

Addendum to Parent-Student Handbook: School Wide Title I Program Fact Sheet

How did my child's school get identified as a School Wide Title I school?

Identification as a School Wide Title I school is based on the significantly low-income rate at the school; the poverty rate is determined by the number of students attending the school on October 1st, who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Schools with a significantly low-income rate of 40% or higher are eligible to become a school wide program.

What is a Title I school wide program and how will it help my child?

A school wide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I school; its primary goal is to ensure that all students, particularly those who are low-achieving, demonstrate proficient and advanced levels of achievement on State academic achievement standards.

School wide programs allow staff to redesign their entire educational program to strengthen the core academic program of the school. All students are eligible to participate in the school wide program. The emphasis in school wide program schools is on serving all students, improving all structures that support student learning, and combining all resources, as allowed, to achieve a common goal.

How and when will I learn about my child's performance on the CT State Standards Assessments?

Each fall, Bristol Public Schools distributes district, school, and individual student State Standards Assessment reports to all parents. The reports contain overall student performance summaries as well as student performance summaries for various subgroups broken down by ethnicity, economic need, special education, and English Language Learners.

How is a School Wide Title I program different from other programs?

A growing body of evidence shows that it is possible to create schools where all students achieve to high standards, even if there are additional challenges and at-risk factors. These schools share common characteristics, including:

- A clear focus;
- High expectations for students and staff;
- An environment focused on learning;
- Strong leadership;
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with standards;
- High-quality professional development;
- A collaborative spirit and collaborative structures;
- Meaningful parental involvement; and
- A commitment to continuous review and improvement.

These characteristics are most likely to produce effective schools when they are integrated together into a school wide framework. The Title I school wide process supports the creation of high-performing schools by encouraging schools to make significant, even radical, changes in how they do business, and providing them with a comprehensive process

for doing so. Developing and implementing a high-quality school wide program is a systemic, effective strategy for increasing the academic achievement of all students.

Additionally, parents will be provided with regular opportunities to work collaboratively with the school to ensure that their children receive the best possible academic support both in school and at home. At any point during the school year, parents have the right to request regular meetings with the school principal to discuss and assist in decisions regarding their children's education.

How can I become more involved as a parent or caregiver of a school-age student?

Bristol Public Schools recognizes parental/familial involvement as vital to improving the achievement of our students. The district has developed a District Parent Involvement Plan jointly with parents. In addition, each Title I school develops with parents a School Parent Involvement Plan, which includes a School-Parent Compact. As a parent of a Title I student, you are encouraged to participate in the development of this plan, which should describe how the school and families will work together to foster regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning and other school activities. All parents will receive the School Parent Involvement Plan and Compact after they are developed. Once you have reviewed the documents, please contact your child's school principal if you have any questions or would like to provide suggestions for improvement.

Parents will be provided with monthly resources to help their children succeed in school. These resources may come in the form of meetings, workshops, newsletters or take-home kits to use with their children at home. Parents will also have opportunities to regularly communicate with their child's classroom teachers and support staff.

Parents also have the opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding the use of Title I parent involvement funds. This is a great opportunity for parents of Title I students to provide input and assistance in planning how best to use Title I funding to improve school-family partnerships.

Parent participation is strongly encouraged at various school and district meetings scheduled throughout the year. Your child's school will also offer additional regular meetings if requested by parents. Any suggestions or concerns presented by parents at any of these meetings will be addressed with the appropriate parents in a timely manner.

How do I know whether the teachers and paraprofessionals in my child's school are qualified to teach?

All teachers who teach core academic subjects (English, mathematics, reading/language arts, science, world languages, arts, and history) must be highly qualified as defined by State and Federal regulations.

All paraprofessionals who provide instructional support in a Title I program must also be highly qualified as defined by State and Federal regulations.

Bristol Public Schools recognizes that cooperative efforts among the parents, school, staff, and community are essential for building strong educational programs for all children. Our school actively supports and encourages parent involvement in all aspects of its learning community. Aligning with the

guidelines of State and Federal regulations, you have the right to request information about the qualifications of your child's teachers and/or paraprofessionals. If you are interested in doing so, please contact your child's school principal. Thank you.

Most importantly, we encourage you to be an active partner with your child's school. Research suggests that how well a child performs in school depends greatly upon how much their parents become involved in their education. Our goal is to help parents communicate high expectations, hold children accountable, monitor and reinforce learning, and guide and advocate for their children. If you are able, please plan to attend the Annual Title I Parent Meeting held in the fall at your child's school.