



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 3, 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: March 26, 2021

Title I Targeted Assistance Schools – Application of Intent to Operate a Schoolwide Program

Districts that plan to transition one or more schools from a Title 1 targeted assistance program to a Title 1 schoolwide program (as outlined on p.4 of the [Title I Schoolwide Transition Process](#)), beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, must submit the 2021-2022 [Application of Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program](#) by **Friday, March 26, 2021**, to the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs via email at schoolwide@doe.nj.gov.

Operating a Title I schoolwide program allows a district to use Title I funds to improve academic achievement and enables a school to more effectively leverage federal funds to upgrade its entire educational program. Transitioning from a Title I targeted assistance program to a Title I schoolwide program remains an option for Title I-funded schools under the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*.

The application process to operate a Title I schoolwide program for the 2021-2022 school year pertains to:

- Title I targeted assistance schools that meet the 40-percent poverty requirement; and
- Title I targeted assistance schools with less than 40-percent poverty that received an approved waiver for this poverty requirement from the NJDOE to submit an Intent to Operate a Title I program.

Schools already approved to operate a Title I schoolwide program prior to the 2021-2022 school year do not need to re-apply annually.

Background

Eligible schools operating a Title I targeted assistance program may choose to operate Title I schoolwide programs as a means to implement comprehensive schoolwide reforms and needed interventions for the entire school. Transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program provides schools with the flexibility to address the needs of all staff, students (particularly those who are low-performing), and their families, as well as a gateway to explore how to most effectively utilize federal, state, and local funds in order to promote schoolwide reforms that raise academic performance throughout the school.

In addition, operation of a Title I schoolwide program affords schools the opportunity to develop an integrated continuum of supports and interventions for all students in the school, such as a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), to improve students' skills through programs and services such as counseling; school-based mental health programs; career and technical educational programs; coursework for postsecondary credit; schoolwide tiered models to address effective behavioral support; professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals and other school personnel; and transitional services from early childhood education to elementary school programs.

In accordance with the *ESSA* §1114, a school operating a [Title I targeted assistance program](#) electing to transition to a Title I schoolwide program must:

- Demonstrate that the school has conducted at least one year of planning for a transition to a schoolwide program, which may be waived if the school has previously been operating under a strategic plan or improvement plan that addresses the entire school;
- Consult with all relevant school stakeholder groups; and
- Participate in the NJDOE’s Annual School Planning Process to develop an Annual School Plan and address 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 *ESSA* §1111(b)(2), to meet challenging state academic standards;
 - b. 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.

Schoolwide Program Guidance

For further information on Title I schoolwide programs, please review [Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program](#), a U.S. Department of Education guidance document that highlights advantages and flexibilities inherent in schoolwide programs.

Contact Information

For questions about transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program, please email the New Jersey Department of Education’s Title I Schoolwide account at schoolwide@doe.nj.gov.

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