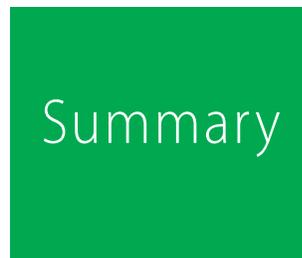




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Summary

April 2011

Prepared by

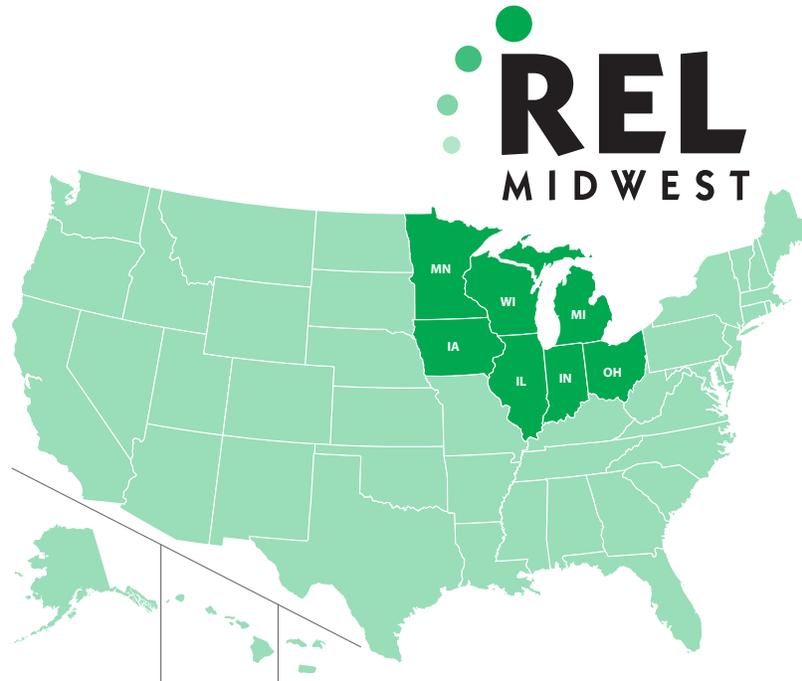
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April 2011

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# Parent involvement and extended learning activities in school improvement plans in the Midwest Region

**Analysis of school improvement plans in five Midwest Region states reveals that more than 90 percent of plans included at least one “potentially effective” parent involvement activity and 70 percent included at least one extended learning activity (a before-school, afterschool, or summer program). Few extended learning programs were described as providing academic support.**

According to the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are required to develop or revise school improvement plans aimed at boosting student achievement. Schools must submit the plans, which describe proposed activities, including parent involvement and extended learning activities (a before-school, afterschool, or summer program), to the local education agency for approval.

To determine the extent to which such plans included parent involvement activities and extended learning programs, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest conducted a content analysis of school improvement plans for schools identified for improvement based on 2007/08 assessment data. This study

adopted the methodology of a similar study of school improvement plans in the Northwest Region (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008). Neither this study nor the Northwest Region study assess the effectiveness of particular activities.

This report addresses six research questions:

- How well do school improvement plans align with the requirements of NCLB section 1116 to notify parents of the school’s improvement status, collaborate and communicate with parents, and include strategies that promote effective parent involvement?
- To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in NCLB section 1118—namely, involving parents in decisionmaking, involving parents in advisory committees, developing parent compacts, assisting parents, educating teachers and school personnel on the value of parents’ contributions, coordinating parent involvement activities with other programs, and identifying resources for parent involvement?
- What parent involvement activities not specified in NCLB sections 1116 and 1118 are included in school improvement plans?

- How do school improvement plans detail how information will be provided to parents with limited English proficiency?
- To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in section 1116 for extended learning programs, including activities before school, after school, during the summer, and during any extension of the school year?
- What is the focus of extended learning programs, and who provides them?

To examine these questions, this study reviewed school improvement plans in five states in the Midwest Region: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. (Indiana and Michigan were unable to provide their school improvement plans in time to participate.) Plans were obtained for 93 percent of the 1,503 schools identified as in need of improvement in the five states in 2007/08 (1,400 plans). The parent involvement and extended learning activities specified in the plans were coded by categories based on the language of NCLB sections 1116 and 1118, a literature review, and activities identified in the Northwest Region study as “potentially effective.”

The report’s findings include the following:

- About 90 percent of the school improvement plans included plans to notify parents of the school’s improvement status, parents’ rights, or both; 57 percent reported having involved parents in developing or approving the plans; and 91 percent included at least one potentially effective parent involvement activity, as required under NCLB section 1116. About half (49 percent) of the plans met all three section 1116 requirements; another 41 percent satisfied two of the three requirements.
- Very few plans (15 percent) included activities that involved parents in decision-making, but 43 percent of plans included advisory activities for parents. Other activities included developing parent compacts (35 percent); identifying budgetary resources for parent involvement (35 percent); providing assistance to parents in understanding state standards, monitoring their child’s progress, or working with educators to improve the student’s achievement (32 percent); and educating teachers and staff on the value of parents’ contributions (23 percent).
- Across all five states, about half the schools (49 percent) whose plans were reviewed served English language learner students. Among them, 53 percent reported presenting information to parents in a language other than English.
- About 70 percent of school improvement plans included at least one extended learning activity. Just 5 percent of before-school, 20 percent of afterschool, and 5 percent of summer school programs offered tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners.