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What is Title 1?

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What is Title 1?

Title 1 is the largest federal aid program for public schools in the United States. Today, Title 1 is part of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* but originated from the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)* as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty". This landmark educational bill, passed during Johnson's "Great Society", changed the funding of school districts from a local to a national responsibility. Title 1 provides federal funds to schools with high percentages of students from low-income families. These funds pay for extra educational services to help at-risk students achieve and succeed regardless of any disadvantages caused by no fault of their own.



Title I is a federal entitlement program that gives funds to schools in need based on student enrollment, the free and reduced lunch percentage for each school, and other informative data. The US Department of Education distributes Title 1 funds to State Departments of Education that, in turn, distribute the funds to individual school districts. Each school district divides its funding among qualifying schools based on their numbers of children from low-income families. In addition, under Title 1, participating school districts must provide supplemental educational services for eligible *private* school students.



Nationwide, nearly half of all public schools from preschool to high school receive Title 1 funds.



Are all Title 1 school programs the same?

There are two types of Title 1 program models authorized under ESSA – a *school-wide program* and a *targeted assistance program*. Identification and authorization of schools to receive Title 1 funds and implement one of these programs stems from having a certain percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch prices. Both programs, however, are contingent upon (1) the school using research-based strategies to improve student achievement and (2) the school must include strategies to support/encourage parent involvement.

Schools receiving Title 1 money to support a *school-wide program* may use their funds to improve student achievement throughout their entire school; therefore every child benefits from the added services and programs, not just the students identified as eligible to participate. All of the school staff focuses on upgrading the entire educational program and improving the achievement of all students, in particular, the low-achieving ones. A school improvement plan

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must be developed and implemented with the involvement of parents, teachers, principals, and administrators.

A *targeted assistance school* receives some Title 1 funds yet is ineligible or has chosen not to operate a school-wide program. The term “targeted assistance” signifies that the services target only a select group of children – those identified as failing or most at risk of failing to meet the challenging content and student performance standards. This program targets the needs of a few rather than overall school improvement.

How is a Title 1 school different from a school not receiving funds?

In a Title 1 school, teachers, administrators, and all other school staff work together to:

- Identify students most in need of educational help (regardless of family income)
- Measure student progress using their state’s educational standards.
- Set goals for student improvement.
- Implement research-based instructional programs that support and supplement regular classroom instruction
- Improve professional knowledge and skills through continuing education and intense professional development
- Hire additional teachers and support staff
- Involve parents in every aspect of the school’s Title 1 program

How do schools measure accountability for Title 1 funds?

To measure student’s achievement, each state must develop long-term goals and indicators for

all students and for each subgroup of students, including economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners. Every year, states use these goals and indicators to identify schools that need comprehensive support and improvement. When a subgroup of students is consistently underperforming, the state then must implement interventions and meet the state-set exit criteria within a time period determined by the school. If the school does not meet the exit criteria, it will be identified for comprehensive support and intervention.

Why is parental involvement a factor in Title 1 funding?

Parental involvement is a crucial factor of Title 1 legislation. Schools receiving Title 1 funding must implement programs, activities, and procedures that include and promote parent involvement in school-related activities. Schools must also provide opportunities that encourage parents to increase their knowledge and skills as they relate to their child’s education. One of the objectives of these programs and activities is to help parents understand and show them how important their involvement is in shaping the lives of their children in becoming successful and productive contributors to our society.

Resources:

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Title I Improving The Academic Achievement of The Disadvantaged. *Office of Elementary & Secondary Education*. Retrieved 3/27/2024 from <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-legislation-table-contents/title-i-part-a/>

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