



LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

SECTION II

Legal Requirements

Overview

In order to improve student achievement and close the achievement gaps, schools must implement scientific, research-based teaching strategies, instill a climate of cultural competence among teachers, and provide sustained and job-embedded professional development. School leaders must believe in the benefits of parental engagement and put forth a policy and plan that will lead to effective parent engagement in schools.

Several state laws mandate that schools involve parents in certain processes and procedures.

- The Michigan State Board of Education has recognized the importance of parent and family engagement and passed the *Family Involvement Policy* on May 15, 1997.
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/familyinvolvementpolicy_175376_7.pdf
- The Michigan House of Representatives also understands the value of parents and families and in 2001 urged schools to develop involvement contracts with parents of their students.
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2001-2002/publicact/htm/2001-PA-0029.htm>
- The Michigan Senate acknowledged the role of parents and families in education in 2004 and called upon schools to develop parent involvement plans designed to support student achievement.
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2003-2004/publicact/htm/2004-PA-0107.htm>

Federal legislation also governs parental involvement in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/No Child Left Behind (NCLB):

- Title I specifically addresses parent involvement in Section 1118. It outlines the actions required by state departments of education, districts, and schools in relation to parent involvement. Parents are able to participate in policy development at all levels to promote a collaborative approach to increasing student achievement.
- Section 1118 indicates that parents are to be included in the decision-making efforts of the schools and districts. These institutions must also ensure inclusion, enabling parents access to information about their child's education to the "extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand."
- Title I, Part C, the Migrant Education Program, includes mandates regarding parent involvement as well. Part C requires that schools involve parents in their children's education, just as in Title I, Section 1118.

- Title III addresses parental involvement in Section 3302(e). Title III specifically addresses participation of parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) in relation to language instruction programs and language acquisition.
- Section 3302(e) states that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must implement an effective means of outreach to “parents of children with limited English proficiency.”
- The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X of ESEA/NCLB) mandates that schools provide education and training to parents/guardians of homeless children. Training should include information regarding their rights and educational opportunities and provide assistance in navigating the educational system. Title X also states that information will be provided in the parent/guardian’s native language. Additionally, it requires schools to ensure that parents/guardians are provided with meaningful ways to engage in their child’s education.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) also outlines parents’ rights to be involved in their children’s education. IDEA includes certain provisions to ensure that parents’ are able to most effectively advocate for their child.

Additional Information & Resources

1. No Child Left Behind: A Parent Guide
<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.html>
2. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act <http://www.ed.gov/esea>