



Title I News

February 2005

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Reading Month 2005

February is Reading month in North Dakota.

The Title I office contracted with Dianne Becker, Cindy Berger, and Diane Kracht from North Central of Barnes Public School District to create the packet. We feel these three teachers are to be commended for their time, effort, and many innovated ideas for the Reading Month Packet.

The 2005 theme is *Around the State in 28 Days – Read to Discover the Spirit!* This packet is available for download at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/read/index.shtm. We hope that all schools and teachers in North Dakota participate in this exciting event.

If you take photos of the great things happening at your school during Reading Month, we invite you to share these with the State Title I office. We love including photos from the field in our slideshows at Title I events.

We ask that all participants complete the final page of the reading month packet entitled *Reading Month Feedback Sheet*. This sheet is available online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/read/2005/feedback75.pdf. The information on this form is extremely important to the Title I office as it drives future Reading Month initiatives.

Are You Renewing Your Teaching License or Credential?

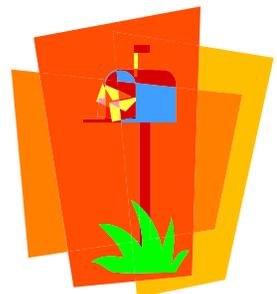
Teachers renewing their teaching license are to direct all questions and correspondence to the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB). You can contact their office by telephone at (701) 328-9641 or by e-mail at diweber@state.nd.us.

Teachers renewing their Title I reading and/or math credential are to direct all questions and correspondence to the Department of Public Instruction's Title I office. Teachers can contact Sandy Peterson, in the State Title I office, by telephone at (888) 605-1951, (701) 328-2170, or by e-mail at smpeterson@state.nd.us.

In most cases, when your teaching license is due for renewal, so is your reading and/or math credential. Teachers must contact the State Title I office to ensure their credential(s) is renewed. It is a common misconception that credentials are renewed automatically when a license is renewed.

Math Month 2005

By now, all schools in North Dakota should have received the 2005 Math Month Packet entitled *Embracing Mathematical Diversity*. Envelopes containing the printed Math Month Packet were mailed on Wednesday, February 2, 2005. In addition to mailing this document, the State Title I office has posted the packet on the Title I website at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/month.shtm. If you have not received a printed copy of the Math Month Packet, please take a moment and download the information from our website. Please feel free to distribute it to others in your school!



Did Your Title I Credential Expire?

To be eligible to work in a Title I classroom, your math and/or reading credential must be up to date and valid. Credentials that are due for renewal must be renewed on/or before the credential's expiration date. It has been brought to our attention by the approval and accreditation process that there are Title I staff teaching with an expired credential.

Title I funds cannot pay for teachers who do not hold a valid Title I credential. If you are teaching in a Title I classroom and your Title I math and/or reading credential has expired, both you and the superintendent of your school will receive a letter from the State Title I office. This letter will indicate that you, the Title I teacher, are teaching Title I with an expired math and/or reading credential. Continuing this practice puts the district's Title I funds at risk. Request for funds payments will not be made until the issue is resolved.

If you are unsure of your credential expiration date or if you have further questions, please contact Sandy Peterson. She is available by telephone at (888) 605-1951, (701) 328-2170, or by e-mail at smpeterson@state.nd.us.

Courses to Renew Reading Credential

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) TeacherLine is a web-based program that offers online solutions for teacher professional development. As you are aware, when a Title I teacher renews his/her reading credential at least one credit must encompass scientifically based reading research (SBRR). The PBS courses listed below will count for the SBRR course needed for renewal of your reading credential. These courses include:

- Teaching Phonics and Spelling for Emergent Readers (Grades PreK-K)
- Teaching Phonics and Spelling for Beginning and Transitional Readers (Grades 1-3)
- An Introduction to Underlying Principles and Research for Effective Literacy Instruction (Grades K-8)
- Teaching Phonemic Awareness and Phonics (Grades PreK-3)
- Teaching Vocabulary: Word Meaning and Word Knowledge (Grades PreK-2)
- Teaching Vocabulary: Word Meaning and Word Knowledge (Grades 3-5)
- Teaching Narrative and Expository Text Comprehension (Grades PreK-K)
- Teaching Narrative and Expository Text Comprehension (Grades 1-3)
- Teaching Narrative and Expository Text Comprehension (Grades 4-6)

For more information on the PBS TeacherLine, please visit www.pbs.org/teacherline or call (800) 572-6386.

Riverside Elementary School Receives Title I Distinguished School Award

Each year, the National Association of State Title I Directors sponsors the Title I Distinguished School Recognition Program. North Dakota's Riverside Elementary School in the Bismarck Public School District was selected for this national recognition. Riverside Elementary School, as well as 35 other Title I schools from around the nation, was honored at the National Title I Conference Distinguished Schools Award Breakfast in Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday, February 1, 2005. The schools were selected for outstanding results in one of two categories: 1). Exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years or, 2). Closing the achievement gap between student groups. Riverside was selected for closing the achievement gap between student groups.

The North Dakota Title I Committee of Practitioners reviewed the applications for this award last fall. Schools applying for this recognition needed to send documentation of strengths in the following areas: opportunity for all children to meet proficient and advanced levels of performance, strong professional development, coordination with other programs, curriculum and instruction to support achievement of high standards, and partnerships among schools, parents, and communities. In addition to these requirements, each applying school submitted the last three years of achievement data and a one-page school description. If you are interested in nominating your school for the Title I Distinguished School Award, please watch for more information at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year.

Congratulations to Riverside Elementary School for a job well done!

Department Announces Standard Setting

The Department of Public Instruction has announced the standard setting event that will establish cut scores for the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA). Due to the large number of grade levels involved (grades 3-8 and 11), the event will occur over two weeks. The reading/language arts expert panels will meet March 30-April 1, 2005 and the mathematics expert panels will convene April 6-8, 2005. The event will be held at the Doublewood Inn, Bismarck.

The department is establishing an expert panel for each grade and content area (e.g., grade 3 math, grade 3 reading/language arts) consisting of former statewide content standards committee members and educators nominated by their supervisors or peers. The department has contacted building principals asking for nominations of teachers who may qualify. (The memo to principals is located at www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/assess/memo10.pdf. The online nomination form is at www.dpi.state.nd.us/survey/standard.shtm.)

Expert panelists will be selected by the department for specific content area and grade level panels. Each group will include representation based on geographic region of the state, size of school district, as well as experience with economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities or limited English proficiency. The standard setting will use the Bookmark Procedure, developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill, the state's testing contractor.

The Bookmark Standard Setting (described at www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/assess/index.shtm) is a multi-step process. Initially, each expert panelist takes the test for the content area and the grade in which he/she is working. Next, panelists receive an ordered test item book that arranges test items for the content area and grade from easiest to most difficult (based on empirical data from the fall 2004 test administration). Each item is analyzed to identify what it is testing and what makes that test item more difficult than the preceding items.

Panelists study the state's achievement standards (which describe what students need to know and should be able to do), and individually identify (or bookmark) points in the ordered test book that distinguish or separate the four achievement levels (advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and novice). A graphic representation of this is located at www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/assess/index.shtm. Based on the vote of all panelists, CTB applies the result to fall 2004 NDSA data to determine the percentage of students that will fall in each category. Results are reported back to panelists, who have an opportunity to reflect on the percentages relative to achievement standards. This process is repeated over three independent rounds of deliberation and voted on until a consensus is reached.

Final results will undergo an independent review by a committee of expert technical advisors who review the validity and reliability of the results. Results are then submitted to the State Superintendent for final approval.

When the State Superintendent makes the decision regarding cut scores for each grade and content area, CTB then applies this information to the scores for each student who took the fall 2004 NDSA, then generates and ships reports to schools. The results of the standard setting are also used to determine the Adequate Yearly Progress of each school, each district, and the state.

Readers are encouraged to visit the DPI website to learn more about the standard setting. Teachers who have questions about the standard setting should contact their building principal or the Department of Public Instruction. At the department, please contact Heidi Bergland by e-mail at hbergland@state.nd.us or by telephone at (701) 328-2317 or Jean Newborg by e-mail at jnewborg@state.nd.us or by telephone at (701) 328-2755.



Director's Report

On Friday, January 28, 2005, I traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to attend the National Title I Conference. Fortunately, I made it to Atlanta just before a big winter storm hit the city; unfortunately, many participants, speakers, and presenters did not. Undersecretary Raymond Simon from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) was scheduled to deliver the welcome for the opening general session but was unable to make it due to the weather. In addition, we were supposed to receive key updates on the teacher quality provision and the special education reauthorization but those presenters, as well, were unable to make it due to the storm. Summarized below are the updates that we did receive in Atlanta:

■ Title I Allocations for the 2005-2006 School Year

We received updated census data and other information needed to begin the allocation process for the 2005-2006 school year. We anticipate that we will have estimated allocations available for school districts in mid-March 2005. Highlighted below are some details regarding the 2005-2006 allocation process.

- The first step in the allocation process is to determine which districts are eligible for Title I funds. Those who lose eligibility will be contacted by the State Title I office.
- The updated 2002 census estimates will be used to calculate the 2005-2006 allocations.
- Once again, there is a hold-harmless provision which guarantees LEAs 85%, 90% or 95% of their previous year's allocation if they are eligible for Title I funds.
- Nationally, the Title I program received a 3% increase above last year's appropriation.
- Preliminary state allocations show North Dakota getting a 1.7 million dollar increase in Title I funding for the 2005-2006 school year.
- When the allocations are released in March, keep in mind that they are only estimates. Final allocations should be available in May 2005.

■ USDE Monitoring of NCLB Regulations

We had a lengthy presentation and received a lot of information regarding the USDE monitoring visits to states on the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) regulations. North Dakota will be monitored the first week in May 2005. In addition to visiting the Department of Public Instruction, the USDE team will also select 3-5 school districts to visit. We will let those districts know as soon as they are selected. The USDE has compiled a list of common issues found out-of-compliance in many states. All North Dakota Title I personnel will be receiving correspondence on this issue within the next few weeks.

■ President Bush's High School Initiatives

Although few details are known at this time, we did briefly discuss President Bush's plans to establish additional programs for high schools. President Bush also mentioned it briefly in his State of the Union Address several weeks ago. As it has been described to me, it sounds like a comprehensive school reform grant for high schools. In the preliminary figures released, it shows North Dakota receiving an estimated 2 million dollar state allocation. It would be somewhat similar to a Reading First grant in terms of program size. These figures are only proposals at this time and would not be available until the 2006-2007 school year. We will keep you updated as we receive more details on this initiative.

■ Round Table Discussions

For me, the most valuable component of our day was when we broke into groups and could participate in several round table discussions.

This gave us an opportunity to ask questions of the USDE staff on a variety of topics and receive immediate feedback. I was able to get clarification on several questions. Listed below are two questions that were asked and the response provided.

Q. Can districts and schools choose whether or not to accept Title I funds?

Director's Report (continued on page 5)

Director's Report (continued)

- A. The answer is yes for districts. Districts can choose to decline Title I funding. If a district opts out of Title I funds, then the program improvement and aide/paraprofessional regulation under NCLB would no longer apply. However, there are certain NCLB regulations that apply to all districts in the state, regardless of whether they receive Title I funds. Specifically, these regulations would include the state assessment requirements, the teacher quality provisions, and the reporting to parents on the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports and school/district report cards.



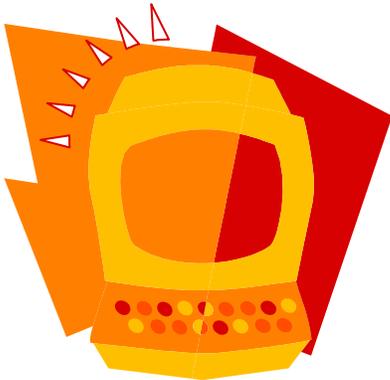
Individual schools cannot choose to decline Title I funds. However, district administration can choose to reorganize and determine, to some degree, where they want to focus their Title I funds. For example, a large district, when calculating the targeting allocations cannot choose to skip a school with a high poverty percent, but yet fund schools with much lower poverty percents. However, a district could choose to focus their Title I funds at the elementary level and not flow Title I funds to the junior high or high school buildings.

- Q. How much flexibility does the state have in distributing the program improvement funds to LEAs?
- A. The state must first provide schools that have been identified for program improvement an opportunity to apply for the additional program improvement funds. If funds remain, districts that have been identified for program improvement can then apply for funding. If funds remain, the state may allow schools who did not make AYP for one year but have not been identified for program improvement to apply for funding. When schools and districts receive program improvement funding, the "targeted assistance" designation of a school is irrelevant. The funds can be used for schoolwide initiative to assist all students, all teachers, or all parents.

The next opportunity for State Title I Directors and USDE staff to gather and meet with each other will be in July 2005 at our annual summer conference in Washington, D.C. We plan to update school personnel on these issues and much more at our regional Title I workshops in April. We strongly encourage all Title I teachers and school administrators to attend.

Teacher Quality Resources

Teacher quality seems to be a hot topic across the state. The State Title I office has posted several informational documents on its website to keep you informed. We would like to highlight a few of the more recent documents as well as provide you with the website in which they are located.



- Teacher Quality Update Memo – February 10, 2005 – www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/targeted/general/reauthoriz/021005memo.pdf
- Teacher Quality Update Memo – January 27, 2005 – www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/targeted/general/reauthoriz/012705memo.pdf
- Praxis II Testing Information – www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/targeted/general/reauthoriz/praxis.pdf
- Testing Requirements for New Teachers – www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/targeted/general/reauthoriz/testrequire.pdf
- Guidance on 5% Set Aside – www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/targeted/general/reauthoriz/53674guid.pdf
- Special Education Information – www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced/CECpresent.pdf

Monthly Featured Articles

Reading Corner

By: Nita Wirtz

Topic: Leveled Books

Have you ever wondered why teachers incorporate leveled books into their Title I or school reading program? Well, it is a known fact the children learn at different rates from many different reasons. [Giansante, 2003] Grade levels are not necessarily an important factor when choosing a book. [Giansante, 2003] The starting point should begin with the child's stage of reading and attempting to match a book that is just at the right level for that child's ability. [Giansante, 2003] Leveled books are not to limit a child's reading but to give options for reading enjoyment at a challenging level that is comfortable and an easy level. [Giansante, 2003]

Other reasons, as defined by leveled book websites, for developing lists and shelves of leveled books include:

- Having available resources for parents who may request assistance in finding a book appropriate for their child. [Giansante, 2003]
- Having available resources for all teachers within the school who request resources in their effort to contribute to the child's reading learning. [Giansante, 2003]



Website Resources:

The list below contains three fantastic resources of leveled books and information on leveling books:

- Wright Group Level – This website provides a table comparing several programs reading levels. For more information visit <http://208.183.128.8/read/Levelbooks.html>.
- Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators – Kathy's site provides a wealth of information on checking the readability of a piece of writing. It includes information on Edward Fry's readability graphs for educators, software entitled Readability Plus and Klesch-Kincaid Reading Level, sites on how to use the Gunning Fox Index, the Flesch Formula, and the Powers Summer Kearl formula for readability level. For more information visit <http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/fry/fry.html>.
- Nancy Giansante of the McCarthy-Towne School Acton in Massachusetts – This is a wonderful list of books where the books are listed alphabetically by the author's name. It also includes two to three different sets of levels with each grade. For more information visit <http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante>.



Matching Books to Readers:

This book resource, as quoted by the publisher, was created with the input of hundreds of early literacy teachers. This book compiles more than seven thousand caption books, natural language texts, series books, and children's literature for kindergarten through grade three. This book will assist you in setting up literacy stations and leveling books.

- Matching Books to Readers: Using Leveled Books in Guided Reading, K-3
By: Irene Fountas, Gay Su Pinnell, Lois Bridges Bird, Paperback, 400 pages, Heinemann, June 1999, ISBN 0325001936.

References:

Giansante, N. (2003). Leveled Book Lists. McCarthy-Towne School Acton, MA. Retrieved on December 12, 2004 from <http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante>.

Helping children with their math homework can be a difficult task for parents. At times children are not interested in doing their homework, or even worse, the homework is too difficult for the parent to understand. Schools should be assisting parents with ways in which they can help their children understand and complete their homework. Below are tips for parents to consider in helping with mathematics homework.

- **Time for Homework** – Parents should establish a set time to complete homework. The time set should be consistent; every day, at that particular time, the child should concentrate on completing homework. If there is no homework, parents should encourage the child to review past concepts, practice problems, or prepare for tests during this time.
- **Regular Homework Place** – Parents should establish an appropriate place for homework. The area in which the child does homework should be well lit, to keep the eyes from tiring. This area should also be quiet, with no disruptions such as television, radio, stereo, etc.
- **Offer Help** – Parents should offer help and only help. Parents should not do the homework for the child. If the child is having difficulty with a particular concept, the parent should guide them through the process without providing answers. By not providing answers, children have a greater sense of accomplishment and will believe that they can do it themselves.
- **Stuck in a Rut?** – If the child is having difficulties with a particular problem, have them try a different strategy such as drawing a diagram, making a list, eliminating possibilities, looking for a pattern, solving an easier/related problem, working backward.
- **Positive Reinforcement** – Parents should let the child know they are proud of their efforts. If the child has been working hard at completing their homework, parents should reward their efforts.
- **Refrain from the Negative** – Often times parents will say “I never use algebra” or “I was horrible in math.” These statements can hinder a child’s willingness and openness to learning math. It also reinforces the struggles and difficulty the child may be facing. This can lead to preconceived notions that math is too difficult for the child too. Rather than focusing on the negative experiences parents may have faced with math, they should forgo those statements but rather stress the importance of the child learning math. The attitudes parents express about math will be the attitude the child will most likely acquire.

Schools can also offer assistance to parents so that they are better prepared to help their child with math homework. Consider the following list for ways your school can help.

- **Homework Night** – Your school could host a monthly homework night. During this event, teachers would explain to parents the methods they are using to teach particular concepts. For the upper grades, it may also serve as a refresher course for the parents so that they may better assist their children at home.
- **Daily Homework Report** – Communication is key. Parents should be regularly informed as to what is happening in their children’s education. A daily homework report outlines the new concepts taught, maybe a few example problems and the assignments that are expected to be completed.
- **Class Website** – Another method to keep parents informed is to create a class website. Teachers can post a variety of information such as assignments, worksheets, sample problems, project, student work, awards, etc. This is a great way to keep communication lines open between the school and home.
- **Activities to Encourage Math at Home** – Schools can arrange activities or homework that involves using math at home. This will encourage students to see the various ways that math concepts can be applied in real life settings.

The following sources were used in creating this article:

The Teacher and Parents Exchange at www.gomath.com/exchange/T12.html,
 Helping Parents Understand Today’s Algebra by Marsha Ratzel at www.naesp.org,
 Helping with Homework at <http://mathforum.org>.

Helping your child learn mathematics at www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/math/math.doc.

One of the Reading First requirements is that all Reading First schools must set aside a block of at least 90 minutes, uninterrupted, reading instruction in the regular classroom every day. Many Reading First schools set aside 120 minutes every day for reading instruction. This article pertains to the core-reading program within a Reading First school. However, all schools are highly encouraged to follow the Reading First model.



1. Choose the core-reading program carefully. It is the primary instructional tool that teachers use to teach children to learn to read and ensure they reach reading levels that meet or exceed grade-level standards.
2. Use the core-reading program with fidelity. If it is based on scientifically based reading research, it will be laid out thoughtfully and carefully to cover all the essential reading components that a student needs to learn to read. Why re-invent the wheel?
3. Minimize interruptions during the 90-minute reading block. When planning assemblies, taking lunch count or attendance, scheduling recess, music, or pull out programs, do all these activities outside of the reading block.
4. Try to schedule the reading instruction in the morning. Children will be more alert during this time.
5. Schedule an additional 30 minutes or more a day, above and beyond the 90-minute block, for students that are considered at-risk. Students with the greatest needs must be provided with additional instructional time to accelerate their progress.
6. Consider the students instructional levels. Targeted instruction can occur within the 90-minute reading block. Instructional time is not maximized by requiring students to participate in activities (such as whole group instruction) that are not at their skill level and do not meet their instructional needs. The key point is to ensure that students are provided with instruction that meets their identified needs and to ensure that students with the greatest needs are provided with additional instructional time to accelerate their progress in meeting benchmarks and reaching proficiency levels.
7. Other materials and strategies, besides the core-reading program, can be used to provide a rich, comprehensive program of instruction. The core program, however, should serve as the primary reading program for the school and the expectation is that all teachers within and between the primary grades use the core program as the base of the reading instruction.

For more information, check out the new document called *Guidance on the 90 Minute Block of Reading Instruction* that has been added to the North Dakota Reading First website at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/reading/index.shtm.

Title I Spring Regional Workshops

The State Title I Spring Regional Workshops have been scheduled for April 2005. The first workshop will be held on Monday, April 25, 2005 in Mandan, North Dakota at the Best Western Seven Seas. The second workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 27, 2005 in Fargo, North Dakota at the Ramada Plaza Suites. Registration information will be posted online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm in March 2005.

A variety of issues are scheduled to be discussed at these workshops including an update on *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) issues, *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA) issues, fiscal training, as well as many more topics. The same information will be presented at each of the workshops. It is our intention to have several sessions offered for teachers and administrators as well as issues concerning targeted assistance and schoolwide schools.

We hope to see you there!

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Upcoming Events

2005 Schoolwide Institute: HOW to Make the Grade with Schoolwide Programs

This schoolwide conference will focus on how to involve parents and the community in closing the achievement gap, how to improve math and science instruction, how to maximize your resources under NCLB, and how to write your school improvement plan.

■ March 22-24, 2005

■ San Antonio, Texas

Information is available online at <http://swp.ou.edu>.

North Dakota Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NDCTM) Spring Conference

■ April 1-2, 2005

■ Jamestown, North Dakota

Information is available online at www.edutech.nodak.edu/ndctm.

North Dakota Reading Association Spring Conference

■ April 14-16, 2005

■ Grand Forks, North Dakota

Information is available online at <http://ndreadon.utma.com/intro.htm>.

Title I Regional Workshops

The State Title I office is hosting two regional workshops for Title I personnel.

■ April 25, 2005 in Mandan, North Dakota

■ April 27, 2005 in Fargo, North Dakota

Information will be available online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm.

International Reading Association

The International Reading Association will be celebrating its 50th Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas. The conference will be packed with sessions on the field's hottest topics including presentations from leading educators, authors, and keynote speakers including Julie Andrews and Dave Barry.

■ May 1-5, 2005

■ San Antonio, Texas

Information is available at www.reading.org/association/meetings/annual.html.

Reading Summer Institute

This session is filled with time efficient strategies, tips, tools and techniques that are both highly effective and extremely practical in helping your students succeed. Specific strategies will help your students get organized, be accountable for results, compensate for difficulties, and improve reading, writing and math skills. Effective tools for positive behavior and building self-confidence will also be included.

■ June 14-15, 2005

■ Bismarck, North Dakota

Information will be available online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm.

Math Summer Institute

Math Perspectives is presenting at this two-strand workshop geared to assist teachers in identifying student needs using *Assessing Math Concepts Assessments*. One strand is geared for K-3 grade teachers and the other is for 4-5 grade teachers. Please note, participation is limited to 50 participants per strand.

■ July 18-19, 2005

■ Mandan, North Dakota

Information will be available online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm.

