STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: November 18, 2026

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Title I Directors, Principals of Title I Targeted Assistance Schools

From: Jacqueline Gibbs, Chief Accountability Officer
Division of Accountability and Analytic Services

Deadline: December 18, 2026

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

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 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 use Title I funds to improve academic achievement and enables a school to more effectively leverage Federal funds to upgrade its entire educational program.

All schools planning to transition to a Title I schoolwide program (as outlined on page 4 of the New Jersey Department of Education Title I Schoolwide Transition Process) must notify the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) by completing the 2027-2028 Application of Intent to Operate a Title I Schoolwide Program by **Friday, December 18, 2026.** This application will be submitted electronically to the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs via the following link: 2027-2028 Application of Intent.

Additionally, schools interested in transitioning to a schoolwide program model **must** attend an informational webinar, *Title I Schoolwide Programs: From Intent to Implementation*, to be held on **Monday, November 30, 2026**. Participants must register at NJDOE Events Registration.

Note: Schools already approved to operate a Title I schoolwide program prior to the 2027-2028 school year do not need to re-apply annually.

Background
The following Title I-funded targeted assistance schools may elect to transition to a Title I schoolwide program for the 2027-2028 school year:

- Title I targeted assistance schools with less than 40 percent poverty, for which the NJDOE grants an approved waiver (now completed and approved as part of the Intent to Operate Application process); 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 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) that addresses the following required components:
  1. A Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the entire school;
  2. Strategies to identify and address priority 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
Schools with less than 40-percent poverty rates that are interested in transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program for the 2027-2028 school year must complete the poverty waiver section in the Intent to Operate Application.

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" guide, which may be accessed at: NJ Department of Education Title I Schoolwide Transition Process

Additional details on Title I schoolwide programs are provided in the following guidance document from the U.S. Department of Education, Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program. This guidance highlights advantages and flexibility 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.