Parental Involvement Provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

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Summary

Requiring or encouraging parents' involvement in the education of their children has been a long-standing goal of Title I, Part A, Education for the Disadvantaged, authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), most recently amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, P.L. 107-110). NCLB encourages parents' involvement by requiring Title I-A schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) to develop, in conjunction with parents, parental involvement policies and school-parent compacts. Schools in LEAs that receive over $500,000 in Title I-A funding must also reserve at least 1% of their Title I-A funds for parental involvement activities. Additionally, the ESEA requires that parents receive notification on their child's school's performance, and, if applicable, their right to transfer their child to a school that met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or to request free tutoring for their child.

This report begins by discussing the various definitions of parental involvement, barriers to increasing parental involvement, research on parental involvement and student achievement, and parental involvement requirements prior to NCLB. It then covers the parental involvement requirements in Title I-A, Sections 1116 and 1118, that were enacted under NCLB and their implementation. A brief discussion of parental involvement requirements in other sections of the ESEA follows. This report concludes by considering two alternative approaches to increasing parental involvement: public charter schools and community schools.

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Introduction

Requiring or encouraging parents' involvement in the education of their children has been a long-standing goal of Title I, Part A, Education for the Disadvantaged, authorized by the of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), most recently amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, P.L. 107-110). However, activities that constitute parental involvement in the ESEA have changed since the law's inception from parent advisory council meetings to volunteering in school to school-parent compacts and helping children learn at home. NCLB continued to view parents as partners in their children's education, but it also included parental notification requirements and two new options for parents whose children attend schools that did not meet state standards. These two options are Title I public school choice, which allows a parent to transfer a child from a school that has not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years or more to a school that has met AYP, and supplemental educational services (SES), which allows a parent to enroll a child in free tutoring if the child's school has not met AYP for three or more years.

Most of the parental involvement requirements in the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, are in Title I-A, Section 1118, though Section 1116 includes parental notification requirements and Sections 1111 and 1112 also have parental involvement provisions. Additionally, there are parental involvement requirements in Title I-B (Reading First and Even Start), Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students), Title IV (21st Century Schools), Title V (Parent Information and Resource Centers), and Title IX (parental consent regarding armed forces recruiter access to student information).

Recent state monitoring reports and implementation evaluations from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) have found that most state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools need to improve their implementation of parental involvement requirements, especially regarding parent notification. While LEAs and schools can surely refine their current parental involvement strategies, alternative approaches to increasing parental involvement could include more full-service approaches such as expanding public charter schools and community schools.

This report examines various modes of parental involvement in the education of their children. It delineates the parental involvement activities that are promoted through the ESEA. It examines progress made toward implementing these activities, and examines research on the importance of various parental involvement activities. It also discusses possible approaches for enhancing parental involvement in education.

It is worth noting that the research reviewed for this report does not generally provide in-depth information about how thoroughly parental activities are implemented in locales or about what makes them more or less successful at achieving goals. Information on implementation of parental involvement activities covered in this report generally comes from survey data reporting on the frequency of activities and on school personnel views on the importance of these activities. Additionally, this report does not examine whether parental involvement activities are uniformly beneficial. While the parental activities reported on are ones which many schools are seeking to promote and which are generally thought to be beneficial to students, parents, and teachers, it is possible that they are implemented in some settings in ways that are not beneficial. As an example, one can imagine involving parents in instructional support activities that do not align

well with parents' backgrounds or skills. These issues were not a central focus of the literature reviewed for this report, and are beyond the purview of the report.

Parental Involvement

Requiring or encouraging parents' involvement in the education of their children has been a long-standing goal of Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Parental involvement initially referred to policy involvement—ensuring that schools were focusing Title I-A funds on the needs of disadvantaged students. The 1988 and 1994 reauthorizations of the ESEA (P.L. 100-297 and P.L. 103-382, respectively) included an emphasis on helping parents become more involved in their child's education. More recently, NCLB gave parents the new role of consumers:[1] through new accountability requirements, parents have the option of choosing a different school for their child or electing free tutoring (supplemental educational services) for their child if their child's school fails to make AYP for two consecutive years or more years.[2]

Defining Parental Involvement

In Section 9101 of ESEA, parental involvement is defined as:

> the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—
>
> (A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
>
> (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
>
> (C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decisionmaking and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
>
> (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118.[3]

The statutory definition exemplifies the fact that there is not a single, uniform definition of parental involvement. Similarly, the practical meaning of "parental involvement" has different meanings as well. Joyce Epstein, a noted expert on parental involvement, uses a popular framework that includes the following six types of parental involvement, all of which are addressed—to varying extents—in Section 1118 of ESEA:

1. Parenting—Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

[1] Kristen Tosh Cowan, *The New Title I: The Changing Landscape of Accountability* (Washington, DC: Thompson Publishing Group, 2003).

[2] For more information on school choice, see CRS Report RL33506, *School Choice Under the ESEA: Programs and Requirements*, by (name redacted). For more information on supplemental educational services, see CRS Report RL31329, *Supplemental Educational Services for Children from Low-Income Families Under ESEA Title I-A*, by (name redacted).

[3] Section 1118, Parental Involvement, includes requirements for LEA and school parental involvement policies, school-parent compacts, and building capacity for involvement.

2. Communicating—Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
3. Volunteering—Recruit and organize parent help and support.
4. Learning at home—Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.
5. Decision making—Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
6. Collaborating with the community—Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.[4]

The above framework focuses on school-related parental involvement, and Epstein's research focuses on how schools can help increase parental involvement. Other researchers focus on more specific parental involvement activities, including parents' attendance at school functions, parents' expectations of their child, and how often parents check their child's homework or read to their child.

Frequency and Types of Parental Involvement

Clearly, there is not a single definition of "parental involvement," and the list of activities that are often viewed as parental involvement is lengthy. The lack of a single definition has posed problems for researchers attempting to study the effects of parental involvement on student education outcomes, as discussed later in this report. Though researching the effects of parental involvement is difficult, measuring the frequency of various parental involvement activities is easier. In a 2006-2007 ED survey, 92% of parents of children in grades K-12 reported that their child's school contacted them concerning their child's performance, 83% reported school communication about how to help with homework, and 86% reported that the school contacted them about parents' expected role in school.[5] In addition, 89% of parents reported attending a general school or Parent Teacher Organization/Parent Teacher Association (PTO/PTA) meeting, 78% reported attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, 74% attended a school or class event, and 46% volunteered or served on a school committee. The survey also found that 70% of parents of students in grades 6-12 expected their child to attain at least a four- or five-year college degree.[6]

Responses to survey questions regarding communication between the school and the parent were fairly consistent across race, poverty status, and parents' education level. On the other hand, in the series of questions regarding parental participation in school activities, parents' education

[4] Joyce L. Epstein, Mavis G. Sanders, and Beth S. Simon et al., *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc., 2002).

[5] Findings on frequency and types of parental involvement are from Kathleen Herrold, Kevin O'Donnell, and Gail Mulligan, *Parent and Family Involvement in Education, 2006–07 School Year, From the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007*, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC, August 2008, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008050.pdf, tables 2, 3, and 6.

[6] Though parental expectations are not a type of school-based parental involvement, research discussed later in this report has focused on this type of parental involvement and found that parental expectations are highly correlated with student achievement.

level and income were positively correlated with participation. For example, 70% of parents with less than a high school education reported attending regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences, while the percentage reached 82% for parents with a graduate or professional degree. The differences were more pronounced in the percentage of parents that reported volunteering or serving on a school committee, falling almost 10 percentage points between each education level on the survey, from 64% of parents with a graduate or professional degree who reported volunteering or serving on a school committee to 20% of parents without a high school diploma who reported doing so. Similarly, poor parents were less likely to participate in school activities, as were parents who did not speak English. Additionally, parents of older students were less likely to be involved in school activities: over 90% of parents of students in grades K-5 reported attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, 76% of parents of students in grades 6-8 reported doing so, and 61% of parents with high school-aged children reported attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference.[7]

A similar pattern was found in parents' educational expectations for their children: about 90% of parents with at least a bachelor's degree expected their child to attain at least a four- or five-year college degree, while 50% of parents with a high school diploma, GED, or less than a high school education had similar expectations. When examined by race/ethnicity, 90% of Asian parents had such expectations, 73% of white parents did, 67% of Hispanic parents did, and 63% of black parents expected their child to attain at least a four- or five-year college degree.[8]

The 2006-2007 ED survey included a wide range of parental involvement activities, which many schools are seeking to promote. It is worth noting that parental involvement activities are not likely to be occurring in a consistent manner across all settings. The survey data reviewed here are useful for examining the prevalence of activities, but are not designed to provide more nuanced information on the nature and intensity of activities.

Barriers to Increased Parental Involvement

Findings from ED's survey support a wide body of research showing that parents' education level, income, and ability to speak English are positively correlated with most aspects of parental involvement.[9] Low-income parents may have inflexible work schedules or work multiple jobs, preventing them from becoming more involved. Parents with little formal education may also feel intimidated by the school environment.[10] Such a feeling may be warranted, as some teachers or schools may assume that their students' parents do not want to be involved, creating an additional barrier to parental involvement. Additionally, parents need to receive timely and clear information—in a language they understand—about their child's education. The absence of such

[7] Herrold, O'Donnell, and Mulligan, 2008, table 3.

[8] Herrold, O'Donnell, and Mulligan, 2008, table 6.

[9] One exception to this is that parents who are less-educated, poor, or do not speak English were more likely to check that their child's homework was completed: 94% of parents without a high school diploma reported checking to see that their child's homework was done, compared to 81% of parents with a graduate or professional degree. This finding is also consistent with other research on parental involvement. Researchers have hypothesized that parents who know their child is struggling with school may be more likely to check to make sure that homework is complete; if the child is doing well in school, parents may not feel the need to check for homework completion.

[10] Patricia Van Velsor and Gracelia L. Orozco, "Involving Low-Income Parents in the Schools: Communitycentric Strategies for School Counselors," Professional School Counseling, vol. 11, no. 1 (2007), p 17–24.

information creates a barrier in parents' ability to become more involved in their child's education.

ED's survey findings also support research showing that parents are more likely to become involved in their child's education if their child is younger. This lack of involvement in the education of older children may occur for the following reasons: (1) parents may believe their involvement is simply not as important as it was when their child was younger, (2) older children desire their independence and let their parents know that, and (3) parents may not have the education to help older children with their homework.[11]

Schools and LEAs are aware of the challenges to increasing parental involvement: ED's National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind* (NLS-*NCLB*), found that principals and teachers reported needing technical assistance in engaging more parents in their child's education. In a national sample, principals at 72% of schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring[12] reported that during the 2005-2006 or 2006-2007 school year they needed assistance in engaging parents. Similarly, 78% of teachers in identified schools reported that during the 2006-2007 school year, insufficient parent involvement was a "major" or "moderate" challenge of improving student performance. In the LEA sample, 31% of Title I-A LEAs reported that during the 2005-2006 or 2006-2007 school year they needed technical assistance in identifying parental involvement strategies.[13]

Research on Parental Involvement and Student Achievement

As mentioned previously, studying the effects of parental involvement on student achievement is a difficult task. In addition to not having a single definition of parental involvement, researchers also have to disentangle effects of parental involvement from other potential influences on achievement, which include effects of parents' education or income. That is, as discussed above, compared with less educated and less wealthy parents, parents with more education and higher incomes tend to be more involved with their children's schooling. Children of such parents also tend to get better grades and graduate high school and attend college with greater frequency than children whose parents do not have those characteristics. Though the vast majority of published studies show that parental involvement is positively correlated with student achievement, many of the studies struggle with these two complications associated with isolating the effects of parental involvement on achievement.[14]

Examining three frequently cited reviews of parental involvement evaluations, it is clear that many researchers agree that various forms of parental involvement in a child's education are positively associated with increases in student academic achievement, and this finding has held

[11] Jacquelynne S. Eccles and Rena D. Harold, "Parent-School Involvement during the Early Adolescent Years," *Teachers College Record*, vol. 94, no. 3 (1993), p. 568–587.

[12] For more information on improvement, corrective action, and restructuring statuses and the consequences of a TitleI-A school failing to make AYP, see CRS Report RL33371, *K-12 Education: Implementation Status of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110)*, coordinated by (name redacted).

[13] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*.

[14] For a discussion of the inadequacies of current research on parental involvement's effects on student achievement, see Doreen J. Mattingly, Radmila Prislon, and Thomas L. McKenzie, et al., "Evaluating Evaluations: The Case of Parent Involvement Programs," *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 72, no. 4 (Winter 2002), p. 549–576.

for racial minority students and for both boys and girls.[15] However, various activities under the umbrella of "parental involvement" have different effects on student achievement, and it is not clear by what methods parents can be encouraged to participate in the most effective activities. Some research indicates that parents' aspirations and expectations for achievement are strongly correlated with student achievement.[16] In fact, a study that was not included in any of the three reviews found that 1st grade students' reading achievement was strongly correlated with parental aspirations and parents' involvement with home-based learning; once these two factors were taken into account, parents' socioeconomic status no longer was a predictor of student test scores.[17]

The benefit of parents participating in specific school activities or school-sponsored parental involvement programs is less clear. Some research has found that that school-sponsored activities do not have as strong a relationship with student achievement as parental involvement activities that are self-initiated (e.g., parental aspirations and parenting style).[18] However, school-sponsored programs may indirectly improve student achievement by encouraging self-initiated parental involvement.[19] Some studies have concluded that effective school-based parental involvement programs must be comprehensive and reach out to all families and involve them in all roles, and must be well-planned and long-lasting.[20]

Some studies have found that home supervision, such as monitoring homework, has a weak or negative correlation with student achievement.[21] Finally, research seems to be inconclusive on the effects that parental involvement in decision-making (e.g., advisory councils or governance boards) has on student achievement.[22]

Parental Involvement Provisions Prior to NCLB

Requiring or encouraging parents' involvement in the education of their children and in the decisions affecting the education of their children has been a goal of Title I-A of the ESEA since its enactment in 1965. The ESEA has been reauthorized eight times (including most recently in 2001, when it was amended by NCLB), and the parental involvement provisions often changed with each reauthorization, and sometimes in between, through guidance from the U.S. Office of Education and, later, the U.S. Department of Education.

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[15] The three reviews are: Xitao Fan and Michael Chen, "Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis," *Educational Psychology Review*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2001), p. 1–22; *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, ed. Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla (National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994); and William H. Jeynes, "A Meta-Analysis of the Relation of Parental Involvement to urban Elementary School Student Academic Achievement," *Urban Education*, vol. 40, no. 3 (May 2005), p. 237–269.

[16] Fan and Chen, 2001 and Jeynes, 2005.

[17] Jerome V. D'Agostino, Larry V. Hedges, and Kenneth K. Wong, et al., "Title I Parent-Involvement Programs: Effects on Parenting Practices and Student Achievement," in *Title I: Compensatory Education at the Crossroads*, ed. Geoffrey D. Bordman, Samuel C. Stringfield, and Robert E. Slavin (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), p. 117–136.

[18] Fan and Chen, 2001 and Jeynes, 2005.

[19] D'Agostino et al., 2001.

[20] Henderson and Berla, 1994.

[21] Fan and Chen, 2001.

[22] Henderson and Berla, 1994.

Parent Advisory Councils

In 1968, the U.S. Office of Education issued a program guide officially recommending that LEAs establish Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) to give parents an opportunity to be involved in Title I-A programs and improve the effectiveness of such programs. In 1971, Title I-A guidelines were amended to require the establishment of LEA-wide PACs, and in the 1974 reauthorization of the ESEA (P.L. 93-380), Title I-A schools were required to have their own PACs as well. A majority of PAC members had to be parents of children who participated in Title I-A programs.[23]

A 1978 National Institute of Education study found that "there is considerable confusion about the role of PACs and that their operational characteristics vary widely."[24] Specifically, the extent to which PAC members were involved in the planning, development, and evaluation of Title I-A programs varied. Additionally, the amount of training provided to PAC members on Title I-A regulations varied between PACs; without proper training, PAC members may not have been able to appropriately advise on Title I-A implementation.

In the 1981 reauthorization of the ESEA (P.L. 97-35), LEAs and schools were no longer required to have PACs. In general, the 1981 reauthorization required less parental involvement in the Chapter 1 (previously, and later, Title I)[25] program than had previously been required by the ESEA. An ED study examined parental involvement in 20 LEAs in 11 states after the 1981 reauthorization of the ESEA. In most LEAs, PACs functioned as a way for the LEA to communicate with parents, rather than as a means for parents to advise the LEA on Chapter 1 implementation. Some LEAs no longer had LEA-wide PACs and very few schools had their own PACs.[26]

The Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297) reintroduced mandatory parental involvement in Chapter 1 programs, but PACs were not required. An ED study of Chapter 1 implementation before and after the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments found no change in the percentage of sampled LEAs that reported having PACs: 64% in the 1987-1988 school year and 65% in the 1990-1991 school year.[27]

Parents as Partners

The Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 reintroduced mandatory parental involvement and included the following parental involvement objectives: communicating with individual parents about their children's progress in the Chapter 1 program, training parents to help their children at home, communicating key features of the Chapter 1 program, and having parents advise schools about the Chapter 1 program. That is, the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments viewed parents as

[23] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, The National institute of Education, *Compensatory Education Study: A Final Report from the National Institute of Education*, Washington, DC, September 1978.

[24] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978, p. 104.

[25] In the 1981 and 1988 reauthorization of the ESEA (P.L. 97-35 and P.L. 100-297, respectively), "Chapter I" was used instead of "Title I."

[26] Michael S. Knapp, Brenda J. Turnbull, and Craig H. Blakely, et al., *Local Program Design and Decisionmaking Under Chapter 1 of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, DC, December 1986.

[27] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Policy and Planning, *The Chapter 1 Implementation Study: Interim Report*, Washington, DC, 1992.

partners in their child's education. According to an ED study, in 1990, between 81% and 97% of sampled LEAs reported incorporating each of the four objectives into their LEA goals. Over half of the LEAs reported that communicating with parents about their children's progress was the major focus of the LEA's parental involvement strategy; 28% said their main focus was training parents in ways to help their children at home. Only 3% of LEAs reported that their major focus was having parents serve in an advisory role.[28]

ED studied how parental involvement changed after passage of the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments by comparing responses from a national sample of Chapter 1 LEAs during the 1987-1988 school year and the 1990-1991 school year. In almost every instance, there was an increase in the percentage of LEAs that reported offering specific parental involvement activities. For example, the proportion of LEAs that reported disseminating home-based education activities to reinforce classroom instruction increased from 46% in 1987-1988 to 73% in 1990-1991. A larger percentage of LEAs also used parents as classroom volunteers (53% compared with 40%), utilized parent liaisons (47% compared with 32%), and offered activities for parents who lacked literacy skills (22% compared with 9%) or whose native language was not English (22% compared with 11%). LEAs with a larger student population offered more parental involvement activities than smaller LEAs. In addition to the national survey, the study included site visits to a sample of 54 schools in 27 LEAs in nine states. These site visits indicated that several factors were key to effective parental involvement programs, including leadership at the SEA and LEA level; dedication of SEA, LEA, and school staff; attitudes of school staff towards parents; and recognition of parents' needs.[29]

Parental Involvement Policies and School-Parent Compacts

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA, P.L. 103-382) reauthorized the ESEA and further defined the role of parents as partners in supporting their children's education. The IASA mandated that Title I-A LEAs and schools have parental involvement policies and that Title I-A schools develop school-parent compacts, both new parental involvement requirements.

Section 1116(a) required all LEAs receiving grants under Title I-A to have a written policy on parental involvement, prepared jointly with parents of pupils participating in the program. Among other provisions, the policy had to describe how the LEA would involve parents in the development of the overall LEA plan for Title I-A (Section 1112) and in school identification and improvement procedures (Section 1118); how it would provide coordination to assist Title I-A schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement; how it would build the schools' and parents' capacity for parental involvement; and how it would coordinate parental involvement activities under Title I-A with those of other relevant federal programs.[30] Additionally, the IASA required that at least 1% of an LEA's Title I-A funds be used to support parental involvement if the LEA received more than $500,000 in Title I-A funds.

Section 1116(b) required each Title I-A school to have a parental involvement policy—developed in conjunction with parents—covering how the school would provide parents with timely

[28] U.S. Department of Education, 1992.

[29] U.S. Department of Education, 1992.

[30] "Other relevant programs" include the Reading First program and the Even Start program as well as Head Start, which is not an ESEA program.

information about Title I-A programs, school performance profiles, a description of curriculum and assessments used by the school, and offering opportunities for regular meetings to share opinions and suggestions. School policies also had to address school-parent compacts, which were described in Section 1116(d) of the IASA. At a minimum, school-parent compacts were to "describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction ... and ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning ... and address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis."[31] Ongoing communication consisted of (1) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, (2) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress, and (3) reasonable access to staff. A parent of each student in a Title I-A program was expected to sign the compact, along with a teacher or principal at the school.

By 1998, 75% of principals in a national sample of Title I-A schools reported that their schools used school-parent compacts. Title I-A principals indicated that the compacts were helpful in promoting a variety of outcomes; principals in the highest-poverty schools found the compacts especially helpful. For example, 81% of Title I-A principals from schools where 76%-100% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals reported that compacts helped with homework completion. Additionally, over 70% of such principals reported that compacts helped with school climate (80%), student attendance (76%), student discipline (76%), teacher-parent relations (73%), and reading at home (71%).[32] Though principals found the school-parent compacts helpful, the ED study noted that in 1997 only about one-third of a sample of parents with children in Title I-A schools reported signing parent-compacts.[33]

Participating schools and LEAs were further required to "build capacity" for parental involvement through activities such as helping parents understand state academic content and pupil performance standards and how to help their children meet them, providing materials and training to parents to help them work with their children, educating teachers and other school staff in the value of parental involvement activities, and providing literacy training to parents.[34]

Parental Involvement Provisions in the ESEA, as Amended by NCLB

Parental involvement requirements in NCLB continued to focus on parental involvement policies and school-parent compacts, but also included additional parental notification requirements and two new options for parents whose children attended schools that did not meet state standards. These two options are Title I-A public school choice, which allows a parent to transfer a child from a school that has had not met AYP for two consecutive years or more to a school that has met AYP, and Supplemental Educational Services, which allows a parent to enroll a child in free tutoring if the child's school has not met AYP for three or more years.

[31] IASA, Section 1116(d).

[32] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, *Promising Results, Continuing Challenges: The Final Report of the National Assessment of Title I*, Washington, DC, 1999.

[33] ED cited the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education for the finding that 37% of sampled Title I parents had signed in-class agreements and 32% had signed at-home agreements to assist their children.

[34] If other sources of funding are unavailable, Title I-A funds may be used for this purpose.

Most of the parental involvement requirements in NCLB are contained in Title I-A, Section 1118, though Section 1116 includes parental notification requirements and Sections 1111 and 1112 also have parental involvement provisions. Additionally, there are parental involvement requirements in Title I-B (Reading First and Even Start), Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students), Title IV (21st Century Schools), Title V (Parent Information and Resource Centers), and Title IX (parental consent regarding armed forces recruiter access to student information).

Title I-A, Section 1118, "Parental Involvement"

Many of the relevant Title I-A requirements are found in Section 1118. LEA parental involvement policies required under Section 1118(a) are similar to those required under the IASA, as are school-level parental involvement policies and school-parent compacts. NCLB included additional ways for schools and LEAs to "build capacity" for parental involvement, including requiring that information sent home to parents is "to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand" (Section 1118(e)(5)). Other ways that LEAs and schools *may* support parental involvement include involving parents in the development of training for teachers and principals, arranging school meetings at a variety of times, and establishing an LEA-wide parent advisory council. NCLB specified that a school or LEA may amend an existing parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, if necessary, to include Title I-A parental involvement requirements.

While both the IASA and NCLB required LEAs that received over $500,000 in Title I-A funds to reserve at least 1% of such funds to support parental involvement activities, NCLB has an additional requirement that 95% of funds reserved for parental involvement be distributed to schools. That is, the funds are meant to support school-level parental involvement activities. Funds may be used to support parent workshops or training through hiring outside consultants, purchasing materials, or providing food, transportation, childcare, and translation services to participants. Funds may also be used to send parents to state or national conferences related to parental involvement or Title I-A. In addition, funds may be used for parent liaisons or parent resource centers. A parent liaison's duties could include "conducting home visits, staffing parent centers, distributing *NCLB* information, administering surveys about the family friendliness of schools, informing parents about their children's performance (both good and bad), providing training on parenting skills, and supplying information about how families can meet their basic needs."[35]

All of the parental involvement activities supported or required under Section 1118 are to be provided, "to the extent practicable," in a format and language that is accessible to parents with disabilities, with limited English proficiency, or who are migratory. LEAs and schools are to inform the parents of Title I-A students about Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs, described later in this report) and the services they provide. SEAs are to review LEA parental involvement policies to assure that they meet the requirements of Section 1118.

Schools participating in Title I-A are required to convene at least one annual meeting to which parents of participating pupils are to be invited to explain Title I-A requirements and the rights of

[35] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, *Engaging Parents in Education: Lessons from Five Parental Information and Resource Centers*, Washington, DC, June 2007, p. 43, http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/parents/parentinvolve/engagingparents.pdf.

parents to be involved. Participating schools must also offer to parents a "flexible number" of additional meetings, including "regular meetings" to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children, if requested by parents. Participating schools must involve parents in planning, improvement, and review of Title I-A programs, and provide them with information on the curricula and assessments used at the school.

Parental Involvement Requirements in Title I-A, Section 1116, "Academic Assessment and Local Education Agency and School Improvement"

Section 1116(b)(6) requires LEAs to inform parents of all pupils attending a school that has been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Section 1116 (i.e., the school has failed to meet AYP standards for two consecutive years or more) of the school's status. The notice is to include the reasons for and an explanation of the identification, how the school's performance compares to that of other schools in the LEA and state, an explanation of actions being taken in response to the identification and how parents can become involved in these activities, and an explanation of the parents' right to transfer their child to another public school. Schools that are in year two (or a later year) of improvement must also explain students' right to SES.[36] Similarly, under Section 1116(c)(6), SEAs must inform parents when the LEA serving their child has been identified for improvement (fails to meet AYP standards for LEAs for two more consecutive years or more), the reasons for the identification, and how parents can become involved in improving the LEA's instructional programs. Also, under Section 1116(c)(10)(E), SEAs must inform parents of all pupils attending schools of an LEA that has been identified for corrective action. This notification must take place after two additional years of an LEA failing to meet AYP after being identified for improvement, but may occur at any time once an LEA has been identified for improvement.

Section 1116(b)(3) requires that a school that has been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Section 1116 develop, in consultation with parents, a two-year school improvement plan. In addition to including information on the school's curriculum and academic goals, the plan must "include strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the school" (Section 1116(b)(3)(A)(viii)). There is a similar requirement for LEAs under Section 1116(c)(7).

Implementation of Parental Involvement and Parental Notification Requirements in Title I-A, Sections 1118 and 1116

ED both monitors and evaluates its Title I-A programs. States are responsible for providing leadership and guidance for LEAs and schools in implementing Title I-A policies and procedures. ED monitors states to ensure they are fulfilling this duty through ongoing document reviews and week-long monitoring visits on a three-year cycle. During the site visits, the monitoring team

[36] Through SEA flexibility agreements with ED for the 2008-2009 school year, some LEAs in seven SEAs are allowed to offer students SES in year one of improvement and do not have to offer Title I public school choice until year two of improvement, effectively reversing the order of interventions outlined in Section 1116(b).

reviews documents and conducts interviews with SEA and LEA staff, principals, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.[37]

Congress mandated that ED conduct a National Assessment of Title I, and its evaluation included two longitudinal studies, the National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind* (NLS-*NCLB*) and the Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under *No Child Left Behind* (SSI-*NCLB*). As part of the studies, all states were interviewed during the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 school years, and a nationally representative sample of LEAs, principals, and teachers completed surveys during those same school years. A sample of parents in eight large, urban LEAs completed surveys as well.[38]

Both the state monitoring protocol and the national evaluation survey instruments address the implementation of parental involvement and parent notification provisions. Findings from both, discussed below, indicate that most states, LEAs, and schools need to improve their implementation of parental involvement requirements, especially regarding parent notification requirements.

Monitoring: Parental Involvement and Parent Notification

The first full cycle of monitoring after passage of NCLB occurred between 2003-2004 and 2005-2006. Overall, of the 53 SEAs (50 states, Bureau of Indian Education, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico) reviewed over the three years, 16 (30%) met the requirement that they ensure that LEAs and schools meet parental involvement requirements. However, the percentage of SEAs that met the requirement fell during each year of monitoring, from 57% in 2003-2004, to 33% in 2004-2005, and to 10% by 2005-2006. The decrease in the percentage of SEAs that met parental involvement requirements mirrored a decrease in the percentage of SEAs that met other Title I-A requirements. Over the three-year cycle, ED refined its monitoring procedures and some of the decrease in compliance is probably due to changes in monitoring procedures. However, compared with other requirements, SEAs were weakest overall in compliance for parental involvement requirements.[39]

During the first two years of the second full cycle of monitoring (2006-2007 and 2007-2008), only two SEAs met parental involvement requirements, one in each year. Each of the 29 SEAs that failed to meet the requirement had problems with parent notification materials (e.g., missing required information or sent late) or parental involvement policies (e.g., missing required information, did not include parents in the policies' development, or failed to evaluate policies annually) or both notification materials and policies. Additionally, in 2007-2008, four SEAs did not ensure that parents were informed of their right to request information on teacher qualifications, three SEAs failed to ensure that school-parent compacts contained all required elements, three SEAs did not ensure that schools held annual Title I-A meetings for parents, and

[37] The monitoring protocol and other monitoring information is located at http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/index.html.

[38] U.S. Department of Education reports from the National Assessment of Title I are located at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html#title.

[39] Zollie Stevenson and Charles Laster, *2003–2006 Monitoring Cycle Report*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs, Washington, DC, October 21, 2008, http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/monitoringcyclerpt1008.pdf.

two SEAs did not ensure that schools consulted parents on how to spend Title I-A parental involvement funds.[40]

Implementation Evaluation: Parental Involvement in Section 1118

In the NLS-*NCLB*, 28% of principals of schools identified for improvement reported that during the 2006-2007 school year, implementing strategies for increasing parents' involvement in their children's education was a major focus of their school improvement strategy.[41] In the same survey, principals of Title I-A schools (both those identified for improvement and those not identified for improvement) were asked about specific strategies used to promote parental involvement during the 2005-2006 school year. Most Title I-A principals reported focusing on arranging school meetings at times convenient for parents (95% reported this was a "major" or "moderate" focus) and ensuring that information was sent home in a language parents could understand (69%) (see **Table 1**). Title I-A principals also reported focusing on providing materials and training to help parents improve the achievement of their children (59%) and educating teachers and other staff on the value of parental involvement and how to work with parents (59%). Title I-A principals did not report a large emphasis on providing childcare or transportation to meetings (39%) or on employing parent liaisons or a parent coordinator (33%).

Table 1. Percent of Title I-A Principals Reporting a Major or Moderate Focus on Various Parental Involvement Strategies, 2005–06

Strategy	Percent	Strategy	Percent
Arranging school meetings at times that are convenient for parents	95	Working with community leaders and community-based organizations to promote parent involvement	46
Ensuring that information related to school and parent programs is sent to parents in a language they can understand	69	Coordinating and integrating Title I parent involvement efforts with other programs such as Head Start or Reading First	45
Educating teachers and other staff about the value of parent involvement and how to reach out to and work with parents	59	Providing child care or transportation services to support parent participation	39
Providing materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve achievement	59	Employing a parent liaison or home-school coordinator	33

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*, n=1,365

Around 80% of Title I-A principals reported that during the 2005-2006 school year at least half of their parents participated in parent-teacher conferences (81%) or an open house or a back-to-school night (79%) (see **Table 2**). About half of Title I-A principals reported that at least half of their parents participated in school-parent compacts (53%) or a requirement that parents sign off on homework (52%). About one-third of Title I-A principals reported at least half of their parents participated in science fairs, math nights, or other academic activities. A lower percentage of Title

[40] Thompson Publishing Group, *Title I Summary Tables*, http://www.thompson.com/public/nclb/monitoringreports/monreports.html.

[41] Findings in this section from the National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind* (NLS-*NCLB*) are from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service and are unpublished.

I-A principals reported that at least half of their parents participated in family literacy services and parent education workshops (11% and 6%, respectively).

Table 2. Percent of Title I-A Principals Reporting That at Least Half of Their Parents Participated in Various Parental Involvement Activities, 2005-2006

Activity	Percent	Activity	Percent
Parent-teacher conferences	81	Family literacy services	11
Open houses or back-to-school nights	79	Observation of classroom activities	10
Written agreements between the school and parents that describe what each will do to help students succeed	53	Parent education workshops	6
Requirement that parent signs off on their child's homework	52	Parent resource center	6
Science fairs, math nights, or other academic activities for students and parents	36	Home visits from teachers or other staff	3
Annual meeting with parents to discuss the school's parent involvement policy	25		

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*, n=1,365

The NLS-*NCLB* also included a parent survey administered in a sample of eight large, urban LEAs. The vast majority of parents (89%) reported that schools did "very well" or "just O.K." during the 2006-2007 school year in keeping them informed, between report cards, of how their child was doing in school (see **Table 3**). Around 70% of parents reported that their child's school did each of the following "very well" or "just O.K.": gave workshops, materials, or advice about how to help children learn at home (76%), gave information about how to help with homework (72%), and informed parents on chances to volunteer at school (70%). Fewer parents reported that the school did well at giving them information on community services to help their family (61%).

Table 3. Percent of Parents Reporting on How Well Their School Performed on Parental Involvement Activities, 2006-2007

Your child's school…	Does it very well	Does it just O.K.	Doesn't do it well	Doesn't do it at all	Not sure
Lets you know between report cards how your child is going in school	60	29	6	5	0
Gives workshops, materials, or advice about how to help your child learn at home	42	34	13	8	2
Gives information about how to help your child with his/her homework	39	33	13	13	1
Gives information on community services to help your child or your family	30	31	15	17	7
Tells you about chances to volunteer at the school	42	28	12	12	6

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*, n=1,876

Implementation Evaluation: Parent Notification and Other Parent Requirements in Section 1116

According to the NLS-*NCLB*, between 94% and 100% of Title I-A schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring reported that during the 2006-2007 school year parents were notified of their school's improvement status.[42] However, in a sample of parents in eight urban LEAs, less than one-quarter of parents of students in identified schools knew that their child's school was identified.

LEAs reported using a variety of communication strategies to notify parents of their rights to Title I-A public school choice and Supplemental Educational Services (SES). During the 2006-2007 school year, 99% and 91% of LEAs reported notifying parents of their public school choice and SES options, respectively, through written notification. Over half of the LEAs communicated with parents about their choice options through written notification in a language other than English, individual meetings with interested parents, and notices in district or school newsletters. One-third of LEAs used a community partner to help communicate the SES option.

Despite schools' and LEAs' efforts to communicate with parents about their options, parents were often unaware of the public school choice option. During the 2006-2007 school year, 95% of Title I-A LEAs required to offer Title I public school choice reported notifying parents of this option. Every surveyed LEA required to offer SES reported notifying parents of this option. However, only 20% of parents in eight large, urban LEAs reported that during the 2006-2007 school year they were notified of the transfer option. Schools were more successful in communicating the SES option: 59% of parents reported that they were notified of the free tutoring.

Poor communication is likely one of the factors contributing to the low participation rates of these two choice provisions: in 2006-2007 the participation rate for Title I public school choice was 1% and for SES it was 17%. Two other possible factors for low participation are a lack of options for secondary students (i.e., there are fewer middle and high schools that can accept secondary choice transfer students and there are fewer SES providers for older students) and late notification to parents about their public school choice option. A fourth possible factor identified in an ED report was that many parents elected not to participate in services.[43] In a survey of parents in eight large, urban LEAs, those that did not participate in public school choice reported being satisfied with the quality of teaching at their child's school (63%) and stated that their child's school location was "easy to get to" (60%). Similarly, 46% of parents whose children did not participate in SES reported that their child did not need help. These results indicate that some parents may not be involved as "consumers" of their child's education—an additional parental involvement role that was established in Title I-A of NCLB, in a manner consistent with what the law is trying to promote.

[42] Unless otherwise noted, findings on the implementation of Sec. 1116(b) are from U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *Title I Implementation—Update on Recent Evaluation Findings*, Washington, D.C., 2009, http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html#title.

[43] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *State and Local Implementation of the* No Child Left Behind Act*: Volume VII—Title I School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services: Final Report*, Washington, DC, 2009, http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/choice/nclb-choice-ses-final/choice-ses-final.pdf.

Finally, an ED study on school improvement plans (mandated under Section 1116(b)(3)) found that a majority of the plans of schools in the Northwest Region (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) failed to include all of the parental involvement requirements in Section 1116. The study also found that the school improvement plans focused primarily on communication activities to involve parents (despite numerous other promising activities), but often did not include activities for communicating with the parents of English language learner students.[44]

Significant Title I-A Parental Involvement Requirements Outside of Sections 1118 and 1116

There are a number of important parental involvement provisions in portions of the ESEA Title I-A other than Sections 1118 and 1116. First, under Section 1111(d), state plans for Title I-A must include information on how the SEA will collect and disseminate information on effective parental involvement practices, based on the "most current research."

Second, under Section 1111(h)(2), states and LEAs participating in Title I-A must report assessment results and certain other data to parents and the public through report cards. States are to publish report cards for the state overall, and LEAs (including charter schools if they are treated under state law as individual LEAs) are to publish report cards for the LEA and individual schools. The report cards must generally include information on pupils' academic performance disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender, as well as disability, migrant, English proficiency, and economic disadvantage status. The report cards must also include information on pupil progress toward meeting any other educational indicators included in the state's AYP standards, plus secondary school student graduation rates, the number and identity of any schools failing to meet AYP standards, and aggregate information on the qualifications of teachers. The report cards *may* include additional information, such as the extent and type of parental involvement in schools, average class size, or the incidence of school violence. LEA and school report cards are to be disseminated to parents of public school pupils and to the public at large; there are no specific provisions regarding dissemination of the state report cards.

Third, under Section 1111(h)(6), "Parents Right-To-Know," the parents of any pupil attending a school participating in Title I-A must be provided, upon request, with information on the professional qualifications of their child's teachers. The information provided must include whether the teacher meets state licensing criteria for the grades and subject areas he/she teaches; whether any such criteria have been waived for the teacher; and the postsecondary degree(s) held by the teacher, including the teacher's major area(s) of study. The qualifications of any paraprofessionals who serve their child must be provided to parents, upon request, as well. In addition, participating schools are required to provide to each parent information on the performance of their child on state academic assessments, and to notify parents if their child is taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not "highly qualified."[45]

[44] U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, *Parent involvement activities in school improvement plans in the Northwest Region*, Washington, DC, October 2008, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2008064a.pdf.

[45] For more information on the "highly qualified" provisions, see CRS Report RL33333, *A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom: Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act*, by (name redacted).

Fourth, under Section 1112(g), Local Educational Agency Plans, LEAs using Title I-A funds to provide a language instruction program for limited English proficient (LEP) pupils must notify the parents of the pupils served by this program within 30 days of the beginning of the school year (or within two weeks if identification occurs during the school year).[46] The parental notification must include the basis for identifying their child as LEP, including the assessment method and the child's level of English proficiency; the instructional methods that will be used in the language instruction program, as well as other programs that might be available; the exit requirements of the language instruction program; how the program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child (if the child has a disability); and information on the rights of the parents to remove their child from the program and to receive guidance on the selection of alternative language instruction programs. In addition, a school that is using Title I-A funds to provide a language instruction program for LEP pupils, and that fails to meet the annual measurable achievement objectives specified under ESEA Title III, Section 3122,[47] must separately notify the parents of participating pupils within 30 days of such failure.

Section 1112(g)(4) also includes a separate series of parental participation requirements applicable specifically to parents of pupils receiving language instruction for LEP pupils funded under Title I-A. These essentially duplicate some of the provisions in Section 1118 applicable to the parents of all participating pupils (e.g., outreach to inform parents how they may help their children meet state academic content and achievement standards, or holding meetings with parents), though with a specific emphasis on helping pupils attain proficiency in English.

Examples of Other ESEA Parental Involvement Requirements

As noted above, Title I-A has the most extensive ESEA requirements for parental involvement. At the same time, other programs authorized under the ESEA require some form of parental involvement or permit funds to be spent on parental involvement activities. The following are some examples.

The Reading First program (Subpart 1 of ESEA Title I-B). The Reading First (RF) program provides funding for programs "based on scientifically based reading research" for pupils in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Section 1202(c)(7)(B) permits LEAs to use funds for certain family literacy programs and to provide training and assistance to parents to encourage their children to read. In a survey of Title I-A principals, 45% reported coordinating and integrating Title I-A parent involvement efforts with other programs such as Head Start or Reading First.[48] On monitoring visits of RF grantees, ED found that RF schools often hold family literacy nights or provide reading materials or newsletters about reading to parents. However, ED did not collect information on which funds (e.g., Title I-A, Title I-B, or other funds) were used for these activities.[49]

[46] There are virtually identical requirements for LEAs and other eligible entities using funds under ESEA Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students) "to provide a language instruction educational program" (Section 3302).

[47] For information on these objectives, see CRS Report RL31315, *Education of Limited English Proficient and Recent Immigrant Students: Provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, by (name redacted).

[48] Unpublished results from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*.

[49] Interview with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, February 12, 2009.

ED's national implementation study of RF included survey questions on parental involvement. Results indicated that RF teachers were no more likely than non-RF Title I-A teachers to involve parents in their children's reading instruction: almost two-thirds of first grade RF and non-RF Title I-A teachers provided special materials for parents of struggling readers and about three-quarters of reading coaches at RF and non-RF Title I-A schools reported that teachers made an effort to involve parents (a rank of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). However, RF first grade teachers were more likely to have reported receiving professional development in how to work with parents than non-RF teachers (54% compared with 49%).[50]

The William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Programs (Subpart 3 of ESEA Title I-B). This program supports efforts to integrate "early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program" (Section 1231(1)). In general, Even Start funds support "intensive family literacy services that involve parents and children, from birth through age seven, in a cooperative effort to help parents become full partners in the education of their children and to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners" (Section 1234(a)).

Even Start parents are more economically disadvantaged than the average parent. During the 2000-2001 school year, 85% of Even Start parents had not completed high school or a GED, 84% of Even Start families had incomes below the federal poverty level, and 77% of parents were unemployed when they entered Even Start. Parents' most common reason for participating in Even Start was to further their education (47%), but the next two most common reasons for participation were related to their child: to become a better parent (38%) and to become a better teacher of their child (29%). The most recent experimentally designed evaluation (published in 2003) found that parents and children who participated in Even Start programs did not perform better on literacy assessments and other measures than a control group of parents and children. The evaluation also found that families did not take full advantage of the services offered by Even Start programs. However, the evaluation found that parents who participated more intensively in parenting education had children who scored higher on literacy assessments. Conversely, parents who participated more intensively in adult education had children who scored lower on literacy assessments. The study's authors suggest that the latter finding may be due to parents placing an increased emphasis on their own education at the expense of their child's.[51] A more recent study of a research-based, literacy-focused early childhood education and parenting education curriculum used in Even Start found that the curriculum had positive impacts on parent interactive reading skill, parent responsiveness to their child, and the amount of parenting education time spent on child literacy. However, the combined curriculum did not have statistically significant impacts on any of the child language development and early literacy outcomes examined in the study.[52]

*Parental notification requirements under Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students (*Section 3302). As noted above, LEAs and other eligible entities using funds

[50] Unpublished results from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, Reading First Implementation Study.

[51] U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division, *Third National Even Start Evaluation: Program Impacts and Implications for Improvement*, Washington, DC, 2003, http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/evenstartthird/toc.html.

[52] U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, *A Study of Classroom Literacy Interventions and Outcomes in Even Start*, Washington, DC, September 2008, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/20084028.pdf.

under Title III must notify parents of LEP pupils of certain information and rights. Among these are the reasons why their child has been identified as needing a language instruction educational program and the parents' rights to decline enrolling their child in such program and to withdraw their child from the program if services have already started.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (Title IV, Part A). School and LEAs that receive grants under this program must consult with parents in developing, operating, and evaluating their programs. Additionally, parents should be involved in activities carried out under this program.

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) (Title IV, Part B). Funds from this grant program may be used for a wide variety of before- and after-school activities to promote student achievement, including promoting parental involvement and family literacy.

An ED study found that parents of elementary school children attending a 21st CCLC program were more likely than parents whose children did not attend a 21st CCLC to help their child with homework, ask their child about school, and attend an after-school event. However, 21st CCLC parents were no more likely than other parents to check their child's homework, attend a school open-house or PTO meeting, or volunteer to help at the school. Parents of middle school children attending a 21st CCLC program were no more likely to participate in parental involvement activities than parents whose children did not attend a 21st CCLC.[53]

Parental Assistance and Local Family Information Centers (Title V, Part D, Subpart 16). This subpart authorizes the Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) grant program. PIRCs provide training, information, and support to parents, teachers and principals, and LEAs and SEAs. At least 50% of a PIRC's grant funds are to be used to serve areas with high concentrations of low-income children and at least 30% of their funds are to be used for early childhood parent programs.

Parental consent regarding armed forces recruiter access to student information (Section 9528(a)(2)). The ESEA, as amended by NCLB, requires LEAs receiving assistance under the ESEA to provide secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers to military recruiters.[54] This section further provides that the student or the parent of the student may request that this information "not be released without prior written parental consent," that the LEA notify parents of this option, and that the LEA comply with the parent's written request.

This provision has been interpreted by schools in different ways. Some schools notified parents of their general right, under various privacy laws, to opt out of the release of student contact information, while other schools explicitly notified parents that student contact information can be released to military recruiters if the parents do not opt out. Additionally, some schools have interpreted a lack of response by parents as an indication of their intent to *not* opt out, while other schools have interpreted a lack of response by parents to mean they want to opt out (i.e. an "opt-in" process to have information released).[55]

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[53] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, *When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program: New Findings*, Washington, DC, 2004, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/20043001.pdf.

[54] Without this provision, LEAs would be prevented from providing such information under Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).

[55] CRS Report RL33371, *K-12 Education: Implementation Status of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110)*, coordinated by (name redacted)

Alternative Approaches to Increasing Parental Involvement

As mentioned previously, in the NLS-*NCLB*, 78% of teachers in schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring reported that during the 2006-2007 school year a "major" or "moderate" challenge of improving student performance was "insufficient parent involvement."[56] The survey question did not define "parent involvement," so it is unclear exactly how teachers believe parents should be more involved to improve student performance. If, for instance, teachers believe that parents should be more involved with their child's homework and the school's activities, schools could simply employ variations on existing strategies to reach these goals: for example, improve communication by using more methods with increased frequency and ensuring translations in more languages to inform parents of school policies and events; provide more professional development to teachers and principals on how to interact with parents; provide parents with more information—in an appropriate language—on how to help their children learn; and provide more workshops for parents that are targeted to their specific needs. If doing more of these activities is an approach used to improve parental involvement, technical assistance could be provided by ED, SEAs, or LEAs to refine and improve the strategies and provide additional guidance to school leaders on effective implementation techniques.

The NLS-*NCLB* found that a minority of principals reported that during the 2006-2007 school year they worked with community partners and employed parent liaisons to promote parent involvement.[57] A community leader or fellow parent may be able to convey the importance of parental involvement to low-income or non-English speaking parents who are wary of the school environment. Parent liaisons often go door-to-door to talk with parents in their homes and are often members of the community themselves. While the ESEA does not require LEAs and schools to implement these strategies, it may be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices in increasing parental involvement and provide guidance to school leaders on best practices. Currently, research documenting the positive effectives of parent liaisons on parental involvement is confined to case studies.[58]

Other alternatives to increasing parental involvement include promoting more full-service models: public charter schools and community schools. Public charter schools operate according to the terms of charters or contracts granted by public chartering agencies. The terms of charters typically provide charter school operators with increased autonomy over the operation of schools, often including exemption from, or flexibility in the application of, many of the state or local regulations otherwise applicable to public schools. This increased autonomy is often granted in exchange for the expectation of increased accountability for results or outcomes.[59]

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[56] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*.

[57] Unpublished results from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*.

[58] For example, see Mavis G. Sanders, "How Parent Liaisons Can Help Bridge the Home-School Gap," *The Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 101, no. 5 (May/June 2008), pp. 287-296 and Joan Montgomery Halford, "How Parent Liaisons Connect Families to School," *Educational Leadership*, vol. 53, no. 7 (April 1996), pp. 34-36.

[59] For more information on charter schools, see CRS Report RL33506, *School Choice Under the ESEA: Programs and Requirements*, by (name redacted).

An ED evaluation of public charter schools found that charter schools were more likely then traditional public schools to have higher levels of parental involvement in certain school-based parental involvement activities. For example, about 35% of charter schools reported that during the 1999-2000 school year, at least half of their parents volunteered at school, compared with about 15% of traditional schools that reported this rate of volunteering. Less than 20% of charter schools reported that at least of half of their parents participated in parent education workshops, instructional issues, governance, and budget decisions; however, charter schools were at least twice as likely as traditional schools to report this frequency of involvement.[60] These findings do not necessarily indicate that charter schools *increase* parental involvement; rather, it is possible that parents who have always been highly involved in their child's education are the very parents who are more likely to enroll their child in a charter school. In fact, in the ED study, there were no statistical differences between charter and traditional public schools in parent participation in parent conferences and open houses: over 70% of both types of schools reported that at least half of their parents participated in both of these activities. As public charter schools become more popular and their numbers continue to increase, it may be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of charter schools in increasing parental involvement.

Recent Developments

At the time this report was written, there had not been any action in the 111th Congress concerning community schools, though members of the 110th Congress introduced bills that focused on such schools. Identical bills were introduced in the House (H.R. 2323) and the Senate (S. 1391) that would have amended Title IV of the ESEA to include grant programs for full-service community schools.[61] Two grant programs would have been authorized by the bills: (1) grants to consortiums of LEAs and community-based, nonprofit organizations that would have provided services to multiple schools and (2) grants to state collaboratives to support the development of full-service community schools. In both bills, $200,000,000 would have been authorized for FY2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each of FY2009-FY2013. Of the appropriated amount, 75% would have funded the local grants, 20% would have funded the state grants, and at least $500,000 of the remaining 5% would have been used for technical assistance. Though neither bill was reported out of committee, ED was able to award 10 five-year grants for full-service community school programs in FY2008 under Title V-D, Fund for the Improvement of Education.[62] The FY2008 appropriation for the grant program was $4,912,650.

The Coalition for Community Schools' vision for community schools includes the following:

> A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, services, supports and opportunities leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone—all day, every day, evenings and weekends. Using public schools as hubs, community schools knit together inventive, enduring relationships

[60] U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Policy and Program Studies Service, *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program: Final Report*, Washington, DC, 2004, http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/choice/pcsp-final/finalreport.pdf.

[61] The terms "full-service community school" and "community school" are used interchangeably among professionals in the field.

[62] For more information on ED's Full-Service Community Schools grant program, see http://www.ed.gov/programs/communityschools/index.html.

> among educators, families, volunteers and community partners. Health and social service agencies, family support groups, youth development organizations, institutions of higher education, community organizations, businesses, and civic and faith-based groups all play a part. By sharing expertise and resources, schools and communities act in concert to transform traditional schools into permanent partnerships for excellence.[63]

Because community schools provide services to parents and family members, these schools have another opportunity to reach out to parents and try to increase parents' involvement in their child's education. A three-year evaluation of two Children's Aid Society community schools in New York City found that parents were more involved and felt more welcome at the community schools than at demographically similar comparison schools. In addition to increasing parental involvement, some research has found that community schools have increased academic achievement.[64]

In its FY2010 budget request, the Obama Administration proposed creating the Promise Neighborhoods program modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ).[65] HCZ aims to improve college-going rates by combining a rigorous K-12 education in charter schools with a full network of supportive services—from early childhood education to after-school activities to college counseling—in an entire neighborhood from birth to college. HCZ combines the supportive services offered by community schools with the educational benefits of charter schools. There are currently three charter schools in the HCZ that will eventually serve children from grades K-12. There are also community centers that are open during the afternoons and evenings, on the weekends, and over summer that provide a wide range of programs and services for children, parents, and community members.

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[63] Martin J. Blank, Atelia Melaville, and Bela P. Shah, *Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools*, Coalition for Community Schools, Washington, DC, May 2003, http://www.communityschools.org/CCSFullReport.pdf.

[64] See Blank, Melaville, and Shah, 2003 for a summary of evaluation literature.

[65] For more information on the Harlem Children's Zone, see http://www.hcz.org/.