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**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001:
REAUTHORIZATION OF ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT**

RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

FACT SHEET 8: PARENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR SCHOOLS

STATUTORY SUMMARY —

Low Performing Schools

According to Section 1116 of the Act, some schools that receive Title I funds will be identified by the State Education Department as in need of improvement. Those schools must notify parents of this and provide an explanation of what that means, the reasons why the school was identified, and what the school will do to address low achievement by its students.

Public School Choice

Schools in need of improvement must provide public school choice. All schools designated for school improvement or corrective action must offer every student the option to transfer to another public school, including a public charter school, in the school district that has not been identified for school improvement or corrective action. The ability to choose starts in the beginning of the school year immediately following identification. Please refer to Fact Sheet 2 for additional information on School Accountability and Public School Choice.

- ♦ The school must explain to parents that they have the option of transferring their child to another public school within the district with transportation provided by the school district.

Supplemental Educational Services

Some schools and charter schools in school improvement must provide supplemental educational services in addition to public school choice. These schools must notify parents of the availability of the services and provide a list and description of approved services providers in the area. Please refer to Fact Sheet 3 for additional information on Supplemental Educational Services.

Teacher Qualifications

According to Section 1111 of the Act, schools receiving Title I funds must inform parents of their right to request information about their children's classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessional staff. Specifically, Section 1111 requires each school district, at the beginning of each school year, to notify the parents of each student attending a Title I school that the parents may request, and the school district must provide the parent upon request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. At a minimum, the school district must provide the following information:

- ♦ Whether the teacher has met State qualifications for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- ♦ Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived.
- ♦ The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

In addition to the information that parents may request, as noted above, a school that receives Title I funds must provide to each parent an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand:

- ◆ information on the level of achievement of the parent’s child in each of the State academic assessments as required under this part; and
- ◆ timely notice that the parent’s child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Additional Information on Teacher Quality is provided in Fact Sheet 4.

Limited English Proficiency

Schools using Title III funds to provide services to limited English proficient students must tell parents that their children have been identified as limited English proficient and in need of services. The schools must also provide information about the services to be provided and their children's level of learning.

Unsafe Public School Choice

When a student becomes the victim of a violent criminal offense while on the grounds of the public school he or she attends, or the student attends a “persistently dangerous school,” the school district must notify the student's parents of their right to transfer their child to a safe public school, including a public charter school, within the district. Further explanation of the unsafe public school option is provided in Fact Sheet 9.

— FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS —

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

1. *Question: Which students in the schools are eligible for public school choice?*

Answer: All students are eligible, but priority must be given to low-income students (as defined by the school district) if it is not possible to serve all students.

2. *Question: How will parents know if they are eligible for public school choice?*

Answer: The school must tell parents that they have the option of transferring their child to another public school.

3. *Question: Does the school district have to provide transportation for each student to the new school?*

Answer: Transportation must be provided or paid for by the school district.

4. *Question: Can students and parents choose a specific school to attend?*

Answer: Under certain conditions, the wishes of parents must be considered by school district officials, providing that if a school district has more than one school that has not been identified for school improvement or corrective action and has not been identified as being 'persistently dangerous', then the school district must offer choice of more than one school and take parental preferences into account.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

1. *Question: What information is a school district authorized to share about a teacher’s qualifications?*

Answer: At a minimum, the school district must provide the following information related to a teacher's qualifications: (1) Whether the teacher has met State qualifications for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction. (2) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived. (3) The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

2. **Question:** *Must the teacher provide written consent prior to the release of this information?*

Answer: A written consent is not required by a teacher prior to the release of information about the teacher's qualifications. Such information is publicly available (SED's Office of Teaching web site).

— **ADVICE TO LOCAL LEADERS** —

1. Local leaders should work with school administrators in developing the notice to parents informing them of the right to request information in teacher qualifications.
2. Local leaders should review information on what specifically will be shared with parents to ensure that this information is related to a teacher's qualifications and not the teacher's performance.

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