

Private School Consultation

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires that school districts consult with private school administrators when designing the private school title I program. Consultation involves communication and discussions between Local Education Agency (LEA) and private school officials on key issues that are relevant to the equitable participation of eligible private school students, teachers, and other educational personnel in Federal education programs. Meaningful consultation provides a genuine opportunity for all parties to express their views, to have their views seriously considered, and to discuss viable options for ensuring equitable participation of private school students, teachers, and other educational personnel. Successful consultation establishes positive and productive working relationships that make planning effective and serve to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of eligible students.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Private school consultation meeting | Private school administrators meet with staff from the Division of Academic Support, Federal and State programs to discuss the private school Title I program. |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Who is responsible for initiating the consultation process?

The obligation to initiate the consultation process lies with the LEA that is responsible for providing equitable services.

How does an LEA identify which private school officials to contact to begin the consultation process?

An LEA generally contacts and begins consultation with school officials representing all the private schools located within its boundaries but, for some programs, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program and the Even Start Family Literacy Program, it may be appropriate to consult with private school officials in the area to be served by the program.

Who participates in the consultation process?

Participants in the consultation process include the LEA and appropriate private school officials during the design and development of the programs. Private school officials can facilitate consultation by providing the LEA the names of the private school officials who should be included in the consultation process along with their roles and levels of authority.

When does consultation between public and private school officials occur?

Consultation between the LEA and private school officials occur before the LEA makes any decision (such as on ordering materials or hiring staff) that affects the opportunities of private school children, teachers, and other educational personnel to participate in programs requiring their equitable participation. Therefore, the LEA must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with private school officials during the design and development of programs (including the process of developing a competitive grant application) as well as throughout the implementation and assessment of programs. In order to ensure timely consultation, LEAs should begin the consultation process early enough to allow for maximum participation of private school students and teachers at the start of each school year.

How does an LEA begin the consultation process?

An LEA generally begins the consultation process each year by contacting private school officials representing the private schools located within its boundaries. One way to accomplish this is for the LEA to extend an invitation to officials of the private schools and convene a meeting with them during which LEA officials describe the Federal education programs and allowable activities available to private school students and teachers, explain the roles of public and private school officials, address the specific needs of private school students and teachers, and provide opportunities for the private school officials to ask questions and offer suggestions. A consultation process that involves an LEA simply sending a letter to private school officials explaining the purpose of Federal education programs and the LEA's intent to apply for funds is not adequate. Likewise, a letter merely describing the services that an LEA intends to provide for private school students, without any prior consultation, is not sufficient.

What topics should be discussed during the consultation process between public and private school officials?

The following topics are discussed during the consultation process

- how the children's needs will be identified;
- what services will be offered;
- how, where, and by whom the services will be provided;
- how the services will be assessed and how the results of the assessment will be used to improve those services;
- the size and scope of the equitable services to be provided to the eligible private school children, teachers, and other educational personnel and the amount of funds available for those services; and
- how and when the agency, consortium, or entity will make decisions about the delivery of services, including a thorough consideration and analysis of the views of the private school officials on the provision of contract services through potential third-party providers.