

# Cash Valley Elementary

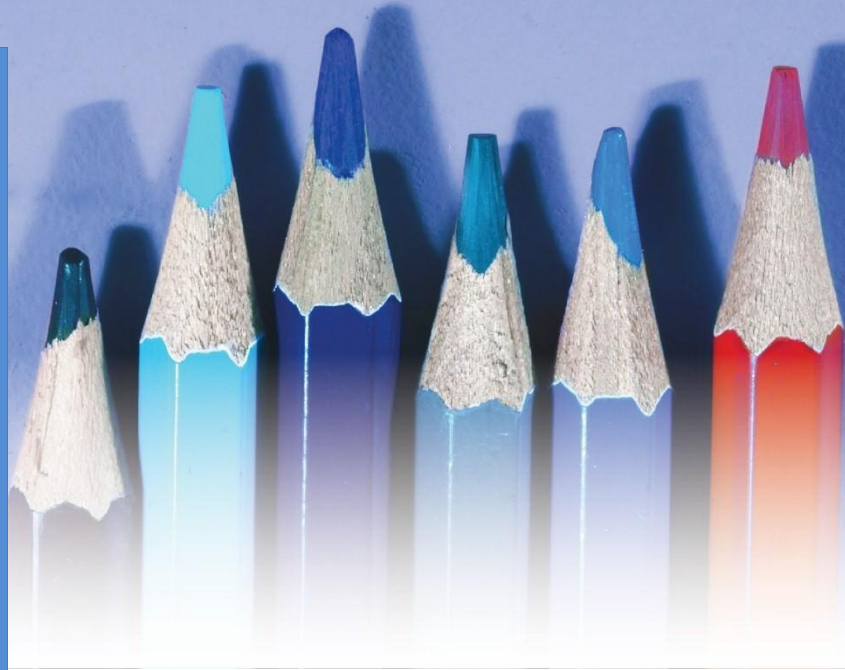
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## School Handbook 2023-2024

### A MESSAGE TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Welcome to Cash Valley Elementary School. This handbook is a communication tool that shares important information regarding policies and procedures to support the instructional and safety operations of the school. It is a resource to use throughout the school year.

The success of each child's education is dependent on an active partnership between the school, family, and community. The establishment of strong relationships between these partners is the necessary factor in meeting the educational needs of every child. We encourage family participation in school-related activities and events offered throughout the year.

The faculty and staff are highly qualified educators and regard education as a priority for all children. Our goal is to develop partnerships that provide a positive educational experience for all.

Please read the information provided and contact the school if there are any questions. Cash Valley Elementary School is "Home of the **Cougars**": **C**hallenging **O**pportunities, **U**ltimate **G**oals - **A**chieving **R**eal **S**uccess!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Lisa Stevenson  
Principal

## CASH VALLEY MISSION

The Cash Valley Elementary School Team, in partnership with families and the community, will ensure the success of all students by:

- Providing a safe, positive learning environment.
- Facilitating support with executive functioning and mindfulness to help students grow emotionally, socially, and academically.
- Implementing differentiated instruction to meet diverse needs of all children.
- Instilling high expectations and growth mindset development.
- Fostering independent learners who actively participate, work collaboratively, and think critically.

**CASH VALLEY VISION:** *All students will reach their full potential, achieve success, and become productive citizens.*

## CHARACTER PLEDGE

I pledge to be a student of character.

I will be worthy of trust.

I will be a respectful, responsible, an expert learner doing what I must.

I will always act with fairness.

I will show that I care.

I will be a good citizen and always do my share.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### Parent Conferences

October 2<sup>nd</sup> (11-2 & 3-5:30)      March 4<sup>th</sup> (10-12 & 1-3:30)

### Report Cards

11/9/23, 1/26/24, 4/5/24, 6/13/24

## ONLINE GRADES

To view online grades, follow these procedures:

1. Visit Follett Aspen (md-allegany.myfollett.com)
  2. Enter child's information: username login ID (last name.first.name) and password.
  3. Click the Academics tab (top toolbar)
  4. List of child's classes and grade summary
- Contact the school with questions or for assistance.

**Cash Valley Elementary  
School Website:**  
[acpsmd.org/ca](http://acpsmd.org/ca)

## CASH VALLEY CORE VALUES

- ✓ All children can learn.
- ✓ High expectations need to be fostered in all children.
- ✓ Structures are provided for students to become prepared for lifetime learning: collaboration, critical thinking, and independence.
- ✓ Feelings of security and positivity enhance student success. Students learn their brain functions, utilize strategies that create a growth mindset, and help students to develop executive functioning skills.
- ✓ Students come with diverse needs; instruction is adapted to meet those needs.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

It is important to complete and return the contact and emergency information forms provided by the school. Correct telephone numbers, addresses, and emergency contact information is necessary to make home connections by school personnel. Please inform the school if there are any changes that occur throughout the year.

## EMERGENCY DELAYS, EARLY DISMISSALS, & CLOSINGS

Weather conditions and events can require delayed openings and early dismissals. The automated calling system, Blackboard Connect, will send notifications of changes. Please listen to messages thoroughly prior to contacting the school. Information will also be posted on the Board of Education website. (ACPS Policy EBCE)

- **Delays:** Arrive at the school by the correct scheduled time (10:20/delayed two hours; 11:20/delayed three hours). Children cannot arrive at school earlier because no supervision will be provided. Breakfast will not be served on delayed days.
- **Early Dismissals:** Alternate plans for early dismissal must be indicated on the emergency information form. This will occur if a child must be dismissed differently due to parents not being at home. Discuss this alternate dismissal with your child. If alternate plans are not indicated, then the child will follow the regular dismissal procedure (1:10/2hr early dismissal; 12:10/3hr early dismissal)
- **Closings:** The BOE will announce if schools are closed for the entire day.

## HOME ITEMS

Labels should be placed on all belongings. Valuable or non-school related items are not allowed at school. These items can create a disturbance. These items will be collected and placed in the office for parents to reclaim. Cell phones needed for after school care must be kept in backpacks during bus and school time. The school will not be responsible for any items that are stolen or lost.

## SCHOOL ARRIVAL

No supervision provided prior to 8:20 a.m.

- 8:20-8:30 a.m. - Children arrive at school and report to designated areas.
- 8:40 a.m. - Announcements begin the official start of the school day, then instruction begins in classrooms.

**Children arriving after 8:45 are tardy based on attendance procedures and must have a parent accompany them to the office.**

## SCHOOL DISMISSAL

Procedures have been established for safety purposes.

- 3:05 p.m. – Parents must park in the upper lot (exception is a handicap sticker), walk to enter through the cafeteria door, and sign-out their child.
- 3:10 p.m. - Announcements begin for dismissal.
  1. Private Transportation: Children will report to the cafeteria.
  2. Bus Riders: Children will walk in appropriate lines to board buses.
- 3:20 p.m. – Car Pick-Up: Parents may enter the roundabout to get children **after buses are dismissed**. Children are escorted to the roundabout by staff.
- 3:30 p.m. – All children have been dismissed, staff dismissed.

Additional dismissal reminders:

- Dismissal Change: If there is a change in a child's departure or destination, a note or phone call is required from a custodial parent or the child will report home following the regular dismissal indicated on the information form.
- Early Dismissal: Parents report to the main office to sign out the child and the office will contact the classroom for the child to report for dismissal.
- Weekday Dismissal Variations: If a child is dismissed differently depending on the weekday, the parent must send a note indicating the procedures for each weekday. The weekday schedule will serve as the regular dismissal procedure. If the weekday schedule is to change, another note from the parent is required.
- Non-Parental Dismissal: Children can only be dismissed to their parents unless prior notification is made from the parents. **Other persons picking up children must report to the office with a photo ID.**
- Children Home Visits: When a child accompanies another child home to visit, the office must receive a **note from the parents of both children** to document permission from both families.

## LIBRARY CIRCULATION

Our school has an online library circulation system for barcoded resources. Overdue/lost book notices are sent home periodically. Visit the online library circulation system by visiting the school website, select bookmarks, and click on Follett Destiny Library Catalog. Students can access online resource databases and ebooks for circulation through this site.

## PARTY INVITATIONS/NON-FOOD TREATS

Party invitations distributed at school must be for the entire class. **No child is to be excluded.** Due to severe allergies, along with nutritional and health guidelines, no food items will be allowed for celebrations. Instead of food snacks, it is encouraged to send non-food items that must be approved by the teacher. (ACPS Policy EFA)

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The School Improvement Plan is written each year by the Leadership Team. It is created based on the established goals designed to develop a quality instructional program and learning environment for children, staff, parents, and community. Through the examination of school performance data, improvement areas are targeted and strategies are determined to reach set goals. Upon the Board of Education approval, the plan becomes the central focus to increase student achievement and is revisited regularly to review progress. The plan is available in the school office and on the school website.

## SCHOOL VISITORS

Visitors are welcome at the school. There are policies implemented for persons visiting the school to maintain safety and security, an orderly learning environment, a welcoming atmosphere, and equitability throughout the school community.

- All persons entering the school must report to the main office.
- Classroom visits must be pre-approved by staff in order to make arrangements.
- Visitors report to the main office and follow the procedures for children arriving late or leaving early.
- Visitors and volunteers requesting entrance to other school areas must **provide a photo ID** that is scanned into the security system. A sticker will be printed and worn in the school during the visitation.

Staff members are trained to report any persons not displaying the proper visitor sticker provided by the office. (ACPS Policy ECAB)

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their child's financial obligations are complete. At the elementary level, this can include devices, lunch, library books, lost school materials, field trips, pictures, and fundraisers.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips extend classroom instruction and enhance learning experiences. Parental permission is required for children to attend. Chaperones are determined based on supervision needs and transportation funding. Approval by school administration and the Board of Education is required. (ACPS Policy IHOA)



## CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

This safety plan is developed to proactively help protect the school community from emergencies with prepared and appropriate crisis responses. To enforce school security, all doors remain locked and video surveillance is accessible inside and outside the building. Visitors must use an intercom system at the main entrance to gain access into the school. A safety employee enforces security measures and provides assistance throughout the school community. As part of safety preparedness, various emergency drills must be conducted throughout the year to practice critical situations. These types of drills include:

- Evacuation/Fire: Children exit the building in the event of an emergency situation, such as fire and smoke (conditions outside are safer than inside).
- Reverse Evacuation: Children reenter the building due to an unsafe situation in the community (conditions inside are safer than outside).
- Drop, Cover, Hold: Due to extreme weather, children drop to the floor, take cover under desks/tables, and hold on (imminent danger to building or surroundings). The school participates in the Great South East Shakeout drill in October to practice.
- Lock-In: All exterior doors are locked and regular instructional routines are followed inside the building (daily procedure during the school day).
- Lockdown: Staff must determine best safety choices based on different situations. The school district instructs children in the method of “Run, Hide, Fight.” Grades 1-5 view a descriptive video while prekindergarten/kindergarten are instructed through age-appropriate information. The approach teaches if a bad person enters the building to do the following:
  - Run and exit the building to a safe location.
  - Hide in a safe location determined by the staff.
  - Fight (ex. throw items) to provide time to escape to a safe place.

Contact the office or the anonymous tip line (1-800-TIP-US-OFF, Ext. 222) for safety and security risk awareness. (ACPS Policy EB, EBC, ECA, ECAB, ECAE, ECAF)

## PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program uses inspection, monitoring, employee education, and sanitation practices to minimize the use of pesticides in schools. IPM procedures are used to control pests which may present human health hazards, cause damage to structures and property, and affect the quality of life for students, staff, and community. Parents are notified within 24 hours prior to the application of any pesticide. If there is an emergency and pesticide must be applied immediately, notice will be given within 24 hours of the application. A sign will be posted at the school entrance at the time of the application and remain for 48 hours. (ACPS Policy EBAD)

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS

Good nutrition is an essential component of a growing mind and body. Cash Valley participates in Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) and Community Eligible Provisions (CEP), therefore, all students receive free breakfast and lunch. Well-balanced meals are provided daily (milk, juice/fruit, vegetables, entrees) to meet nutritional needs. Children bringing home lunches are encouraged to pack items that are healthy. Glass containers and soda cans should not be included. Bringing outside lunches (fast food) is not permitted.

- Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) Applications: These forms should be completed and returned to the office to determine eligibility. **Parents must complete a new application each year.** In October, children are removed from the FARM list. Contact the office to obtain forms.
- Lunch Accounts: A cafeteria debit account is automatically provided to each child. Parents can periodically deposit funds into the account for their child to purchase additional drink and snacks. Children use their Personal Identification Number (PIN) for purchases. If a check is used to deposit money, make the check to the school and indicate the PIN. All deposits are to be made to the cafeteria staff in the mornings.
- PAYPAMS: This is an electronic option for children's cafeteria money deposits that can be regulated from home. Information can be obtained from the cafeteria or the website (paypams.com).
- Overdue Accounts: Reminders for overdue accounts will be sent home with your child. This can result in children being served alternate meals.
- Meal Prices: **ALL students will receive free breakfast and lunch.**

For questions, contact the cafeteria (301-759-2730). (ACPS Policy EF, EFA, JQA)

## SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS

Transportation by bus is provided by the district based on location and is a privilege. Review the following bus expectations to encourage positive behavior choices:

- Listen to the bus driver for safety.
- Remain seated and do not block the aisle.
- Keep head and arms inside the bus.
- Keep the bus clean.
- No eating and drinking.
- No yelling, screaming, and fighting.
- No inappropriate language.
- Do not throw objects.
- Do not damage the bus.

Children that have issues following these regulations will receive referrals that can result in parent conferences and suspension from the bus. If suspension is a result, parents have the responsibility of transporting their child to and from school. (ACPS Policy EFA, EEAEC)

## DISCIPLINE/POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

The district discipline policy states, “Good discipline in the school is extremely important. Without good discipline, the school cannot discharge its primary responsibility in the development of citizenship. Without good discipline, students cannot realize their greatest opportunities for growth.” To achieve the school vision, the school implements the district PBIS initiative. This program has shown that successful schools focus on prevention through intervention and teaching expected behavior.

- Children are expected to do their best and their attitude determines their direction. These school-wide behavior expectations are accepted and displayed throughout the school community.

### COUGAR CODE

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be An Expert Learner
- A behavior matrix identifies expected behaviors in each school area, along with lessons centered on social, academic, and behavioral skills.
- Positive behaviors are acknowledged through incentives, activities, and Cougar Code recognition.
- A three-tiered system addresses discipline that requires levels of interventions and consequences through an intervention approach (Restorative Practices).
- Learning Assistance Program (LAP) provides a temporary, structured setting with a trained assistant delivering behavioral support. Administration determines placement in LAP and parents are informed.
- PBIS/PST teams review discipline data to determine behavioral recommendations with staff.

Positive relationships between staff and families are critical to develop a partnership that focuses on behavioral improvements for children. (ACPS Policy JK)

## GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

A full-time counselor provides services and instruction to all students. The counselor conducts classroom lessons to assist in the developmental and emotional health of children, along with career exploration. Character education is addressed to contribute to a safe and orderly environment and provide a positive influence on school improvement and academic achievement.

## HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

All children have a right to an equal education free of bullying and harassment. Harassment is offensive behavior that is threatening and creates an intimidating environment. Bullying occurs when these offensive behaviors become repetitive with a person maintaining a power position. The school investigates complaints and appropriate disciplinary actions addressing this type of negative behavior. (ACPS Policy JBA)

## ATTENDANCE

The district policy states, “Regular school attendance is expected of all students... is directly related to school achievement. In order to maximize academic achievement, there must be a unified effort by all school staff, parents, students, and the community to improve overall school attendance. School administrators, teachers, and support staff are expected to make all reasonable attempts to assist students and parents in addressing those factors which cause students to be absent from school.” Based on the law, children are considered tardy when they are not present in school at the designated times and considered truant when they do not attend school. A record of absences is maintained by the school and is monitored by the Pupil Service Team (PST). Parents are contacted through automated phone calls for daily absences and by the Board of Education attendance letters for accumulated absences.

- Children arriving at school after **8:45 a.m.** will be marked as tardy. Parents must accompany their child into the main office to sign in.
- Absences are required to have a signed parental note, email, and/or a doctor note explaining the absence.
- District policy specifically identifies tardy and absence reasons as being lawful or unlawful.
- Family vacations need to receive prior approval from the principal to be considered excused absences based on attendance history.
- Children that attend school 4 hours or more equals a full day. Children that attend school 2 hours, but less than 4 hours, equals a half day.
- Children are expected to make up missed classwork.
- Monitoring Procedures (monitored by PST):
  - Five (5) days of unlawful absences result in a school system written notification.
  - Nine (9) days of unlawful absences result in a school system written notification and a parent conference may be scheduled.
  - Twelve (12) days of unlawful absences result in a school system notification, a parent conference scheduled, attendance contract signed, and shared documentation of the course of action.
  - Twenty (20) absences total (15 unlawful or 10 consecutive unlawful days), the school Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW) will send a letter that files charges against the parents for non-attendance.
  - Parents can follow an appeals process for attendance violation decisions.
  - PST can also determine additional interventions, regardless of absences, in order to provide support for families to improve attendance.

*Attendance Works* ([attendancesworks.org](http://attendancesworks.org)) is a valuable resource that prioritizes school attendance for engagement to learn and thrive. Attendance in school affects the development of the whole child and provides a consistent routine that leads to successful experiences. (ACPS Policy JED)



## FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies can affect a child's health and academic performance; therefore, a plan is implemented for avoidance and management of food allergy situations.

- **Parent Responsibilities:**
  - Written authorization is needed to begin action for food allergies, restrictions, substitutions, modifications and treatment to allergic reactions.
  - Healthcare provider documentation indicating the food allergy and restrictions/exposure also needs to be provided to the principal, school nurse, and food service personnel. Authorization must be given to share this information to persons that assist the child in the school setting. The district Food and Allergy Sensitive Form can be used for this purpose.
  - Specific medications for allergic reactions must be provided to the school nurse following medication procedures.
  - Health and emergency care plans are developed with the school nurse with detailed procedures to minimize the allergic reaction risk.
- **School Health Responsibilities:**
  - A list of children with food allergies that require meal modifications will be created and distributed to the food service manager, food service central office, teacher, and principal.
  - Health and emergency care plan will be developed with the school nurse with detailed procedures to minimize the allergic reaction risk.
  - School nurse conferences with the cafeteria manager of dietary restrictions.
  - If an allergic reaction occurs, emergency procedures will be followed and parents will be contacted.
- **Food Service Responsibilities:**
  - Special dietary restrictions will be entered into the service management system.
  - Food service staff will follow the guidance document provided by the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service.
- **School Responsibilities:**
  - Collaboration between staff and parents will ensure safety of children with food allergies.
  - Food allergy information will be disseminated to appropriate staff.

These procedures will assist in reducing the risk of food allergy situations during the school day. (ACPS Policies JLCEA, JLCEB)

## HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Communication is sent home in various forms such as assignment books, communicator folders, newsletters, emails, phone calls, school website, Schoology, Class Dojo, and Blackboard Connect. Contact the school for clarifications, questions, concerns, or if there is a need to meet with school personnel.

## HEALTH AND MEDICATION SERVICES

A full-time nurse coordinates services regarding children's health. The nurse supports the school by providing information in health and science areas. In reference to children's medication, procedures are developed for home and school care.

- Medicines for minor illnesses and non-prescriptive medicines should be given at home. If this is not possible, parents can come to the school to administer the medication to their child.
- If it is determined by a physician that a child receives medication during the day (daily basis or emergency), the school must receive written instructions from the prescribing physician on a school health form which can be obtained from the school nurse.
- Medications must be in the original container from the pharmacy.
- **Children must not transport medication to school.** The parent must deliver the medicine to the school nurse or arrange for the pharmacy to deliver the prescription to school.
- Medication is safeguarded in locked designated areas and only available to authorized school personnel.

The school nurse is available for any questions or concerns regarding services and medication administration. (ACPS Policies JLCEA, JLCEB)

## HOMEWORK

Homework extends the learning experience beyond the classroom. The objective is to strengthen skills, increase understanding, improve study habits, and involve parents in their child's progress. The school also recognizes the involvement of afterschool activities and the need for family time.

- **Forms of Homework:**
  - Practice assignments to reinforce taught skills
  - Preparation assignments to read, gather, and organize information prior to a lesson
  - Extension assignments for a project that parallels class work and requires students to apply prior learning
- **Expected Time Requirements:**
  - Grades PK/K – approximately 20 minutes
  - Grades 1-2 – approximately 30 minutes
  - Grades 3-4 – approximately 40 minutes
  - Grade 5 – approximately 50 minutes
  - All grades are encouraged to read (or be read to) for 15-30 minutes.
- Children are responsible for completing homework independently. Parents are to review the assignments and provide support, as needed.
- Assignments may vary between children based on individual needs.

Assignment books/folders can be used in grades 1-5 and may require a parent signature. This is a parent/teacher communication tool. (ACPS Policy IKB)

## AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS

Each grading period children will be recognized based on academic achievement and growth, attendance, character, and Cougar Code behavior.

## TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE

Children are expected to use school telecommunications for educational purposes in an ethical, responsible, and legal manner. Parents must complete the Student Equipment Agreement form for ACPS devices and/or database/Internet access. Personal cell phones and communication devices are not to be used during scheduled instructional times. Privately owned technical devices brought to school by children must be turned off and remain in their backpack during arrival, throughout the instructional day, and dismissal. Children also assume the responsibility for any loss, damage, theft, or use by others of their own devices. Inappropriate use of these devices will be addressed by the administration and parents will be contacted. (ACPS Policy JIK)

## PTO AND VOLUNTEERS

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) builds relationships between the home and school by providing funding support, learning activities, and special events that benefit the overall school community. The Parent Involvement Coordinator meets weekly with volunteers to assist school personnel with classroom activities and materials. Contact the school to volunteer and become a PTO member!

## DRESS CODE

School attire worn by students may not disrupt the educational mission of the school. Children should be dressed in a style that promotes health and safety and meets the daily demands of the instructional and non-instructional aspects of the day. Remember that children need to dress safely for physical education classes and participation in daily recess. (ACPS Policy JICA)

## SUPPLY LISTS

The school provides general supplies to each classroom to be used by the children. In addition, a suggested supply list created by grade levels is located on the school website.

## Non-Discrimination

The Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity or expression, genetic information, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, physical characteristics or disability in matters affecting employment, admission to, or treatment in providing access to programs. (ACPS Policy AC)

Allegany County Public Schools Website:  
[www.acpsmd.org](http://www.acpsmd.org)

## TITLE I PROGRAM

Cash Valley implements a Title I program that provides funding for additional personnel, instructional materials, and professional development. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) outlines the focus of this program. Parents are invited to review and comment on the plan and are encouraged to become a member of the team to participate in the decision-making process. Parent input and engagement are recognized as key components of children's success. Once the SIP is BOE approved, it is available to view in the school office and on the school/district websites.

- Parent input is requested on the development and review of the following documents:
  - School Improvement Plan
  - Parent/Family Engagement Plan
  - School Parent Compact
  - Parent/Family Engagement Budget
  - District Parent and Family Engagement Plan Annual Review
- Parents can obtain Title I information by visiting the district website to learn about the types of programs, parent/family engagement, parent school compact, parents right to know, complaint procedures, parent involvement policy, and the parent/family engagement plan.
- Parents from each grade level are invited to join the Title I Parent Committee. This committee reviews documents for future improvements.

If you are interested in becoming a member of a Title I team, contact the office or the Parent Involvement Coordinator at the school.

### TITLE I TIPS

Cash Valley has a Schoolwide Title I Program. This means that the federally funded instructional staff may work with all students in the school. The Schoolwide Title I program is designed to increase academic achievement for all students by using federal funds to meet the needs of all students more effectively. Title I provides additional resources for the school, such as instructional materials, professional development, parent information, parent/family engagement programs, and extra staffing to provide instructional support.

Parents have the right to know the certification status of the teachers and instructional assistants that work with their children. This information is available by sending a written request to: Mr. Glen Rice, Supervisor of Human Resources, 108 Washington Street, P.O. Box 1724 Cumberland, MD 21502.

Parent/Family engagement is an important factor in the academic success of students. This plan describes how the ACPS will plan and support programs, activities, and procedures for involving parents/families in Title I program schools. The policy is posted on the district website.