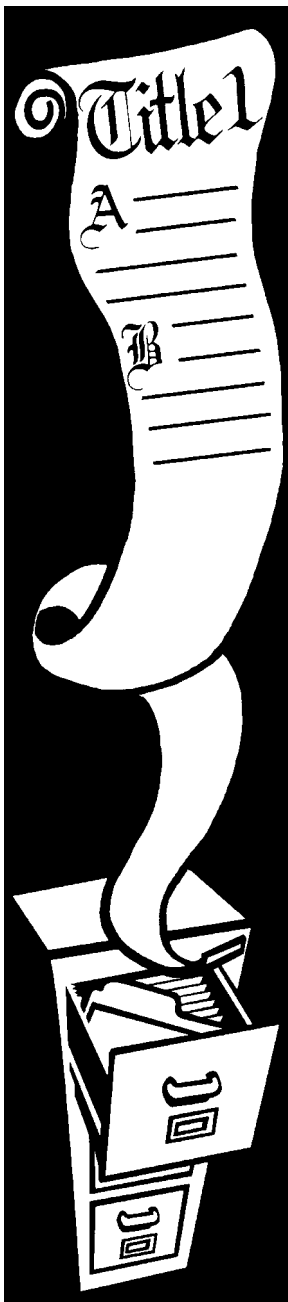


Title I

Tools for Ensuring Quality Educational Opportunities

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PEER

Introduction

Title I¹ of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) is the largest federally funded education program. The overall purpose of Title I is to give schools with high concentrations of children living in poverty the funds to provide special assistance for children who are not achieving well academically or who are at-risk of educational failure. In 1994, Congress completely overhauled Title I through the “Improving America’s Schools Act” (IASA).² Congress rewrote the law to ensure that Title I programs are in line with the standards-based education reforms taking place in general education. Changes in 1994 made explicit the intent of the 1988 amendments to Title I that had been designed to ensure that educationally disadvantaged students were educated according to the same high standards states were establishing for all students. To accomplish this purpose, Title I requires states to:

1. ensure *high standards for all children* and align the efforts of states, local educational agencies, and schools to help children served under this title to reach such standards;
2. provide children an *enriched and accelerated educational program*, including, when appropriate, the use of the arts, through schoolwide programs or through additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time so that children served under this title receive at least the classroom instruction that other children receive;
3. promote schoolwide reform and ensure access of children (from the earliest grades) to *effective instructional strategies and challenging academic content* that includes intensive complex thinking and problem-solving experiences;
4. significantly upgrade the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools *with substantial opportunities for professional development*;





5. *coordinate services* under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with health and social service programs funded from other sources;

6. *afford parents meaningful opportunities to participate* in the education of their children at home and at school;

7. distribute *resources, in amounts sufficient to make a difference*, to areas and schools where needs are greatest;

8. *improve accountability*, as well as teaching and learning, by using state assessment systems designed to measure how well children

served under this title are achieving challenging state student performance standards expected of all children; and

9. provide *greater decisionmaking authority and flexibility to schools and teachers* in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance. [Emphases added.]³

Beyond merely setting standards and calling for high expectations, these aspects of Title I spell out what is required to provide meaningful “opportunities to learn.” These nine requirements are the essence of Title I’s potential for truly improving education.

Types of Title I Programs

There are two types of Title I programs at the school level: schoolwide programs and targeted-assistance programs. In **schoolwide programs**, Title I money is used to upgrade the entire school’s educational program, rather than to target services to a group of identified children. By affecting the school’s entire educational program, the overall education of ALL children who attend the school can be improved. To qualify as a Title I schoolwide program, at least 50 percent of the students must be considered low-income. In contrast, Title I money in **targeted-assistance programs** may only be used to provide services to eligible children identified as having the greatest need for special assistance.⁴ Children with disabilities who are failing or at risk of failing to meet standards are eligible for Title I

targeted assistance. Schools receiving targeted-assistance money either have less than 50 percent of their population in poverty or choose to fund extra services for those students who are most educationally disadvantaged.

Schoolwide programs must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school, based on children’s performance in meeting the state’s standards. The school must then develop reform strategies aimed at the entire school program. These strategies must be designed to provide opportunities for all children to meet the state standards and must be based upon practices proven effective through research and experimentation.

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Instructional strategies must:

- Focus on amount and quality of learning time, such as an extended school year, before or after school, and summer programs, etc.
- Be designed to meet the needs of *all* students, in particular, historically underserved populations.
- Be in place to identify students who are having difficulty mastering standards, and
- Provide effective and timely additional assistance to identified students.

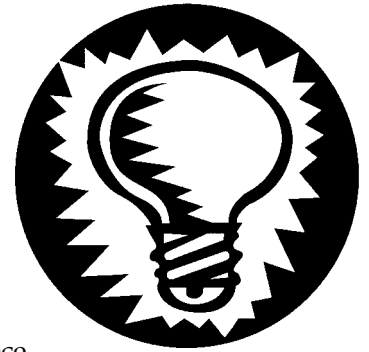
In addition, schoolwide programs must provide instruction by highly qualified professional staff, develop mechanisms for meaningful parent involvement, and provide professional development.

In Title I schoolwide programs, all children, including those with disabilities and children with limited English proficiency, are eligible to receive Title I services described above.

Targeted-assistance programs must help participating students, i.e., those who are the lowest achieving, meet the state's standards. Similar to schoolwide programs, schools must use strategies that are proven to be effective and are provided by highly

qualified personnel. In addition, schools must provide effective instructional strategies and extended learning time to ensure that children receive an accelerated curriculum. Targeted-assistance programs must use methods that minimize the removal of children from regular classrooms during regular hours, i.e., pull-out programs, and must explicitly coordinate with and support the regular education program. Suggested activities include: counseling, college and career awareness and preparation, school-to-work programs, and preschool transition programs.

In targeted-assistance schools, children with disabilities and children with limited English proficiency may already be entitled to services under other federal laws (such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] or Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]) and state laws because of their disability or LEP status. Therefore, a targeted assistance school may not use its Title I funds to pay for services that are mandated under other federal, state, or local law requirement for these children. However, a targeted-assistance school may use its Title I funds to coordinate and supplement the services that individual children are already receiving.



Assessments

The purpose of assessments is to measure the extent to which children are reaching the standards. For a state to receive Title I funds, it must develop assessments based on the state content and performance

standards. These assessments are not to make high-stakes decisions about individual children, but to keep track of how well districts and schools are enabling Title I students to meet standards.



Schoolwide programs must identify individual students having difficulty mastering any of the identified standards and provide the identified students with timely and effective assistance. Schoolwide and targeted-assistance programs must demonstrate sufficient gains in the performance of *all* students being served, including students with disabilities and students who are low-income or have limited English proficiency.⁵

Assessments must be administered at three key points: at least once each during grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12. They must use multiple methods of examining performance, i.e., not solely standardized, multiple-choice tests, and must test higher learning skills and analytical abilities. All Title I students are to participate, including

students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.⁶ Consistent with the requirements of IDEA, schools must provide students with disabilities with accommodations needed to participate in the assessments. The IEP must address the need for accommodations.

The assessments must be constructed to facilitate multiple reports, including: Reports about individual students; global information such as race, ethnicity, and gender comparisons; comparisons of students with and without disabilities; and comparisons of economically disadvantaged and other students. These types of reports provide a look at who, in fact, is being well served under Title I, and where efforts need to be targeted to improve the program.

Accountability and Improvement

Title I requires states to develop a definition of “Adequate Yearly Progress.” This definition is used to determine whether or not particular schools and districts are making satisfactory progress toward enabling students to meet student performance standards. The progress of students with disabilities must be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of a school or district. The state must then identify districts that are not making sufficient progress.

If the state determines that a district has not made adequate progress for two

consecutive years, the district is put into “improvement status.” The district must then develop and implement a revised Title I plan. The state may, however, take corrective action at any time. After four years of inadequate progress, the state must step in. State actions can include withholding state funds from a district. Local districts must take similar corrective action steps in schools which are not making adequate progress.

Parent Involvement

Title I has a strong emphasis on parent involvement. In fact, it is the only federal statute, apart from IDEA, that so strongly emphasizes parent involvement. Under IDEA, parent involvement is, for the most part, tied to planning about individual children. In addition to addressing the needs of individual children, Title I requires meaningful parent involvement in the *design and implementation of entire school programs*, making schools accountable to students and their parents. Parents of students with disabilities may use Title I's strong parent involvement requirements to ensure that schools are organized and run in ways that respect the rights of students with disabilities, that children are identified who are having difficulty becoming proficient in particular areas, and that there is an effective process for addressing the needs of an individual child having such difficulty.

Title I envisions parent participation in each of three levels of decisionmaking: state, district, and school.

Parent Involvement at the State Level

State plans must be developed in consultation with parents.

Parent Involvement at the District Level

District Parental Involvement Policy

School districts must work with parents to reach agreement on a parental

involvement policy. This parental involvement policy must be incorporated into the district's plan and must describe how the district will:

- involve parents in the joint development of the plan;
- provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement;
- build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement (See "Building Capacity for Parent Involvement" on page 6.);
- coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with other programs, such as Head Start; and
- conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of parent involvement.



In addition, the law specifically requires local school districts to provide "full opportunities" for participation of parents who are disabled or who have limited English proficiency, including providing information and school profiles in a language and form that such parents understand. Districts receiving over \$500,000 in Title I funds must spend at least 1% of this money to facilitate parent involvement, such as through training, materials, or child care at meetings.



Parent Involvement at the School Level

School Parental Involvement Policy

Each school which receives Title I money must have a written parental involvement policy, jointly developed and approved by parents, that describes how the school plans to carry out the requirements of the law. The school should ensure that parents of children with disabilities help to develop the policy. The policy must ensure that the school will:

1. invite parents to an annual meeting to inform them about the school's participation in Title I and to explain their right to be involved;
2. offer a flexible number of parent meetings throughout the year and may provide transportation, child care, or home visits;
3. involve parents in Title I planning, review, and improvement;
4. provide parents with timely information about, among other things, programs, school performance profiles, their child's individual assessment results, the curriculum, assessments used, and proficiency levels students are expected to meet; and
5. include a school-parent compact.

School-Parent Compact — A Component of the School Parental Involvement Policy

Each school receiving Title I funds must also develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improving student achievement. Again, the school should ensure that parents of children with disabilities assist in developing the school-parent compact. The compact must show how the school and parents will work together to enable children to achieve the state's high standards. The compact must:

1. describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables children to meet the state's performance standards,
2. describe the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, and
3. address the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and parents including through parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, and access to staff.

Building Capacity for Parent Involvement — Districts and Schools

To build the capacity of parents to participate effectively, Title I requires schools and school districts to undertake the following:

1. Provide training and information to help parents understand the National Education Goals, the states' content and student performance standards, state and

local assessments, the Title I requirements, how to monitor their child's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children, and how parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.

2. Provide materials and training for parents on coordinating literacy efforts that will help them work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
3. With assistance from parents, educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff in the value of parents' contributions, and in how to reach, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between home and school.
4. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool programs and other programs, to the extent feasible and appropriate.
5. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities, and encourage partnerships between elementary, middle, and secondary schools and local businesses.
6. Provide opportunities as appropriate and feasible for parents to learn about child development and child-rearing issues designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.
7. Ensure, to the extent possible, that information about school and parent programs, meetings, and other

activities, is provided in the language used in such homes.

8. Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request.

In addition to the above requirements, Title I lists the following activities that schools may provide with Title I funds. Schools may:

- involve parents in developing training for teachers, principals, and educators as a way to improve instruction and services to the children of such parents;
- provide parents with necessary literacy training if the school district has no other sources of funds for such training;
- pay reasonable and necessary expenses, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions;
- train and support parents to enhance the involvement of other parents;
- arrange meetings at a variety of times, such as in the mornings and evenings, to maximize the opportunities for parents to participate in school-related activities;
- arrange for teachers or other educators to conduct in-home conferences with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school; and
- adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement, such as Even Start.



Conclusion

Title I requires high quality programs to be created and implemented to ensure that all students, in particular, students who are disadvantaged, can acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century. Title I, with its commitment to high standards and schoolwide reform, provides important tools to ensure that students with disabilities who participate in Title I schools or programs receive the benefits of school reform.

For more information, see the following Title I Provisions:

Schoolwide Programs:

See ESEA, at section 1114; 20 U.S.C. 6314

Targeted Assistance Programs:

See ESEA, at section 1115; 20 U.S.C. 6315

Assessments:

See ESEA, at section 1111(b)(1)(D)(3); 20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)(D)(3)

State Plans, Accountability, and Improvement:

See ESEA, at sections 1111 and 1116; 20 U.S.C. 6311 and 6316

Parent Involvement:

See ESEA, at section 1118; 20 U.S.C. 6318

State Level Parental Involvement:

See ESEA, at section 1111(a)(1); 20 U.S.C. 6311(a)(1)

District Level Parental Involvement Policy:

See ESEA, at section 1118(a); 20 U.S.C. 6318(a)

School Level Parental Involvement Policy:

See ESEA, at section 1118(b) and (c); 20 U.S.C. 6318(b) and (c)

Parent-School Compact:

See ESEA, at section 1118(d); 20 U.S.C. 6318(d)

Endnotes

1. 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.* Between 1981 and 1994 the program was called “Chapter 1.”
2. The Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA), Public Law 103-382, fundamentally restructured all parts of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including Title I, to support comprehensive state and local reform of teaching and learning.
3. 20 U.S.C. 6301(d).
4. Title I describes children eligible for targeted-assistance programs as children [not older than age 21] “identified by the school as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State’s challenging student performance standards on the basis of multiple, educationally related, objective criteria established by the local educational agency and supplemented by the school, except that children from preschool through grade two shall be selected solely on the basis of such criteria as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures. (2) Children included. – (I) Children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, migrant children or limited English proficient children, are eligible for services under this part on the same basis as other children selected to receive services under this part . . . (B) A child who, at any time in the two years preceding the year for which the determination is made, participated in a Head Start or Even Start program, is eligible for services under this part. (C) (i) A child who, at any time in the two years preceding the year for which the determination is made, received services under the program for youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at risk of dropping out under part D . . . may be eligible for services under this part. . . . (D) a child who is homeless . . . 20 U.S.C. 6315(b)(1) - (2).
5. 20 U.S.C. 6314(b)(1)(H)(i); 6314(b)(1)(B); 6315(c).

The U.S. Department of Education provides this policy guidance on eligibility: “Eligible children are children who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State’s challenging student performance standards. Children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, migrant children, and limited English proficient (LEP) children are eligible for Part A services on the same basis as other children that are selected for services. **Thus schools are no longer required to demonstrate that the needs**

of LEP students stem from educational deprivation and not solely from their limited English proficiency. Similarly, schools are no longer required to demonstrate that the needs of children with disabilities stem from educational deprivation and not solely from their disabilities.” [Emphasis added.] See “Targeted Assistance Schools” in *Policy Guidance for Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Compensatory Education Programs, April 1996.

6. Language Assessments: Students with LEP must be assessed in their native language. The law requires states to identify the languages for which student assessments are needed and not available. States may request help from the U.S. Department of Education if linguistically accessible assessment measures are needed. 20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(5).

Resources

Policy Guidance for Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Compensatory Education Programs, April 1996.

Rogers, Margot. (1995). *Planning for Title I Programs: Guidelines for Parents, Advocates, and Educators*. DC: Center for Law and Education.

“PEER Teleconference Highlights: Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (Nov./Dec. 1997) in *PEER Review*. (Carolyn Romano, Ed.) Federation for Children with Special Needs. Vol. 2, Issue 6, p.3.

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