

Title I Professional Development Guidance

Developed by the Office of Student Achievement and Accountability

The academic success of students correlates highly with the qualifications and skills of their teachers. Although by the end of the 2005-2006 school year all teachers must be highly qualified, ongoing professional development is crucial to ensure their continuous improvement in the instructional skills needed to help all students meet or exceed proficiency targets on state academic assessments.

Each LEA that receives Title I, Part A funds must provide high-quality professional development. “High-quality” professional development is defined in the reauthorized ESEA [§9101(34)]. Professional development activities must be planned for principals, teachers, and other staff, including paraprofessionals, in Title I schools as follows:

- Be sustained and classroom-focused. It must be provided over time and not take the form of one-day or short-term workshops.
- Improve the teaching of academic subjects by contributing to an increase in teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects they teach, consistent with the state’s content standards, to enable children to meet these standards.
- Provide training in the use of effective, scientifically based instructional strategies for a diverse range of students, helping to close the achievement gap.
- Support the district and school needs assessments and district and school plans, including Program/Activity Plans and Title I Unified Plans, if applicable.
- Draw on resources available under other programs such as NCLB Title IIA, and from other sources.
- Include strategies for developing curricula and teaching methods that integrate academic and vocational instruction (including applied learning and team teaching) if an LEA determines such strategies are appropriate.
- Include strategies for identifying and eliminating gender and racial bias in instructional materials, methods, and practices.

Resources

An LEA must ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to carry out professional development activities effectively in each Title I school. An LEA may satisfy its requirement through districtwide professional development activities and/or activities implemented by each Title I school. Title I requires certain reserves for professional development activities.

- 5% of the Title I allocation for LEA professional development. (Equitable participation must be offered to eligible nonpublic schools.)
- 10% of each school allocation for schools in need of improvement (SINIs).
- 10% of the Title I allocation for districts in need of improvement (DINIs). The 10% SINI reserves may be included in this 10% calculation.

The SINI and DINI professional development reserves are dedicated. These funds must be used for their intended purpose.

Principals, teachers, and other school staff must decide how to use these funds set aside for professional development activities.

Title I Unified Plan

High-quality professional development is an integral part of effective improvement plans, at both the school and LEA levels. An LEA must describe in its Title I Unified Plan the strategies of the LEA and its Title I schools to provide professional development.

“The professional development component of the school improvement plan (Title I Unified Plan for SINIs) should directly address the academic achievement problems that caused the school to be identified. In most cases, this professional training will focus on the teaching and learning process, such as increasing content knowledge, the use of scientifically based instructional strategies, especially in core academic subjects, and the alignment of classroom activities with academic content standards and assessments. Another example of useful professional development would be training teachers to analyze classroom and school-level data and use it to inform their instruction. The professional development detailed in the school improvement plan must be provided in a manner that affords increased opportunity for teachers to participate, and must incorporate teacher mentoring activities or programs.” [NCLB §1116(b)(3)(A)(iii)(III) and (x); §200.41] (*LEA and School Improvement Non-Regulatory Guidance, C-9*)

Currently many teachers leave the profession within five years of beginning their teaching careers. Mentoring programs pair novice teachers with more experienced professionals who serve as role models and provide practical support and encouragement. High-quality, structured mentoring programs have a positive effect on the retention of qualified teachers.

Allowable Activities

The law prohibits the use of Title I funds vs. general aid to benefit an entire school district or, except in schoolwide programs, all children in a school, grade, or class. In schoolwide programs, Title I funds may be used to upgrade the entire educational program of the school. In targeted assistance schools, the LEA may use Title I funds only for projects that are designed and implemented to meet the educational needs of children who are properly identified and selected for participation in the program, and that are included in the LEA’s application as approved by the NJDOE. Parents may participate in professional development activities if a school or LEA determines that parental participation is appropriate.

Some allowable professional development activities that districts may conduct include the following:

- In-house trainings by outside experts or qualified, trained staff.
- Outside conferences and trainings.
- Mentoring and coaching programs by facilitators and/or teams.
- Data analysis and technology training.
- Training in strategies to instruct limited English proficient children, including appropriate language and academic support services and use of curricula and assessments.
- Training in methods of instructing students with special needs.
- Parent engagement strategies.
- Forming partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty.

Schoolwide Programs

Each school operating a Title I approved schoolwide program that receives Title I, Part A funds for any fiscal year must devote sufficient resources to effectively carry out professional development activities described in subsection (b)(1)(D) in accordance with NCLB section 1119 for such fiscal year, except that a school may enter into a consortium with another school to carry out such activities. [§1114(a)(4)]

All school staff in schoolwide program schools may participate.

Note: Dedicated reserved funds must be tracked accordingly.

Targeted Assistance Programs

LEAs must provide opportunities for professional development funded by Title I and, to the extent practicable, from other sources, for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals, including, if appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff, *who work with participating children*. [§1115(c)(1)(F)]

The cost of training personnel whose salaries are not paid with Title I funds is an allowable charge *if the training is specifically related to the Title I program* and is not designed to meet the general needs of the LEA, an entire school, or children in a school or class. All school staff in targeted assistance schools may participate, *if such participation will result in better addressing the needs of Title I participating students*. (**Note:** There must be a direct benefit to Title I students with training geared to the instructional needs of these specific students. Title I funds may not be used for a teacher's general professional development simply because there is a Title I student in the teacher's class.) *Knowledge* of effective teaching strategies that is gained through Title I professional development activities *may be shared* with teaching staff who do not work with Title I participants.

References:

- *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*
- *Title I, Part A Policy Guidance: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies*, April 1996, US Dept. of Education
- *LEA and School Improvement, Non-Regulatory Guidance*, July 2006, US Dept. of Education