

Understanding the Basics of Title 1 Funds

written by: Sarah Malburg • edited by: Trent Lorcher

Title 1 funds aim to bridge the gap between low-income students and other students. The U.S. Department of Education provides supplemental funding to local school districts to meet the needs of at-risk and low-income students.

What's it All About?

Most educators, parents and community members have heard the term Title 1 School thrown loosely around, but what is it? Title 1 is the nation's oldest and largest federally funded program, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Annually, it provides over \$14 billion to school systems across the country for students at risk of failure and living at or near poverty. In fact, over the course of the 2009-2010 school year, federal funding through this program was used by over 56,000 public schools nationwide in order for struggling students to meet state standards in a variety of subject areas.

Originally, the idea of Title 1 was enacted in 1965 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This policy committed to closing the achievement gap between low-income students and other students. The policy was rewritten in 1994 to improve fundamental goals of helping at-risk students. With the implementation of No Child Left Behind, schools must make adequate yearly progress on state testing and focus on best teaching practices in order to continue receiving funds.

What is the Purpose of Title 1 Funding?

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the purpose of Title 1 funding, "is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

The basic principles of Title 1 state that schools with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting students' educational goals. Low-income students are determined by the number of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. For an entire school to qualify for Title 1 funds, at least 40% of students must enroll in the free and reduced lunch program.

How are Title 1 Funds Used?

How to use Title 1 funds rests with each school. Title 1 funds can be used to improve curriculum, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, increase staff and program improvement. The funding should assist schools in meeting the educational goals of low-income students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Title 1 funds typically support supplemental instruction in reading and math. Annually, this program reaches over six million students, primarily in the elementary grades.

Types of students that might be served by Title 1 funds include migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, homeless students, students with disabilities, neglected students, delinquent students, at-risk students or any student in need. Students can be classified as at-risk for numerous reasons. A few reasons they might be classified as at-risk students include: low academic performance, being held back a grade for one or more years, or being homeless. There are other criteria that may place students in an at-risk category as well.

References

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