



# Keep Parents Informed

Requirements of No Child Left Behind

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The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ensures that parents have the information they need to:

- make well-informed choices for their children, more effectively share responsibility with their children's schools, and
- help those schools develop effective and successful academic programs.

The reporting provisions added by the NCLB Act offer parents important insight into their children's education, the professional qualifications of their teachers, and the quality of the schools they attend.

This tutorial summarizes the responsibilities that state departments of education, local school districts and schools have to keep parents informed.

For all communications discussed in this tutorial, the information must be presented in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and "to the extent practicable" in a language that parents understand.

### **What are my state department of education's responsibilities?**

#### **Annual Report Cards**

State report cards must include information related to assessments, accountability, and teacher quality, and include data from all districts in the state.

#### **Individual Student Assessment Reports**

As part of the state assessment, states must produce individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports that allow parents, teachers, and principals to understand and address the specific academic needs of each student. These reports should include information regarding achievement on academic assessments aligned with the state's academic achievement standards.

States must provide these reports to parents, teachers, and principals of all public schools as soon as possible after the assessments are given.

#### **Progress Reviews of District Parent Involvement Activities**

The state department of education as a part of its annual yearly progress review of each district receiving Title I, Part A funds, must determine if each district is, among other things, carrying out its responsibilities under section 1118 with respect to parental involvement. Then it must publicize and disseminate the results of this review to its districts, teachers and other staff, parents, students, and the community.

## **Notifications for Districts Identified for Improvement or Corrective Action**

The state must promptly notify the parents of each student enrolled in a school served by a district that has been identified for improvement or corrective action.

In the case of a district identified for corrective action, the state must publish and disseminate to parents and the public information on corrective actions it has taken.

The notice must include information about:

- the reasons for the identification
- how parents can participate in upgrading the quality of the district
- the results of the state's annual progress review of the schools served by the district in meeting the state's student academic achievement standards.
- whether the district is carrying out its responsibilities:
  - for making adequate yearly progress
  - having a system of support for its schools involving parents
  - maintaining a highly qualified teaching staff

## **Complaint Procedures**

The state's department of education must adopt written procedures, consistent with state law, for receiving and resolving any complaint from an organization or individual that the state, district or other agency, or consortium of agencies is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to the Title I, Part A program, such as the school accountability or parental involvement provisions.

## **What are my school district's responsibilities?**

### **Annual Report Cards**

The district's report card must include information related to the assessment, accountability, and teacher quality data elements as it applies to the district as a whole and as it applies to each school served by the district. Individual school report cards are not required, but information about each school must be included in the district's report card.

### **Progress Reviews of District Parent Involvement Activities**

The district must publicize and disseminate the results of its local annual review of each school (i.e. the review used to determine whether the school is making adequate yearly progress) to parents, teachers, principals, schools, and the community so that they can continually refine the instructional program, in an instructionally useful manner, to help all children in Title I, Part A programs meet the challenging state academic achievement standards.

The district must also review and publicize the effectiveness of the actions and activities its schools are carrying out in Title I, Part A programs with respect to parental involvement, professional development, and other activities assisted under Title I, Part A.

### **Written Parental Involvement Policies**

Each district that receives Title I, Part A funds must develop a written parental involvement policy that establishes the district's expectations for parental involvement.

The policy must be developed jointly with, and agreed upon with, the parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs and distributed to parents of all children participating in such programs.

If the district already has a district-level parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, the district may amend that existing policy, as necessary, to meet the requirement.

The District's policy must establish its expectations for parental involvement, and describe how it will:

- Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.
- Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement.
- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I, Part A with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPOY), state-run preschool programs, and Title III language instructional programs.

The district must conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served with Title I, Part A funds.

This evaluation is to be used to:

- Identify barriers to greater participation by parents in the parental involvement activities, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
- Design strategies for more effective parental involvement based on the evaluation findings;
- Revising, if necessary, the district's parental involvement policies; and
- Involve parents in the activities of schools served under Title I, Part A.

## **Teacher & Paraprofessional Qualifications**

At the beginning of each school year, the district must inform parents of each student attending a Title I, Part A School of their right to request information about the professional qualifications of both the teachers and the paraprofessionals who teach and work with their children.

## **Complaint Procedures**

The state's complaint procedures must contain a requirement that districts disseminate, free of charge, adequate information about the state's complaint procedures to parents of students, and appropriate private school officials and representatives.

## **Information to limited English proficient parents**

A district receiving Title I, Part A funds must implement effective outreach to parents of limited English proficient students to inform those parents of how they:

- can be involved in the education of their children; and
- be active participants in assisting their children to attain English proficiency, achieve at high levels in core academic subjects, and meet the challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic content standards expected of all students.

The district's outreach to parents of limited English proficient students must include sending notice of opportunities for, and holding, regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of Title I, Part A students.

A district using Title I, Part A or Title III, Part A funds to provide a language instruction program (as defined in Part C of Title III of the ESEA) must provide information to the parents of children identified for participation or participating in such a program information explaining how their child was identified for participation, a description of the program, and their rights as parents.

## **Information related to identification should include:**

- the reasons for the identification of their child as limited English proficient and in need of placement in a language instruction educational program;
- the child's level of English proficiency, how that level was assessed, and the status of the child's academic achievement;

## **Program information should include:**

- the methods of instruction used in the program and other available programs, including how those programs differ in content, instructional goals, and the use of English and a native language in instruction;
- how the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of their child;

- how the program will specifically help their child learn English, and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation;
- the specific exit requirements of the program, including the expected rate of transition from the program into classrooms that are not tailored for limited English proficient children, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school for the program if Title I, Part A funds are used for children in secondary schools;
- in the case of a child with a disability, how the program meets the objectives of the child's individualized education program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or the child's individualized services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 504);

**Parents' rights information should include:**

- an explanation of the parent's right to decline enrollment in a language instructional program and to choose another program or method of instruction if available;
- a description of the right that parents have to remove their child immediately from the program upon their request; and
- assistance to parents in selecting among various programs and methods of instruction, if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity.

The district must provide this information to parents not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year for those children identified before the beginning of the school year as limited English proficient. For children identified as limited English proficient after the beginning of the school year, the district must provide this information to parents within the first 2 weeks of the child being placed in a language instruction program.

If the language instruction program has not made progress on the annual measurable achievement objectives, a separate notice to parents of children identified for participation or participating in the program must be provided informing them of that failure not later than 30 days after the failure occurs.

**Annual Yearly Progress**

The district must publicize and disseminate the results of its local annual review of each school (i.e. the review used to determine whether the school is making adequate yearly progress) to parents, teachers, principals, schools, and the community so that they can continually refine the instructional program, in an instructionally useful manner, to help all children in Title I, Part A programs meet the challenging state student academic achievement standards.

The district must also review and publicize the effectiveness of the actions and activities its schools are carrying out in Title I, Part A programs with respect to parental involvement, professional development, and other activities assisted under Title I, Part A.

## **Schools in "Need of Improvement"**

If a district identifies a school for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the district must, promptly following identification, provide a notice to a parent or parents of each student enrolled in the school, that –

- explains what the identification means, and how the school compares academically to other schools served by the district and state involved;
- identifies the reasons for identification;
- provides an explanation of how the parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues that caused the school to be identified for school improvement; and
- explains the parent's option to transfer his or her child to another public school, with transportation provided by the district, or to obtain supplemental educational services for the child.

The notification must provide parents with enough relevant information to help them decide what is best for their child. The district:

- must inform parents about the academic achievement of students at the school or schools to which their child may transfer;
- may choose to include a description of the special programs, facilities, and before- or after- school programs available at the schools;
- may include the professional qualifications of teachers in core academic subjects, and may identify parental involvement opportunities.

Because the district must provide choice to students in eligible schools not later than the first day of the school year, notice to parents should occur well before that day.

In addition to providing school improvement information to the parents of each child in a school identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the district must publish and disseminate, to both parents and the public, information explaining:

- what the school is doing to address the problem of low achievement;
- what the district or the state is doing to help the school address the problem; and
- if applicable, a description of specific corrective actions or restructuring plans.

## **Schools identified as "persistently dangerous"**

At a minimum, a district that has one or more schools identified as persistently dangerous must:

- Notify parents of each student attending the school that the state has identified the school as persistently dangerous;
- Offer students the opportunity to transfer to a safe public school, which may be a safe public charter school; and

- For those students who accept the offer, complete the transfer.

In addition, the district should also consider:

- Developing a corrective action plan; and
- Implementing that plan in a timely manner.

Parental notification regarding the status of the school and the offer to transfer students may be made simultaneously. Districts are encouraged to complete each of these steps as quickly as possible.

### **What are my school's responsibilities?**

#### **Written Parental Involvement Policies**

Each school must develop, jointly with parents of children participating in Title I, Part A services, a written school parental involvement policy that describes how the school will carry out the parental involvement requirements, including the development of a school-parent compact.

If the school already has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, the school may amend that existing policy, if necessary, to meet this requirement. Schools must update these policies periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

Each school served under Title I, Part A must notify parents of its written parental involvement policy in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and to the extent practicable, provide notice and the policy in a language the parents can understand. In addition, each school must make its written parental involvement policy available to the local community.

#### **Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications**

Title I, Part A schools must give each parent timely notice when their child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

#### **Title I Part A Programs**

Each school served under Title I, Part A must convene an annual meeting, at a time convenient for parents to inform them of their school's participation in Title I, Part A programs, and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements and the rights of parents to be involved in those programs.

In order to keep parents informed, schools must invite to this meeting all parents of children participating in Title I, Part A programs and encourage them to attend.

Schools must offer a flexible number of additional parental involvement meetings, such as in the morning or evening so that as many parents as possible are able to attend.

Schools served under Title I, Part A must provide to parents of participating children, in a timely manner, information about the programs funded by Title I, Part A. That information must include:

- a description and explanation of the school's curriculum;
- information on the forms of academic assessment used to measure progress; and
- information on the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

Upon the request of parents, schools must provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school must respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

### **Individual Student Assessment Reports**

Each year a school that receives Title I, Part A funds must provide parents with an individual student report informing them on their child's level of achievement on the state's assessments in at least reading/language arts and math. This report may be covered by the state's reports on individual student academic achievement.