

Addendum

Additional Information for Districts in Need of Improvement

District in Need of Improvement Criterion

A district is identified for improvement if it meets the following NCLB criterion:

*Does not make AYP in **all** grade spans within the district—elementary, middle school, and high school—for two consecutive years in either the language arts literacy or mathematics content area. (2007-2008 and 2008-2009) in total students or in any subgroup.*

When calculating AYP, data are aggregated for all schools in the district by grade span. Data from grades 3-5 are aggregated to determine the elementary grade span; data from grades 6-8 are aggregated to determine the middle school grade span; and data from grade 11 (test data from three administrations of the HSPA) is used for the high school grade span.

Note: If a district consisting of only one school is identified as a district in need of improvement, the federal sanctions for *schools* in need of improvement apply—district sanctions do not apply.

What MUST Districts Do

Title I districts identified as in need of improvement (DINI) must meet federal requirements as follows: complete a district improvement plan and parental notification (sample letter available at www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/0910/). The NCLB Consolidated Application must be revised to incorporate the requirements for DINIs. For Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 DINIs, the state must also apply one or more corrective actions, consistent with state law.

District Requirements

Districts in need of improvement that receive Title I funds must comply with the following requirements and deadlines.

- Incorporate the following elements into the district’s 2009-2010 NCLB Consolidated Application.
 - Develop a district improvement plan. (Year 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 districts must review the district improvement plan written for Year 1 and update it as appropriate.) The 2009-2010 NCLB Consolidated Application’s “Title I District Improvement Plan” provides a list of the essential elements that must be included to fulfill the requirements of the district plan. This is available at the following Web address: <http://www.nj.gov/education/title1/program/>

Upload the revised Title I District Improvement Plan to EWEG no later than **May 5, 2010**. The improvement plan must be implemented as soon as possible during the 2009-2010 school year.

- Districts in need of improvement have an additional “reserve” requirement (noted on the Eligibility screen, Step 4 of the EWEG on-line application). Not less than 10 percent of the district’s Title I, Part A allocation must be reserved for high-quality professional development for instructional staff specifically designed to improve classroom teaching. These funds may *not* be used for the regular Title I program; funds must be used for professional development. If unspent, the funds must be carried over. However, this reserve must continue to be designated for professional development purposes. **Note:** (1) The district may include in this

10 percent reserve the Title I, Part A funds required to be reserved for eligible Title I schools in need of improvement within the district. (Each served school in need of improvement is required to set aside 10 percent of its Title I school allocation for professional development.) (2) The five percent reserve for LEA professional development for “highly qualified” teachers may *not* be used to satisfy this reserve.

The additional professional development reserve will change the eligible school attendance area allocations as reflected in EWEG, Step 4. The revised school attendance allocations must be updated in the Title I budget, which must be uploaded on EWEG.

The revisions to the Title I Eligibility screen must be submitted electronically through the EWEG system by **May 5, 2010**. For more information on school and district improvement, please refer to the United States Department of Education’s *LEA and School Improvement, Non-Regulatory Guidance*, July 21, 2006, at www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.doc.

- Revise the NCLB Program Plan and Budget screens. The designation of a district in need of improvement and the addition of the required district professional development reserve will necessitate changes to the programs and activities originally submitted with the NCLB application. These pages must be revised and submitted on EWEG accordingly.
- Notify all parents of students enrolled in the school district that their school district is in need of improvement by **March 5, 2010**. This notification, in the parents’ native language, must explain the reasons for the identification, how parents can participate in improvement efforts, and what corrective actions will be taken. A sample letter is provided on the Title I Web site at www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/0910/.
- Note: Districts that submit an appeal may extend the parental notification deadline until the appeal is resolved.
- The NJDOE will issue a press release on or about **March 5, 2010**, identifying which districts have been designated for improvement. This announcement will meet the state’s responsibility for broadly disseminating the list of districts to parents and the public.
- Continue to provide technical assistance to your Title I schools identified as schools in need of improvement.
- Note: Districts identified for improvement cannot be providers of supplemental educational services (SES); however, *high-performing schools within the district* that have been approved as SES providers may continue to provide these services.

Districts in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6

Districts that are determined to be in need of improvement for three consecutive years are identified for corrective action by the state. Under NCLB, the state must take at least one of the following corrective actions, consistent with state law:

1. Defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative funds.

2. Implement a new curriculum, including related professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based research that is more likely to increase student achievement
3. Reassign and/or reallocate district personnel relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress
4. Appoint a Highly Skilled Professional to assist the superintendent and school board with the administration of affairs.

In conjunction with at least one of the actions on this list, the SEA may also authorize parents to transfer their child from a school operated by the LEA to a higher-performing public school operated by another LEA that is not identified for improvement or corrective action. If it offers this option, the SEA must also provide transportation or provide for the cost of transportation to the other school.
§1116(c)(10)(C)

What Else Can Districts Do

Districts identified as in need of improvement may choose to do one or more of the options outlined below:

- If a district believes that either the data or the calculation of district improvement status is incorrect, the district should file an appeal within 30 days. Prior to filing an appeal, a district should take the following steps:
 - Consult with the district’s test coordinator to review the student demographic information.
 - Review the state assessment results provided by the vendor and apply the NCLB conditions to those results. (See *Understanding Accountability in New Jersey for 2009 State Assessments* at www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/0910/)
- A district can examine the data to analyze the functioning of the central office and each of the schools using a comprehensive needs assessment and the Collaborative Assessment and Planning for Achievement (CAPA) Report recommendations for those schools that received a CAPA review.
- Districts can earnestly develop/update and implement the district’s improvement plan, including revising curriculum and teaching strategies, examining policies and procedures and reallocating resources.
- To seek help from highly skilled experts, a district might hire outside professionals to bring a fresh approach to solving the problems or partner with a high-performing district.
- If the number of students with disabilities who take and achieve proficiency on the Alternative Performance Assessment (APA) exceeds 1 percent, a district can apply for an exception to this APA allowance by contacting the NJDOE Office of Special Education at (609) 292-0147.

Status Profile and Appeal Process

Please review the attached profile on which the NJDOE has determined the district’s improvement status. If you believe the district’s improvement designation is in error for statistical or other substantive reasons, the district may appeal the designation by submitting the attached appeal form by **March 5, 2010**.

The Preliminary Appeal form is also available at www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/0910/. Along with the form, include the following documentation:

- A detailed explanation of why you believe the data are in error.
- Corrected data with the source.

Please note that state assessment results provided by the vendors are used as a baseline to determine the AYP results. AYP conditions are applied to these data. Assessment data alone do not determine AYP.

Appeals decisions will be made by the NJDOE. After the appeals process is complete, the NJDOE will make any adjustments resulting from granted appeals and finalize the districts in need of improvement list.

Specific details about the New Jersey Single Accountability System are available on the NJDOE Web site under Title I Accountability in the following documents:

- *NCLB Consolidated Accountability Workbook*
- *Understanding Accountability in New Jersey for 2009 State Assessments*

Timelines

In summary, the following are the timelines:

March 5, 2010	Appeals Due
March 5, 2010	Release of Districts in Need of Improvement List to Public
March 5, 2010	Notification to Parents by Districts
May 5, 2010	Revision of NCLB Consolidated Application and submission of District Improvement Plan elements of Title I Unified Plan