

TITLE I, PART A

Parental Involvement and Parent Engagement Program



This section provides an overview of the strong focus that the ESEA has on parental notification and involvement. Included in this section is the purpose of Title I, the federal definition of parental involvement, the requirements for state educational agencies (SEAs) as they relate to Title I parental involvement under the ESEA, and the roles and responsibilities of the Department's Parent Engagement Program.

Overview of Parental Involvement Under ESEA

Title I, Part A is a federally funded program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The purpose of Title I under the ESEA is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. While the ESEA has many requirements, there is a strong focus throughout the law on parental notification and involvement, particularly as it relates to:

- » Ensuring that high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum, and instructional materials are aligned with challenging State academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement.

- » Affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

Parental Involvement Defined

The purpose of parental involvement under Title I, Part A is to promote active involvement among local educational agencies (LEAs), administrators, school staff, parents, parental involvement coordinators or parent liaisons, community leaders, and other stakeholders working to improve student achievement and promote academic success. LEAs must ensure that strong strategies are in place to:

- » Build capacity to involve parents/stakeholders in an effective partnership with the school.
- » Share and support high student academic achievement.

Parental involvement has been a vital component of Title I in the ESEA since it became law in 1965, but the term itself had never been defined until the 2001 reauthorization of the ESEA when amended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This amendment clarified the term parental involvement as well as lawfully established that parents are the key stakeholders in their children's education. The definition of parental involvement can be found in Section 9101(32) of the ESEA and states:

The term parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including and ensuring that:

- » Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- » Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
- » Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, when appropriate, in decision-making as well as being a part of the advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
- » Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1118.

This definition, in conjunction with other provisions in the ESEA, set the parameters by which SEAs, LEAs, and schools must implement policies, programs, and procedures to involve parent(s) in Title I Programs (US ED, 2004).

In 2004, the US ED issued Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance to assist SEAs, LEAs, and schools in administering the parental involvement provisions of Title I, Part A of the ESEA. This guidance is not intended to be all-inclusive; rather, it answers questions about and clarifies aspects of the law that were brought to the attention of the U.S. Department of Education. To learn more about Title I, Part A parental involvement and to read the non-regulatory guidance, please visit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc>

General SEA Responsibilities Under ESEA

The ESEA requires SEAs to involve parents and other stakeholders in the development of their plans for implementing federal law. The Department's original plan was approved by the US ED on May 19, 2003 and revisions to the plan were approved on June 7, 2004. A Flexibility Waiver covering ten ESEA requirements was also approved on February 9, 2012.

The ESEA allows SEAs to use the funds they reserve for the administration of Title I, Part A programs to meet their parental involvement responsibilities.

Such parental involvement responsibilities fall into three general categories:

- 1) Collecting and disseminating information to LEAs and schools regarding effective parental involvement practices
- 2) Providing technical assistance to, and monitoring the parental involvement policies and practices of LEAs and schools
- 3) Providing notice and information to parents regarding the education of their children

SEAs must ensure that LEAs and schools are made aware of effective parental involvement practices. Section 1111(d) of the ESEA states:

Each state plan shall describe how the SEA will support the collection and dissemination to LEAs and schools of effective parental involvement practices. Such practices shall be based on the most current research that meets the highest professional and technical standards on effective parental involvement that fosters achievement to high standards for all children. In addition, each state plan shall be geared toward lowering barriers to greater participation of parents in school planning, review, and improvement experienced.

Thus, it is the responsibility of SEAs to ensure that LEAs and schools are kept abreast of effective parental involvement practices to increase the academic achievement of students and to lower existing barriers to parental participation.

In implementing parental involvement programs, activities, and procedures, SEAs, LEAs, and schools must comply with federal civil rights laws. Thus, SEAs, LEAs, and schools may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.



Parent Engagement Program

The Georgia Department of Education's Parent Engagement Program ensures that Title I, Part A parental involvement regulations are met with meaningful and strategic actions to build parent capacity to improve student achievement and promote academic success as mandated by the ESEA. Schools and districts must ensure that strong strategies are in place to both build capacity to involve parents/stakeholders in an effective partnership with the school and to share and support high student academic achievement. The Parent Engagement Program believes that parents, schools, families, and communities working together can create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains across the board in student achievement; therefore, the goal of the Parent Engagement Program is to increase student achievement by engaging and empowering parents to become actively involved in their children's education across all grade levels. To achieve this goal, the Parent Engagement Program:

- » Works with partners in local school districts and throughout Georgia's communities by supporting and providing effective and practical, research-based practices to equip parents with the best strategies and resources available to help their children succeed in school.
- » Develops and delivers communications to parents and families on the factors that influence student success.
- » Creates collaborative partnerships with external organizations and agencies that support parent and family engagement initiatives to provide needed services, supports, and resources to schools, districts, and families.
- » Provides technical assistance, trainings, materials, and professional development opportunities to district and school administrators, parental involvement coordinators or liaisons, and other family engagement professionals on parental involvement compliance as mandated by law as well as on parent engagement strategies.
- » Monitors Title I schools and districts to ensure that schools and districts receiving Title I, Part A funds are in compliance with parental involvement requirements by implementing programs, activities, and procedures designed to involve parents through policies and plans as well as ensuring budgets and expenditures related to parental involvement funds are spent correctly.
- » Collaborates and coordinates plans with other Department programs to ensure that parent engagement is the focus of various initiatives across the agency and that school districts are equipped with knowledge of these programs to share with parents and their children.

To learn more about the Department's Parent Engagement Program and to obtain needed resources, visit our website at: <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Parent-Engagement-Program.aspx>