

Parents ask about

parent involvement policies

What is a parent involvement policy?

For more
on
Title I,
read the
brochure
*Parents
Ask About
Title I*

A parent involvement policy explains how the school district or the school itself supports the important role of parents in the education of their children. Every school district that receives Title I money must have a parent involvement policy. So must every school in the district that receives Title I money. (Title I is a Federal aid program that provides extra educational services for children who are behind in school.)

How does a parent involvement policy explain how schools and parents will work together?

The policy will cover a wide range of issues, such as:

- What the school staff will do to support parent involvement
- Parents' rights and responsibilities
- How school staff will communicate with parents
- The school procedure for complaints and other concerns

The policy may spell out general goals for parent involvement, such as:

All schools in the district will have a plan for providing ongoing information to parents about how children are educated.

And, the policy may include specific directions on what school staff and parents should do, such as:

Teachers must hold annual parent-teacher conferences during the school year.

What will be in my district's parent involvement policy?

For more
information on
standards,
read the
brochure
*Parents Ask
About
Standards*

The district policy describes the district-wide plan for involving parents in their children's education and in the Title I program. It describes how all schools and *parents in the district* will work together to help Title I students achieve the district's *standards of learning*. (Standards describe what students should be able to know and do at each grade level.)

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These are the topics that must be included in your district's policy:

- How parents will be involved in determining what the school needs to do to help their children achieve the standards
- How parents will be involved in developing the Title I plan at their school
- How the district will help its Title I schools involve parents
- How the district will coordinate the parent involvement activities of Title I and other programs such as Head Start and Even Start
- The district's plan for reviewing and evaluating its policy each year

What will be in my school's parent involvement policy?

Your school is required by Title I to involve parents in several specific ways.

For more information on compacts and profiles, read the brochures *Parents Ask About Compacts* and *Parents Ask About School Profiles*

The policy must describe the school's plans for:

- An annual meeting for parents to describe Title I
- Other parent meetings
- Giving parents up-to-date information about their children in an easy-to-understand form
- Coordinating the parent involvement activities of Title I and other programs in the school

In addition, the policy must include a *compact*, which is a written agreement of what schools and parents are each supposed to do to help students achieve.

Finally, the policy must describe the school's plans for developing a school *profile*, which is like a report card on your school.

How is the parent involvement policy developed?

The process that is used to develop the policy and put it into action will vary from district to district and from school to school. However, each district and each school is required to involve parents in the process. They also are required to give a copy of the policy to the parents of every child in Title I.

How will the parent involvement policy be put into practice?

Schools are allowed to use Title I money to support parent involvement.

For example, they can use some of their Title I funds for workshops that inform parents about what their children are learning, or to buy materials that parents can use to help their children with schoolwork. Title I funds also can be used to provide child care or transportation for parents to attend school functions.

School districts that receive more than \$500,000 from Title I must use at least 1 percent of the money to support parent involvement. (For \$500,000, that would be at least \$5,000.)

How can I make sure that my school's parent involvement policy is working?

Make sure you get a copy of your district's parent involvement policy and a copy of your school's policy. If you can't understand them, have someone from the school staff explain them to you.

Ask as many questions as you need to find out whether your district and school are doing what the policies say they will do to involve parents.

If the parent involvement policy has not yet been created, you can give your opinion to school staff on what should be in it. You may want to join the team that will write the policy. If the policy has been created, you can give your opinion on how it can be improved. Districts and schools must review their parent involvement policies every year. You may want to join the committee that reviews and updates them.

What else do I need to know?

Every parent involvement policy is different. Here are some questions you might want to ask to learn more about your district's and your school's policies:

Ask about developing the parent involvement policies

Do my district and school have parent involvement policies? If not, when will they be available?

Who's in charge of developing the policy for our district and our school?

What is the process for developing the policies?

How are parents involved?

What part can I play in developing the parent involvement policy?

Ask about interpreting the policies

How do I get copies of the district and school parent involvement policies?

What do the policies say that the school will do for me and for other parents?

What do the policies expect me and other parents to do?

How do the policies protect my rights as a parent?

How do our policies compare to ones in other districts and schools?

If I don't agree with the policies, what can I do?

Ask about how your school uses the policies

What happens if school staff or parents do not follow the policies?

How is Title I money being used to support parent involvement?

Is other money available to support parent involvement?

Do the district and school review policies every year, as they are required to do?

Who can answer these questions?

Your child's teacher can answer many of them. Or you can ask:

- The school principal
- The Title I director in the school
- The superintendent of schools
- Members of the school board
- Members of the parent-teacher organization
- The parent coordinator
- Staff members at the parent resource center
- Other parents

Parents Ask About Title I

Parents Ask About Standards

Parents Ask About Compacts

Parents Ask About School Profiles

**Other brochures in
this series available
from your school**

The following sections from
"IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT OF 1994"
that relate to parent involvement policies.

**Title I: Amendments to the Elementary and
Secondary Education Act of 1965**

"Sec. 1118. Parental Involvement.

"(a) Local Educational Agency Policy.-

"(1) In general.-A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs assisted under this part consistent with the provisions of this section. Such activities shall be planned and implemented with **meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.**

"(2) Written policy.-Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall **develop jointly with, agree upon with, and distribute to, parents of participating children** a written parent involvement policy that is incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establishes the **expectations for parent involvement**, and describes **how the local educational agency will-**

"(A) involve parents in the joint development of the plan under section 1112, and the **process of school review and improvement** under section 1116;

"(B) provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement;

"(C) build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement as described in subsection (e);

"(D) coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, the Parents as Teachers Program, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs;

Title I: Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

“(E) conduct, with the involvement of parents, an **annual evaluation** of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy developed under this section-

“(i) to determine the effectiveness of the policy in **increasing the participation of parents**; and

“(ii) to identify **barriers to greater participation by parents** in activities authorized by this section, giving **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; and

“(F) **use the findings of the evaluations** described in subparagraph (E) in designing strategies for school improvement and revising, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this subsection and subsection (b)(1).

“(3) Reservation.- (A) Each local educational agency shall **reserve not less than 1 percent of such agency’s allocation** under this part to carry out this section, including family literacy and parenting skills, except that this paragraph shall not apply if 1 percent of such agency’s allocation under this part (other than funds allocated under section 1002 (e) for the fiscal year for which the determination is made is \$5,000 or less.

“(B) Parents of children receiving services under this part shall be **involved in the decisions regarding how funds** reserved under subparagraph (A) are allotted for parental involvement activities.

“(b) School Parental Involvement Policy.-

“(1) In general.- **Each school** served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed upon by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements of subsections (c) through (f). Such policy shall be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

Title I: Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

“(2) Special rule.-If the school has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such school may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

“(3) Amendment.-If the local educational agency has a school district-level parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such agency may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

“(4) Parental comments.-If the plan under section 1112 is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the local educational agency shall submit any parent comments with such plan when such local educational agency submits the plan to the State.

“(c) Policy Involvement.

-Each school served under this part shall-

“(1) **convene an annual meeting**, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school’s participation under this part and to explain this part, its requirements, and their right to be involved;

“(2) **offer a flexible number of meetings**, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, **with funds** provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;

“(3) **involve parents**, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children;

“(4) provide **parents of participating children-**

“(A) **timely information** about programs under this part;

Title I: Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

“(B) **school performance profiles** required under section 1116(a)(3) and their child’s individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of such results, as required under section 1111(b)(3)(H);

“(C) **a description and explanation** of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;

“(D) opportunities for regular meetings to **formulate suggestions**, share experiences with other parents, and participate as appropriate in **decisions** relating to the education of their children if such parents so desire; and

“(E) **timely responses** to parents’ suggestions under subparagraph (D); and

“(5) if the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

“(d) Shared Responsibilities for High Student Performance.-

As a component of the **school-level parental involvement policy** developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a **school-parent compact** that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State’s high standards.”