

Parents Frequently Asked Questions

National PTA: National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs; An Implementation guide for School Communities, 2010.

Is an LEA required to reserve any funds to implement the parental involvement requirements?
ESEA requires an LEA with a Title I, Part A allocation greater than \$500,000 must reserve at least one percent of its allocation for planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to ensure that parents are provided opportunities and experiences that enable them to promote high student academic achievement and be involved in an effective partnership with the school.

Parents of children who receive Title I, Part A services must be involved in the decisions regarding how these funds are allotted for parental involvement activities. Not less than 95 percent (of the 1 percent reservation) of the funds for parental involvement must be distributed to Title I, Part A schools, and must be in addition to the school's regular Title I, Part A school allocation.

May an LEA use funds from other sources to satisfy the requirements of the 1 percent for parental involvement? No. The law does not say "an amount equal to" it specifically states that an LEA must reserve at least one percent of its allocation greater than \$500,000.

Since the schools must get 95 percent of the 1 percent that is reserved for parental involvement may these monies be reflected in the schools' allocations instead of part of the administrative funds on the consolidated application? No. All reserved funds must be reflected on the consolidated application under Section III (B) "Determination of Amounts for Allocation."

Are parent notification documents required to be provided in languages other than English?
Notification and information provided to parents must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand.

Have the new Parental Involvement requirements under Title I, Part A empowered parents?
Yes. The new ESEA statute has greatly strengthened parents' right-to-know and to be informed on several topics, including the following:

- Achievement level of their child in each of the state's academic assessments.
- Professional qualifications of their child's teachers.
- Timely notice that their child has been assigned to or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified as defined by ESEA.

In addition to these three areas, parents must be included in the planning processes for Title I, Part A Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance programs, the LEA's and school's written parental involvement policies, and school parent compacts.

National PTA: National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs; An Implementation Guide for School Communities, 2010
LEAs that have Title I, Part A schools identified for School Improvement must also provide parents with an explanation of what the identification means, why the school was so identified, what the school and LEA are doing to address the problem of low achievement, and what the parents' options are related to school choice and transportation, and, if applicable, supplemental educational services.

What is a parental involvement policy? A parental involvement policy is a description of how the school LEA or the school will support the important role of parents in the education of their children.

What should be included in the district's parental involvement policy? The district policy should describe the districtwide plan for involving parents in their children's education and in the Title I program. It should describe how all schools and parents will work together to help Title I students achieve the *standards of learning*. The district's policy must include the following requirements:

- 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 parental involvement activities of Title I and other programs such as Even Start and Head Start.
- An outline of the district's plan for reviewing and evaluating its policy each year.

What should be included in the school's parental involvement policy?

The school's written policy must describe the school's plan to:

- Convene an annual meeting to inform parents of Title I, Part A guidelines.
- Offer a flexible number of meetings.
- Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review and improvement of Title I, Part A programs.
- Provide parents timely information, school performance profiles, individual student assessment results, a description and explanation of the curriculum.
- Opportunities for regular meetings, timely responses to parent suggestions and compacts.

How is the parental involvement policy developed? Each district and school is required to involve ALL parents in the process. However, the developmental and implementation processes will vary depending on the district and school.

How will the parental involvement policy be put into practice? Schools are allowed to use Title I money to support parental involvement. For example, Title I funds can be used to provide childcare or transportation for parents to attend school functions. Funds can also

National PTA: National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs; An Implementation guide for School Communities, 2009. be used to provide workshops that inform parents about what their children are learning, or to buy materials that parents can use to help their children with schoolwork.

What is a compact? A compact is a written statement of what schools, students and parents are supposed to do to help students achieve. Each school that receives Title I money must have a compact.

What is the purpose of a compact? The purpose of a compact is to list the specific duties of school staff, students, and parents in student learning. With a compact, everybody knows what everyone is to

do. The compact also includes how the school and parents will communicate with each other.

How does the compact describe the responsibilities of schools and parents? The compact is based on the school's standards of learning. It is also like a plan of action that says what everyone will do to help students achieve the standards set for their grade level. For teachers, the compact says what they should do to teach the content standards. For example, a compact might say something such as:

Teachers will develop lesson plans that cover their grade level's content standards.

- For other school staff, the compact says what they should do to support the teaching of the content standards and students' ability to learn. For example, a compact might say:
- The principal will make sure that the school is safe and secure so that students can focus on learning, free of disturbance and fear.

For parents, the compact says what they could do to support their children's achievement of the standards. For example, a compact might say:

- Parents will provide the child a supportive environment in which to do their homework.
- Parents will review and discuss each report card with the child, then sign the card and return it to school.

For students, the compact says what the students themselves need to do in order to reach the standards.

- Students will attend school every day or, students will complete and return homework assignments.

National PTA: National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs; An Implementation guide for School Communities, 2010. The compact also will describe how teachers and parents communicate with each other. For example, a compact might say:

- Teachers will schedule conferences and schedule times for parents to explain the reading content standards and what parents can do at home to support this learning.

Who is covered by the compact?

The compact covers all Title I students, parents and school staff that targeted assistance schools and schoolwide school programs.

How might teachers use the compact?

Teachers could use the compact as a plan of action that tells them what to teach and what to do to help their students achieve the school's standards. It also tells them what support to expect from other school support staff and parents.

What are parents supposed to do with their copy of the compact?

Parents are to use their signed compact as a description of what they are to do to support their child's school progress. They can also use it as a starting point for conferences and a tool to continuously assess how the school is doing in teaching the standards.

How is a compact developed?

The compact is part of the parental involvement policy; therefore, the parents **must** be involved in the development process.

How does the Title I program use standards?

Any school that receives Title I money must use the same standards for all students, both those served by Title I programs and all others in the school. This means that Title I programs must be designed to give students the help they need to reach the same high standards that are set for everyone else.

What is a school profile?

A school profile is a report card on the school. It gives some basic facts about the school and the students. It also tells how each child is performing and what the school is doing to achieve high standards for all children.

What is the best way to handle parental involvement?

Research indicates that what seems to work best is for parents to be involved in several different roles over time. Joyce Epstein lists six categories of parental involvement; they are:

- Parenting
- Communications
- Parent Volunteering
- Learning at Home
- Decision-making and Governance
- Collaboration and Exchanges in the Community

What is needed for a successful school-family community partnership program?

The National Network of Partnership Schools reported research that indicates five ingredients that are important for a successful partnership program.

These elements are an active and supportive action team for school, family and community partnerships, adequate funding, time, guidance, and leadership.

National PTA: National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs; An Implementation guide for School Communities, 2010.