



# Parent involvement activities in school improvement plans in the Northwest Region



Institute of Education Sciences  
U.S. Department of Education



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Summary

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# Parent involvement activities in school improvement plans in the Northwest Region

**Although the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 spells out parent involvement requirements for schools in need of improvement, the majority (54 percent) of the 84 percent of Northwest Region school improvement plans reviewed failed to include such provisions. Many schools rely on communication as the primary way to involve parents—despite the wide range of parent involvement practices discussed in the literature.**

All Title I schools designated as in need of improvement are required to submit a two-year school improvement plan to their state education agency. The plan must address the academic issues that led to the improvement status and must describe strategies for increasing student achievement. As part of the school improvement plan schools must implement at least three components of parent involvement: notify parents of the school's improvement status, collaborate and communicate with parents (provide opportunities for parents to be involved in developing and approving the school improvement plan), and include "effective" parent involvement activities in the plan. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 views parent involvement as a key intervention for raising student achievement and bringing schools out of improvement status.

This study explores how the improvement plans of Title I schools in improvement in the Northwest Region align with the parent involvement requirements of the NCLB Act. The study analyzed 2006/07 school improvement plans for 308 Title I schools, covering 84 percent of schools in improvement in the Northwest Region states. In addition to examining whether the plans contained parent involvement activities as required by NCLB section 1116, the study identified and looked for parent involvement activities as outlined in section 1118 and activities that section 1116 refers to as "effective" but does not define and so were identified from the literature as "potentially effective" strategies (because the studies on which they were based were mainly correlational).

A team of five researchers independently coded 4,926 parent involvement activities identified from the 308 school improvement plans, with 91 percent interrater reliability. The analysis revealed that a majority (54 percent) of school improvement plans did not include the three parent involvement components required by section 1116 of the NCLB Act. Other findings include:

1. Despite the wide range of parent involvement practices discussed in legislation and in the literature, the school improvement

plans mentioned primarily nonacademic and academic communication and parent-teacher conferences.

2. The number of section 1116 parent involvement requirements addressed in the plans decreased as the school level increased from elementary to middle to high school.
3. Even though 75 percent of the schools in improvement served English language

learner students, only 33 percent of the school improvement plans included activities for communicating with parents in a language they could understand.

4. The schools that did include all requirements of section 1116 were primarily in states or districts that provided schools with a template for completing their school improvement plans.

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