

***Tensas Parish Parental Involvement Policy
2009-2010***

The parental involvement program of the Tensas Parish School Board will incorporate activities through the collaboration of the community, parents, and educators to maintain an extensive program. This parenting program will provide guidance, information, and training to parents. The program will involve parents in decision making and provide opportunities for parents to actively participate in the education of their children. Using the Parish Parental Involvement Policy as a guide, the district administrative staff will assist each school in the writing of their 2009-2010 Parental Involvement Policy. The school parental involvement policies will be included in each school=s Student/Parent Handbook which is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school term. A form is included in the handbooks for parents and students to sign indicating that they have received and reviewed the handbook. The district parental involvement policy is disseminated to parents at the beginning of the school term with a form for parents to sign indicating that they have received a copy of the policy.

How do parents participate in the development of the Parent Involvement Plan/Policy?

Each school has a Parent Advisory Council that is involved in the decision-making process regarding school-level parental involvement policies, activities, and funding. The Tensas Parish Title I Parental Involvement Advisory Council membership includes parents from each school=s Parent Advisory Council, community leaders, educators, and a parent coordinator and teacher from each school. This council is instrumental in planning and developing the parish Parent Involvement Policy. In addition, an End-of-the-Year Evaluation Form is sent home to all parents to give them an opportunity to comment on Title I Parental Involvement activities and policies. The data collected from the returned evaluations is used by the parish Parental Involvement Advisory Council to develop the parish Parent Involvement Policy. Parents may also be asked to serve on other committees or to complete surveys to provide additional input needed to develop the school and/or parish Parent Involvement Policy.

How are parents involved in the school review and improvement process?

As a part of the school review and improvement process, parents complete questionnaires and a survey of needs. Data collected from parents, students, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as test data, are analyzed to determine the weaknesses which need to be addressed through the school improvement plan. Parents, as a part of the School Improvement Team, may be involved in the decision-making process as research-based strategies are chosen to address the identified weaknesses. Parental involvement activities are included in the school improvement plan, and each school=s Parent Advisory Council is involved in planning and facilitating the school-level parental involvement activities. Parents may also serve on the committee responsible for writing the school=s mission statement. Parents involved in the school improvement process, as well as any other interested parents, are given an opportunity to review the school=s completed SIP.

How does the district assist schools in planning and implementing parent involvement activities?

The Director of Federal Programs/Parental Involvement Supervisor will coordinate Title I, II, III, and IV programs which encourage parental involvement. The district personnel will help plan and implement parental involvement activities which include Parent-Teacher Organizations, Parent Advisory Councils for each school, parent volunteer programs, home visits, ABack-to-School Night,@ Parent-Teacher Conference Day(s), family inservices and training, and Family Curriculum Nights. The Parental Involvement Supervisor will oversee parental involvement activities and technical assistance training at the parish and individual school levels. Upon request, district personnel will conduct district-wide trainings and follow-up trainings. The Parental Involvement Supervisor will review evaluations to determine the effectiveness of parental involvement activities. The 1% required funding for parental involvement will come from the Title I administrative budget, and the individual schools will request these funds as needed for parental involvement activities.

How does the district assist schools and parents in building capacity for involvement?

Parents will be offered training sessions (local level or district level) and materials to help them understand the Louisiana Academic Content Standards, the Grade Level Expectations (GLE=s), the Comprehensive Curriculum, the State Accountability System, state and local academic assessments, and methods to help them monitor their child=s progress in school. Parents may also be invited to participate in professional development activities when the topic covered may help them understand or accept a new program or strategy being implemented. If needed, district personnel will provide community/school forums and/or district-wide meetings to promote meaningful consultation with parents on important issues or topics. Some of the topics will include “Helping Your Child With Homework,” “Helping Your Child Learn Math,” and “Helping Your Child With Reading.” To promote positive relations with parents, school personnel will attend professional development activities which address conducting effective parent-teacher conferences, helping parents understand the importance of discipline and homework, and assisting parents with data analysis. In addition, Ruby Payne materials or other resources may also be used. These professional development activities will be conducted at least once each semester and will be structured to familiarize school personnel with strategies they can use to foster positive relations with parents. These strategies may also be discussed in the Professional Learning Communities which meet monthly at each school. These activities are designed to help all school personnel reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners. All documents sent to parents will be in an easily understood format and language.

How does the district coordinate and integrate parent involvement strategies with district and parish Pre-K programs?

The district coordinates and integrates parent involvement strategies with other parish Pre-K programs such as the LA 4 Program, the Tensas 4 Program, and the IDEA Noncategorical Preschool Program. Individuals from these programs serve on the Tensas Parish Title I Parental Involvement Advisory Council which meets twice a year to set goals, plan activities, review accomplishments, evaluate results, and revise the parish Parent Involvement Policy. Pre-K

parents are invited to school and district-level meetings and may serve on the School Improvement Team. Pre-K parents are given an opportunity to respond to surveys and to complete evaluations of parental involvement activities. Joint meetings are held with parents of children enrolled in the Pre-K programs and in the district's K - 12 programs. Pre-K students visit kindergarten classes during the school year, and kindergarten teachers conduct inservices for Pre-K parents. These joint activities help to facilitate the transition of students from the parish Pre-K programs to kindergarten.

How does the district conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the Parent Involvement Policy?

At the end of the school term, an End-of-the-Year Evaluation form is sent home to all parents. This evaluation provides parents an opportunity to make comments or suggestions regarding the School-Parent Compacts. It also gives parents an opportunity to comment on and evaluate the content and effectiveness of the Title I Parent Involvement Policy. The data collected from these returned evaluations is used by the Tensas Parish Title I Parental Involvement Advisory Council to aid in the development of the School-Parent Compacts and the Title I Parent Involvement Policy for the next school term. At its spring meeting, the parish Advisory Council focuses on reviewing the accomplishments and achievements of the yearly goals and on evaluating the Parent Involvement Policy. Based on their evaluation of the effectiveness of the current policy, the Council makes recommendations and changes to improve the Parish Parent Involvement Policy.

Describe the evaluation methods that are used in determining barriers to greater participation in district and school activities.

Input is received from the members of the Tensas Parish Title I Parental Involvement Advisory Council and parish parents through the End-of-the-Year Evaluation. This input is analyzed to identify and address barriers to parental involvement. Flexible meeting times are scheduled to accommodate parents' schedules. If parents are unable to attend meetings, a document highlighting the main topics covered in the session may be sent home with students and/or posted on the school web site. Flyers with notices and/or highlights of meetings may be placed in various community sites. Transportation may be provided for parents needing this service. In dealing with special populations, program personnel may communicate directly with parents. Home visits are made if needed. When necessary, communication with parents/guardians is made using the language spoken in the home. These strategies address some of the barriers to parental involvement and should increase the level of future parental involvement.

School-Parent Compacts

At the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, the School-Parent Compacts will be distributed to all students as a part of the Student/Parent Handbook. These compacts will be signed by the school administrator, the classroom teacher, the parent, and the student. A copy of the signed compact will be returned to the school and kept on file by the school administrator.

State Parental Information and Resource Centers:

Parents will also be informed of the existence and purpose of two (2) state parental information and resource centers which have been established. The names and contact information for the two centers listed below will be included in each school=s Student/Parent Handbook.

- 1) Parents in Louisiana may contact this Parent Information and Resource Center for further information concerning No Child Left Behind and how to assist their children in meeting its requirements.

Louisiana Promise
Volunteers of America Highland Center
520 Olive Street, Suite C-4
Shreveport, LA 71104
Phone: 318-429-6968
Toll-Free Information Line: 1-866-751-6958

- 2) Parents may also contact an IDEA supported center that provides information, referral, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, educators, and other professionals.

Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC)
www.laptic.org

Written Documentation for Parents

The parental involvement program will provide parents with documents such as the following: Parent/Student/Teacher Compacts, newsletters from each Title I school or a parish newsletter reporting news from all parish Title I schools, tri-weekly student progress reports, student report cards at the end of each six-week grading period, assessment result reports, the Tensas Parish Student Code of Conduct, and individual school=s Student/Parent Handbooks. All documents, reports, and notices sent to parents throughout the school year will be in a format and language that is easily understood.

Parents Right to Know (Professional Qualifications of Teachers)

Parents have the right to request information on the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). Upon your request, the school that your child attends will provide the following information about your child's teacher(s).

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifying and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas taught;
- Whether the state has waived qualification or licensing criteria and the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status;
- The teacher's degree(s) and/or certification;
- Whether the child receives services from paraprofessionals, and if they do, their qualifications.

In addition, if a child is assigned to a teacher who is not highly qualified for four (4) or more weeks, the Title I school principal will send parents a timely written notice. Upon receipt of the notice, parents may request a meeting with the principal to discuss their concerns.

Other Parental Involvement Activities

The Guidance Counselor meets with all 8th grade students and their parents to develop a five-year curriculum for each student to follow. Signatures of parents are required indicating their approval of the chosen curriculum. Participation of students in a Tech Prep class also requires parent signatures indicating their approval.

The Adult Education Program offers daytime classes in St. Joseph at the Adult Education Building located immediately behind the Tensas Parish Media Center. All three (3) schools work closely to ensure that all adults seeking an education receive services from Adult Education.

Finally, realizing that students cannot learn if they are not in school, the Tensas Parish School Board and the District Court Judge annually hold parents accountable for excessive absences of students.

Louisiana Department of Education Complaint Procedures For The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

If the Tensas Parish Title I Program is not providing services in accordance with state and federal regulations, a parent may file a complaint in accordance with *The Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*, Bulletin 741, Section 349, which is available online at the following website address: <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v115/28v115.doc>. Parents may also request a copy of this bulletin by calling the Department's toll-free number, 1-877-453-2721. This bulletin contains detailed procedures established for resolving complaints filed against the Department of Education or a local education agency pursuant to provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §6301, et. Seq. (ESEA).

Summarized from the above handbook, complaints to the Louisiana Department of Education must (1) be in writing and (2) describe a violation of the law or a violation of federal statutes or regulations.

The written complaint must include:

- A statement of the violation of a requirement of a pertinent federal statute or regulation;
- The facts on which the statement is based, including the name of the local education agency;
- A proposed solution for the problem;
- The parent's signature and contact information;
- Only violations occurring within the last year.

A parent is notified when a complaint has been received by the department, and complaints will be resolved within 60 days of receiving the complaint, unless the timeline has been extended. The parent will receive a written decision addressing each violation and will also be informed of the right to request that the Secretary of the United States Department of Education review the decision made by the Louisiana Department of Education.