

New and Improved! Title I Guiding Principles

*The purpose of Title I, and the educators of Alachua County,
in partnership with families and caregivers,
is to ensure that all students
have a fair and equitable opportunity
to obtain a high-quality education.*

*Our mission,
in tandem with parents and guardians,
is to support students
to reach for academic excellence and
to prepare them for lifelong success.*

*This educational team,
together,
manages resources and facilitates activities
that help students to attain
high levels of scholastic proficiency and achievement
while also fostering their full potential and overall development.*

How We Got Here

In April of 2024, the Title I Department of Alachua County Public Schools gathered together with community stakeholders in the district, including other department leaders and members, parents, representatives, and other friends within ACPS. Input was sought regarding revising the, now former, mission statement for the department. Feedback was collected, reviewed, and reworked in ways that would allow for a new statement to properly include and express views of district members that are more current and up-to-date. Because mission statements, by definition, are only one sentence, these updates will be referred to as “Guiding Principles”.

Previous Mission Statement - 2020 to 2024

"The purpose of Title I is to ensure that all children have a fair, equitable, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and assessments."

Reactions, Responses, Revisions

Stakeholders concurred that the comment, "at minimum," diminished the vitality and strength of the statement, so it was deleted. There were questions about some of the words being redundant and/or clear only to those with training or degrees in the field of education, so those words were removed or replaced. However, stakeholders believed that a focus on student academic proficiency and achievement included the priorities of all involved.

Participants in this discussion about the mission statement also noticed that parent and family engagement was overlooked entirely by the old statement. Their partnership was simply missing from the equation. That was corrected by adding several phrases that openly included them as part of the educational team of ACPS.

Shareholders also agreed that developing the whole child was equally important to academic proficiency. Fostering the whole human being was perceived as critical to student success both in and out of school. Statements were added that spoke to this potential as well.

A Brief History of The Timing of the Prior Mission Statement ~ 2020

The previous mission statement was written during one of the emotional heights of the CoVID-19 pandemic - late 2020. Much of how to proceed into the unknown future of that time was deprived from even the most perceptive and wise among us. So, it was thought, at the time, that tying the wording and phrases tightly to state mandates related to education was critical.

Getting Up-to-Date and Current ~ 2024

Having entered a new phase post-pandemic in early 2024, stakeholders felt that phrasing should and could focus more on the partnership between parents and schools. Words and phrases were added that allowed for the different types of caretakers children may have in their home and for students as whole-person learners as well. Remarks were also revised that helped to develop the shared influence on the children in the custody and care of educators and administrators, moms and dads, grandparents and guardians in all of their forms.

Assistance and Acknowledgements

Title I staff worked diligently to capture, categorize, and collaborate stakeholder input. Ultimately, though, it was the greater associations within and throughout the district that helped to create a statement that will serve as both inspiring and instrumental to guiding the actions of the Title I Office and their schools, their staff and students, as well as families and caretakers at large. *"Every task we take on in Title I touches the life of a child,"* says School Renewal Director Jennifer Steptoe, so it is to their future and beyond to which we look toward and forward!

