

14. Parental Involvement

Statutory Requirement: Sections 1111 and 1118

Overview

Involving parents and families as full partners in the education of their children is one of the cornerstones of the ESEA/No Child Left Behind Act. When families support learning, children are more successful in school and school success helps children become successful adults.

The United States Department of Education defines parent involvement as meaning

“the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that—

- (A) parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning;
- (B) parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school;
- (C) parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;
- (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Sec. 1118.”

In order to receive Title I funds, a school district **must**, in meaningful consultation with parents/families, implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents/families in the Title I program.

DPI is responsible for reviewing district parental involvement policies and practices to determine if they meet the requirements of Sec. 1118.

Funding Parent Involvement

Title I requires that monies be reserved to ensure that parent involvement practices and policies are being administered. Listed below are the funding requirements.

- Districts receiving an allocation of at least \$500,000 **must** reserve not less than 1 percent to carry out parent involvement activities including family literacy and parenting skills. 95 percent of the 1 percent must be distributed to schools for parental involvement activities.
- Districts receiving less than \$500,000 are still responsible for parent involvement activities, but no minimum dollar amount is required.
- Parents of Title I children **must** be involved in the decisions regarding the expenditure of the funds reserved for parent involvement.

Required Responsibilities of the District in Implementing Meaningful Parent Involvement Practices and Policies

- Disseminating report card information on how a district and school is performing.
- Including a strategy for coordination of Title I with Title II.
- Including a description of the district’s strategy to implement effective parental involvement.
- Including assurance that the district will work with schools as the schools develop and implement their plans or activities.

Development of District Parent Involvement Policy

With parents in meaningful involvement, the district must develop, agree upon, and distribute a district parent involvement policy that will describe how the district will accomplish the following tasks:

- Involve parents in the activities of Title I schools
- Involve parents in the joint development of the district's parent involvement policy
- Provide necessary support and assistance to district schools in planning and implementing parent involvement practices and policies;
- Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the parent involvement plan
- Use findings from evaluation to identify barriers and design strategies for more effective parent participation, paying particular attention to race, ethnicity, limited English proficiency.

Development of School Parent Involvement Policy

With adequate representation of parents in meaningful involvement, the individual school must develop, agree upon, and distribute and annually review a school building parent involvement policy that will describe how the school will accomplish the following:

- Notify parents of the policy in understandable format and, to the extent practicable, provide it in a language the parents can understand;
- Update the policy periodically to reflect changing needs of parents and the school;
 - Provide information to parents about:
 - The Title I program in the school, including a chance for parents to comment on school wide program plans;
 - Curriculum, assessments, proficiency levels for students;
 - How parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- The school must, at least annually, sponsor a meeting(s) for parents of participating children.
 - For schoolwide programs, all parents are invited;
 - For targeted assistance programs, all parents of targeted students are invited.
 - The meeting(s) should take place at convenient, flexible times so parents can attend.
 - Schools may use Title I funds to provide transportation, child care or home visits. This may be necessary for homeless and low income families.

Development of School—Parent Compacts

As a component of the school building level parental involvement policy, all Title I schools must develop a school—parent compact. The School—Parent Compact must be developed jointly with parents of all students served by Title I. This means all parents in schoolwide programs and all parents of Title I students in targeted assistance programs must be invited to participate in the development of the compact.

The school-parent compact must address the following:

- How parents, the entire school staff, and students share responsibility for improved student academic achievement.
- The school's responsibility to provide high quality curriculum and instruction to enable children to meet state standards.
- Ways in which parents will support their child's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, television watching, volunteering in their child's classroom, participating in decisions relating to their child's education.
- The importance of communication between teachers and parents on an on-going basis.
- At a minimum, communication between teachers and parents must occur:

- Ways in which parents will support their child’s learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, television watching, volunteering in their child’s classroom, participating in decisions relating to their child’s education.
- The importance of communication between teachers and parents on an on-going basis.
- At a minimum, communication between teachers and parents must occur:
 - Annually at parent-teacher conferences to discuss the compact as it relates to their child’s achievement;
 - Through frequent reports to parents on their child’s progress;
 - Through reasonable accessibility to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class.

Building Capacity for Parent Involvement at the District and School Level

Building capacity refers to continuous improvement in engaging parents in parent involvement practices and policy development. All Title I schools and districts are required to:

- Explain state content and performance standards, and the use of state and local assessments to parents;
- Provide information that helps parents work with their children to improve their child’s academic achievement;
- Educate school staff in how to reach out to and communicate with parents as equal partners;
- Foster linkages to programs such as Head Start, Even Start and Reading First
- All parents including those with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities and parents of migratory children must be provided full opportunities to participate in program activities.
- Ensure that information related to school and parent programs is provided, to the extent practicable in a language that the parent understands.
- Provide other reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.

The above descriptions inform you as to what you are required to do to fulfill the intent of Section 1118 of Title I. Each school district and school is unique and their needs are different. To that end, Title I allows the schools and districts some flexibility in engaging parents.

Parental Notification and “Right-to-Know”

School districts and local schools are required to notify parents, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parent understands. Required notifications include:

- Whether their child is being taught by a highly qualified teacher;
 - Parents must be informed of their right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child’s teacher.
 - Parents must be notified if their child is taught for four consecutive weeks by a teacher that is not “highly qualified” as defined under the law.
 - Parents must be notified if their child is provided services by a paraprofessional, and what are the qualifications of that paraprofessional.
- The reasons why their child is participating in a limited English proficient program;
 - This communication must happen no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year. The communication must include the following:
 - Reasons the child was placed in a language instruction educational program;
 - The child’s level of English proficiency and how the level was assessed;
 - The status of the child’s academic achievement.

Note: A complete list of parent notification requirements for LEP students can be found at:
<http://dpi.wi.gov/ell/school-home.html>

- If a child is attending a school identified for improvement (SIFI), parents must be notified of the following:
 - What being a SIFI school means and a comparison of their SIFI school with other schools in the district;
 - Why the school is SIFI and what the school and the district is doing to address the problem of not making adequate yearly progress;
 - How parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues of the school;
 - The parent option of public school transfer (transportation provided) or supplemental educational services for the child.
- If a child is attending a school that has been identified as persistently dangerous, parents must be notified of the following:
 - The parents have a right to transfer their child to another public school, with transportation provided.
 - If a child is the victim of a violent crime on school grounds, parents must be notified of the right of that child to be transferred to another public school, with transportation provided.

Selected National Resources

DPI Parent Toolkit (Toolkit for Schools-Involving Parents in NCLB):
<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/bbnclbbk.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/partnership.html>

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education: <http://www.ncpie.org/WhatsHappening>

National Network of Partnership Schools/JHU: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nochild.htm>

National PTA: <http://www.pta.org/homepage.html>

Learning Points Associates: <http://www.learningpt.org/>

Public Education Network: <http://www.publiceducation.org/index.asp>

Title I Report: <http://www.titlei.com>