

# Overview

# Schoolwide Programs

Questions and Answers



September 2007

## Title I Schoolwide Programs

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### **Q1. What is a Title I schoolwide program?**

#### **A1. Title I schoolwide program--**

- Is built on schoolwide reform strategies, rather than separate, add-on services.

A schoolwide program permits a school to use funds from Title I, Part A and other Federal education program funds and resources to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all the students. This contrasts with a Title I targeted assistance program, through which Title I, Part A funds are used only for supplementary educational services for eligible children who are failing or at risk of failing to meet State standards.

- Provides flexibility in spending Title I funds.

Schoolwide programs have great latitude in determining how to spend their Title I, Part A funds. Schoolwide programs do not have to identify particular children as eligible for services or show that Part A funds are paying for supplemental services that would otherwise not be provided or separately track federal dollars. Instead, schoolwide programs can use their Title I, Part A funds in the manner they choose, as long as they engage in reform strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time and help provide a high-quality curriculum for all children, according to a comprehensive plan to help children meet the State's challenging standards.

- Permits flexibility to combine other Federal funds in support of the schoolwide program.

Schoolwide programs may now use, in addition to Title I, Part A funds, funds from most other Federal education programs to upgrade the entire educational program. A schoolwide program that includes other Federal programs does not have to conform to the specific statutory or regulatory requirements of each separate program as long as the intent and purposes of those programs, as well as certain requirements relating to such critical areas as civil rights and health and safety, are met. The involvement, during comprehensive planning of a schoolwide program of all staff, parents, and others in the community that have a stake in the children's education will help to ensure that the program is designed to meet all of the school's students' needs.

- Focuses on results.

Flexibility in the use of funds is tied to increased achievement by children in the target groups that the individual programs are intended to help.

**Q2. What is the purpose of schoolwide program?**

- A2. The purpose of schoolwide programs is to allow a school to use resources effectively and efficiently to undertake comprehensive reform of the entire educational program in the school to assist all children, particularly the lowest achieving children, to meet the high state academic achievement standards.

**Q3. What advantages do schoolwide programs offer?**

- A3. The schoolwide program provisions provide many advantages to schools developing schoolwide programs. By allowing schools to integrate their programs, strategies, and resources, the schoolwide program authority can become the catalyst for comprehensive reform of the entire instructional program children in these schools receive. An example can show why:

By consolidating their Federal resources to support schoolwide reform, the principal, teachers and other school staff within a school, with the participation of parents, have the opportunity to:

- Comprehensively plan the overall educational program for all children in the school;
- Come together with one another, eliminating the isolation that characterizes working conditions for many educators;
- Address the needs of students in an integrated way;
- Spend Federal resources in ways they determine can most effectively raise the achievement of their students; and
- Stimulate comprehensive reform of the entire instructional program provided to children, rather than operating separate and fragmented add-on programs.

Schoolwides encourage schools to begin planning by asking themselves: How are the students performing in relation to what children are expected to know and do? What kind of schoolwide changes is necessary to support achievement of State standards? Is the program designed to address the needs of all children who attend the school over the entire year? As long as they are asking--and answering--these kinds of questions, schoolwides can use their Federal resources to support the kinds of changes they deem essential for the success of their students.

**Q4. What requirements must a school meet to be eligible to operate a schoolwide program?**

- A4. 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.

**Q5. What is the essential difference between a Title I schoolwide program and a Title I targeted assistance Program?**

- A5. A targeted assistance program employs staff paid with Title I funds to serve only those students who have been identified as being most at-risk of not meeting the State's challenging standards. Multiple measures of student academic achievement are used to determine which students are eligible to participate in the program. Services to eligible students may be provided in a "pullout" setting on a limited basis or may be provided in the regular classroom.
- Schoolwide program schools use Title I funds to meet the needs of all students in the school, as determined through a comprehensive needs assessment. Individual students are not identified as eligible to participate. No distinctions are made between staff paid with Title I funds and staff who are not. All school staff are expected to direct their efforts toward upgrading the entire educational program and improving the achievement of all students, particularly those who are low achieving.

**Q6. What factors should a high-poverty school take into consideration when deciding to operate a schoolwide program?**

- A6. The primary consideration for a high-poverty school when considering whether to operate a schoolwide or a targeted assistance program is which strategy provides the greatest likelihood of improving the achievement of its students with the greatest needs. Properly implemented, schoolwide programs enable Title I schools with high concentrations of poverty to improve the achievement of their lowest-performing students by redesigning their total educational program rather than merely adding on services for students identified as especially at-risk.
- The original schoolwide concept (which was first included in the law in 1978) drew on "effective schools" research that pointed to the value of implementing comprehensive improvement strategies throughout an entire school as a way of improving outcomes for individual students. Research findings since that time reinforce the fact that all children, including the lowest-performing children, in high-poverty communities can master challenging academic content and complex problem solving skills when resources, practices, and procedures are coordinated across an entire school.

**Q7. How does a school become a schoolwide program?**

- A7. In a schoolwide program:
- The district determines that a school's poverty level makes it eligible to become a schoolwide program--40% or greater or the school receives an Ed-Flex Waiver--and the school has been selected to participate in Title I
- AND
- The school, in consultation with its district, decides that it wants to become a schoolwide program

AND

- High-quality assistance and support is available to the school. This can be demonstrated in one of two ways:
  - The State has provided written information to the district that demonstrates the State Education Agency (SEA) has established a statewide system of support and improvement.

OR

- The school demonstrates to its district that it will receive high-quality technical assistance and support from other assistance providers. Among the many examples of other assistance providers a school can draw on are--
  - Comprehensive technical assistance centers.
  - Regional education and research laboratories.
  - Universities, colleges and community colleges.
  - Other successful schools or educators (e.g., distinguished schools or distinguished educators).
  - Educators within the school.
  - Local consortia of various institutions such as community service organizations, educational agencies, and private industry.

**It is important to recognize that it is a school's decision as to whether it will or will not choose to operate a schoolwide program.**

**Q8. Who is responsible for making decisions in a schoolwide program?**

- A8. Program decisions are to be made at the school level: schools, in consultation with their districts, determine how to use their funds in ways that best meet the needs of their students. Bringing these decisions to the school level helps discourage a district-directed one-size-fits-all program and, instead, affords a significant resource for schools to use to meet the needs of their students. However, consultation with the district regarding these decisions is extremely important, because the district has the ultimate responsibility for the education programs.

**Q9. What are the essential components of a schoolwide program?**

- A9. Title I requires all schoolwide programs to include certain components that research suggests are essential to any high-functioning school.

A Schoolwide program must include the following 10 components:

1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school that is based on information on the performance of children in relation to the State academic and student academic achievement standards.
2. Schoolwide reform strategies that:
  - Provide opportunities for all children to reach the State's "Meets or Exceeds Standards" levels of student performance.
  - Use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research strategies that:
    - Increase the amount and quality of learning time, such as extended school year, before- and after-school, and summer school programs.
    - Strengthen the core academic program in the school.
    - Meet the educational needs of historically underserved populations, including girls and women.
  - Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of children of targeted populations of any program that is included in the schoolwide program, and address how the school will determine if these needs are met. These programs may include counseling and mentoring services, college and career preparation, such as college and career guidance, services to prepare students for school-to-work transition, and the incorporation of gender equitable methods and practices.
  - Are consistent with, and are designed to implement, the State and local improvement plans.
3. Instruction by highly qualified professional staff.
4. High-quality and on-going professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals, and where appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, principals, and other staff to enable all children in the schoolwide program to meet the State's student academic achievement standards.
5. Strategies to attract high-quality, highly qualified teachers to high need schools.
6. Strategies to increase parental involvement, such as family literacy services.
7. Plans for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood programs such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a public preschool program to local elementary school programs.
8. Measures to include teachers in decisions regarding the use of academic assessments to provide information on, and to improve, the achievement of individual students and the overall instructional program.
9. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering any of the State's standards during the school year will be provided with effective, timely additional assistance. The assistance must include:
  - Measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assistance.
10. Coordination and integration of Federal, State, and local services and programs, including programs supported under this Act, which are:
  - Violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training.