

Leveraging Title I Schoolwide Programs to Address Barriers to Academic Success



Adapted from Communities in Schools: https://www.communitiesinschools.org/media/filer_public/d2/2e/d22e3bda-bf36-486d-935e-7e232bcce54b/fact_sheets_leveragingtitle1.pdf

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is an opportunity for state and local education agencies to provide a more well-rounded education. ESSA promotes evidence-based strategies that address the needs of students and their communities, helping students overcome barriers to success.

Recent guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (Department) identifies Title I schoolwide programs as a key tool for school improvement and an important source of funding for strategies that improve the academic achievement of all students in a school. This brief summarizes this guidance to identify opportunities to leverage Title I schoolwide programs for student-centered supports, such as ISS and wraparound services.

Title I School Programs

Under ESSA, a school that meets the following conditions may operate a schoolwide program:

A Title I school with more than 40% of students living in poverty.



A Title I school with less than 40% of students in poverty that receives a waiver from an SEA.



Schoolwide Program Components

According to the Department, required components of a Title I schoolwide program are: (1) a comprehensive needs assessment, (2) a comprehensive schoolwide plan, and (3) annual evaluation and revision of this plan. This planning process ensures that schools maximize their investment and address each of the unique academic and non-academic needs in a school.

Why a Schoolwide Program?



Serving all students.

A school operating a schoolwide program does not need to identify particular students as eligible to participate.



Consolidating Federal, State, and local funds.

A school operating a schoolwide program may consolidate Federal, State, and local education funds to better address the needs of students in the school.

Misunderstandings about Title I Schoolwide Programs

In recent guidance, the Department included a helpful chart to address common misunderstandings about Title I schoolwide programs.ⁱ The following is a relevant section:

Misunderstanding

Explanation of the Law

Title I funds may be used only to support reading and math instruction.



Title I funds may be used in a schoolwide program to support academic areas that the school's needs assessment identifies as needing improvement.

Title I funds may be used only to provide remedial instruction.



The purpose of a schoolwide program is to upgrade the entire educational program in the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest achieving students. This does not need to be achieved through remedial instruction, however.

Title I funds may be used only to serve low-achieving students.



Title I funds may be used to upgrade the entire educational program in a schoolwide program school and, in doing so, all students may benefit from the use of Title I funds.

If a school does not consolidate funds through a schoolwide program, Title I funds may be used only to provide services in a pull-out setting.



Title I funds may be used to upgrade the entire educational program in a schoolwide program and serve all students, even if the school does not consolidate Title I funds with its other funds.

Title I funds may be used only for instruction.



Title I funds may be used for activities and strategies designed to raise the achievement of low-achieving students identified by a schoolwide program school's comprehensive needs assessment and articulated in the school's comprehensive schoolwide plan. For example, Title I funds may be used to improve attendance, improve school climate, counteract and prevent bullying, provide counseling, mentoring, and school-based mental health programs, or provide positive behavioral interventions and supports.

ⁱ US Department of Education, *Supporting school reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program* (2016), <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaswpguidance91916.pdf>
ⁱⁱ This chart contains select information. For the complete chart, please reference: Department, *Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program*: 5-7