



State of New Jersey

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July 11, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

FROM: Karen L. Campbell, Director
Office of Supplemental Educational Programs

ROUTE TO: Title I Directors and Principals of Title I Schools

SUBJECT: Title I, Part A Schoolwide Programs Under the *Every Student Succeeds Act*
(ESSA)

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)*, provides an opportunity for a participating Title I, Part A school with less than a 40-percent poverty rate to request to transition from a Title I targeted assistance program to a Title I Schoolwide Program. As a result, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is providing an opportunity for interested schools to apply to implement Title I schoolwide programs in the 2018-19 school year.

As articulated in *ESSA*, a school with less than a 40-percent poverty rate that currently operates a Title I targeted assistance program may choose to operate a Title I schoolwide program as a means to upgrade its entire educational program. Transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program increases a school's flexibility to address the needs of all students (particularly those who are low-performing), as well as families and staff. It also helps schools explore ways to most effectively leverage federal, state and local funds to promote schoolwide reforms designed to raise the academic performance throughout the school.

In accordance with Section 1114 of *ESSA*, a school with less than a 40-percent poverty rate that elects to transition to a Title I schoolwide program for operation during the 2018-19 school year must complete the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Submit a waiver request using the [template](#) on the NJDOE's Title I website. The waiver request requires an interested school to submit an evaluation of its existing Title I targeted assistance program, to provide data on the scope and effectiveness of its current program and the need for expanding Title I services to the entire school. This waiver request must be submitted no later than **Friday, September 15, 2017** via email to schoolwide@doe.state.nj.us.

- **Step 2:** Upon approval of the waiver request, the NJDOE will issue a letter to the school in late fall 2017 with instructions on submitting the *Intent to Operate a Schoolwide Program* application. The letter will also include details on the process for the school to engage all relevant stakeholder groups during the 2017-18 school year in conducting at least one year of planning to transition from a Title I targeted assistance program to a schoolwide program in the 2018-19 school year.
- **Step 3:** In the spring of 2018, the school will submit to the NJDOE documentation of its stakeholder engagement efforts and documentation relating to the school's Comprehensive Needs Assessment process and its outcomes.
- **Step 4:** The school will submit the 2018-19 Title I Schoolwide Plan to the NJDOE by June 30, 2018. The NJDOE will contact the school with details on the submission process, including available technical-assistance opportunities.

Each school with a waiver request that is not approved may reapply to operate a schoolwide program in the 2019-20 school year.

For further information on Title I schoolwide programs, please review the following guidance documents from the U.S. Department of Education (USED):

- [USED Schoolwide Letter to Chief State School Officials](#) – This July 2015 letter focuses on various aspects of schoolwide programs and serves as a schoolwide resource tool.
- [Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program](#) – This guidance highlights advantages and flexibilities inherent in schoolwide programs.
- [Designing Schoolwide Programs](#) – This document addresses program requirements.

For questions about transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program under this waiver process, contact Dr. Anthony Wright at anthony.wright@doe.state.nj.us or Andrea Sunderville at andrea.sunderville@doe.state.nj.us.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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