

Title I – About

What Is Title I?

Title I is the largest federal aid program for elementary, middle, and high schools in the United States. Begun in 1965 under President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his “War on Poverty,” Title I today is part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This legislation grants federal funds to schools with large numbers of poor children to provide extra educational services that help students achieve at high levels. Specifically, the objective of the Title I program is to enable all students to meet state and local student performance standards and for schools to achieve the Adequate Yearly Progress goals set by the Indiana Department of Education.

How Does Title I Work?

The federal government provides Title I funds to Indiana each year. To obtain the funds, Indiana must submit a plan describing the academic standards children are expected to meet (i.e., Indiana Academic Standards) and how academic progress will be measured (i.e., Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress – Plus test commonly referred to as ISTEP+). Indiana then allocates Title I money to school corporations. The amount of money a school district receives is based on census data indicating the proportion of low-income children in the district. Districts with the highest percentage of children from low-income families receive the most money. School corporations target the Title I funds they receive to schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families. In addition, under Title I, participating public charter schools are required to provide supplemental educational services for eligible private school students.

How Big Is Title I?

Nationwide, more than 50,000 public schools (about 12.5 million students) receive Title I funds. Title I funds may be used for children from preschool to high school. However, most of the students served (65%) are in grades 1-6 while another 12% are in preschool and kindergarten. In Indiana, 97% of school corporations receive Title I funding.

What Happens at a Title I School?

Overall, the teachers, administrators, and other school staff at Title I schools work to:

- identify students most in need of educational help (regardless of income)

- measure student progress using state and local standards
- set goals for improvement
- implement research-based instructional programs that supplement regular classroom instruction
- improve professional knowledge and skills through continuing education
- hire additional teachers and support staff
- involve parents in all aspects of the school's Title I program

There are two types of Title I program models allowed under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB): the school-wide program and the targeted assistance program. Schools are identified and authorized to implement one of these programs based on the percentage of students receiving free and reduced price lunches. Both school-wide and targeted assistance programs must be based on research-based strategies for improving student achievement and include strategies to support parent involvement.

School-Wide Program

Schools with poverty rates of 40% or higher are eligible to implement a school-wide program. The purpose of a school-wide program is to improve student achievement throughout the entire school. Individual students are not identified as eligible to participate. Rather, every child will benefit from the added services and programs that a school-wide Title I plan can offer. All school staff focus on upgrading the entire educational program and improving the achievement of all students, particularly those who are low-achieving. In addition, a school improvement plan must be developed and implemented with the involvement of parents, teachers, principals, and administrators. Essentially, a school-wide program helps a school do more for all its students.

Targeted Assistance Program

Schools with a poverty rate lower than 40% (or schools that choose not to implement a school-wide program) are eligible to implement a targeted assistance program. Targeted assistance schools employ staff paid with Title I funds. Title I staff focus on serving only those students who are failing or who are most at risk of failing to meet the Indiana Academic Standards. Many different achievement measures are used to determine which students are eligible to participate in targeted assistance programs. Services to eligible students may be provided in a "pullout" setting or in a regular classroom.

How Are Schools Held Accountable?

Schools receiving Title I funds are evaluated each year by administrators, teachers, and parents using state and local assessments to determine if the school has made Adequate Yearly Progress. If the program goals have not been met, program and school plans are revised.

What Role Do Parents Play?

Parental involvement is a critical component of Title I legislation. Schools receiving Title I funding are obligated to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in school-related programs. Schools may also provide opportunities for parents to increase their knowledge and skills related to their children's education. Such programs, activities, and procedures must be planned and implemented after meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

Who Can I Contact For More Information?

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