



AIKEN COUNTY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Title I Newsletter

Fall 2016

Purpose of Title I

Title I is a federal program that provides opportunities for the children served to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to meet challenging state content standards.

Title I resources are distributed to schools where needs are the greatest, in amounts sufficient to make a difference in the improvement of instruction.

Title I coordinates services with other educational services and, to the degree possible, with health and social services programs.

Title I provides greater decision-making authority and flexibility within the schools and for teachers. However, greater responsibility for student performance is the exchange for this flexibility.

Parent & Family Engagement in Title I Planning

The school district is continually monitoring the implementation of its Title I plan and welcomes input from parents regarding its current and future plans. If you have comments or suggestions regarding the District's Title I plan, please contact Jeanie Glover, Director of Federal Programs.

Parent's Right to Know

As a parent, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers and instructional assistants who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for the following information about your child's classroom teachers and requires the District to give you this information in a timely manner:

- whether the teacher is certified to teach the subjects and/or grade levels the teacher is teaching,
- whether the teacher's certificate is a waiver or substandard certificate,
- the teacher's academic major, graduate degrees, if any, and
- the teacher's certification area.

If you would like to receive this information, please contact Human Resources at 641-2464.

Curriculum and Assessments

Aiken County Public Schools provides a high-quality curriculum based upon the state standards. This curriculum has been approved by the South Carolina Board of Education and adopted by the Aiken County Board of Education.

Textbooks used in the classrooms have been reviewed by a committee of teachers and adopted and endorsed by the State Department of Education. Specific educational programs in each school are targeted to meet the identified needs of the children in the school.

Aiken County Public Schools administers a variety of standardized assessments to its students. In the fall and the spring, kindergarten students are administered the DRA2+, which is a readiness assessment for this group of students. The state assessment for grades three through eight is given in the spring and measures student performance on the state standards in English/language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Children in third through tenth grades take the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), which provides teachers with a reading proficiency level for each student.

Students in the eleventh grade are administered the ACT WorkKeys assessment. End-of-Course Tests are administered in Algebra I, English I, U.S. History and the Constitution, and Biology I.

To monitor student progress throughout the year, all students are given teacher-prepared and textbook-provided benchmark assessments.

SC Department of Education Complaint Resolution Procedures

The State Department of Education has the authority to hear complaints and appeals regarding certain federal programs and requires school districts to distribute the following information concerning the South Carolina Department of Education's complaint resolution procedures:

- Organizations or individuals may file a complaint that applies to Title I within thirty days of receiving the decision by the school district or group of districts.
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing and they must contain a statement indicating the violation, the facts on which the statement is based, and the specific requirement of law or regulation allegedly violated. Complaints and appeals must be filed with the State Superintendent of Education at the S.C. Department of Education, 1429 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201.
- The SDE will confirm receipt of the complaint within ten business days and will conduct an investigation to determine the merits of the complaint. The Deputy Superintendent will issue a final decision regarding the complaint within 60 days, except under exceptional circumstances that warrant an extension.
- The final decision of the SDE may be appealed to the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Education.

District-Wide Title I Parent and Family Engagement Activities

The Title I legislation requires school districts to utilize a portion of their Title I funds to support parent and family engagement. The parent and family engagement activities listed below are included in the district's Title I plan. This plan was jointly developed by the members of the district's Title I Planning Team.

- Disseminate Title I information to parents in an understandable format
- Provide parent resource information to schools for the purpose of improving student academic achievement and school performance

Summary of Title I Plan for District-Wide Activities for 2016-2017

The distribution of Title I funds to a school is based upon the number of students in the school who qualify for free and reduced lunch. For the 2016-2017 school year, Aiken County Public Schools allocated 5.2 million dollars to thirty-one public schools. These resources were distributed to schools where needs are the greatest and in amounts sufficient to make a difference in the improvement of instruction.

The portion of Title I funds not allocated to schools is expended on district-wide Title I activities to assist in improving the instructional program in all Title I schools and to ensure that the schools and the district continue to be in compliance with Title I regulations. If you have questions regarding the Title I Plan for district-wide activities, please contact Jeanie Glover, Director of Federal Programs.

District-Wide Title I Expenditures for 2016-2017

The Title I legislation includes provisions for all children to meet the state's proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement by the end of the 2016-2017 school year. To assist in reaching this goal, the activities listed below are included in the District's Title I plan, which was jointly developed by the members of the district's Title I planning team.

- Employ Title I coordinators to assist schools with fulfilling program planning, implementation, and Title I legislative requirements
- Provide nine student service workers to serve as liaisons between the home and school
- Provide a parenting coordinator and secretary to work at Freedman Parenting Center
- Provide funds for homeless students
- Provide reading interventionists in the highest poverty elementary schools

District Parent and Family Engagement Policy

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, each school district receiving Title I, Part A funds jointly develops with and distributes to parents a written parent and family engagement involvement policy that contains required information from the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965. This parent and family engagement policy describes how the district will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities. If you would like to provide input on this policy, please contact Jeanie Glover, Director of Federal Programs, 803-641-2403.

The District will

- Include parents on its Title I Planning Team and involve them in the development of the Title I plan and the process of school review and improvement. Each year the district requests for parents to participate on its Title I planning team and issues an invitation to parents in its fall Title I newsletter.
- Ensure that Title I schools carry out the parent and family engagement and parent notification requirements of the Title I legislation. Each year the district requires each Title I school to involve parents in parent and family engagement activities by allocating Title I funds for parent and family engagement activities, and the district gives each Title I school a Title I newsletter for parents. This newsletter includes the parent notification requirements of the Title I legislation.
- Provide training at the schools and district to help and support schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities that will improve student achievement and school performance. Each year the district provides materials to schools and trains facilitators every two years on planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement programs and activities, working with parents as equal partners, and building ties between parents and schools.
- Provide training at the school and district levels to build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent and family engagement. Each year the district provides materials and every two years trains facilitators on planning and implementing helpful parent and family engagement activities.
- Assist schools in organizing and combining Title I parent and family engagement activities with other parent and family programs such as Head Start, First Steps, and 4-K to better prepare students for school. The district's pre-school content interventionist works with the district's pre-school program and other agencies to make sure children are ready for school.
- Conduct a district-wide Title I Parent and Family Engagement Survey each year to evaluate the district's and schools' parent and family engagement policies and programs to increase parent participation and to identify reasons parents do not participate in Title I parent and family activities. Each spring surveys are sent to parents by the Office of Federal Programs, and the results of the survey are used to plan for more effective parent and family engagement activities at the district- and school-levels and to adjust the school- and district-level parent and family engagement policies.
- Ensure that Title I schools provide information about school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in a way parents can understand. The district provides translated documents to Title I schools and, as requested, oral translations for Title I information.
- Ensure that Title I schools help parents understand topics such as the state and local academic assessments, the state's academic content standards, and the achievement levels students are expected to meet, and how to monitor their child's progress and work with their child's teachers. Each year schools host parent conferences and a Title I Annual Meeting to help parents understand the state's standards and assessments and the requirements of Title I. The district gives schools parent information on how to work with teachers and how to check their child's progress. Also, the district provides grades, attendance, and discipline referrals on the PowerSchool Parent Portal on the district's website, and other parent resource links are located on the website.