



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) legislation provides all children with a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high quality education with the expectation of students reaching proficiency or higher on state standards and assessments. The key elements of this law are parent involvement, highly qualified teachers and support personnel, and the use of research based programs and materials. According to this law annual test data is reviewed and every child is expected to be moving toward proficiency and be on grade level on state tests. Schools are measured by the percentage of students proficient and the passing rates of groups of students. The defined groups included School as Whole, White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, Multiracial, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient Student, and Students with Disabilities.

The law provides specific emphasis on reducing achievement gaps for all groups of students.

IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED

Title I is a federal program designed to provide supplemental educational services to children who are disadvantaged. If 35% of the students in a school are eligible for free and reduced lunch, the school qualifies to be a Targeted Assistance Title I School. As 40% of students or more in a school are eligible for free and reduced price lunch, the school qualifies to be a schoolwide Title I program. Schoolwide designation allows federal money to be used to offer supplemental educational services to all students within the school.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

When schools, parents, and families work together to support learning throughout a child's academic career, the child's learning is enhanced and the child is more likely to do well after graduation. The Every Student Succeeds Act expects parents and families to be included by schools in meaningful consultation leading to the development of improvement plans. Schools are expected to develop parent and family engagement plans that build parent leadership capacity. Each school must set aside at least 1% of Title I funds to be used for parent and family engagement activities. Schools usually schedule two or more parent and family engagement activities as well as parent conferences each year. Parents may request additional one-on-one teacher conferences at mutually agreeable times.

Each school's parent and family engagement plan should accomplish the following:

- Convene an annual public meeting to inform parents about Title I and their right to be involved in their children's education. This typically is held at the PTA/PTO meeting.
- Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings at various times of the day.
- Involve parents and families in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of the parent and family engagement plan and policy.
- Provide timely information including the curriculum, the instructional programs available, and the proficiency levels children must meet.
- Provide opportunities for regular meetings (if requested) to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- Provide for parent comments on the content of schoolwide program plans.
- Develop Student-Parent-School Compacts that indicate shared responsibilities for high student academic achievement.
- Provide parental assistance on understanding state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards, as well as how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve their child's achievement.
- Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve achievement.
- Educate school personnel in the value and utility of the contributions of parents, and how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners while building closer ties between parents and schools.