

Summary of U.S. Department of Education Title I Monitoring Visit

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) visited North Dakota on May 5-9, 2008 to monitor the Department of Public Instruction's implementation of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act. The programs within NCLB that were monitored included Title I – Part A, Title I – Part D (Neglected and Delinquent), Title I – Part B (Even Start), and Title X – Part C (McKinney – Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth). The USDE monitoring team consisted of six individuals. In addition to visiting the department, the monitoring team visited several North Dakota schools and programs to gather information on the state's implementation of NCLB.

At the close of the USDE visit, an exit conference was held outlining areas of concern noted during the visit. The USDE conducts its exit conference different from the procedures followed by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The DPI exit conference addresses commendations, recommendations, and compliance issues that are summarized in a monitoring letter. In contrast, at the USDE exit conference, only the issues of concern were addressed. The USDE monitoring team took these issues back to Washington to conduct further discussion and research to determine whether the issues will be cited as recommendations or compliance issues. Either way, North Dakota schools can expect further guidance and increased oversight on each of the issues outlined within this document.

North Dakota State Assessment

■ Accommodations and Modifications

- The state has provided clear evidence that accommodations and modification policies are provided within the state assessments. There was evidence that these policies are not understood by school officials. The state should provide a documented method to clarify and communicate these policies to the schools.

■ Reporting

- The USDE observed that school and student reports for the state's alternate assessments were produced and distributed to schools later than the state's standard assessment. The state should provide a method to minimize any disparity in the release of reports from all state assessments.

■ Rules for Alternate Assessment Caps

- The state has yet to invoke rules that cap the use of alternate assessment proficiency rates that exceed 1% of the statewide tested population. The state should clearly communicate its proficiency rate cap rules, including the method of identifying districts that exceed the cap and the means of lowering excessive rates among violating districts.

■ Accountability for New Schools

- The state's accountability rules clarify the method of reconciling, reorganizing, or consolidating school districts for the purposes of generating valid and reliable AYP determinations. The state should likewise clarify such methods for newly organized schools.

■ Report Card Clarification

- The state currently reports overall achievement rates for all levels of performance, grades, and subjects. The state should restructure its annual school and district Report Cards to clearly state the number and percentage of students who are not proficient against the state's achievement standards in the aggregate and disaggregated by subgroups.

Title I

■ Timely AYP Notification

- Under the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act, all districts and schools are required to send correspondence to the parents of each child enrolled in the district and/or school regarding its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status. The notice to parents should be written in an understandable format and, when applicable, in a language that parents can understand. Federal law mandates that this notification take place in a timely manner.
 - *For schools/districts identified for program improvement, this notice must take place prior to the first day of school.*
 - *For schools/districts NOT identified for program improvement, this notice must take place at the start of the school year (i.e., as part of welcome back letter or August newsletter).*

■ Supplemental Services Funding Cap

- Supplemental services provider charges must fall within the per-pupil funding cap.

■ Schoolwide Plans

- Schoolwide plans are to reflect information at the school level rather than system configuration (i.e., K-6 and 7-12 plans rather than K-12 plans).

■ Parental Involvement Set-Aside

- Parents must agree to the manner in which districts are spending the 1% set-aside for parental involvement.

■ Time and Effort Logs

- Documentation of time and effort must be maintained and reflective of the services rendered. Title I paid personnel are restricted to Title I responsibilities, even in a schoolwide program.

■ Private Schools

- When private schools participate in Title I services, the LEA must maintain control and oversight of the finances, employees, services, computers, equipment, etc. In addition, all services, computers, and equipment can only be utilized by Title I students.

■ Title I Committee of Practitioners

- The state's Title I Committee of Practitioners must have multiple representatives from stakeholder groups.

After the USDE monitoring team deliberated on the above issues, an official monitoring report outlining final recommendations and compliance issues was sent to the department. This report can be accessed online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/targeted/resource/monitor/index.shtm.