



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: January 13, 2021
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route to: Title I Directors, Principals of Title I Targeted Assistance Schools
From: Peggy McDonald, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services
Deadline: January 29, 2021

Title I Targeted Assistance Schools – Process to Transition to Schoolwide Programs

Under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, as reauthorized by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, the Title I, Part A Program is designed to help economically disadvantaged students meet high academic standards by participating in either a *schoolwide* or a *targeted assistance* program. *Targeted Assistance* programs use Title I, Part A funds to support programs for identified students with the highest academic need only (i.e., students failing or most at risk of failing) in order to meet the district's core academic curriculum. *Schoolwide* programs are implemented in high-poverty schools using Title I, Part A funds to upgrade the entire educational program in addition to supporting a program that provides services for identified students with the highest academic need.

Title I-funded schools currently operating *targeted* assistance programs have the option to transition to Title I *schoolwide* programs. Transitioning to a Title I *schoolwide* program allows a district to:

- Serve 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));
- Provide services that need not be supplemental – A school operating a *schoolwide* program does not need to provide specific services that supplement the services participating students would otherwise receive (ESEA section 1114(a)(2)(A)(ii)); and
- Consolidate Federal, State, and local funds – A school operating a *schoolwide* program may consolidate Federal, State, and local funds to better address the needs of students in the school (ESEA section 1114(a)(1)(A)).

Background

The following Title I-funded targeted assistance schools may elect to transition to a Title I schoolwide program for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Title I targeted assistance schools with less than 40-percent of its students living in poverty that receive an approved waiver for the 40-percent poverty requirement from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE); and
- Title I targeted assistance schools that meet the 40-percent poverty requirement.

In accordance with [ESEA section 1114](#), a school operating a Title I targeted assistance program (section 1115) that elects to transition to a Title I schoolwide program must:

- Conduct at least one year of planning for a transition to a schoolwide program, which may be waived if the school previously has been operating under a strategic plan or improvement plan that addresses the entire school;
- Consult with all relevant school stakeholder groups; and

- Submit an Annual School Plan (ASP) to the NJDOE via Homeroom that addresses the following required components:
 1. A Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the entire school;
 2. Strategies to address school needs, including a description of how such strategies will:
 - a. Provide opportunities for all children, including each subgroup of students, as defined in ESEA §1111(c)(2), to meet the challenging state academic standards;
 - b. 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
 - c. Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of low-achieving students who are at risk of not meeting the challenging state academic standards, through various support activities; and
 3. An annual evaluation of the implemented programs and services as articulated in the ASP.

Schoolwide Poverty Percentage Waiver Request

At this time, the NJDOE is providing an opportunity for interested Title I targeted assistance schools with less than 40-percent poverty to apply for waivers. NJDOE approval of the waiver is necessary for Title I targeted assistance schools with less than 40-percent poverty to apply for Title I schoolwide status for the 2021-2022 school year.

Schools with less than 40-percent poverty rates that are interested in transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program for the 2021-2022 school year, must submit a Title I schoolwide waiver request application using the template on the NJDOE's [Title I webpage](#). The waiver request application must be submitted no later than **Friday, January 29, 2021** via email to schoolwide@doe.nj.gov.

The NJDOE will issue official notifications to schools upon approval of the poverty percentage waiver requests, with specific instructions on the next steps in the transition process to schoolwide programs.

Schoolwide Program Guidance

To assist schools with the schoolwide transition process, the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs has created a "Title I Schoolwide Transition Process" document available on the NJDOE's [Schoolwide Programs](#) webpage.

Additional details on Title I schoolwide programs are provided in the [Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program](#) guidance document from the U.S. Department of Education. This guidance highlights advantages and flexibilities inherent in a Title I schoolwide program.

Contact Information

For questions about transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program, please email the Title I Schoolwide account at schoolwide@doe.nj.gov. Further information on the annual Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program application process will be forthcoming in mid- January 2021.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group