

Title I Fall Update

For district staff responsible for Title I programs



Introduction

The goal of this update is to provide you with timely reminders of your responsibilities under Title I and guidance to help you meet those responsibilities. As always, your feedback regarding the usefulness of these updates is encouraged.

This update spans the fall of the 2014-15 school year, and corresponds to the activities described on page 5 of the [Handbook for Title I Directors](#).

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Fiscal issues

FY15 Title I comparability reporting

Documenting comparability of services is an annual requirement for each district receiving Title I, Part A funds, and must be completed near the beginning of the school year. Per federal law, districts may only receive Title I funds if they use state and local funds to provide services in Title I schools that, taken as a whole, are at least comparable to the services provided in schools that do not receive Title I funds. When all schools receive Title I funds, districts must ensure that state and local funds are used to provide services that, on the whole, are substantially comparable in each school.

FY15 Title I comparability forms and instructions can be found [here](#). These forms should be completed as soon as possible and at least **by the end of November**. If schools are found not to be comparable, prompt adjustments in staffing in the non-comparable schools should be made in collaboration with the district business manager and district personnel responsible for staffing.

Each year districts must ensure compliance with all comparability requirements, including establishing and implementing: (a) a local educational agency-wide salary schedule; (b) a policy to ensure equivalence among schools in teachers, administrators, and other staff; and (c) a policy to ensure equivalence among schools in the provision of curriculum materials and instructional supplies. These documents must remain on file at the district and be available for outside review. Districts must also keep on file a copy of their signed FY15 NCLB grant assurances document.

Districts with only one school for each grade span or a district with only one school, such as a charter school or a regional vocational school, are exempt from the comparability requirement. These districts should only complete the Summary Sheet contained within the comparability forms to document this fact.

Contact us at titlei@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-6230 if you have any questions about the contents of this update or more generally about your district's Title I programming.

Grant maintenance

FY15 review and approval of Title I grants

As of October, most districts have submitted their FY15 Title I grant application. If your district has an FY15 Title I allocation but has not yet submitted an application, please do so by the October 31, 2014 deadline.

After your district's FY15 Title I & Title IIA grant application has been approved, we will notify your district of approval and, once both grants are processed, we will upload a "final" approved FY15 Title I & Title IIA application workbook to your district's Title I and Title IIA Grants drop box in the Department's Security Portal. The uploaded workbook that is labeled as "final" is the workbook to be used if and when an amendment to the application is needed.

Grant maintenance (continued)

FY14 year 2 grants

Districts that expended all FY14 funds by June 30, 2014 should submit their final financial report (FR-1) for the grant by October 31, 2014. Grants Management sent the FR-1 form along with instructions to all district control users in a September 8, 2014 email. If FY14 funds were not expended by June 30, the grant will remain open for an additional year, until June 30, 2015. Districts in this situation are now operating in year 2 of the FY14 grant. The FY14 grant workbook should be amended as necessary to reflect any budgetary or programmatic changes taking place in year 2 of the grant. There is no separate carryover grant application.

15% carryover limit

Title I, Part A grant funds are available for use over a two-year period, however federal law limits the amount of Title I funding that a district can carry over from one fiscal year into the next. Specifically, the amount a district may carry over into year 2 of the grant period is limited to 15 percent of the district's total allocation. On October 20, Grants Management sent an email to district control users in districts that may be at risk of exceeding the 15% carryover limit (based on the amount of FY14 Title I funding that the district claimed through 6/30/14). Those districts receiving that email must complete a Title I Interim Expenditure Report to reconcile and report spending through 9/30/14.

Districts unable to expend or encumber 85% of their year 1 Title I award by September 30th may request a waiver from the 15% carryover limit. The Title I office will review all waiver requests. Please note that per federal requirements, waiver requests must be reasonable and necessary and can only be granted once every three years. If a waiver is denied, the unspent funds in excess of 15% will be reallocated to other eligible districts in accordance with section 1126(c) of Title I.

Title I grant amendments

Districts must submit requests to amend grants when:

- there is any significant change in program objectives; or
- there is any increase or decrease in the total amount of the grant; or
- an increase in a line of the budget exceeds \$100 and 10% of the line, or exceeds \$10,000.

As with the original grant proposal, ESE staff are responsible for reviewing and approving Title I grant amendments. We will notify your district of the need for additional information or changes, if necessary, and when the amendment has been approved and processed by the Grants Management office. To help facilitate an efficient review and approval process, please be sure to include in your district's amendment request details regarding proposed Title I amendments. We need to understand why you are proposing a change and how the change will improve the provision of Title I services; you can help us by answering these questions in advance.

If the district needs to file an FY15 Title I and/or Title IIA amendment, be sure to use the finalized workbook that has been (or will be) uploaded to the Title I & Title IIA Grants drop box within the Security Portal. The workbook will be uploaded to the ESE Outbox and the file name will end in "final". If the workbook has not been uploaded and an amendment is needed, please send a request to titlei@doe.mass.edu and we will expedite the process.

FY14 and FY15 drawdown and spending

At the end of each month, Grants Management will send a request for funds form (RF-1) to district control users for expenses incurred that month. Control users will receive a separate RF-1 for FY14 and FY15 grant funds. The request window is typically open for 10 days. Generally speaking, districts should **spend down FY14 year 2 funds first**, before drawing on FY15 funds. FY14 year 2 funds are spent in the current fiscal year, but still remain a separate funding stream from FY15 Title I funds.

Grant maintenance (continued)

FY15 mid-year allocation adjustments

As usual, this winter ESE will issue mid-year adjustments to FY15 Title I allocations. ESE must adjust district allocations each year for several reasons. We are required to reserve funds for adjustments in allocations to charter schools that are new or have significantly expanding enrollments, and redistribute to districts any unused funds from that reservation as well as any funds that were allocated to certain eligible districts but were not claimed. This year we also received notice from the U.S. Department of Education of a slight change to our overall state allocation. We will notify districts at the time of the adjustments, and districts will be required to submit an FY15 amendment to reflect any changes in the Title I allocation.

2014 accountability reporting

Release of 2014 accountability data

On September 19, 2014 ESE provided districts with official 2014-15 accountability data that incorporated all discrepancies reported and accepted during the MCAS discrepancy reporting window (August 7-14). Commendation designations were also reported. We have prepared guidance and tools, as well as short videos, to help you understand the accountability system. These resources are located [here](#).

To view a district's or school's accountability report, find the organization's profile on our school and district profiles [website](#) and click the Accountability tab.

2014 school and district report cards

ESEA requires districts to annually prepare and distribute school and district report cards to the parents/guardians of all children enrolled in district schools. Districts can meet this requirement by sending a Department-generated *school report card overview* to parents/guardians. Complete report cards and report card overviews for schools and districts are now posted on [Profiles](#) and we ask that you disseminate school report card overviews to families by the end of October.

Guidance on report card distribution requirements, including information on electronic distribution options, as well as sample notification letters are posted [here](#).

In addition to the school report cards, federal law requires that certain information be communicated to families of children enrolled in a district's schools. This information must include, at a minimum:

- The accountability and assistance level of the child's school and district
- The reason for the level designation, such as the aggregate or high needs groups not meeting cumulative progress and performance index (PPI) targets
- An explanation of what the level designation means
- An explanation of the school and/or district improvement activities the district has initiated to increase performance in Level 2-5 schools, and how parents/guardians can become involved in school and district improvement activities
- For Title I schools, information about right-to-know requirements regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teacher(s)

For your convenience, ESE has made available a customizable letter that, when accompanied by the school report card overview, fulfills the above mentioned parent/guardian notification requirements. The sample letter is available in English and 9 other languages, and can be found [here](#).

Please direct questions about the overall CPR process to your district's program quality assurance (PQA) liaison or compliance@doe.mass.edu.

Questions about the Title I program review can be directed to titlei@doe.mass.edu.

View the full CPR schedule [here](#).

Title I monitoring

2014-15 Title I program reviews

As in prior years, districts receiving Title I funds that are scheduled for a coordinated program review (CPR) in a given fiscal year also participate in a Title I program review.

Districts scheduled for an FY15 CPR received official notice of the Title I program review via an email dated July 18, 2014. The timing of Title I program review activities is independent of and does not necessarily coincide with the schedule of CPR document submission and district visits. Title I program review materials are due to ESE on December 18, 2014. Please review the program review/monitoring resources posted [here](#). These include guidance and sample materials that can help all districts ensure that they maintain appropriate documentation of their Title I programs.

Coordinating services with neglected/delinquent facilities

Some districts receive grants on behalf of children in neglected/ delinquent community residential facilities (Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 grants) within the district's geographic boundaries. This is a reminder that all Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 grant recipients must establish and have on file at the facility and in the affiliated school district, an electronic copy of the Title I Part D Subpart 2 budget summary and narrative that correspond to the N or D allocation in line item 5 of the Title I grant, as well as an electronic or hard copy of the 'formal agreement' that spells out the programmatic and fiscal agreement between the facility and the school district, with the latter acting as fiscal agent for grant funds.

Technical assistance and networking opportunities

Technical assistance and networking opportunities are available for Title I Directors:

- Fall Title I and Title IIA Statewide Conference (November 5). Register for the conference [here](#).
- Regional Title I Directors meetings (in November 2014). Regional meeting hosts will send invitations to Title I directors.

Information on other networking opportunities available [here](#)

Family Literacy Month

Governor Patrick has issued a Proclamation declaring November 2014 as Massachusetts Family Literacy Month. This marks the 18th year that our state is acknowledging and celebrating the important role that families play in their children's literacy development. Commissioner Chester, of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, has issued a message encouraging school districts, libraries, adult learning centers, parent support programs, social service agencies, and local businesses to collaborate and provide activities for families during this month. Please visit this [website](#) for ESE Commissioner Chester's announcement, Governor Patrick's 2014 Proclamation, and family literacy resources.

Title I calendar at a glance

October
Submit requests to amend grants, as needed.
Collect signed time & effort records for split-funded staff.
With assistance of business manager, document Title I expenditures per school building for the current & prior school years and demonstrate comparability of services.
Design evaluations for district & school family engagement activities.
Distribute report cards/overviews, including right-to-know & district/school accountability & assistance level information
Review & update needs assessment & program evaluation procedures as needed.
Review & update school improvement plans for Title I schools with accountability status.
Design evaluations for Title I funded professional development activities for impact on student learning.
Review system wide school enrollment based on the district's Student Information Management System (SIMS) October 1 collection
Participate, as needed, in development & submission of EPIMS data.
Conduct annual fall parent orientation meeting.
Initiate planning for new schoolwide programs, if applicable.
November
Submit requests to amend grants, as needed.
Collect signed time & effort records for split-funded staff.
Ensure Title I schools have created rank-ordered student selection lists of Title I students in targeted assistance programs, set up files, notified parents, & implemented targeted assistance services.
Ensure home-school compacts are collected.
Update targeted assistance program plan.
If scheduled for a coordinated program review (CPR), organize documentation for Title I program review.

View past Title I quarterly updates on our [website](#)

Updating Directory Administration

When a new person assumes the role of Title I director, it is important to update the Title I contact information in DA. This will ensure that the appropriate person receives all ESE communications. This [website](#) explains the purpose of DA and provides a link to the list of district level directory administrators who are responsible for its maintenance.

For Title I questions: titlei@doe.mass.edu / 781-338-6230

For accountability-related questions: esea@doe.mass.edu / 781-338-3550