

Parent Involvement Policy Frequently Asked Questions

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(Section 1117) requires parent involvement policies that include a variety of actions and processes. This Q & A addresses some of the many questions that practitioners have about how to implement this aspect of the law.

District Level Policy

1. *Are the criteria for the written parent involvement policy for all schools or just those receiving Title I funding?*

Schools receiving Title I funds, both targeted assistance and schoolwide programs, must have a school-level parent involvement policy (school-parent compact). Schools not receiving Title IA funds are not required to have a written parent involvement policy. Districts receiving Title I funds must have a Title I component in their district parent involvement policy.

2. *What if you are not serving English Language Learners (ELL) or Migrant students, do you have to include those areas in the parent involvement policy?*

If the district currently is not serving ELL or Migrant students but receives Title I funds, it should have language in its policy that includes the ELL and migrant parent involvement components, so that the district will be prepared if those students later enroll in the district. Districts may choose to modify the language slightly to say that in the event ELL or migrant students become enrolled in the district, the following will apply.

3. *What is to be evaluated as part of the parent involvement policy? What are acceptable forms of evaluation?*

The law states that the district must conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the District Title I Parent Involvement Policy with regard to improving the academic quality of the schools serviced, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by law, particularly by parents who:

- are economically disadvantaged;
- have disabilities;
- have limited English proficiency;
- have limited literacy;
- are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
- are parents of migratory children.

Districts must develop an evaluation process that meets the above guidelines. One suggestion is to develop a rubric that allows for gauging the degree to which the academic quality of the schools served has improved and ways in which parents' participation is increasing. Other sources of evaluation may come through district surveys and focus groups. This evaluation must consider all the various aspects of the District Title I Parent Involvement Policy.

4. *What are the “musts” with regards to the requirements of the district Title I parent involvement policy?*

Title I Parent Involvement Policies Must:

- Be developed with and agreed upon by parents of students participating in Title I Programs
- Demonstrate a coordination and integration of Title I parental involvement strategies with those of other educational programs
- Describe how the district will provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities
- Describe how the content and effectiveness of the District Parent Involvement Policy will be evaluated annually in consultation with parents. Use these findings to design strategies for more effective parental involvement and to revise, if necessary, the District Title I Parent Involvement Policy
- Commit the district to build schools’ and parents’ capacity for strong parent involvement
- Describe how parents: (1) jointly develop the Title I program plan with the district, (2) review implementation of the plan, and (3) suggest improvements to the plan
- Describe how the district will involve parents in the activities of the schools served
- Involve parents in decisions regarding how Title I funds allotted for parent involvement activities shall be used
- Ensure that all information related to school and parents programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to parents in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand
- Describe how the effectiveness of parent involvement actions and activities by district schools receiving Title I funds will be reviewed
- Describe how, with the assistance of parents, the district will educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff in:
 - the value and utility of contributions of parents;
 - how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners;
 - implementing and coordinating parent programs;
 - building ties between parents and the school.
- Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request
- Describe how assistance to parents, as appropriate, will be provided

School Level Policy

5. *What are the requirements of the school level policy?*

All schools receiving Title I funds are required by law to adopt a policy on parent involvement and to jointly agree upon a school-parent compact.

6. *Can the school-parent compact and the school parent involvement policy be one and the same document?*

Yes. The school-parent compact describes the responsibilities of school, administration, staff, and parents and is part of the school policy. This is what must be shared, at a minimum, annually with parents at a parent/teacher conference

7. *How does this policy need to be developed?*

The policy and compact should be jointly developed and agreed upon with parents, staff and administration.

8. *Does the school-parent compact have to be signed by parents?*

No. However, schools may ask parents to sign the compact as documentation that it was shared. The law only requires that the compact be shared, at a minimum, once during the year at a parent/teacher conference. In addition, the school may wish to modify the compact on a case by case basis to meet the needs and circumstances of individual parents and students.

9. *Can an Individual Literacy Plan (ILP) serve as the school compact?*

Yes, if all the components of the compact are embedded in the ILP and only students with ILPs are receiving Title I services. However, in a schoolwide program, the compact needs to be shared with all parents at a parent/teacher conference.