

# Chapter 4- Parent Involvement Policies and Notifications

NCLB makes it clear that Congress expects schools receiving federal funds to ensure that parents are actively involved and knowledgeable about their schools and their children's education. The law requires schools to give parents information and notices in a uniform and understandable format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents can understand. Listed below are several key notifications and policies that districts and schools must provide to the parents of Title I served students.

It is important to note that while some reports are at the district level, some of the required reports are specific to the individual schools. It is also very important to keep documentation of the following for audit purposes.

## 1. District and School Parent Involvement Policies

A district receiving Title I funds must develop a district-level parent involvement policy and must develop a school parent involvement policy for each Title I school. Note that the District Parent Involvement Policy is separate from, and may be different than the School Parent Involvement Policy. Each school receiving Title I funding must have its own School Parent Involvement Policy. The policy must explain how the district and/or the school will involve parents in the development and implementation of the district and each school's parent policies.

Following are guidelines for writing the parent policy:

- a. The policy must be in a written format.
- b. If a school or district has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, it may amend the policy to meet the requirements under No Child Left Behind.
- c. Schools must hold at least one annual meeting for Title I parents and offer a flexible number of meetings to review the policy.
- d. Parents need to be involved in an ongoing manner in the planning, review and improvement of the Title I programs.
- e. Provide the following information to Title I parents:
  1. Explanation of program formats.
  2. Description and explanation of curriculum.
  3. Forms of academic assessment and if requested, opportunities for regular meetings to discuss the education of their children.

## 2. Annual Evaluation

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

The review must:

- a. Identify barriers to greater participation by parents in 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;
- b. Use the findings of the evaluation to design strategies for more effective parent involvement;
- c. Revise, if necessary, the LEA's parent involvement policies; and

- d. Involve parents in the activities of schools served under Title I, Part A. *[Sec. 1118(a)(2)]*

### 3. School-Parent Compact

A school receiving Title I funds (including private school students receiving Title I services) must develop a school-parent compact that outlines the responsibilities of each party for improved student academic achievement. The school-parent compact must describe the following:

- a. The school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables children served under Title I, Part A to meet the state's student academic achievement standards.
- b. Ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning (for example, monitoring attendance, homework completion, or television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time).
- c. Additional guidance may be obtained on the Innovation and Improvement website at <http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent.htm> and Parent Involvement E- Bulletin #02-08 available at <http://www.isbe.net/e-bulletins/default.htm>.
- d. The importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum—
  - 1. Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement.
  - 2. Frequent reports to parents on their child's progress.
  - 3. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities. *[Sec. 1118(d)]*

### 4. Annual Title I Parent Meeting Required

An Annual Parent Meeting is also required to review the policies above, the requirements and components of Title I and to involve parents in decisions regarding use of district and school parent involvement set-aside funds for Parent Involvement Activities.

### 5. District and School Report Cards

- a. These Report Cards can be sent to parents via the students, through the mail, or made available at building administrative offices and on the district website.
- b. Districts and schools may use the link to the Illinois State Report Card for electronic distribution.
- c. Districts and schools must also provide this information in a written format to be available to those parents/guardians that do not have electronic accessibility. *[Sec. 1111(h)(1) and (2))(B)(ii)]*

### 6. Teacher Qualifications

At the beginning of each school year, districts must notify parents that they have the right to request specific information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher(s). This information includes:

- a. Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- b. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or conditional certification.
- c. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and other graduate certification or degree, and the field of discipline of the certification and/or degree.
- d. The information must also disclose whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals,

and if so, the paraprofessionals' qualifications. [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1111(h)(6)(A)]; *U.S. Department of Education's non-regulatory guidance on Parent Involvement in Title I, Part A, question C-6 found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.pdf>*.