



## North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

# Title I News

February 2007

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### Remember to Keep Parents Informed

The *No Child Left Behind* Act places a significant focus on communicating with and informing parents. There seems to be universal agreement regarding the correlation between strong parent involvement and student success in school.

A reasonably predictable chain of events has occurred in the past several years. When report cards are disseminated at the end of each nine-week period, the State Title I office receives a flood of phone calls from concerned parents. The messages are fairly consistent; I didn't know my child was failing and what can I do to better assist my child?

Parents need to be appraised regarding the academic standing of their children. I know it is hard for some to believe, but parents do not always know that their child is having difficulty in school, especially in the upper grades. Parents can't help their child or enforce good study habits if they aren't aware of the problem.

One effective way to address this issue is for schools to send out a progress report midway through the nine-week period. Many schools follow this practice. It is an excellent way to keep parents informed and give them time to make changes if the grades are not proficient. Parents will truly appreciate the extra effort made to be kept informed!

The State Title I office has created a website designed specifically for parents to help them find information on ways to become involved, access information regarding their school or district, and obtain resources aimed at helping parents better enable their child to succeed in school.

Your help in sharing this resource with parents would be greatly appreciated. The website can be accessed at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/parent/index.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/parent/index.shtm).

### Federal Title Funding Update

In mid-February, a joint funding continuing resolution was passed to provide an appropriation for the 2007-2008 school year. In an unexpected turn of events, Title I and Special Education actually received a slight increase from last year. However, we are still anticipating that North Dakota will receive a decrease in our state allocation due to a decline in our state census data. The resolution also provides additional funding for Title I schools in improvement. Most other programs were level funded.

The Department of Public Instruction must wait to receive state allocations amounts from the USDE. Once received, we can generate estimated district allocations. We do not expect to receive state allocation information until mid-March 2007. We will inform all administrators when estimated allocations have been posted on the department's website.

## Winship 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 Winship Elementary School in the Grand Forks Public School District was selected for this national recognition for the 2006-2007 school year. Winship Elementary School, as well as 53 other Title I schools throughout the nation, was honored at the National Title I Conference Distinguished Schools Award ceremony in Long Beach, California on Saturday, January 27, 2007. Schools are selected for outstanding results in one of two categories:

1. Exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years
2. Closing the achievement gap between student groups.

Winship Elementary was selected for exceptional student performance for two or consecutive years.



Staff members representing Winship Elementary School from the Grand Forks Public School District include from left to right: Cris Johnson, Nell Mertz, Renee Lies, Gail Kalenze, Terryl Rood, Billie Dixon, and North Dakota State Title I Director, Laurie Matzke.

The North Dakota Title I Committee of Practitioners reviewed the applications for this award in the fall of 2006. Schools applying for this recognition were required to provide documentation 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 description of their school. 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 2007-2008 school year.

Congratulations to Winship Elementary School for a job well done!

## Math Month 2007

April has been designated Math Month in North Dakota for 2007 and the Math Month packet is underway. The theme for this year is "Sports Math Activities." The entire packet is based on math activities linked with sports.

Toni Stith, Kari Selisker, and Eric Weaver from the Fargo Public School District have developed the 2007 Math Month packet for your use. The Math Month packet focuses on an array of hands-on activities for teachers at the elementary and middle school level. The State Title I office would like to thank these individuals for their dedication, hard work, and wonderful ideas to make this year's Math Month a huge success.

The Math Month packets will be mailed to every school district in North Dakota in early March. They will be placed in a manila envelope, with "Math Month Packet" stamped in red. Due to the size of the document, only one hard copy will be mailed to each building. We ask that it be shared with all school personnel. The packet can also be found at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/resources.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/resources.shtm) on the Title I website.

Please direct any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the April 2007 Math Month packet to Flo Hilzendeger by email at [fhilzendeger@nd.gov](mailto:fhilzendeger@nd.gov) or by telephone at (701) 328-4646.

## Director's Report

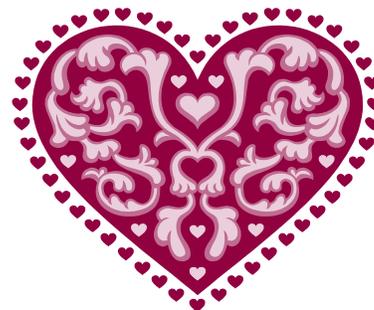
On January 25, 2007, I traveled to Long Beach, CA to attend the National Title I Convention. They had some excellent presenters, and once again, we are working to book some of these speakers for future Title I events in North Dakota. State Title I directors met with U.S. Department of Education (USDE) staff for two days. I received updates on the following topics:

- **Federal Funding for 2007-2008**

At the time of our meeting, the nation was still operating under a continuing resolution to level fund all programs for the 2007-2008 school year. Further updates have since been received and are outlined in the funding article on page 1 of this newsletter.

- **Updates on Key NCLB Issues**

USDE personnel provided updated information on key issues pertaining to NCLB, including state assessments and highly qualified teachers. North Dakota's state assessment plan is close to being approved. Staff reiterated that the highly qualified teacher provision will continue to be a key issue in the upcoming year as states work toward getting all teachers highly qualified.



- **Future Initiative**

There is still a national focus on helping high school students achieve high standards. We may possibly see funding for high school literacy issues in the 2008 budget for the 2008-2009 school year. In addition, there is still a focus on math and a "Math Now for Elementary School Students" initiative that would be modeled after the Reading First program.

- **State Monitoring of NCLB**

USDE staff gave an overview of the monitoring process and changes for the upcoming year. North Dakota is tentatively scheduled to be monitored by the USDE in the spring of 2008. In addition, the USDE will be strengthening the monitoring of the supplemental services provision.

- **Updates on USDE Guidance for Targeted Assistance Schools**

As previously reported, the USDE is working to provide updated federal guidance for targeted assistance schools. Unfortunately, USDE staff could not provide a specific date as to when the updated guidance will be available. As soon as it is released, we will provide a web address where it can be accessed, as well as compile a summary of any changes in the policy.

- **Federal Programs Reauthorization**

The federal programs included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act are slated to be reauthorized. The programs were last reauthorized on February 2, 2002, when President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind* Act into law. Some organizations are pushing for a passage as early as the summer of 2008. However, most agree that it is more likely that it will occur after the 2008 election in the spring of 2009. The National Association of State Title I Directors, Council of Chief State School Officers, and the USDE all have reauthorization papers, which can be accessed at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/Legislative/FEDIssues.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/Legislative/FEDIssues.shtm) on the released Title I website. The reauthorization papers outline what changes each entity would like to see made in the reauthorization process.

## Two Questions Posed to the USDE:

In a school that has both a Reading First and a Title I program, a clear understanding and knowledge of the regulations of each program is necessary. At the State level, we came up with two questions that we felt needed clarification from the U.S. Department of Education.

1. **Can the Reading First assessments be used for the Title I student selection process?** Guidance received in the past has always stated that the school district is responsible for the assessments used for the selection of Title I students. This would indicate that the district must pay for the assessments used for the Title I selection process and that federal funds (i.e., Reading First funds or Title V funds) cannot be used for this purpose. Yet, the Reading First programs include screening assessments, progress monitoring assessments, and diagnostic assessments. Using these assessments clearly defines which students are most at-risk. Do the Title I regulations require school districts using Reading First assessments to administer another assessment funded by the district in order to select Title I students?

Answer: USDE staff reiterated that the guidance received in the past has always stated that the school district is responsible for the assessments used for the selection of Title I students. In reviewing language in the Title I regulations, they responded by stating that Title I funds may not be used to purchase assessments for the purpose of identifying Title I students. However, they stated that Reading First funds, or other federal funds such as Title V funds, may be used for the purpose of selecting students eligible for Title I services.

2. **In a Title I targeted assistance school, can Title I teachers go into a Reading First classroom during the 90 minutes of core reading instruction?** According to the Title I regulations, in a Title I targeted assistance school, all Title I services must be supplemental. Since the 90 minutes of core reading instruction is required for all students in a Reading First program, is it supplemental if a Title I teacher provides services during that time? Some Reading First schools break the students into groups during the 90 minutes, providing the students with work stations which are monitored by the teacher or having the students work independently. If the Title I teacher were to provide additional direction, feedback, and assistance to small groups during the 90 minutes, would that qualify as supplemental services? The issue that we posed to USDE staff is “How is this scenario any different than using the Title I in-class model of instruction in a targeted assistance school without a Reading First program?” This is especially pertinent considering that the message states are receiving is to encourage the in-class model over the pull-out model in targeted assistance programs.

Answer: We are still waiting for a reply from the U.S. Department of Education. When we receive a reply, we will post the response in a future issue of our newsletter.

Many schools have different programs being implemented at the same time. Ideally, these programs will be intertwined and work together for the best interest of the students and still maintain the integrity of the regulations of each program.

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## Reading Month 2007

February is Reading Month in North Dakota. The 2007 theme is *Mission Briefcase: Somewhere in the States!* This packet is available to download at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/read/index.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/resource/read/index.shtm). We hope that all schools and teachers in North Dakota are participating 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*. The information on this form is extremely important to the Title I office, as it drives future Reading Month initiatives.

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As mentioned on the cover page of this newsletter, communicating with parents regarding student progress and achievement is important. However, both parents and teachers play a vital role in educating children. An article published in the *Washington Post* outlined ten recommendations on how educators and parents can better work together. Each recommendation is summarized below.

1. **Stop Using Jargon** – When visiting the doctor, a patient will often ask that the diagnosis be explained in “terms I can understand.” Just like the medical profession, the educational field has its own terms, phrases, and buzz words that make sense to educators, not to the rest of the world. When communicating with parents, whether it be verbally or in writing, schools should be cautious to use words that will make sense to the rest of the world.
2. **Visit Parents on Their Turf** – Often schools invite parents into the school for “parent involvement” events and sometimes receive poor participation. Schools are encouraged to hold events outside of the school walls, such as at a local church, community center, etc. These places can be neutral territory for all parties and may be more inviting to parents.
3. **Ask Parents to Teach What They Know** – Schools often ask for parent volunteers and then are not sure how to put them to best use. This article encouraged schools to emphasize the parents’ strengths through sharing with students. An idea would be to have parents share aspects of their talents, careers, or culture during an assembly at school.
4. **Welcome Complainers** – Sometimes parents get involved with schools over negative issues. Schools must recognize that this involvement, although not always the most pleasant, is also important. It is the parents job to stand up for the rights of their child. Schools must embrace these situations and make the most of them.
5. **Hire Parent-Friendly Principals** – Schools can be proactive in their relationship with parents by hiring principals that are good communicators and work well with parents. Having principals who make an effort to reach parents on a personal level can have lasting impacts on parent-school relationships.
6. **Seek Parent Volunteers** – As mentioned earlier, schools often ask for parent volunteers. It is important that when a parent does volunteer to help at the school that the school take them up on their offer. Whether it be to monitor halls, participate in playground duty, file papers, etc., having parent volunteers present in school sets an example for students. It can also free up time for teachers for other tasks!
7. **Offer Educational Activities for Parents and Students** – Schools can offer activities for parents and students to interact with each other. These activities can be events such as science fairs, math nights, reading events, etc. However, these events do not always have to be educationally related. Having parents chaperone a dance or supervise on a class trip encourages interactions between adults and children.
8. **Get Parents to Observe Classes** – Schools can hold events such as “Take Your Parent to School Day” or “Homework Help Night” to encourage parents to take a more active role in their child’s education.
9. **Provide Courses for Parents** – Unfortunately, children do not come with owners manuals and parenting is a tough job. Schools can provide assistance for parents by providing courses for them to help tackle these issues. These courses may include question and answers about drugs, high school graduation requirements, and dealing with a difficult child. Some parents may also need a refresher course in English, math, or algebra to better help their child with homework. Any assistance schools can provide to parents will show benefits.

Research Corner continued on page 6.

## Research Corner (continued)

10. **Create a Great School** – Parents are driven to support positive things for their children. Creating a strong school with great programs for students will naturally attract parents, creating a better parent-school relationship.

The information in this article was adapted from:

Mathews, J. (2006) Tips for a Better Parent-School Relationship: A Few Suggestions From Both Sides of the Discussion. *Washington Post*.

<b>Reading First Corner</b>	<b>By: Gail Schauer</b>	<b>Reading First and the Next Step</b>
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The Reading First program has now been implemented in North Dakota schools for three and a half years. The implementation of a Reading First program within a school is an intense and complex process. Reading First schools must:

- Implement a 90-minute block of core reading instruction daily using the chosen core reading program with fidelity
- Implement an additional 30 minutes of intensive supplemental reading instruction for the at-risk students
- Administer all of the assessments listed within the grant
- Analyze the assessment results and use them to drive instruction
- Employ a knowledgeable reading coach
- Provide leadership through the principal and the reading coach
- Provide on-going professional development on reading instruction
- Evaluate the Reading First program on a regular basis

It is very encouraging to note that the staff in the Reading First schools are implementing the program with enthusiasm and have a real commitment to helping our students succeed.

Once a Reading First program has all the components in place and is running smoothly, the next step is to take the program to a deeper level. The school's Reading First team should be looking at each component separately and have an in-depth discussion on the implementation. For example, one of the most crucial components is the 90-minute block of core reading instruction. Have your Reading First staff identify and celebrate the pieces of the 90 minutes that are working well. Identify and brainstorm solutions for the pieces that are not working well. Discuss what needs to change to make the 90 minutes work better:

- Is it being implemented with complete fidelity?
- What's difficult about implementing with complete fidelity?
- What would make it easier to implement with fidelity?
- Are there minimal interruptions; can anything be done to reduce the interruptions?
- Can the additional 30 minutes of reading instruction for at-risk students be better tied to the 90 minutes of instruction?
- Does the program within the additional 30 minutes align to the core reading program?
- How can better communication take place between the teacher implementing the 90 minutes and the teacher implementing the 30 minutes?
- Are assessment results used to inform instruction and how are the results used?
- How can the assessment results be better used?

With the expertise of the teaching staff and a team effort, a Reading First program can be strengthened by improving each Reading First component.

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **North Dakota Reading Association (NDRA) Conference**

The 2007 NDRA Conference, *Bully for Reading*, will feature events such as guest authors, story telling, exhibitors, and more. The conference is geared toward educators with a particular interest in reading.

■ March 15-17, 2007 in Dickinson, North Dakota

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

### **National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Annual Conference**

■ March 21-24, 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia

Information is available at [www.nctm.org/meetings/atlanta](http://www.nctm.org/meetings/atlanta).

### **North Dakota Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NDCTM) Annual Conference**

■ March 30-31, 2007 in Bismarck, North Dakota

Information is available at [www2.edutech.nodak.edu/ndctm](http://www2.edutech.nodak.edu/ndctm).

### **Title I Program Improvement Workshop**

■ April 30, 2007 in Bismarck, North Dakota

Information will be available at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm).

### **International Reading Association (IRA) Annual Convention**

The IRA's 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention, *Literacy Without Boundaries*, will inspire you with hot topics and outstanding speakers. This convention is for teachers, administrators, and life-long learners with a particular interest in reading instruction.

■ May 13-17, 2007 in Toronto, Canada

Information is available at [www.reading.org/association/meetings/annual.html](http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/annual.html).

### **2007 Summer Symposium**

■ June 19-22, 2007 and June 25-26 in Minot, North Dakota

Information will be available at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm).

### **2007 Summer Symposium**

■ July 9-12, 2007 and July 16-17, 2007 in Bismarck, North Dakota

Information will be available at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm).

### **Title I 2007 Fall Workshop**

The State Title I office is sponsoring a fall workshop for Title I personnel.

■ October 8-9, 2007 in Bismarck, North Dakota

Information will be available fall 2007 at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1/events.shtm).