for those that want to become involved.

### *Staff Directory*

A staff directory is provided on the SciTech website at [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com), is available in the SciTech main office and is sent via the weekly email in order for families to have direct access to contact information for staff.

### *Advisory*

Weekly students receive their academic grades during their advisory period. Parents and families are either informed via hard copy or email by their student on a weekly basis about their students' academic progress.

### *Home Access Center (HAC)*

Parents and families can access grades via the Home Access Center through PPS. Login information can be requested by contacting Mrs. Theuret at [stheuret1@pghschools.org](mailto:stheuret1@pghschools.org) or 412-529-7652. Students can also use their district-issued login information to access the HAC at this link: <https://www.pghschools.org/Page/4929>.

### *Website*

Information is updated and added regularly to the SciTech website which can be found at [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com).

### *Facebook*

Important updates and information are included on the SciTech Facebook page. In addition, there are various school highlights and photos shared regularly. Families can follow the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pittsburghscitech](http://www.facebook.com/pittsburghscitech).

### *Twitter*

Important updates and information is available on Twitter. Families can follow SciTech on Twitter by using @PghSciTechAcad.

### *Blackboard Connect Robocalls*

In addition to the electronic distribution of information, SciTech uses Robocalls to advertise events and happenings at SciTech. It is important that if any family phone numbers change that the main office is notified immediately at 412-529-7620.



### **School Events**

The SciTech PTO is planning to host a variety of events throughout the school year to increase parent engagement throughout the school. The PTO is also assisting student clubs and organizations when they need volunteers and chaperones. Various school events are also coordinated by class councils and other SciTech student organizations. These events will be advertised via the SciTech website, robocalls, weekly emails, Facebook and Twitter. When volunteers are needed student organization supervisors will reach out to eligible parent or guardians.

### **Family Resources**

Various resources are provided via the school email list to families. On our website [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com) under the “Families” section there are a variety of resources posted throughout the year.

#### *Family Resource Area*

When entering the building there is a Family-Student Resource Area. This resource area houses many hard copy resources for our families throughout the year.