

No Child Left Behind

Tip Sheet: What Parents Need to Know About Supplemental Educational Services

No Child Left Behind is the education plan that was signed into law by President Bush in January of 2002. It's designed to improve student achievement and help schools do a better job of teaching. The law includes a number of important opportunities for parents to be involved with the schools. These Tip Sheets from The Mississippi Forum on Children and Families are designed to help parents understand their rights under the law.

One of the provisions of No Child Left Behind that's important for parents to know about is called Supplemental Educational Services. This is extra, outside help for students who attend Title I schools. A school can receive Title I funds from the federal government if a certain percentage of its students are eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch. Ask your principal if your school receives Title I funds.

The law says that a school is determined to be in need of improvement if it has failed to meet state goals for two years in a row.

- In Mississippi that's determined primarily by Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) and Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) scores.
- There's a formula that the state uses to determine how the scores should be progressing. This is called "adequate yearly progress."
- If a school's scores are NOT high enough, then the school has failed to make adequate yearly progress. If this happens for two years in a row the school is said to be "in need of improvement."

Parents of students in Title I schools in need of improvement are offered the following options:

- Public school choice is available to all children in Title I schools in need of improvement, and must be offered to parents beginning in the first school year after a school has been determined to be in need of improvement.
- Supplemental services, or out-of-school help, must be offered to parents in the second year after a school has been determined to be in need of improvement.
 - Priority for this additional help is given to low-income parents.
 - Money is provided by the district for parents to select the provider of those additional services from a list approved by the State Department of Education.

This additional help could be in reading, language arts or math, and can take place before or after school or on weekends. It must not take place during school hours. It can be individual tutoring, extra classes or special programs offered by organizations in the community.

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about Supplemental Services:

How will I know if my child is eligible for these supplemental services?

As soon as your child becomes eligible for this extra help, your school district should notify you and provide you with a list of organizations and tutors who have been approved by the state to provide these services. You are free to choose any provider on the list, and your school district will pay for the services to your child. Churches, nonprofit organizations, private tutors, for-profit companies and others may be on the list.

How can I find out more about the providers on the list so that I'll be able to decide which one I want to work with my child?

The list you receive from the school district should include information about these providers, such as their qualifications to provide these services and their effectiveness. Before you choose a provider, it would be a good idea for you to talk to a few of them and ask questions about how they will help your child. Find out how they teach the subjects that your child needs the most help with.

How will I know if these services are helping my child?

When you have chosen the provider you want to work with your child, you will meet with them to set some goals for your child, discuss how you will be sure the goals have been met, and set a timeline for getting it done.

What about students with disabilities? Will the providers on the list know how to work with these students?

Students with disabilities must have the same access to extra services as students without disabilities. The state must be sure to include on the list of providers those who can adequately help students who need extra accommodations.

Where is the first place I go to get this information?

You can request it from the local district's superintendent's office. If you cannot get the information you need, contact Pam Peyton-Curry at the State Department of Education at (601) 359-3499.

Where else can I go to find out more about No Child Left Behind?

- Mississippi State Department of Education: <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us>
- The U.S. Department of Education's No Child Left Behind web site at <http://www.nclb.gov>
- Call Mississippi Forum on Children and Families and ask for the PIRC coordinator at (601) 355-4911 or visit our web site at www.mfcb.org