



NCPIE Update

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Title I and No Child Left Behind

A Look at the Impact of the NCLB Legislation on Parent Involvement in America's Title I Schools

Julie Miller was the featured speaker at the April NCPIE Meeting. Julie, Editor and Publisher of the *Title I Report* gave the group a comprehensive overview of the issues and opportunities for families in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Primary emphasis was placed on this legislation's Title I provisions. While there isn't room to cover all that Julie talked about at our meeting, here at least are the highlights. For more information visit the *Title I Report* website at www.titlei.com/

Primary Title I Parent Involvement Provisions:

NCLB, formerly called the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA) retained all IASA parent involvement requirements:

- * Each LEA and school must have a parent involvement plan, *drafted with parent input*
- * Each school must have a parent-school compact that identifies each group's responsibilities.
- * Each Title I school must hold at least one annual meeting for parents to explain the program.
- * Schools may use Title I funds to provide transportation or child care to parents, to provide food at Title I meetings or to make home visits. Schools may not pay parents to attend meetings.
- * Schools/LEAs *can* have parent advisory councils, but they are not mandatory.

New Title I Requirements:

- * States must review local parent involvement plans.
- * State plans must describe how they will support collection and dissemination of parent involvement practices.
- * 1% set-aside remains (for LEAs getting \$500,00); 95% must go to schools. This could result in termination of district-level parent centers, as those funds don't count against the 1%.

Notification: Teachers

- * Districts must notify parents of each child in a Title I school annually that they have the right to request information about the qualifications of their children's teachers.
- * Parents must also be notified about whether their child is being taught by a paraprofessional.
- * Parents must be notified if a child is assigned to, or taught for at least four consecutive weeks, by a teacher who is not "highly qualified," as defined by state law.

Notification: English Language Learners (ELL)

Both Titles I and III require schools to notify parents within 30 days if a child is placed in a program for ELL students. Notification must include:

- * Reason child is identified as needing language instruction.
- * Child's level of English proficiency and how it was/is assessed.
- * Program's method of instruction.
- * How the program will meet the needs of the child.
- * How the program will help the child learn English.
- * Program exit requirements and "graduation" rates.
- * Notice of any alternatives *and* that parents can opt out of special programs entirely.

Notification: School Status

Title I accountability rules require an extensive "report card" at state, LEA and school levels.

- * Parents must be notified if a school or LEA is identified as needing improvement for each year that it is in the improvement process.
- * Parents must be notified of what steps are being taken to improve the school or LEA and how parents can be involved. They must be notified directly where possible, as well as through "public" means.
- * Notice must explain the reason for identification, what it means and "how the school compares in terms of academic achievement" to other schools in the LEA and state. This notice must include information about Choice and Supplemental Service options.

Public School Choice

- * Students in "failing" schools can transfer to another public/charter school in the same district; priority is given to poor, low performing students.
- * Parents must be notified of choice options by the start of the school year. If schools are identified later, parents must be offered choice mid-year.
- * Notification must include, at minimum, achievement data on the schools offered as the choice option.

- * Parents must be notified even if the district has open enrollment.
- * District must pay or provide transportation.
- * The district is obligated to spend up to an amount that is equal to 20% of its Title I allocation. *(That limits only the district's financial obligation; if possible, additional children must be allowed to transfer with their own transportation.)*
- * After the home school moves out of improvement, the child can stay in the choice school, but transportation by the district is not required.

Parameters of Choice Provisions:

- *The district is required to offer option of more than one school where available.
- * Special education students are offered choice in schools that offer FAPE only.
- * Desegregation plans must be renegotiated if necessary to allow choice.
- * Districts can set geographic limits and protect schools with entry requirements.
- * LEAs with no schools available for transfer should make arrangements with another district "if practical."
- * Districts are not exempt from the choice mandate because higher performing schools are full, even if they are full to safety limits.
- * Districts are expected to add schools or classrooms.
- * "Schools within schools," distance learning, special programs could be acceptable as a stopgap measure but not a final solution.

Supplemental Services (SES)

Supplemental Services are defined as extra tutoring, designed to improve the achievement of low-performing students. Schools that fail to make AYP after a year in "improvement" must offer SES. Only low-income students in designated schools are eligible, as defined by district for allocating Title I funds among schools. Expenditure is limited to the district's Title I allocation per child or the actual cost of services, if lower up to an amount = to 5% of LEA allocation. Visit the *Title I Report* website for more detailed information on who can be a provider, LEA and SEA responsibilities, provider agreements and transportation requirements for SES.

New Rules for Paraprofessionals

Starting January 8, *all* Title I-funded aides must have a high school diploma or GED. All Title I-funded aides hired after January 8 must have completed 2 years of college, earned an associate's degree; or "demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment," their "knowledge of" and "ability to assist in instructing" reading, writing, and math readiness" in those subjects. Department of Education officials say states may mandate a particular test, which does not have to be pencil and paper. Existing aides must meet standards within 4 years.

Paraprofessional Duties

Duties of Title I-funded aides are explicitly limited to translation, parent activities, helping with classroom management, assisting in computer labs or libraries or one-on-one tutoring at times when students "would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher." Aides may not provide academic instruction unless directly supervised by a teacher. Visit www.titlei.com for more information.

In Their Own Words

Mississippi PIRC: Parents for Public Schools

Since its founding, Parents for Public Schools has worked to build the capacity of parents to be effective change agents in schools. Much of our work has centered on closing the gap in achievement by closing the gap between families and schools. With the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act, the tide is now with us. Our Parent Information Resource Center is designed to result in:

- Stronger partnerships among parents, teachers, and principals
- Stronger relationships between parents and their children's schools
- Higher academic achievement for many students
- A network of public schools parents involved in school improvement and student achievement

In a recent statewide public engagement campaign, *Make Accountability Count*, spearheaded by Parents for Public Schools, in partnership with the Public Education Forum of Mississippi, regional meetings attended by hundreds of parents and citizens across the state were held to discuss public school accountability measures. The results clearly revealed that in order to successfully implement state and federal standards and accountability measures, we must ensure that adequate support – both inside and outside the education system – is in place to help students, their parents, and schools. Parents for Public Schools is committed to this task. (Guidelines for implementation of Mississippi's accountability measures can be viewed in our report, *Mississippians Say: Make Accountability Count* at www.parents4publicschools.com/jackson-56.)

Community by community and school by school, citizen stakeholders, as well as public educators, are being asked to play a more active role in supporting student achievement. And yet, very few understand how the state and federal laws will impact student learning and school performance. Those who have specific information often lack the capacity to know what they can do to support student achievement and school improvement.

In response to this challenge, Parents for Public Schools is establishing a Mississippi Parent Information Resource Center. The Center will provide:

- Parent-friendly information about new Mississippi Curriculum Standards and measurement of student and school performance
- Training to parents of K-12 children to build their capacity for supporting individual student achievement and school improvement
- Training and information to individuals who work with parents including teachers and school staff

While the Center will provide a statewide focus, target areas for parent training will include the five areas in which Parents for Public Schools has chapters including Jackson, Brookhaven, Jefferson Davis County, Meridian, and Starkville. In addition, PPS will work closely with the AJFC Community Development PIRC in Natchez, MS to share materials and workshops in an attempt to maximize statewide resources.

II. Current Activities

Among our most exciting partnerships is the one we have forged with the Mississippi Department of Education. This partnership was initiated through our *Make Accountability Count Campaign* and has grown with the work we are doing through the Parent Information Resource Center. We are currently developing guides for parents, *Helping Your Child Succeed in School*, that explain the primary curriculum benchmarks or standards that students are expected to learn at each grade level. The guides will also provide tips for parents to reinforce learning at home.

We are working closely with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction and the Office of Innovation and School Improvement in the Mississippi Department of Education to negotiate an agreement for the MS Department of Education to adopt our guide and make it available to every parent in every school district in the state. In addition to input from the MS Department of Education, the guides were developed with input from a diverse group of parents, including a group of low-income, inner city parents who work with Parents for Public Schools on reform efforts in Jackson Public Schools. We also enlisted input from teachers to ensure that they will use the guides with parents.

To reinforce the print materials, we are developing a workshop that helps parents understand what curriculum standards are, how they are measured, and how to use the guides we are developing in talking to teachers about their children's progress in school. We will make these workshops available to school districts and parent groups around the state with special emphasis on the target areas mentioned above.

Because of a relationship we established with the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning last year, Parents for Public Schools was recently asked to appear on a statewide television broadcast, *The Learning Exchange*. The topic of the 30-minute broadcast, which reaches nearly 300,000 people throughout Mississippi and in some border states, was "parent involvement in schools." We were able to announce the establishment of the Parent Information Resource Center to the audience and describe its services.

Upcoming NCPPIE Meetings and Presentations

June 25, 2003

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference A

Clare Crane, Principal of a Boston public school will talk about how she created a family friendly school that serves the entire community.

August 27, 2003

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room B

Speaker and topic to be announced.

FAPE Update

National IDEA Summit scheduled to take place June 19-21!

Its not too late to register!

The second National Summit on IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) will take place June 19-21, 2003 in Arlington, VA at the Crystal Gateway Marriott. Parents and professionals interested in issues affecting special education and children with disabilities are encouraged to attend. The Families and Advocated Partnership in Education Project (FAPE) and its three partners in the national IDEA Partnerships will conduct the event which is designed to serve as an opportunity for the varying perspectives on IDEA to gather and discuss how to collaborate on implementing the special education law.

The 2003 Summit will feature results of state summit discussions as well as a variety of other information that is of interest to parents, advocates, teachers, service providers, administrators, and policy makers. For information on attending the National Summit, see the FAPE web-site at www.fape.org, the IDEA Partnerships web-site at www.ideainfo.org or link to it through www.pacer.org

IDEA Reauthorization Bill Update

Republican and Democratic staff for the Senate HELP Committee called the education and disability communities in for a briefing recently, to announce that the bi-partisan IDEA reauthorization bill is not ready for "prime time." The staff clarified that they continue to work together and are making good progress. The bill should be completed shortly and will be introduced in early June.

When the bill is introduced, stakeholders will have 2 weeks to review it carefully and provide suggestions to the Committee. Then, after 2 weeks, the Committee will present a substitute bill for mark up. Staff suggested that stakeholders be prepared to review the bill immediately upon its introduction and provide written suggestions for changes very quickly. The House passed its reauthorization bill, HR 1350, on April 30th. (Source: The Education Report, Washington Partners, LLC)

NCPIE is a core partner in the FAPE Project

For more information on FAPE visit them on-line at www.fape.org