

R.S.U. 71

Title I



Staff Information

2024/2025

What is Title I?

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) supports reforms and innovations to improve educational opportunities for low-achieving students. Title I is designed to provide all children significant opportunities to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. To this end, Title I supports districts and schools in Maine to meet the educational needs of low-achieving students in schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families.

For districts in Maine it is essential to use Federal education funds effectively and efficiently. Of the two types of Title I programs a district can operate — targeted assistance or schoolwide — only the latter permits a district to use Title I funds to support comprehensive schoolwide reforms.

In a schoolwide program, a district may use Title I funds to implement reforms to upgrade the entire educational program of the school.

In contrast, in a targeted assistance program, a district may use Title I funds only for Title I students — i.e., those who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State's academic achievement standards. (ESEA section 1111(b)(1)(A))

Under ESSA, schoolwide programs remain a key tool for using Title I funds to improve academic achievement and enable a school to more effectively leverage Federal funds to upgrade its entire educational program.

What is a Title I schoolwide program?

RSU 71 has 3 schools that are identified as **Schoolwide Title I schools** (CASS, East Belfast, and Nickerson). Ames and Weymouth are not identified by the state as Title I schools but do provide intervention services similar to Title I teaching staff. These positions are funded by our local budget. Title I funds may be used to upgrade the entire educational program in a school so all students may benefit. There is no identification process. The program promotes improved instruction for all students. Activities must be a part of the approved schoolwide plan (school level Comprehensive Needs Assessments (CNA) and district Consolidated Plan) and support an identified academic need through the school's CNA, usually, literacy and math-focused. Title I funds are used to provide professional development for all staff to support all students.

A Title I schoolwide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I school in order to improve the achievement of the lowest-achieving students. (ESEA section 1114(a)(1)). Under the ESEA, a school may operate a schoolwide program if it meets any of the following conditions:

- A Title I school with 40 percent or more of its students living in poverty, regardless of the grades it serves.
- A Title I school that receives a waiver from an SEA to operate a schoolwide program without meeting the 40 percent poverty threshold.
- A Tier I or Tier II school in a State that requested and received a waiver through the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program that receives funds to implement one of the SIG intervention models.

Benefits of Operating a Schoolwide Program

A school that operates a schoolwide program is able to take advantage of numerous benefits, including:

- Serving all students. A school operating a schoolwide program does not need to identify particular students as eligible to participate. (ESEA section 1114(a)(2)(A)(i)).
- Consolidating Title and local funds to better address the needs of students in the school. (ESEA section 1114(a)(1), (3)).

Implementing a Schoolwide Program

There are three required components of a schoolwide program that are essential to effective implementation:

- Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment
- Preparing a comprehensive schoolwide plan
- Annually reviewing and revising, as necessary, the schoolwide plan.

Consistent with the benefits identified above, a school operating a schoolwide program may use Title I funds for any activity that supports the needs of students in the school as identified through the comprehensive needs assessment and articulated in the schoolwide plan. (ESEA section 1114(b)). In designing and implementing the schoolwide plan, a school must implement strategies that:

- (1) provide opportunities for all children to meet challenging State academic standards;
- (2) use methods and instructional strategies that strengthen the academic program in the school, increase the amount and quality of learning time, and help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum, which may include programs, activities, and courses necessary to provide a well-rounded education; and
- (3) address the needs of all students, but particularly those at risk of not meeting challenging State academic standards. (ESEA section 1114(b)(7)(A)).

Because Title I interventionists and classroom teachers are working together to support all students throughout the school as part of schoolwide programming, it is the expectation that all teachers are expected to participate in school-wide events for both professional development and family education/engagement. Events may take place during the school day or after school.

Uses of Title I Funds in a Schoolwide Program

The following are some common misunderstandings regarding the flexibilities available in using Title I funds to operate a schoolwide program:

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. At times, this may be best achieved by preparing low-achieving students to take advanced courses — for example, providing an intensive summer school course designed to accelerate their knowledge and skills, offering an elective course to prepare them to take advanced courses, or providing after-school tutoring while they are taking advanced courses.
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. However, consistent with the purpose of Title I, the reason to upgrade the entire educational program in a school is to improve the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.
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.	Regardless of whether funds are consolidated, a schoolwide program school need not use Title I funds to provide services only in a pull-out setting, although this practice is not prohibited. Title I funds may be used to upgrade the entire educational program in a schoolwide program school and serve all students, even if the school does not consolidate Title I

	funds with its other funds. However, the primary purpose of a schoolwide program is to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students by upgrading the entire educational program, and can best be achieved by consolidating funds. (Please see the discussion below that identifies additional advantages of consolidating Title I funds with other Federal, State, and local funds in a schoolwide program.)
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 the quality of instructional materials, improve attendance, improve school climate, counteract and prevent bullying, provide counseling, mentoring, and school-based mental health programs, or provide positive behavioral interventions and support.

Safeguarding the Interests of Historically Underserved Populations

Although a school may use Title I funds to serve all students in a schoolwide program, there are protections to ensure that low-achieving students and historically underserved populations of students do not get ignored.

- ❖ The very purpose of a schoolwide program is to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students. (ESEA section 1114).
- ❖ A comprehensive schoolwide plan must include strategies for —
 - meeting the educational needs of all students, including each subgroup of students defined in section 1111(c)(2) (economically disadvantaged students; students from major racial and ethnic groups; children with disabilities; and English learners). (ESEA section 1114(b)(7)(A)(i)); and
 - addressing the needs of all students but particularly the needs of students who are failing, or are at risk of failing, to meet the challenging State academic standards. (ESEA section 1114(b)(6), (7)(A)(iii).
- ❖ A district operating a schoolwide program must comply with all Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the

Education Amendments of 1972, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In addition, a district must comply with the requirements under the IDEA with respect to children with disabilities. (ESEA sections 1114(a)(3)(B), 8306(a)(1)).³

- ❖ A district must ensure that each schoolwide program school receives funds from nonFederal sources to provide services that are required by law for students with disabilities and English learners before using Title I funds in the school. (ESEA section 1114(a)(2)(B)).

Consolidating Federal, State, and Local Funds in a Schoolwide Program

By making systemic changes that knit together services funded from a variety of sources into a comprehensive framework, schools have a better chance of increasing the academic achievement of all students. To encourage this approach and better leverage all available funding, a schoolwide program school has the flexibility to consolidate funds from Title I and other Federal education programs with State and local funds. (ESEA section 1114(a)(1), (3)).

By consolidating funds in a schoolwide program, a school can more effectively design and implement a comprehensive plan to upgrade the entire educational program in the school as informed by the school's comprehensive needs assessment. When a school consolidates funds in a schoolwide program, those funds lose their individual identity and the school may use the funds to support any activity of the schoolwide program without regard to which program contributed the specific funds used for a particular activity. Each state must ensure that it will modify or eliminate State fiscal and accounting barriers so that these funds can be more easily consolidated. (ESEA section 1111(g)(2)(E)).

Advantages of Consolidating Funds in a Schoolwide Program

- ☐ Flexibility to allocate all available resources effectively and efficiently.
- ☐ A school is not required to meet most of the statutory and regulatory requirements of the specific Federal programs included in the consolidation, provided it meets the intent and purposes of those programs.
- ☐ A school is not required to maintain separate fiscal accounting records by Federal programs that identify the specific activities supported by each program's funds.

What is a Title I targeted assistance program?

Title I funds may only be used to meet the needs of children identified as being in the greatest need of services. Students must be selected using multiple, educationally related objective criteria. All costs must be supplemental and limited to services for eligible students in a targeted assistance program. RSU 71 no longer has schools identified as **Targeted Assistance schools**.

What does the Title I instruction (targeted and schoolwide) look like?

Students who participate in Title I may be part of a group, working with others who are working on the same skill or level, or may receive individualized instruction. A typical literacy or math lesson consists of instruction based upon identified student needs. A lesson can be scheduled for 10 - 30 minutes, depending on the skill being practiced.

Two models are used to implement instruction in Title I. One is referred to as an *inclusion model*. Inclusion means that the Title I teacher/Interventionist goes into the classroom to provide supplemental instruction, supporting the students as they practice tasks in the classroom. In this model, the Title I interventionist and the teacher will collaborate and co-teach as a team in order to support all of the students in the classroom. This is referred to as the 'push in' model. When supplemental instruction takes place out of the classroom and in the Title I classroom, we refer to it as the 'pull out' model. We use the model that is best for each student's learning needs.

Differences between Targeted Assistance and Schoolwide Programs

Although many similarities exist between Title I Targeted Assistance and Schoolwide programs, there are also significant differences. It is especially important that schools that have recently moved or are moving from Targeted Assistance to Schoolwide be aware of these differences and address them as they develop school Title I plans and submit information to the district for the Consolidated Application.

Targeted Assistance	Both	Schoolwide
Student identification is made that renders them eligible or ineligible for services. Students identified as most at risk of not meeting state academic standards are served.		All students can receive additional services. No student identification is made that renders them eligible or ineligible for services. Students identified as most at risk are given additional assistance.
		The plan must be based on a comprehensive needs assessment.
	Plans and programs employed must be based on scientifically-based research and must strengthen the core academic program of the school	
Program targets resources only to those students most at-risk academically in reading and/or math.		Program promotes improved instruction for all students and constitutes comprehensive school reform

Professional development with Title I funds focuses on staff who provide direct support to Title I students and is aligned with these students' needs	Professional development must be aligned with Title I program goals.	Title I funds are used to provide professional development for all staff to support all students
The program is not contingent on the school's poverty rate.		Unless a waiver is granted, only schools with a poverty rate of 40% or more may operate a schoolwide program.
Title I funds are used to support additional instruction.	Schools must provide additional learning time for students who have been identified as most at risk of not meeting reading and/or math standards.	Title I funds may be merged with Federal, State, and local funds to support additional instruction.
Careful accounting must show that non-Title I sources are not replaced with Title I funds.		Districts must show that overall the level of educational services is higher in schools with Title I funds than services would be without federal money. The schoolwide plan must align with budget expenditures.
Students are to be pulled from the regular educational setting as little as possible. After-school and summer classes should be considered.		Since the program serves all students, there may be a need to pull students from the regular educational setting to receive the benefits of the federal money, but pull-out should be as minimal as possible.
On-going progress monitoring must be in place to identify students most at-risk and eligible for services.	On-going monitoring of student progress is necessary to determine intervention program modifications.	A comprehensive needs assessment helps identify how services will be delivered. Teachers are involved in the analysis of academic assessments.
Title I services are a part of the overall school planning process and are considered whenever new school plans are developed.		A formal and comprehensive plan must be developed for each school on a schoolwide plan, outlining how both school and Title I resources will be used to meet the identified needs.

	The plan must coordinate and integrate Federal, State, and local services and programs.	
Parents must be notified of students' eligibility for Title I services		No parent notification of additional services to students is necessary.
Title I teachers and paraprofessionals must be highly qualified.		All content teachers and paraprofessionals, including Special Education staff, must be highly qualified.
	Emphasis is placed on parental involvement and family literacy. Parent-School Policy/ Compact must be developed.	Parents are involved in plan development, revision, and review.
	Programs must facilitate the transition from early-childhood programs to the school.	

Who are the Title I instructors?

Each of the 5 elementary schools in RSU 71 has highly qualified teachers and/or ed techs who provide supplemental Title I/intervention services. They have completed the necessary education, and intensive training in Title I and they receive ongoing professional development.

How are teachers and parents kept informed?

Teachers and parents are always welcome to contact Title I staff to ask questions about the program, inquire about their child's progress, or offer suggestions. Each school will form a **Parent Advisory Team** that will meet throughout the school year. The team will consist of the Title I teacher, classroom teacher/s, the principal, and parent/s. Their purpose will be to review school plans (Comprehensive Needs Plan) and based on school data, determine how to meet the goals of the school for that year. Targeted Assistance schools must plan family engagement educational activities to take place throughout the school year for parents and their students. Title I teachers/interventionists communicate with teachers and parents, sharing student progress on a regular basis.

Annually, there is a **Title I Parent Information Meeting** that parents and teachers are encouraged to attend. The purpose of this information meeting is to share information about

the Title I program and provide learning opportunities for parents and teachers. Teachers and parents are also offered opportunities to give the Title I staff feedback about the program in a variety of ways; face-to-face and end-of-the-year survey. Title I staff members may also participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences as appropriate.

In targeted assistance schools, reports of each student's Title I progress go home with regular classroom report cards and progress notes. The final report contains assessment results and notifies the parent of their child's year-end status in Title I. Notices are sent home when a student enters or exits the Title I program.

Title I and Homelessness

Children and youth living in a homeless situation (as defined by the McKinney Vento Act) may benefit from Title I services and programs. However, additional Title I funds may be used to address specific academic needs of students who are homeless or highly mobile. For additional information, contact Laura Miller, Title I Coordinator in RSU #71 at PO Box 325, Belfast, ME (338-1960).

Contacts:

School listing and staff members

Captain Albert Stevens School

Lisa Brita lbrita@rsu71.org
Geri Winslow gwiinslow@rsu71.org
Sarah Mitchell smitchell@rsu71.org
338-3510

Nickerson School

Beth Carter bcarter@rsu71.org
338-1858

East Belfast School

Beth French bfrench@rsu71.org
Kara Burke kburke@rsu71.org
338-4420

Ames School

Sharon Clark sclark@rsu71.org
342-5100

Weymouth School

Sarah Bowen sbowen@rsu71.org
342-5300

Title I Coordinator

Dr. Laura Miller lmiller@rsu71.org
338-1960

All staff members can also be reached through email using the first initial of their name, last name and then @rsu71.org. An example would be lmiller@rsu71.org