

ESSA Quick Reference Brief: Rank and Serve under Title I, Part A



What the Law Says

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides federal dollars to schools to help students at risk of not meeting state academic standards. As described in Section 1113(a)(3)(A), when districts have insufficient funds to serve all eligible schools, a district shall serve all schools in rank order where the concentration of children from economically disadvantaged families exceeds 75%. If funds remain after serving all eligible schools that exceed 75%, the district shall rank the remaining schools either by poverty or by grade span and then poverty.

All districts receiving Title I-A funds are required to follow rank and serve requirements, **with the exception of districts that enroll fewer than 1,000 students.**¹

What It Means

“Rank and Serve” is the process used to determine which schools should be served with Title I-A funds. The intent of the law is to concentrate the funds in schools with the highest percentages of children from families experiencing poverty and to provide sufficient funds to make a difference in the academic performance of these students. In order to determine which schools will receive Title I-A funds, each district must put its schools in rank order from highest to lowest concentrations of children from families experiencing poverty. **Schools with a poverty level of 75% or above must be served in rank order, regardless of grade span.**² Districts that meet the exception described above do not have to follow rank and serve guidelines and can serve any school.

Selecting Measures for Ranking and Serving

Before the rank and serve process can begin, districts receiving Title I-A funds must determine the level of poverty at all schools in the district. Districts must select one of five measures to determine relative percentages of children from economically disadvantaged families residing in their attendance areas³:

1. Census counts of children from families below the poverty level (this is the same data used by the federal government to allocate Title I-A funds to districts).
2. Counts of children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.
3. Counts of children whose families receive assistance under the federal welfare program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
4. Counts of children eligible for Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan).
5. A combination of two or more of these data sources.

The selected measure is used to determine the number of economically disadvantaged students at district schools and the proportionate share for eligible private schools. Most school districts use free or reduced-price lunch enrollment to determine schools' poverty levels, but with the introduction of the [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#), which eliminates the school meal application for individual households, some are exploring other measures. Regardless of the method selected, **the district must use the same method from the same point in time** to determine poverty rates, rank schools, and to set per-pupil allocations across the district.

¹ ESEA Section 1113(a)(6)

² ESEA Section 1113(a)(3)(A)(i)

³ ESEA Section 1113(a)(5)

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Requirements

The table below outlines the required steps for ranking and serving schools under Title I-A.

| Step | Description | Considerations |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Select the measure to be used for determining poverty in the district. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The measure chosen must be consistent across the district and collected at the same point in time. |
| 2 | Determine amount available to be allocated to schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with the total allocation, then determine the amount of set asides to be deducted. The amount remaining is the amount available to be allocated to schools. | Required set asides include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services to support students experiencing houselessness Parent and Family Engagement (only applies to districts with an allocation of more than \$500,000) Services for Neglected Children (only required for districts that receive Neglected funds) Equitable services for eligible private school students in private schools that choose to participate in Title I-A |
| 3 | Rank order all schools in the district by percentage of poverty. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate to schools with over 75% poverty. Schools over 75% must be served in rank order, regardless of grade span. |
| 4 | After schools with 75% poverty or above are served, determine whether to rank the remaining schools into grade span groupings or the district as a whole. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a district selects grade span grouping as the method for serving schools, the district can choose to fund grade spans at different Per Pupil Amounts (PPA). NOTE: The PPA amount for a higher poverty school must be more than or equal to that of a lower poverty school within the same grade span. |
| 5 | Determine the amount of funding for each school served. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A district may determine a baseline PPA by dividing the total available Title I funds (after set-asides) by the total number of economically disadvantaged students in the district. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a school whose poverty rate is below 35% is served, all schools being served must receive a PPA that is equal to or greater than 125% of the PPA the district receives*. This amount can be determined using the following formula: (District allocation / total number of economically disadvantaged students) X 1.25. |

* A district can continue to serve any school that falls below 35% poverty **through a one-year extension**, provided the school was eligible and served in the previous year.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is our district’s current measure for determining poverty? Does our measure rank and serve schools accurately reflect our population or should a different measure be considered?
2. How are we meeting the strengths and needs of students attending schools that our district chooses not to provide serve with Title I-A funds (e.g.; high schools)?

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3. How does the district coordinate and communicate with schools regarding changes to Title I-A budgets (e.g., decreases to school budgets, changing poverty rates that affect which schools are served)?

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Are any schools required to be served?** Yes. Any schools that have a poverty rate above 75% must be served with Title I-A funds.
2. **What are the requirements for serving charter schools?** Any district sponsored charter school must be ranked by poverty and they must be served if eligible for Title I, Part A. This requirement applies both to existing and newly established charter schools.
3. **What about schools with no fixed attendance area?** In cases where a district's schools have no fixed attendance area, such as those with a districtwide open enrollment policy or choice program, or in the case of magnet schools that draw from more than one attendance area, ESEA Section 1113(b)(1)(B) allows an LEA to determine a school's eligibility for participation in Title I-A on the basis of the poverty level of children enrolled in the school.
4. **May a district allocate a greater PPA to schoolwide programs than targeted assistance programs since schoolwide programs serve all children?**

The Title I statute requires allocations to be based on the total number of economically disadvantaged children in a school attendance area or school. Therefore, **poverty is the only factor on which a district may determine funding.** In other words, a district may not allocate funds based on the instructional model, educational need, or any other non-poverty factor. Because Title I-A places the responsibility for selecting participants and designing programs on schools rather than on the district, the district will not necessarily be in a position to know in advance the instructional model or educational need when determining allocations.

5. **May a district reserve funds off the top of its Title I-A allocation before allocating funds for equitable services?** No. A district must determine the amount of funds available for providing equitable services prior to any expenditures or transfers of funds. This includes all reservations for administration, parental involvement, and districtwide initiatives.

Resources

- [Within District Allocations under Title I, Part A](#)
- [CEP-Title I Guidance](#)
- [Introduction to CEP](#) (ODE)
- [ESSA Quick Reference Brief: Community Eligibility Provision](#) (ODE)
- [Guidance on using the Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\) in completing the Budget Narrative](#) (ODE)
- [Oregon Federal Funds Guide](#) (ODE)

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Examples of Ranking and Serving Methods

In each of the following examples, the district's **Title I-A Allocation** is \$1,000,000, **Set Asides** are \$10,000 and the **Allocation to Schools** is \$900,000.

Example 1: Rank and Serve by Grade Span

| School | Grade Span | Total Enrollment | Poverty Enrollment | Poverty Percentage | Per Pupil Allocation | School Allocation |
|---------------|------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Apple Primary | K-2 | 200 | 75 | 37.5% | \$650.00 | \$48,750 |
| Ball Elem | K-5 | 350 | 175 | 50.0% | \$650.00 | 113,750 |
| Cat Elem | K-5 | 350 | 100 | 28.57% | \$0.00 | 0 |
| Dog Middle | 6-8 | 600 | 425 | 70.83% | \$600.00 | 255,001 |
| Eagle Middle | 6-8 | 650 | 440 | 67.69% | \$569.99 | 250,796 |
| Fox High | 9-12 | 1,200 | 515 | 42.29% | \$449.91 | 231,704 |

\$900,000

Example 2: Rank and Serve by Poverty

| School | Grade Span | Total Enrollment | Poverty Enrollment | Poverty Percentage | Per Pupil Allocation | School Allocation |
|---------------|------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Dog Middle | 6-8 | 600 | 425 | 70.83% | \$600.00 | 255,000 |
| Eagle Middle | 6-8 | 650 | 440 | 67.69% | \$575.00 | 253,000 |
| Ball Elem | K-5 | 350 | 175 | 50.0% | \$555.00 | 97,125 |
| Fox High | 9-12 | 1,200 | 515 | 42.29% | \$500.50 | 257,757 |
| Cat Elem | K-5 | 350 | 100 | 28.57% | 0 | 0 |
| Apple Primary | K-2 | 200 | 75 | 37.50% | \$494.90 | 37,118 |

\$900,000

Example 3: Funding a school below 35% (125% rule)

| School | Grade Span | Total Enrollment | Poverty Enrollment | Poverty Percentage | Per Pupil Allocation | School Allocation |
|---------------|------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Apple Primary | K-2 | 200 | 75 | 37.50% | \$809.61 | 60,721 |
| Ball Elem | K-5 | 350 | 175 | 50.00% | \$750.00 | 131,250 |
| Cat Elem | K-5 | 350 | 100 | 28.57% | \$722.54 | 72,254 |
| Dog Middle | 6-8 | 600 | 425 | 70.83% | \$735.00 | 312,375 |
| Eagle Middle | 6-8 | 650 | 440 | 67.69% | \$735.00 | 323,400 |
| Fox High | 9-12 | 1,200 | 515 | 42.29% | \$0.00 | 0 |

\$900,000

Calculation Method

1. Determine district PPA **before set-asides** (total allocation divided by # of students in poverty): \$1,000,000 divided by 1,730 = \$578.03 PPA
2. Determine the new PPA under the 125% rule (district PPA X 125%): \$578.03 X 1.25= \$722.54 per student
3. **Every funded school** must be served at a rate of \$722.54 per student (or above).