

Title I of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Statewide Testing

Funding and purpose

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is the single largest source of federal education funding; Minnesota received about \$98 million in fiscal year 2002 and about \$113 million in fiscal year 2003 in Title I funding. Title I funding is distributed based upon the number of low-income families residing in a school district. The funding provides additional educational programs and services to help children who are behind in school, including after-school, weekend and summer school programs, teacher training, parent involvement activities, specialists in reading, language arts and math, and tutors and aides.

1994 federal requirements

When Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1994, it required states to adopt or develop challenging curriculum content and performance standards, align assessments with state content standards, and implement an accountability system to measure school and district progress in improving student achievement. The legislation, among other things, required states to

- ▶ develop challenging reading and math standards
- ▶ develop three levels of performance standards for all students (partially proficient, proficient, advanced)
- ▶ administer reading and math assessments in grade spans 3 through 5, 6 through 9, and 10 through 12
- ▶ use criterion-based assessments that judge students' performance against an objective standard, instead of using norm-referenced tests that compare students' performance to that of other students
- ▶ use the same performance standards to assess students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, but provide reasonable adaptations and accommodations to ensure accurate and reliable information on what the students know and can do
- ▶ report student assessment data by school district, school, gender, major ethnic and racial groups, limited English proficiency status, migrant status, disability, and economic disadvantage
- ▶ define adequate yearly progress by using performance standards to establish a benchmark for school improvement
- ▶ require schools to show continuous progress toward achieving adequate yearly progress
- ▶ establish consequences for schools that fail to meet the standard for adequate yearly progress

In exchange for undertaking the added requirements, Congress gave states greater flexibility in their use of Title I funds.

***Compliance
waivers***

As of March 2002, Minnesota and 35 other states and instrumentalities had not fully complied with 1994 Title I assessment requirements. To avoid jeopardizing Title I funding, the federal education department granted Minnesota a three-year waiver, giving the state until January 1, 2004, to complete assessment requirements. As a condition of receiving the waiver, the Department of Children, Families and Learning submitted to the federal education department a plan and time line for addressing deficiencies in the state's assessment system.

***2001 federal
requirements***

In 2001, Congress passed new legislation to again reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The 2001 legislation augments the 1994 assessment and accountability requirements by requiring states to increase testing requirements that must be implemented through 2008 and establish progressively severe consequences for schools that fail to improve test scores. Under the 2001 legislation, among other things, states must

- ▶ develop content standards in science by the 2005-2006 school year that are applicable to all students and align content and performance standards in science and administer the science assessments by the 2007-2008 school year in grade spans 3 through 5, 6 through 9, and 10 through 12
- ▶ administer reading and math tests annually to all students in grades 3 through 8, including at least 95 percent of students in specific population subgroups who may meet separate annual performance targets, beginning in the 2005-2006 school year (states need not administer these tests if Congress fails to appropriate specified funding in any one year)
- ▶ require some students in grades 4 and 8 to take the National Assessment for Educational Performance (NAEP) at federal expense
- ▶ annually assess limited English proficiency students by the 2002-2003 school year and test in English those students who have attended school in the United States for three consecutive years unless an alternative local assessment is more reliable
- ▶ make available annual information on student performance and teacher qualifications by the 2002-2003 school year
- ▶ show gains in academic achievement for all students and for specific population groups and measure the gains against the state's definition of adequate yearly progress, which must expect all students to perform at a proficient level within 12 years
- ▶ define by year the actions a school district must take to improve failing schools, including allowing students to attend other public schools, using Title I funds for supplemental services from public or private providers, undertaking corrective actions such as replacing school staff or implementing a new curriculum, and restructuring the school as a charter school.

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