

AISU's Title I Targeted Assistance Program

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is a federal program that provides financial assistance to schools with high percentages of students from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

AISU is a Targeted Assistance School because our number of low-income students is below 40%. (If our percentage was higher than 40% we would be categorized as a "school wide" Title I program with different regulations.)

In a targeted assistance program, the population eligible for Title I services must be: (1) children not older than 21 who are entitled to free public education through grade 12; and (2) children who are not yet at the appropriate grade level for free public education. In addition to this baseline requirement, Title I-eligible children are defined as those who are "failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state's challenging student academic achievement standards."

The school makes this determination based on "multiple, educationally related, objective criteria established by the LEA and supplemented by the school." "Multiple" means "more than one," so it would not be sufficient to base eligibility on the score from a single test. "Educationally related" means that there must be an academic component to the criteria. "Objective" means that the criteria cannot be based on teacher judgment or other subjective means.

Targeted Assistance schools have significant discretion on the Title services they will provide, for instance, a school could concentrate resources on certain grades or in certain academic subjects. At AISU, because of our use of online curriculum and what we learned from testing our student population, we felt strongly that the most beneficial use of funds was to focus on student literacy (the ability to read and write). Specifically, we use our Title I funds for our Middle School Literacy program.

It is important to highlight that determining eligibility for services as an entirely separate and district process from determining a schools' population of low-income children in order to calculate its allocation. Selection for services is based entirely on low achievement, not low income.

COMPONENTS OF A TARGETED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The statute establishes eight components that must be included in a targeted assistance program. In a targeted assistance program, the school must:

1. Use Title I resources to help participating children meet the state's challenging student academic achievement standards expected for all children;
2. Ensure that planning for students served under Title I is incorporated into existing school planning;

3. Use effective methods and instructional strategies that rely on scientifically based research and strengthen the core academic program of the schools and that:

- Give primary consideration to providing extended learning time,
- Help provide an accelerated, high-quality curriculum, including applied learning; and
- Minimize removing children from the regular classroom during regular school hours for instruction provided under Title I;

4. Coordinate with and support the regular education program;

5. Provide instruction by “highly qualified” teachers;

6. Provide opportunities for professional development using Title I resources and,

7. Provide strategies to increase parental involvement; and

8. Coordinate an integrated federal, state and local services and programs. Each participating school must assist the identified students in meeting the state’s proficient and advanced levels of achievement by coordinating Title I funds with funds received from other sources. In addition, the school providing targeted assistance must review, on an ongoing basis, the progress of participating children.