

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2021-2022

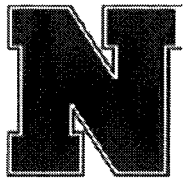


PROGRAM

PARENT HANDBOOK

OF

PROGRAM POLICIES



Neshaminy School District

Administrative Offices • 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road • Langhorne, PA 19047

We Build Futures

2021-2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Neshaminy School District is pleased to have the opportunity to provide your child with additional academic support in Reading and Math through its Title 1 program for the 2021-2022 school year. This program, funded with federal dollars, provides support to students in grades K-4 and is staffed with highly qualified and dedicated teachers and instructional assistants. Our Title 1 teachers and instructional assistants use their time and talents to help their students become readers that are more proficient and help foster a love of reading.

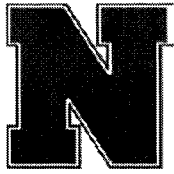
One very important component of this program is parent engagement. Every attempt is made by our building staff and administrators to involve parents in their child's learning. Parent engagement is accomplished through conferences, classroom visits and specially designed workshops, which involve both parents and children.

As you can see, we offer a very comprehensive program to our students and their parents and look forward to your participation.

Best wishes for a great school year.

Sincerely,

Rob McGee, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Neshaminy School District
rmcgee@neshaminy.org



Neshaminy School District

Administrative Offices • 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road • Langhorne, PA 19047

We Build Futures

September 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

Your child attends a Neshaminy School District Title I school, which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. Throughout the school year, we will be providing you with important information about this law and your child's education. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

At Neshaminy School District, we are very proud of our teachers and know they are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. Neshaminy School District Title I schools must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived and
- What undergraduate or graduate degree(s) the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees in specific major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in December 2015. It reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA) and includes right to know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessment and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include:
 - Subject matter tested, purpose of the test and source of the requirement (if applicable),
 - Amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
 - Time and format for disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. The commitment includes making sure that all our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment, please contact me at 215-809-6553 or email me at mburkholder@neshaminy.org.

Sincerely,

Michelle Burkholder
Assistant to the Superintendent
Director of Elementary Education

Main number - 215-809.6000

Superintendent -215-809-6500 Assistant Superintendent -215-809-6510 Director of Administration -215-809-6510 Technology Services -215-809-6572
Business Administration -215-809-6520 Curriculum & Instruction -215-809-6550 Facilities & Transportation -213-809-6250
Food Services -215-809-6541 Human Resources -215-809-6606 Pupil Services -215-809-6588 Purchasing & Receiving - 215-809-6280

OVERVIEW OF TITLE I PROGRAM

Title I is a 100% federally funded supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) to improve learning outcomes for students that attend schools in areas that have high percentages of low-income families. Title I programs are designed to help children meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics. In buildings with 40% or more poverty, LEAs may use the funds to upgrade the entire curriculum of the school and are Schoolwide Programs. In buildings with less than 40% poverty, programs are designed to help specific children and are targeted assisted programs.

The funds are allocated each year based on a grant proposal submitted by the Neshaminy School District and can be used solely for providing help to these children. Evaluation of the program is continual during the year. Specific guidelines must be followed to qualify for funding. The guidelines are as follows: Title I funds flow to states and school districts on a formula basis. The formula takes into account the number of low-income children and the statewide average per pupil expenditures. Resources within the state are targeted to the districts and schools with the greatest need.

SELECTION OF SCHOOLS

There are presently five elementary schools within the Neshaminy School District which qualify for Title I services (Joseph Ferderbar, Herbert Hoover, Walter Miller, Albert Schweitzer, and Tawanka). The selection of the schools is based on the number of students receiving free or reduced lunches in the individual schools. This selection method is mandated by the state, although there is not necessarily a correlation between a child requiring free lunches and the same child experiencing difficulty in reading/math.

CURRICULUM

The Title I curriculum is designed to support the classroom programs. Lessons are designed to strengthen the reading and/or math ability of the Title I students.

All the materials and teaching techniques used in the Title I program are designed to complement and reinforce the existing reading instruction in the regular classroom. In addition, supports will be provided in the area of math based on student needs.

Our goal by the end of the school year is to improve reading and/or math performance of all participating students based on identified areas of need.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Annual testing results indicate, that on the average, Neshaminy Title I students show gains which exceed gains shown in most Title I programs throughout Pennsylvania. The NSD Title I program has been recognized by the United States Department of Education as an Unusually Effective Schools Program.

Performance assessment data collected at the end of each year indicate that students show measurable growth during the first year in the program and continue to improve their literacy skills from year to year.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Neshaminy School District recognizes that the involvement of parents and their support of student learning are important factors in helping students meet with success. School Board Policy #918 states that: The Board recognizes that meaningful parent and family engagement contributes to the achievement of state academic standards by students participating in Title I programs. The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the school, parents, family members, and community.

Neshaminy recognizes the importance of developing and maintaining ongoing communications with parents of students receiving assistance in our Title I program. It is important that parents receive information concerning their opportunities for involvement, their child's eligibility for the Title I program, their child's educational progress, and their rights of parents to receive information and to participate in the education of their children.

To assist parents in becoming active participants, the following programs and procedures are followed:

- An annual meeting is held at the beginning of each school year to explain the Title I program, goals, each school's involvement in the Title I program, specific information about the format of the program, and the rights of parents to be involved.
- Parents of students in the Title I program are given the opportunity to provide feedback about the Title I Parent & Family Engagement Policies at the district and school level.
- Parents also have the opportunity to help the Neshaminy School District and the individual school staff in planning, reviewing, and improving the Title I program.

- Parent surveys are used to solicit feedback about programs and policies, and information is provided to parents in many other ways including: presentations and workshops held throughout the school year, school newsletters, parent conferences, and the school district website.
- Of particular importance are parent teacher conferences where teachers will discuss with parents the progress of their child, ways monitor progress, individual student assessments, proficiency levels, grade level standards, and the Title I program. In addition to the scheduled conference, other conferences are scheduled upon request.
- Parents are also invited to participate in school events and volunteer in activities at the school.
- Parent training and workshop sessions are held in schools that are specific to Title I and are planned based on feedback and interests of parents.

Important terms:

The Home-School Compact outlines how parents, teachers and students will share in the responsibility for improved student achievement.

A Parent & Family Engagement Policy/Plan is developed with parents early in the year.

Back-to-School Night is held each fall in all the public elementary schools. Parents are invited to meet with classroom teachers. Title I Literacy Specialists are available to answer any questions or concerns you may have at this evening session.

A Title I Annual Meeting is held in the fall months. Parents are invited to personally meet the Title I Literacy Specialists. This is an opportunity for parents to become better acquainted with Title I program, policies and procedures. Interested parents will be asked at this meeting to help to set policies and procedures for the coming year.

Parent notification of selected students is accomplished by sending a letter to parents each fall prior to student participation in the Title I program. Parents have the opportunity to discuss specific instructional objectives for their child with the Title I Literacy specialist at any time, including the onset of the program.

Visiting Title I classrooms is encouraged. You may visit at any time during the day. However, we would like you to contact the school and the Title I Literacy Specialist to schedule your visit. Groups change frequently during

the day; therefore, it would be most beneficial for you to come at the beginning of a scheduled period.

During an annual evaluation at the conclusion of the school year, parents will be asked to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the Parent & Family Engagement Policy and the Title I program. School staff will use the findings of the evaluation to revise policies as appropriate.

Parent volunteers are important to the school district and the success of our programs. You are encouraged to become a contributing volunteer. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact your Title I Literacy Specialist to schedule a meeting.

Formal, scheduled parent conferences are held twice a year. At this time, the Title I Literacy Specialist informs you of your child's strengths and areas for growth and suggests activities or ways of helping at home. This is also a time for parents to express specific concerns about his/her child.

School newsletters will include specific information regarding Title I services quarterly. These newsletters will keep you informed of happenings in your child's classroom. They will also include some hints and activities in reading for you to use with your child at home.

We appreciate the opportunity to work cooperatively with all parents to assist their child(ren) in learning to read so that the children can read to learn and build knowledge and skills that will ensure academic success.

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY #918

Book Policy Manual

Section 900 Community

Title I Parent and Family Engagement

Number 918

Status Active

Adopted June 19, 2018

Purpose: The Board recognizes that meaningful parent and family engagement contributes to the achievement of state academic standards by students participating in Title I programs. The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the school, parents, family members, and community.[1][2]

Definition

Parent and Family (Family Member) - these terms are used interchangeably and shall include caregivers, a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, or a legally appointed Education Decision Maker of a child participating in a Title I program.

Authority

The Board directs the district and each of its schools with a Title I program to:[1]

1. Conduct outreach to all parents and family members.
2. Include parents and family members in development of the district's overall Title I Plan and process for school review and improvement.[3]
3. Include parents and family members in the development of the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Following adoption of the policy by the Board, the policy shall be:
 - a. Distributed in writing to all parents and family members.
 - b. Incorporated into the district's Title I Plan.[3]

- c. Posted to the district's publicly accessible website.[\[4\]](#)
 - d. Evaluated annually with parent and family involvement.
4. Provide opportunities and conduct meaningful collaborations with parents and family members in the planning and implementation of Title I programs, activities and procedures.

Accessibility

The district and each of its schools with a Title I program shall provide communications, information and school reports to parents and family members who are migrants or who have limited English proficiency, a disability, limited literacy, or racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, in a language they can understand.[\[1\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy, plan and programs comply with the requirements of federal law.[\[1\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district and its schools with Title I programs provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members by providing resources, information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format or, upon request, in another format. Such efforts shall include:

1. Providing communications in clear and simple language.
2. Posting information for parents and family members on the district's website.
3. Including a telephone number for parents and family members to call with questions.
4. Partnering with community agencies which may include libraries, recreation centers, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to assist in sharing information.

The building principal and/or Title I staff shall notify parents and family members of the existence of the Title I programs and provide:

1. An explanation of the reasons supporting their child's selection for the program.
2. A set of goals and expectations to be addressed.
3. A description of the services to be provided.
4. A copy of this policy and the School-Parent and Family Compact.[\[1\]](#)

Parents and family members shall actively carry out their responsibilities in accordance with this policy and the School-Parent and Family Compact. At a minimum, parents and family members shall be expected to:[\[1\]](#)

1. Volunteer in their child's classroom.[\[6\]](#)
2. Support their child's learning.
3. Participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and positive use of extracurricular time.

Guidelines

Each district school operating a Title I program shall hold an annual meeting of parents and family members at a convenient time, to explain the goals and purposes of Title I programs and to inform them of their right to be involved. Parents and family members shall be given the opportunity to participate in the design, development, operation and evaluation of the program. Parents and family members shall be encouraged to participate in planning activities, to offer suggestions, and to ask questions regarding policies and programs.[\[1\]](#)

The schools with Title I programs shall offer a flexible number of meetings which shall be held at various times of the morning and evening. Title I funds may be used to enable parent and family member attendance at meetings through payment of transportation, child care costs or home visits.[\[1\]](#)

The schools shall involve parents and family members in an organized, ongoing and timely way, in the planning, review and improvement of Title I programs, the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the joint development of the Title I Plan.[\[1\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

At these meetings, parents and family members shall be provided:[\[1\]](#)

1. Timely information about programs provided under Title I.
2. Description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the academic standards.
3. Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.

To ensure the continuous engagement of parents and family members in the joint development of the Title I Plan and with the school support and improvement process, the district shall:

1. Establish meaningful, ongoing two-way communication between the district, staff and parents and family members.
2. Communicate with parents and family members about the plan and seek their input and participation through the use of newsletters, the district website, email, telephone, parent and teacher conferences, and home visits if needed.
3. Train personnel on how to collaborate effectively with parents and family members with diverse backgrounds that may impede their participation, such as limited literacy or language difficulty.
4. Distribute and discuss the School-Parent and Family Compact.

If the Title I Plan is not satisfactory to parents and family members, the district shall submit any parent or family member comments with the plan when the school makes the plan available to the Board.[\[1\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

Building Capacity for Parent and Family Engagement

The district shall provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement

activities to improve academic achievement and school performance through:[\[1\]](#)

1. Providing assistance to parents and family members in understanding such topics as the academic standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of parent and family involvement, how to monitor a child's progress and work with teachers to improve the achievement of their children.[\[2\]](#)[\[7\]](#)
2. Providing material and training to help parents and family members work with their children to improve academic achievement and to foster parent and family engagement, such as:
 - a. Scheduling trainings in different locations on a variety of topics including how to support their child in school, literacy, school safety, cultural diversity and conflict resolution.
 - b. Using technology, including education about the harms of copyright piracy, as appropriate.[\[8\]](#)
 - c. Providing information, resources and materials in a user-friendly format.
 - d. Providing, as requested by a parent or family member, other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities.
3. Educating teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals and other school leaders and staff, with the assistance of parents and family members, on the value and usefulness of contributions of parents and family members and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with them as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent and family programs, and build ties between parents and family members and the school.[\[9\]](#)
4. To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinating and integrating Title I parent and family involvement efforts and activities with other federal, state and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents and family members in more fully participating in the education of their children.[\[1\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

Coordinating Parent and Family Engagement Strategies

The district shall coordinate and integrate Title I parent and family engagement strategies with other parent and family engagement strategies required by federal, state, and local laws by:[\[1\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

1. Involving district and program representatives to assist in identifying specific parent and family member needs.
2. Sharing data from other programs to assist in developing initiatives to advance academic achievement and school improvement.

Annual Parent and Family Engagement Policy Evaluation

The district shall conduct, with meaningful participation of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this policy in improving the academic quality of all district schools with a Title I program.[\[1\]](#)

The evaluation shall identify:[\[1\]](#)

1. Barriers to parent and family member participation, with particular attention to those who are migrants, are economically disadvantaged, have a disability, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority.
2. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers.
3. Strategies to support successful school and parent and family interactions.

The evaluation shall be conducted through:

1. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the content and communication methods through a variety of methods.
2. A parent and family member and teacher survey designed to collect data on school level and district-wide parent and family engagement outcomes.

3. A parent and family advisory council comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents and family members to adequately represent the needs of the district's Title I population.

The district shall use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family engagement, and to revise, if necessary, the district's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy.[\[1\]](#)

School-Parent and Family Compact

Each school in the district receiving Title I funds shall jointly develop with parents and family members a School-Parent and Family Compact outlining the manner in which parents and family members, the entire school staff and students will share responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents and family members will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the state's academic standards. The compact shall:[\[1\]](#)

1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment, enabling students in Title I programs to meet the academic standards.
2. Describe the ways in which parents and family members will be responsible for supporting their child's learning; volunteering in the classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related to their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time.[\[6\]](#)
3. Address the importance of ongoing two-way, meaningful communication between parents/family members and teachers through, at a minimum, annual parent-teacher conferences at the elementary level, frequent reports to parents and family members on their child's progress, reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.[\[6\]](#)

Title I Funds

Unless exempt by law, the district shall reserve at least one percent (1%) of its Title I funds to assist schools in conducting parent and family engagement activities. Parents and family members shall be involved in the

decisions regarding how the Title I reserved funds are used for parent and family engagement activities.[\[1\]](#)

Not less than ninety percent (90%) of the reserved funds shall be distributed to district schools with a Title I program, with priority given to high need schools. The district shall use the Title I reserved funds to conduct activities and strategies consistent with this policy, including:[\[1\]](#)

1. Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for the district and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.[\[9\]](#)
2. Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
3. Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
4. Collaborating or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
5. Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the district determines are appropriate and consistent with this policy.

Documentation of Parent and Family Engagement Practices

Documentation to track the implementation of this policy is an essential part of compliance and may include, but not be limited to, sign-in sheets at workshops, meetings and conferences; schedules, training and informational materials; communications and brochures; and meeting notes.

