

# **Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy**

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## **Parent & Family Engagement Policy 2023-2024 School Year**

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**Revised October 2023**

*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 (PSCC) Meetings*

The PSCC was designed by Pittsburgh Public School’s Board of Directors to have a group of dedicated parents and community members in each school who serve as an advisory, not a decision-making body, to the principal regarding issues such as school safety, student achievement, curriculum, discipline, and parental and community involvement.

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 monthly, and meetings are open to all those who are interested in attending. PSCC Meetings will occur at different times throughout the year, sometimes in the evenings and sometimes in the mornings. At in-person evening meetings childcare is 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 I program each year. In addition, at the May PSCC Meeting attendees provide feedback for the Schoolwide Program Plan.

Throughout the school year there are various PSCC meetings about topics such as: 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. Feedback was collected from families to determine potential topics for the school year through a consensus. Topics and corresponding dates will be communicated to families after the survey results are compiled. Staff assist in facilitating these meetings and are available for consultation with our families. Agendas for the meetings may also be developed through a shared decision-making process. Parents may be involved in the decision-making process of the topics discussed at meetings. Time is also dedicated on each agenda for the PAC Representative to report out and gather feedback.

**2023-2024 PSCC Meeting Schedule:** *\*Any changes will be sent to families via the SciTech weekly email list.*

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>
<b>Thursday, September 14</b> <i>9-10:00am VIRTUAL</i>	<b>Thursday, February 8</b> <i>6-7PM IN-PERSON @ SCITECH</i>
<b>Thursday, October 12</b> <i>5:30-6:00pm IN-PERSON @ SCITECH</i>	<b>Thursday, March 14</b> <i>6-7:00pm VIRTUAL</i>
<b>Thursday, November 16</b> <i>6-7:30pm IN-PERSON @ SCITECH</i>	<b>Thursday, April 11</b> <i>6-7:00pm VIRTUAL</i>
<b>Thursday, December 7</b> <i>6-7:30pm IN-PERSON @ SCITECH</i>	<b>Friday, May 17</b> <i>9-10am IN-PERSON @ SCITECH</i>
<b>Thursday, January 11</b> <i>6-7:00pm IN-PERSON @SCITECH</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
- Extracurricular Activities
- Compact of Understanding (see on next page)

### *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 2023-2024 school year is on Wednesday, 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 and learn about course curriculum. All staff are present for this event to speak with families.

### *Title I Meeting*

Our annual Title I parent meeting is held on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 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 and at the district site [www.pghschools.org/scitech](http://www.pghschools.org/scitech). All parents and family members were invited and encouraged to attend. This meeting is publicized via a hard copy invitation mailed to families in the Back to School Mailing Below are topics covered:

- Curriculum at SciTech
- Title I Program Information
- Review of School Progress on State Academic Assessments
- Achievement Levels of State Academic Standards
- SciTech Changes for the 2023-2024 School Year
- Parent and Family Engagement
- Important Upcoming Dates

### *Comprehensive School Plan Parent Input Meeting*

Families are invited to attend this meeting Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 9am 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 Thursday, October 12, 2023 and Friday, October 13, 2023. Conferences will be scheduled during the hours of 4pm-7pm on Thursday and 8am-12pm on Friday. 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. 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. The mode of the conference, in-person or virtual, is determined by the parent/guardian. Staff members will provide necessary materials and training to family members in order to support their student’s achievement as necessary. SciTech ESL teacher is available to collaborate with classroom teachers as needed for family conferences. Support will be provided in a language that parents and families can understand.

### *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). Staff members will provide necessary materials and training to family members in order to support their student’s achievement as necessary. SciTech ESL teacher is available to collaborate with classroom teachers as needed for family conferences. Support will be provided in a language that parents and families can understand.

## Transition Plan

### *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, community building, organization for schoolwork and much more.

### *Advisory*

Beginning in grade 6 through grade 8, students have the same advisor. At the high school level students have the same advisor in grades 9 through 12. Advisory is every Wednesday during period 4 for the entire school year. 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 if requested. Advisors will reach out to families about reports on their student's progress as necessary.

### *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.

### *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 is at SciTech and multiple dates are given to accommodate family schedules. 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 monthly. 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 2023-2024 school year the following fundraisers and events are tentatively planned:

- Fundraisers: Box Tops for Education, SciTech Gear, Sarris Candy
- Staff Events: Stock the Shelves
- Family Events: Science and Technology Festival, Teacher and Staff Luncheon
- Student Events: Student Incentive Events Planned (for example, attendance celebrations)

First semester meeting dates and locations are below. The PTO will be holding meetings at various locations around the city due to SciTech not being a neighborhood school.

- Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>- SciTech- 6:30-7:30pm
- Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>- Pins Mechanical Southside Works- 6-8pm
- Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>- SciTech- 6-8pm
- December, Date TBD- White Whale Book Store- Time TBD

## **Parent Volunteers**

Parents and family members are encouraged to become school volunteers. The PTO will contact parents and family members for other events they will be holding. SciTech staff members will contact parents and family members for specific classroom needs. Volunteers are often needed for lunch room support, activities and tutoring during our Period 4. The FACE Coordinator will contact parents and family members for general school volunteers when needed. Instructions on how to obtain clearances are found on the school's website. 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 annually to learn about the professional development opportunities that staff participate in and share feedback on the opportunities. The meeting for the 2023-2024 school year will occur Thursday, January 11 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. We ensure regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

### *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/scitechemallist>. 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. This can include student opportunities, district services, resources from SciTech teachers, etc.

### *Newsletters*

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

### *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>. This calendar notifies parents and families of all events and important dates happening at SciTech. Hard copies are available upon request.

### *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 review 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).

### *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 the main office is notified immediately at 412-529-7620.

### *Talking Points Messages*

SciTech staff regularly communicate to families via Talking Points. This allows for automatic translation into the preferred language of the family.

### **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, and Facebook. 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.