

# Information for Parents on Title I Priority Schools

Wisconsin is raising expectations for schools to ensure that all students are ready for college or a career when they graduate from high school. This means schools need to understand which students are performing well, which students need extra support, and what school staff can do to close the achievement gaps.

Wisconsin is one of approximately 40 states to develop a new plan to hold schools accountable for student achievement. As part of the plan, the state must identify Title I schools that demonstrate a need for additional support to ensure that all students meet high standards.

## ***What is a Title I School?***

The federal government provides funds for states to distribute to schools and districts with high percentages of economically disadvantaged children in order to support services which improve student outcomes. Title I funds ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and graduate college and career ready.

## ***What is a Title I Priority School?***

A school is named a Priority School if its level of student achievement on statewide standardized tests in reading and math falls within the lowest performing five percent of Title I schools for the past three years. Being named a Priority School allows the state to devote more resources and support to improve student achievement in the school.

## ***How often will the state identify new Priority Schools?***

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will identify a new group of Title I Priority Schools once every four years, giving school staff time to implement new practices and improve student achievement. Schools can exit priority status before the end of four years if their data demonstrates they are on track to meet state established achievement goals within six years.

## ***How will this affect my child's education?***

The state will require your child's school to take immediate steps to implement proven reforms, and continue this work across the next four years. First, your child's school will contract with state-approved education experts called Turnaround Partners to closely review how children learn reading and math at your school.

The state will approve a list of Turnaround Partners which demonstrate proven educational expertise and an ability to help schools improve. Districts must hire a partner from this list. The partner will conduct an intensive review of school practices, identify the school's strengths and weaknesses, and then require the school to make changes based on these findings.

Based on the review, the Turnaround Partner will help the school develop a reform plan. The plan must include how the school will provide:

- **Response to Intervention (RtI)**, or how school staff will work together to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students
- **Extended Learning Time**, or how the school will add at least 300 hours of instruction for all students, including before or after-school learning and extending the school year or day.
- **Highly Skilled Educators and Leaders**, or how the school will provide continuous professional development for teachers and principals to lead change
- **Positive and Safe Learning Environments**, or how the school will allow pupil services staff (school nurses, psychologists, social workers, and guidance counselors) time to help all students
- **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**, or how the school will help all students succeed academically and
- **Family Engagement**, or how the school will invite families to help children learn and progress.

### ***What can parents do?***

- **Encourage your child's learning.** Sign on to your school's online portal and frequently check your child's grades, homework assignments, and attendance. Recent state test scores for your child may also be listed. Limit your child's daily "screen time" and encourage them to read and to participate in school groups and activities.
- **Support your child's school.** Ask your school principal how parents can help the school improve. Attend school events such as family learning nights with your child. Volunteer to help at school events or to work one-on-one with children to improve their skills. Join your school's parent group to learn more about school programs and family-community efforts that make the school a better place for all students.
- **Keep in touch with your child's teachers.** Attend parent-teacher conferences, e-mail or phone teachers with your questions and concerns, and make it a point to let teachers know your child's learning strengths and needs. The positive relationship you establish with teachers will let your child know that adults at home and school are focused on their learning success.
- **Keep learning.** Let the principal know if you or parents you know need help speaking English or reading. Many schools offer resources to help parents improve job skills and computer literacy, earn a high school equivalency diploma, or take college classes. Send a profound message to your child about the importance of learning by continuing to learn yourself.