March 3, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As a District, we have a commitment that we will treat every child as our own. That means we will ensure that each and every one of us who is involved in the lives of your children will teach them, advocate for them, help them, and celebrate with them as we would do for our own children. Yet the truth is that it really doesn't stop there. The truth is that we also believe every parent and every guardian should have the opportunity to volunteer and participate in the school and classroom in the same way we, as parents, would want to participate in the schools and classrooms.

In fact, it is our belief that parent/guardian involvement in our district should go far beyond bake sales, fund raising and school celebrations. Parent/guardian involvement in our district must be a collaboratively shared interest in ensuring that all students will learn. To that end, we commit to treat each child in the district as our own and to ensure that each of you, as a parent/guardian, will have the same opportunities to volunteer that we would want to have for ourselves. In fact, research has demonstrated that when families are involved in schools, all students experience success! Even more important is that race/ethnicity, class, or level of education does not matter. It is simply the willingness to be involved and make a difference in the lives of students, one student at a time. When families partner with the school, our children are the winners!

Our pledge to partner with each of you is so important to us that we are committed to consistently implementing and supporting the following National Standards for Family-School Partnerships which were developed by the National Parent Teacher Association.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

**Standard 1:** Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

*As parents/guardians each school office is a place where you should feel welcomed. We value what you have to say, your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas. We will work and partner with you to ensure that you can participate in the life of the school and the district. We will create and maintain a climate that supports partnerships with our parents and community.*
Standard 2: Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

Involvement programs that link to learning improve student achievement. It’s simple: The more parent and community involvement activities focus on improving student learning, the more student learning improves. Learning-focused involvement activities may include

✓ Family nights on math or literacy.
✓ Family-teacher conferences that involve students.
✓ Family workshops on planning for college.

Standard 3: Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

All families can contribute to their children’s success. Family involvement improves student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents’ level of education. We will create and maintain an environment where we are all committed to ensuring every child’s success in school. We will all work together to

✓ Teach our children the importance of education.
✓ Explicitly provide the essential standards that children are expected to know and to be able to do and help to provide reinforcement outside of the regular school day.
✓ Ensure that all of our children are successful in school and know that their school and their family are partnering together for their success.
✓ Make parent involvement a priority.
✓ Recognize and remove barriers to parent involvement.
✓ Share decision-making power with parents and community members.
✓ Work to understand class and cultural differences.

Standard 4: Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Speaking up for children protects and promotes their success. Children whose parents are advocates for them at school are more confident at school and take on and achieve more. The more families advocate for their children and support their children’s progress, the longer their children stay in school and the better their children do. Families should:

✓ Become knowledgeable about the operations of schools and the laws that govern those operations.
✓ Be confident about their ability to work with schools.
✓ Expect only the best from their children and for their children.
Standard 5: Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

As a district, we will continue to provide opportunities for every parent/guardian to be involved. We will, as a school district, seek your thoughts, your ideas, and your feedback. We will ensure that we are working together as professional educators and families to create the best opportunities for all students. We will work together to ensure that all students are successful. Some examples of what we will do include:

- Family surveys
- Community Forums
- Quarterly newsletters

Standard 6: Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Engaging community members, businesses, and organizations as partners in children’s education will improve the learning community in many ways. For example, community partners may be able to:

- Provide expanded learning opportunities.
- Build broad-based support for increased school funding.
- Provide quality after-school programs.

Furthermore, as a District we will ensure that all sites set goals as a part of their School Site Plans that specifically address the National Standards for Family-School Partnership. These goals will include the following:

- Ensure that all parents and community members are welcomed at each site and office.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for families to engage school staff in regular two-way communication about student learning.
- Provide regular parent programs to support student learning in the home and at school.
- Actively seek parent input regarding school programs and policies.
- Continue to develop support programs for families and students in need or who are at risk of failure.

I look forward to continuing to develop and strengthen our partnership. Our district, Pollock Pines Elementary, is a great place for students! We have tremendous potential, and together, as educators and families, we will ensure that each and every one of our students, our children, is successful. We will be the place where it is known that we
treat every child as our very own and where we partner with every parent/guardian to ensure that every child learns.

On behalf of all of our outstanding educators and district staff, thank you for trusting us with your most precious of gifts – your children. I want to thank each and every one of you who has generously given of your time to help and volunteer in the classrooms and at our school sites. We appreciate all that each of you does to help our children succeed! We look forward to partnering with each of you as we continue to make Pollock Pines the best place for children.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Kevin Monsma
Superintendent