



# Making a Difference

Congratulations to the recently formed Action Teams who came together as part of the district and individual schools joining the Johns Hopkins University's **National Network of Partnership Schools**. Representatives from Early Childhood, Glen Oak, Irving, Kingman, Lincoln, Manual, Sterling, Trewyn, and Tyng were all part of a district training provided by Brenda Thomas from the National Network. Here's hoping you are all off to a positive beginning and have been able to incorporate your work and ideas into your school improvement planning! Mark your calendar for Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> when Brenda Thomas will be back to assist us with follow-up! Details will be forthcoming, but we hope that you and your team members will be available. She will also be conducting a second round of trainings for those schools who wish to join the Network and **did not participate in late October**.

We want to provide a forum for you to share with others what is happening in your schools with family involvement. If you have an activity that was successful or a resource that would be helpful to others let us know! We want to write it up for everyone to hear about it. So email and tell us - what is "Making a Difference" in your school?

Linda Reabe ([reabe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:reabe@sbcglobal.net))  
Sharon Love ([sfl82@gcctv.com](mailto:sfl82@gcctv.com))

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## Peoria Public Schools Title I Parental Involvement Goals FY07

All Title I schools will contact 100% of their students' families including parent-teacher conferences, phone conferences, home visits, and two-way written communication.

By the end of 2007, all Title I schools will have in place a system for providing students, parents, and their extended families support through identification, information and access of local social services.

### Unity By: Ray A. Lingenfelter

I dreamed I stood  
in a studio  
And watched two  
sculptors there,  
The clay they used  
was a young child's mind  
And they fashioned it  
with care.

One was a teacher;  
the tools they used  
were books and  
music and art;  
One was a parent  
with a guiding hand  
and a gentle loving heart.

And when at last  
Their work was done  
They were proud of  
What they had wrought  
For the things they  
Had worked into the child  
Could never be sold or bought.

And each agreed  
They would have failed  
If they had worked alone  
For behind the parent  
Stood the school, and  
Behind the teacher  
Stood the home.

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## "FACT Nights" Bring Families Together

On an evening last October, children inside Grant School in Wausau, Wisconsin, sat in tents with lights dimmed and listened to teachers read books by flashlight. Rotating to a new tent for a different tale every ten minutes, the "camping" atmosphere grabbed their attention and got them excited about reading. The event was one of four Families And Children Together (FACT) Nights, which invite parents and students to share in a free meal and spend quality time together as they join in reading or math activities.

"While the students enjoyed their activity, parents were back in the gym listening to some background about the reading programs that take place at our school," explained parent partnership coordinator Wendy Hazuga. "After the ten-minute presentation, parents were encouraged to ask questions, connect with other parents, or join their children at the planned activity for the evening. We also set up tables with information and examples of work being done in the classrooms at each grade level."

Each FACT Night begins with a free meal made and served by faculty members. A committee that includes Hazuga and the school's principal organizes the nights, and teachers volunteer to help with one event per year. Staff members help out in lieu of parents so that they and their kids can spend the evening as a family. The meal is designed to encourage parents to connect with their children. Door prizes are awarded as an incentive to attend.

"We send out two invitations for each FACT Night," said Hazuga. "The first is put in our bi-weekly school newsletter, and then another invitation is sent home with students a week before the FACT Night to encourage more families to sign up. The second invitation has become a very useful way to attract more families."

The event planners have found that separating the parents and students briefly allows the parents to concentrate on the information school representatives provide about their math or reading curriculum. The students move on to a fun activity or craft project while parents remain seated in the gymnasium after their meal.

"In the past, when we provided informational presentations for parents in another room, we struggled to get the parents to join us," reported Hazuga. "So instead of asking them to move, we came to them with the information. The presentations are kept very brief so parents don't feel overwhelmed with too much information. This change in the format worked well for us, and we want to continue with it."

Another component of the reading night was a "Used Book Give Away." The school collects used books throughout the year, and everyone who attends a reading-themed night can take two or three of those books to add to their home library.

Math nights have featured games that reinforce counting, pattern recognition, and money arithmetic, as well as math-related crafts.



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FACT Nights are one component of Grant School's improvement-plan goals, and Hazuga says that the faculty has fully embraced and supported the program.

"Staff members must play a big role in these family nights," she added. "It takes a lot of work to provide a meal, which includes preparation and clean-up. Classroom teachers also provide items to display at each of the nights. The teachers are on hand to answer questions, make presentations, and run crafts and activities with the kids. It really takes the entire school to make these nights a success.

Article by Cara Bafile

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## Illinois Title Association

Illinois Title Association (ITA) is a special interest council of the Illinois Reading Council established in 1992. Our mission statement is "Our goal is to inform, to connect, and to support individuals associated with Title I programs."

The best benefit of membership in ITA is that you have a link to other Title I teachers. We have a web site- [www.illinoistitleone.org](http://www.illinoistitleone.org) -and an email address- [illinoistitle1@yahoo.com](mailto:illinoistitle1@yahoo.com) . You can ask questions, receive answers and get information or links to other informational places. Our ITA Newsletter is published four times a year and is full of lots of information on several different topics. If you attend the Illinois Reading Council Conference in Springfield in March, you will find our strand geared for Title I teachers. This is a great source for networking with other Title I teachers, not to mention the interesting ideas you will pick up.

Please consider becoming an Illinois Title Association member.

Susanne Riddell

ITA President

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### Illinois Title I Association Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ IRA Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed \$40 for ITA Membership which includes membership into the Illinois Reading Council. Mail to: Illinois Reading Council - 1210 Ft. Jesse Road - Normal, IL 61761



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## District 150 Title I Parent Involvement

1. District 150's Title I plan, its parental involvement policies and the district's process for reviewing its Title I plan must all be jointly developed by and agreed upon with the parent of the Title I participating children, including the parents of participating children enrolled in private schools.
2. District 150's Title I Parent Involvement Policy and changes in the policy will be distributed to the parent's of the participating children.
3. The District 150's Title I Director must submit any parental comments with the District's Title I plan when it is submitted to the State if the plan is not satisfactory to the parents of the participating children.
4. The District 150 Title I Director shall establish a Title I Parental Involvement Committee comprised of representative for all Title I programs, including preschool, along with representative from groups such as Even Start and Head Start. This committee shall meet at least one time per semester.
5. Each District 150 Title I school Principal shall establish a parental advisory committee consisting of parents, teachers, staff, and administrators. This committee shall be involved in decisions regarding how Title I parental funds are used to enhance parental involvement.
6. Each District 150 Title I school shall develop a plan for building strong parental involvement programs. This plan shall be included with the school's overall Title I plan.
7. Each District 150 Title I targeted assistance school will establish, in consultation with parents, administrators, and pupil service personnel, procedures and criteria for identifying eligible children most in need.
8. The Title I Director will inform eligible schools and parents of school-wide policies and opportunities.
9. Each District 150 Title I school will actively promote appropriate professional developmental programs for teachers, parents, pupil services personnel, administrators, and other staff in order to raise the academic standards and performance of the Title I students.
10. The District 150 administration will provide technical assistance and materials to the Title I schools as they support Title I parents to help promote learning at home.
11. Each District 150 Title I school shall require parents of participating Title I children to provide necessary feedback and suggestions for planning, developing, and implementing effective Title I programs. The responsibilities of the school and parents as partners in education will be outlined in a signed school/parent compact.
12. The District 150 administration will provide regularly scheduled conferences for Title I teachers to communicate actively with parents and actively involve the parents in the school curriculum.
13. The District 150 administration will coordinate the Title I program and collaborate with other agencies providing services to children, youth, and families, including health and social services.
14. The District 150 staff will provide services to eligible children in private schools and hold timely and meaningful consultations with private school officials and the parents of participating children.
15. The District 150 administration, through Title I Director, will be responsible for verifying that the District carries out parental involvement requirements as mandate by the law.
16. District 150 Title I schools will annually measure the progress that Title I students are making towards meeting State student performance standards through the use of high-quality student assessments and report the information to parents, students, and teachers.
17. The District 150 Title I Parent Involvement Advisory Committee will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the District's Title I parental involvement policy.
18. The District 150 administration will use the evaluation findings in designing strategies for school improvement and in existing parental involvement policies at the District and school levels.

CROSS REF: 6:250 (Community Resource Persons and Volunteers), 8:90 (Parent Organizations)

ADOPTED: July 18, 2005

