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Energizing Title I Annual Meetings

ESEA Section 1116(c)(1) requires all Title I schools to hold an annual meeting at a convenient time to inform parents about the school's Title I program, its requirements, and the rights of parents and families to be involved.

Many LEAs and schools report facing dwindling attendance at this meeting. The following nine upgrades can attract more parents and set the stage for family engagement later in the school year.

9 Ways to Revive Tired Title 1 Annual Parent Meetings

Same Old, Same Old	Kick it up a Notch
1. Send out the meeting invite and hope parents show up.	Enlist a group of parents to help plan a Title I meeting that will appeal to families. Recruit diverse parents and don't stop at those who always volunteer first. This group can encourage others to attend the meeting.
2. Use an "all business" approach when planning the agenda.	Entice families with some kind of student performance. Get creative: Have students sing, dance, demonstrate something they learned, lead a Title I trivia game, etc.
3. Let school staff speak during the entire meeting and pack as much information as possible into a slide presentation.	Avoid boring slides. Talk less and listen more. Include time for parents to build relationships with school staff and each other. Share ownership of the meeting by having parents present some parts.
4. Use abstract descriptions when informing parents about academics and legal mandates.	Whenever possible, show -- don't tell -- parents what they need to know. For example, try a "gallery walk" of student work that illustrates elements of the curriculum.



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5.Focus only on what happens at school.	Inquire about families' challenges at home. For example, ask if parents are struggling to limit kids' screen time or manage sibling conflict. Discover future parent workshop topics while sending the message that school staff care.
6.Serve coffee and muffins.	Add an interactive element to refreshments provided. For example, invite families to taste-test an array of desserts with a common theme. Or feature potluck items (labeled with the contributing family's name) to celebrate cultural heritage.
7.Pitch only typical volunteer opportunities, such as joining the PTA.	"Volunteering" can connote activities that require prep work and must be done in person. Stress "engagement" instead. Engagement activities might include completing online school surveys or using social media to boost attendance for school events.
8.Let families leave empty-handed.	Set up a lending library with parenting resources as well as fun learning games parents can do with their children. Engage local businesses to donate door prizes.
9.Provide lengthy handouts.	Most parents will spend less than a minute reading a document. Keep handouts to one page and incorporate bullet points and graphic elements.

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