

# No Child Left Behind

## Parent Notifications Required by NCLB

### Action Guide for Parents and Communities

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Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

## Overview

Meaningful communications with parents and community members by the state education agencies, school district and individual schools is imperative to school support and improvement. Continual and constant communications between educators, and parents and the community should already be an integral component of the school program, but NCLB requires that there are certain times during the year that parents and the community be informed about such information as: state, school district, and school report card information; the identification of schools or the district being identified as needing improvement or corrective action; the placement of students in ELL programs; the availability of public school choice and/or supplemental educational services; information about the district's Title I parent involvement policies; and information to parents about their school being identified as "persistently dangerous." In addition, the law specifically states that parents receive information "to the extent practicable... in a language and format that parents can understand." This Action Brief provides a review of these NCLB notification requirements.

## Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

Most of the notification provisions in NCLB require that the state, local district and/or individual school entities notify parents about certain aspects of the school program. The area where the school entities must disseminate information to the community relates to the annual state and local school district report cards. The reports cards provide information about the state, school district, and individual school progress in meeting the AYP expectation, along with other indicators of academic progress. Please note that this information will often be in addition to other measures of aptitude and progress that the state or local school districts may administer, and provide community organization with rich and powerful mechanisms to engage community members in discussions about the meaning of academic data.

However, because community notification about state, school district and individual school information and progress is not as prevalent as requirements to notify parents, that does not mean the community-based organizations do not play an important role in working with schools and parents. Effective communications between the home and school is an essential element in building a relationship of trust, understanding and support in improving the public school performance. Given that schools must communicate with parents in languages and formats they can understand, it is critical that community and parent leaders have open channels of communications so that they are equipped with the information they need to provide support to parents in Title I schools.

### Action Opportunities

- Know and be informed of all of the areas where NCLB requires the school entities to notify the community and/or parents about academic progress. This information relates to state, school district and individual school information.
- Provide help and support to the school district in disseminating academic progress information through various means: to community organization members through meetings and newsletters, community and town meetings, the media, and faith-based channels. Everyone

Law Citation	Provision	Title I	ELL	All Parents	Responsibility to Notify	Timeline for Notification
Title I, Section 1111 (h)(6)	<b>Teacher Quality:</b> Parents have a right to request information regarding the qualifications of the student's classroom teachers.	✓		✓	Local school district	Beginning of each school year
Title I, Section 1111 (h)(6)(B) i	<b>Teacher Quality:</b> Parents must be notified if their child is taught by a teacher for 4 or more weeks (20 days) that does not meet the state's definition of "highly qualified"	✓		✓	Local school district	Timely Notice
Title I, Section 1111 (h)(6)(B) (i), Section 1112 (c)(1)(f)	<b>Student Academic Assessments:</b> Parents should receive information on their child's achievement on each of the State academic assessments in an understandable and uniform format.	✓		✓	Local school district	As soon as is practically possible after the test is taken
Title I, Section 1112 (c)(1)(A)	<b>Schoolwide Title I Eligibility:</b> LEA's must inform parents about schoolwide Title I programs and the authority of Title I schools with such programs to consolidate funds from Federal, State, and local sources.	✓			Local school district	Timely notice
Title I, Section 1111 (h) (1)(A), (h) (2)(A), (h)(2)(E)	<b>Public Dissemination of Report Card Data:</b> The local education agency must publicly disseminate to parents report card data that are sufficient to yield statistically reliable information that explains and defines the academic status of the school and student achievement and that do not reveal personal identifiable information about an individual student. The information must be in an understandable and uniform format and widely available through public means, such as posting on the Internet, distribution through the media and public agencies. (See Report Cards Action Brief)			✓	State department of education and local school district	Annual reports: Beginning of every school year
Title I, Section 1116 (a)(1)(C), 1116 (b)(6A-F)	Results of the <b>local annual school reviews</b> to determine if the school is making AYP must be disseminated to parents. Parents must be promptly notified if their child's school has been identified as in need of improvement, corrective action, or for restructuring. This notification must include, among several other things, an explanation of what the identification means, how the school compares in terms of academic achievement to other schools served, transfer options, an explanation of how the parents can become involved in addressing the academic issue that caused the school to be identified for school improvement. (See Standards and Assessment Action Brief)	✓		✓		Annually and promptly after identification as in need of improvement is established
Title I, Section 1116 (b)(1)(E), 1116 (b)(1)(F), 1116 (b)(9) Regulations 200.22, 200.23	<b>Public School Choices:</b> Parents shall be notified that they have the option to transfer their child to another public school served by the LEA with transportation provided, which may be a public charter school, that has not been identified for school improvement. (See Choice Action Brief)	✓			Local school district	Annually, if practicable, before beginning of the school year, but not later than first day of school year following identification

Law Citation	Provision	Title I	ELL	All Parents	Responsibility to Notify	Timeline for Notification
Title I, Section 1116 (b)(9)(C)	<b>Alternative Governance:</b> The LEA shall provide prompt notice to parents when corrective action measures fail to make AYP and when the school district may choose to place the school under alternative governance arrangements.	✓			Local school district	Not later than the beginning of the school year
Title I, Section 1116(c)(1)(b), 1116 (c)(1)(s)	The State must share the results of the state review of the LEA in making AYP with parents, and if the agency is identified for improvement, the reasons for that identification and how parents can participate in upgrading the quality of the LEA.	✓		✓	State Education Agency	Annually
Title I, Section 1116(c)(10)(E)	Parents must receive information on any corrective action the SEA takes through means such as the Internet, public agencies, and the media.	✓		✓	State Education Agency	
Title I, Section 1112 (g)(1)(A)(i-vii)	Parents of limited English proficient children must be informed about, among other things, the reason for the identification of their child as limited English proficient and in need of placement in a language instruction educational program, the child's level of English proficiency, how such level was assessed, and the status of the child's academic achievement. (See English Language Learners Action Brief for complete review of provisions under this section.)	✓	✓		Local school district	Not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, inform a parent of a limited English
Title I, Section 1112 (g)(1)(B)(2) and Title III, Section 3302 (b)	<b>Separate Notification of Failure to Meet English Language Attainment Objectives:</b> School districts implementing ELL programs must meet annual measurable objectives towards the attainment of English language proficiency by ELL students identified for such programs. When school districts fail to meet the defined objectives, they must notify parents of students identified for the program separately of the failure. (See English Language Learners Action Brief)	✓	✓		Local school district	Not later than 30 days after failure occurs
Title I, Section 1112 (g)(4) and Title III, Section 3302 (a)	<b>Notice of Parent Meeting for English Language Learners:</b> Each local education agency receiving Title I funds must implement effective outreach to parents of limited English proficient students that informs them on how they may be involved in the education of their children, be active participants in assisting their children to attain English proficiency, help their children achieve at high levels in core academic subjects, as well as meet challenging State academic achievement and content standards. This outreach includes holding and sending notice of opportunities for parents to participate in regular meetings with schools for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of students identified for these programs. (See English Language Learners Action Brief)	✓	✓		Local school district	Timely notice

Law Citation	Provision	Title I	ELL	All Parents	Responsibility to Notify	Timeline for Notification
Title I, Section 1119 (i)	Parents have the right to request principal verification of highly qualified staff requirements	✓		✓	School level	Annually
Title I Section 1116 (e)(2)(A-III)	<b>Notice of Supplemental Services:</b> Once a school has been identified as in need of improvement for 2 consecutive years, local school districts must notify all parents of children in the poorly performing school of the option to have their child receive supplemental education services.	✓		✓	Local school district	Start of the school year
Title I, Section 1118 (a)(2)	<b>District Notice of Parent Involvement Policy Meetings:</b> Local school districts that receive Title I funds must develop jointly and distribute to parents a written parent involvement policy, which explains the district's expectations for parent involvement, including how the district will provide technical assistance to schools in implementing effective parent involvement activities. (See Community and Parent Decision-Making Action Brief)	✓			Local school district	Timely notification
Title I, Section 1118 (b)(1)	<b>School Notice of Parent Involvement Policy Meetings:</b> Schools must develop jointly with and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy. (See Community and Parent Decision-Making Action Brief)	✓			School level	Timely notification
Title I, Section 1118 (d)	<b>School-Parent Compacts</b> are a component of school-level parental involvement policies, and must be developed by the school, teacher and parents as a description of how parents, the entire school staff and students themselves will work together for improved student academic achievement.	✓			School level	Start of the school year
Title I, Section 1120 (a)(1)	<b>Participation of Children Enrolled in Private Schools:</b> Private school families of children in schools participating in Title I service or activities must be assured that they can participate on an equitable basis.				Local school district	Annually
Title VI, Section 602	<b>National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):</b> Parents of children participating in NAEP must be notified before an assessment is administered that their child may be excused from the assessment, and that students are not required to answer any test questions (Section 411 under the Amendment to the National Education Statistics Act of 1994)				National Assessment Governing Board	Before the Assessment

Law Citation	Provision	Title I	ELL	All Parents	Responsibility to Notify	Timeline for Notification
Title IX, Section 9532	<b>Notice of Unsafe Schools</b> Local school districts must notify parents of each student attending a school deemed by the state education agency as a "persistently dangerous" school about the unsafe school choice option. This option allows parents of students in such schools, or students who become the victim of a violent crime while on the grounds of any school (whether deemed unsafe or not) to attend a safe school within the district, including a public charter school.			✓	Local school district	Within 10 days of notification by the SEA of unsafe status
Title IX, Section 9532	<b>Notice to Parent of Victim of Violent Act Against a Student</b>			✓		Within 10 days of the violent act
Title IX, Section 9528(2)	<b>Notice to Obtain Written Parental Consent for Military or College Recruiters</b> Districts must notify parents of the option to request that information about their child not be given to any military or college recruiters without prior written parental consent.			✓		After recruiters have requested student information
Title X, Part C, Section 722(e)(3c)	<b>Notice of Education Services for Homeless Children and Youths</b> Parents, guardians of or homeless children themselves must receive notification at the time of enrollment of several things: the choice of schools they may attend; the fact that they are not required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youth; that they must be given comparable services like other children enrolled in the school, including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meal programs; and that they should not be stigmatized by school personnel.			✓	State department of education and local school district	Upon enrollment and at least twice annually while the child is enrolled in such school
Title X, Part C, Section 722(g)(6)(v)	<b>Notice of Education Rights of Homeless Children and Youths</b> Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth must be disseminated and made available in places where such children and youth receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.			✓	Local school district	Distributed every year to locations and places that provide services to the homeless

in the community should possess the information they need to judge the quality and the health of their public schools.

- Notification is only the FIRST step in a communications process. Notification opens the communications door, but communication efforts need to be sustained over a period of time to be effective and lead to meaningful improvements. Work with your school district and parent organizations in developing continuing communication strategies. Some areas of work could include:
  - Use more than one single channel of communication. Letters sent through the mail are often the least effective means of notification and communication
  - Include face-to-face meetings, the Internet, radio talk shows, the media, and town meetings in the communication strategies;
  - Avoid education jargon, and use language that the community and parents can understand;
  - Notifications and other communications should be positive and let the community know that student academic progress is a priority;
  - Make sure that the notifications are sent in a timely manner, after the district or school receives information;
  - Be sensitive to parents and community members whose primary language is not English, or who are intimidated by language of standards and testing;
  - Avoid resorting to standardized form letters to communicate with parents. Unfortunately, some school districts will minimally comply with NCLB, without seeing the notification process as an opportunity to build positive relationships with parents and the community; and
  - The community and parents should understand the purpose of the communication, and community organizations can make their services available to citizens who need additional information.
- The message and content are extremely important. You can work with the school district in assuring that:
  - Community and parents understand the basics of NCLB and AYP expectations;
  - The annual results of AYP and the impact of those results on the district as a whole and the various schools are understood;
  - If there are schools that have been identified as low performing, explain what that means, explain the assessment program including an explanation of both the assets and flaws of high stakes testing, and describe what the district intends to do to increase achievement;
  - Community leaders can serve as interpreters of information for parents and the community. Do parents need follow-up information to the notification? Are there community advocates that might serve to help parents make decisions about public school choice? Supplementary Educational Services, or selection of an ELL program? Has the district developed Title I parent involvement policies? Do parents understand their rights and responsibilities related to the policy?
  - As the school district receives academic progress information about the district, hold community meetings to determine what to do with the data, and plan for next steps, especially if school improvements are required. Remember, the community, as well as parents, have a responsibility to assure quality schools for all children.

## Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

For NCLB notifications to be meaningful, it is critical that parent leaders and organizations communicate the following to parents:

- The basic elements of NCLB and AYP;
- The notifications that parents will or may receive required of NCLB, what those notifications must include, which educational entity is required to send the notification, and when during the year the notifications must be sent. Use the Action Brief as one of your communications tools;
- The notifications must be in a languages and format parents can understand; and
- The names of school district officials or community members that parents can contact if they have questions about the notification, or do not fully understand the content of the notification.

### Action Opportunities

- Inform and explain to parents in advance about the notifications that will or may receive related to information about NCLB and their child.
- Work with the school district and individual school about the most effective means of reaching parents, and in a format and a language that is understandable.
- Use the notification provisions to engage parents, and discuss how important it is for them to receive academic progress information about their child and school. Also, use the notification provisions as a means, but not the only means, of encouraging effective communications between parents, teachers, and the principal.
- Parent leaders should make parents aware of when in the year they can expect to be notified about the state, school district and school report cards. They should work with parents in understanding what information will be on the report cards, and the impact that information has on their child and school.
- In the case that parents receive notification about their school being identified as needing improvement or corrective action, encourage the school to develop a communications strategy with parents that includes more than a letter to the home. Encourage the school to call a special meeting of the parents to explain the letter, what the next steps for improvement will be, and how parents can assist the school in meeting AYP expectations. In addition, develop a strategy to reach those parents who do not attend the meeting such as parent-teacher conferences, phone calls to the home, or home visitations.
- Be sensitive to those parents who may require special language assistance, and assure that the school provides translation support as needed.
- For ELL parents who receive a notification about special language programs for their child, provide assistance as needed in explaining the program options to parents, how to decide which may be best for their children, and assure that the school district provides language assistance with those parents who do not speak and or understand English.
- Serve as a “bridge” between your school and families to help enhance communications. Remember, notification is only the FIRST step in a communications process. Notification opens the communications door, but communication efforts need to be sustained over a period of time to be effective and lead to meaningful improvements. Work with your school dis-

trict and school in developing communication strategies that are continuous throughout the year and even through the summer months. Steps to effective communications should include:

- Use more than a single channel of communication. Letters sent through the mail are often the least effective means of notification and communication.
- Include face-to-face meetings, the Internet, radio talk shows, the media, and town meetings in the communication strategies.
- Avoid education jargon, and use language that the community and parents can understand.
- Notifications and other communications should be positive and let the community know that student academic progress is a priority.
- Make sure that the notifications are sent in a timely manner, after the district or school receives information.
- Be sensitive to parents and community members whose primary language is not English, or who are intimidated by language of standards and testing.
- Avoid resorting to standardized form letters to communicate with parents. Unfortunately, some school districts will minimally comply with NCLB, without seeing the notification process as an opportunity to build positive relationships with parents and the community.
- The community and parents should understand the purpose of the communication, and community organizations can make their services available to citizens who need additional information.
- Work with your school and parents in discussing the ways that parents use the information from the notification they receive.

### **Our Vision**

Every day, in every community, *every* child  
in America benefits from a quality public education.

### **Our Mission**

To build public demand and mobilize resources for  
quality public education for *all* children through a national  
constituency of local education funds and individuals.



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

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