

Dear Parents,

St. Marys Area Middle School is a Schoolwide Title I School. The following information is being provided to you in an attempt to answer any questions about the program that you may have as a parent. Please feel free to contact my office at any time if you should have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Noel Petrosky, Principal

What is a Title I Schoolwide program?

A Schoolwide program permits a school to use funds from Title I, Part A and other Federal education program funds and resources to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all the students. This contrasts with a Title I targeted assistance program, through which Title I, Part A funds are used only for supplementary educational services for eligible children who are failing or are at risk of failing to meet state academic content standards.

Schoolwide programs have great latitude in determining how to spend their Title I, Part A funds. Schoolwide programs do not have to identify particular children as eligible for services, or separately track federal dollars. Instead, Schoolwide programs can use their Title I, Part A funds in the manner they choose within federal guidelines, as long as they engage in reform strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time and help provide a high-quality curriculum for all children, according to a comprehensive plan to help children meet the state's challenging academic content standards.

Schoolwide programs serve all children in a school. All staff, resources, and classes are part of the overall Schoolwide program. The purpose is to generate high levels of academic achievement in core subject areas for all students, especially those students most in need.

Components of a School-wide Program

- A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school is conducted.
- School-wide reform strategies provide opportunities for all children to meet the state's proficiency performance standards.
- Highly qualified staff members provide instruction.
- Professional development is conducted on a continual basis throughout the year.
- Activities are presented to increase parent involvement.
- Plans are included to provide transitional assistance from preschool to elementary, from elementary to middle school, and from middle school to high school.
- Measures are taken to include teachers in the decisions regarding the use of assessments.
- Activities are conducted to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering state standards will be provided with effective, timely, additional assistance.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an integral part of the Title I program. Parents are encouraged to become partners in helping their children achieve and become actively involved in all aspects of the process of the Title I program, from the writing of the plan to its implementation and evaluation.

A strong connection between the home and the school is a key element in student success. Materials, strategies, and assistance from teachers are available to all parents within a Title I Schoolwide program. Opportunities for active parent participation include, but are not limited to, open house, parent workshops, school-parent compacts, parent-teacher organizations, conferences, timely notifications, and more.

Federal regulations require schools to utilize a portion of their Title I funds to support parent involvement. Parents should contact the school principal with any comments or suggestions regarding the school's parent involvement expenditures. If you would like to participate on the district and/or the school Title I planning team or make comments on the plan, please contact the school office.

Parent Involvement Policy and School-Parent Compact

Each Title I school is required to ask for input from parents regarding the development of a parent involvement policy and a school-parent compact. The school-parent compact can be found online and a copy will be sent home with your student(s). The parent involvement policy explains how the school plans to work with parents to review and improve parent programs and describes how parents can participate in planning these programs.

The School-Parent Compact outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the way in which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards. You are asked to read the School and District Parent Involvement policies and the School-Parent Compact and give your suggestions or comments for revisions to the school principal. Changes will be made, when possible.

Description & Explanation of Curriculum, Forms of Academic Assessment, and Proficiency Levels Students Are Expected to Meet

St. Marys Area School District provides high-quality curriculum based on Pennsylvania's Curriculum Standards.

A variety of tests are administered to students to determine levels of proficiency. To monitor student progress throughout the year, student assessment may include:

- Assessments created by teachers and/or provided by textbooks.
- District assessments
- The Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) will be given annually to students in grades three through eight. These assessments will measure student performance based on state standards.

Results of student assessment are presented at the parent/teacher conferences, and by means of progress reports, report cards, etc.

Parents' Right to Know

Title I schools must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act). These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. If you would like to receive any of this information about your child's teacher(s) or paraprofessionals, you may contact the school office.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the ESEA, contains additional parent right to know requests, which can be obtained from the school office, including:
Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out
Information on required assessments including: subject matter tested, purpose of the test, source of the requirement (if applicable), amount of time it takes students to complete the test, time and format of disseminating results

The St. Marys Area Middle School administration, faculty, and staff are fully committed to helping your child develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in school and beyond. As we enter into the 2017-18 school year, the district wishes to express that all teachers and paraprofessionals at the St. Marys Area Middle School meet the highly qualified status. We appreciate your support and partnership as we work to provide the best education for your child.