

## Office of School Choice

# Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

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## Purpose

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. Under the authority of No Child Left Behind, schools that receive Title I, Part A funds must operate either a Schoolwide Program or Targeted Assistance.

## Overview of Schoolwide Programs

A schoolwide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I school; its primary goal is to ensure that all students, particularly those who are low-achieving, demonstrate proficient and advanced levels of achievement on State academic achievement standards.

In general, a Title I school may operate as a schoolwide program only if a minimum of 40 percent of the students in the school, or residing in the attendance area served by the school, are from low-income families [**Section 1114(a)(1) of Title I of ESEA**].

Whereas Title I targeted assistance programs only provide educational services to identified individual students, schoolwide programs allow staff in schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families to redesign their entire educational program to serve all students. The emphasis in schoolwide program schools is on serving all students, improving all structures that support student learning, and combining all resources, as allowed, to achieve a common goal. Schoolwide programs maximize the impact of Title I. Adopting this strategy should result in an ongoing, comprehensive plan for school improvement that is owned by the entire school community and tailored to its unique needs.

## ESEA, Title I, Part A, Schoolwide Program Components

- ESEA Section 1114 (b) (1) requires a Title I schoolwide program plan to contain each of the following ten components as well as related measurable goals and strategies for implementation:

1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school (including the needs of migrant children as defined in Section 1306) with information about the academic achievement of children in relation to the state academic content standards as described in Section 1111(b)(1).
2. Schoolwide reform strategies that:
  - a. Provide opportunities for all children to meet the state's proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement described in Section 1111(b)(1)(D).
  - b. Use effective methods and instructional strategies based on scientific research that:
    - i. Strengthen the core academic program in the school.
    - ii. Increase the amount and quality of learning time, by providing an extended school year, before- and after-school and summer programs and opportunities, and an enriched and accelerated curriculum.
    - iii. Include strategies for meeting the educational needs of historically underserved populations.
  - c. Address the needs of all children in the school, especially those of low achieving children and those at risk of not meeting the state academic content standards who are members of a population targeted by the schoolwide program. The services of such a program include:
    - i. Counseling, pupil services, and mentoring services.
    - ii. College and career awareness and preparation, such as college and career guidance, personal finance education, and innovative teaching methods, which may include applied learning and team-teaching strategies.
    - iii. The integration of vocational and technical education programs.
  - d. Address how the school will determine if such needs have been met.
  - e. Are consistent with the state plan and any local improvement plans.
3. Instruction by highly qualified teachers.
4. High-quality and ongoing professional development for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals and, if appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff to enable all children in the school to meet the state academic content standards in accord with Section 1119 and subsection 1114 (a)(4).
5. Strategies to attract highly qualified teachers to high-need schools.
6. Strategies to increase parental involvement through means such as family literacy services in accord with Section 1118.
7. Plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs, such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a state-run preschool program, to local elementary school programs.
8. Measures to include teachers in decisions regarding the use of academic assessments (described in Section 1111[b][3]) to provide information on, and to improve, the achievement of individual students and the overall instructional program.
9. Effective, timely assistance for students who experience difficulty in attaining the proficient or advanced level of the academic content standards as required by Section 1111(b)(1). Students' difficulties must be identified in a timely way and in such a way as to provide information on which to base effective assistance.

10. Coordination and integration of federal, state, and local services and programs, including programs supported under ESEA, violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training.

## Overview of Targeted Assistance

Title I, Part A, funds in a targeted assistance school (TAS) are used in the following ways:

- To provide services to eligible children identified by the school as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state's academic content standards..
- To supplement the services that would be provided by non-federal sources, in the absence of the Title I, Part A, funds.
- To support methods and instructional strategies that are proven to be effective and that strengthen the core curriculum.

Records must be maintained to document that Title I, Part A, funds are spent only on activities and services for eligible students.

## Schools ESEA, Title I, Part A, Targeted Assistance Program Components

In general, each targeted assistance program section shall–

1. Use such program's resources under this part to help participating children meet such State's challenging student academic achievement standards expected for all children;
2. Ensure that planning for students served under this part is incorporated into existing school planning;
3. Use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research that strengthens the core academic program of the school and that--
  - a. give primary consideration to providing extended learning time, such as an extended school year, before- and after-school, and summer programs and opportunities;
  - b. help provide an accelerated, high-quality curriculum, including applied learning; and
  - c. minimize removing children from the regular classroom during regular school hours for instruction provided under this part;
4. Coordinate with and support the regular education program, which may include services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First or State-run preschool programs to elementary school programs;
5. Provide instruction by highly qualified teachers;
6. Provide opportunities for professional development with resources provided under this part, and, to the extent practicable, from other sources, for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals, including, if appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff, who work with participating children in programs under this section or in the regular education program (in accordance with subsection (e)(3) and section 1119);
7. Provide strategies to increase parental involvement in accordance with section 1118, such as family literacy services; and

8. Coordinate and integrate Federal, State, and local services and programs, including programs supported under this Act, violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training. (ESEA Section 1115 (c)).

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Answers questions about Title I schoolwide programs.

1. What are the requirements to operate a schoolwide program?

A local educational agency may consolidate and use funds under this part, together with other Federal, State, and local funds, in order to upgrade the entire educational program of a school that serves an eligible school attendance area in which not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families (free and reduced lunch), or not less than 40 percent of the children enrolled in the school are from such families.

2. Who needs to be involved in creating a school plan and implementing it?

The plan should be developed by representatives of the school community (stake holders), including parents, and other people who all carry out the plan, including teachers, principals, and administrators. If appropriate, technical assistance providers, school staff, and, at secondary schools, students may also be included.

3. Why is the comprehensive needs assessment so important?

The needs assessment should identify gaps between the current status of the school and its vision of where it wants to be, relative to key indicators or focus areas. Data obtained from the needs assessment provide the foundation for the focus of the comprehensive SWP plan. The program's evaluation measures how successful the school has been in addressing identified needs, and meeting the goals of the plan.

4. What is the process for updating SWP plans?

The SWP plan must be evaluated annually and revised based on results of the annual evaluation.

5. How is fund expenditure treated in the SWP school?

A school that consolidates funds from different federal programs in a SWP is not required to maintain separate accounting records of the specific activities supported by those particular funds. The school is required only to maintain records that show that the SWP as a whole addresses the intent and purposes of each of the federal programs whose funds were consolidated to support the SWP. The school must ensure that the needs of the program participants are addressed. The school must meet the requirements of all consolidated programs in regard to health, safety, civil rights, student and parental participation, services to students of private schools, comparability of services, and maintenance of effort and use of federal funds to supplement, not supplant, non-federal funds.

6. What advantages do SWPs offer?

The SWP provisions provide many advantages to schools developing SWPs. By allowing schools to integrate their programs, strategies, and resources, the SWP authority can become the catalyst for comprehensive reform of the entire instructional program. Please review the following example:

A SWP funded under Title I, Part A, also receiving professional development funds under Title II, educational funds under Title III, and vocational education funds under the Perkins Act. This SWP school would not have to document it spent professional development funds on professional development activities or Perkins money on vocational education programs. Nor does the school have to demonstrate it is complying with all the requirements of each program or show its SWP plan contains sufficient activities to reasonably address the needs identified through the comprehensive needs assessment. It could combine those funds with other funds to support overall SWP initiatives for all students. Ultimately, evaluation of the SWP's effectiveness will show whether the intended beneficiaries' needs are being met by the many resources of the various programs.

7. What does the issue of "Supplement Versus Supplant" mean to a school and district?

Both the TAS and SWP requirements prohibit the use of federal funds to supplant state or local funds. This provision is conceptually confusing because it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a particular use of funds is, in fact, a case of supplanting.

An LEA may use Title I funds only to supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the level of funds that would, in the absence of Title I funds, be made available from non-Federal sources for the education of students participating in Title I programs. In no case may Title I funds be used to supplant--i.e., take the place of--funds from non-Federal sources. To meet this requirement, an LEA is not required to provide Title I services using a particular instructional method or in a particular instructional setting.

In operating a TAS, Title I, Part A of the ESEA gives LEA and school personnel flexibility in selecting the instructional strategies they believe will best meet the needs of students who are at risk of not meeting challenging State academic achievement standards. The expectation is LEAs and schools will use sound instructional strategies of high quality to ensure the students served will reach proficiency on challenging State academic standards and assessments. At the same time, the type of services supported by Title I must supplement or be in addition to the educational services that an LEA would, in the absence of Title I, provide to its students using state or local funds. Programs which do not remove children from the regular classroom during regular hours for Title I services and, instead, provide extended learning time (e.g. extended school year, before- and after-school, and summer programs etc.) are supplemental.

Unlike a TAS, a SWP school is not required to select and provide supplemental services to specific children identified as in need of services. A school operating a SWP does not have to: (1) show that federal funds used with the school are paying for additional services that would not otherwise be

provided; (2) demonstrate that federal funds are used only for specific target populations; or (3) separately track federal program funds once they reach the school.

A SWP school, however, must use Title I funds only to supplement the amount of funds that would, in the absence of the Title I funds, be made available from non-federal sources for that school, including funds needed to provide services that are required by law for students with disabilities and English Learners.

### Presumption of Supplanting

It is presumed supplanting has occurred if:

- Federal funds were used to provide services required to be made available under other federal, state or local law.
- Federally-funded services were provided with non-federal funds in the prior year.
- Title I funds were used to provide services to Title I students, and the same service is provided to non-Title I students using non-Title I funds.

### 8. What fiscal record-keeping requirements apply to an LEA or a school with respect to federal funds that are consolidated in a SWP?

An LEA must be able to show the amount of funds from each Federal education program for each grant year that was consolidated in the single SWP account the LEA allocated to a SWP school. The LEA may use any reasonable method to demonstrate how federal funds that were consolidated in a SWP have been expended. For example, the LEA could allocate expenditures of federal funds consolidated in a SWP school in proportion to the amount of funds allocated to the school under each Federal program.

A school operating a SWP that consolidates in a single account and uses, in a SWP, funds from other federal education programs administered by the Secretary (except Reading First) is not required to maintain separate fiscal accounting records, by program, that identify the specific activities supported by those program funds. The school must, however, maintain records that demonstrate that the SWP, considered as a whole, addresses the intent and purposes of each of the federal education programs whose funds were consolidated to support it.

