

**District Improvement  
Frequently Asked Questions  
April 2008**

1. Do we get in improvement because of combined population or can we get in district improvement because of subgroup populations?

**Yes, combined and subgroups**

2. Can a subgroup of free and reduced students get you in school improvement if they all fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years?

**“Any” subgroup failing to meet AYP for two consecutive years will advance a school into improvement status.**

3. We have a K-6 building and a 7-12 building. We do not have a 6-8 building configuration. Does the 6-8 grade span matter?

**All grades are considered when determining AYP. If the district configuration does not include grades 6-8, the sixth grade scores will be calculated in the k-5 grade span and the 7-8 scores will be calculated in the 9-12 grade span. Districts should review their Adequate Yearly Progress School Improvement Report to determine where these students are counted.**

4. What resource should the schools have to show that their district is in improvement? What form should they have that would show this?

**All superintendents were sent, by certified mail a notification that the district improvement reports were posted on the private web sites. In addition, a letter to superintendents with districts in improvement was sent to inform them of their status. They were also given information about the appeals process. No districts appealed.**

**5. Do the districts have to send out a (written) letter notifying parents of being in improvement?**

**Yes, the United States Department of Education (USDE) rule states that the State Educational Agency (SEA) can require the Local Educational Agency (LEA) to send the notice to parents it should be on SEA letterhead.**

**6. Do all five subgroups have to miss AYP for a district to be identified?**

**No, however; for districts to be identified they must miss Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) or safe harbor for all three AYP groups (grade spans) in the same subject (Literacy and/or Math) for two consecutive years.**

**7. Can the Master Principal Institute be considered a viable District Improvement strategy?**

**Master Principal Institute is a leadership design model to improve school performance by providing training programs and opportunities to expand the knowledge base and leadership skills of public school principals.**

**Professional Development for districts in improvement must concentrate on the academic areas that caused them to be identified for improvement (i.e., literacy, math).**

**8. We have two campuses that are k-6 (one very small that maintained year 3 status last year...the larger k-6 campus made AYP last year and yet we've gone into year one district improvement) why?**

**Districts must consider their historical data for two consecutive years when calculating AYP. Districts should review the district improvement reports that were posted on its private website. Refer**

**to question #6 concerning a district being identified for improvement when all three grade spans fail to meet AYP in the same subject**

**9. Is it the number of students that is in an entire grade span?**

**Yes, this includes students from all schools within the district that have student populations that fall within the applicable grade spans. i.e. The collective status for all the schools within a district within each grade-level grouping (k-5; 6-8; 9-12).**

**10. When does the notification for district improvement have to be done?**

**Although the non-regulatory guidance does not include a specific timeline for notification it does state the district must promptly notify the parent of each student enrolled in the schools served by that district.**

**11. We have a non-title I school with sub populations that helped us to get in district improvement, can the children from the non-title I schools attend our summer schools funded by Title I? Can the teachers from the non-title I schools also attend any professional development related to the district improvement?**

**In general Title I funds may not be used to benefit students attending non-title I schools. Per the 2007 school improvement fund state application at**

**<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/stateletters/schimpfundappl.pdf>  
<<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/stateletters/schimpfundappl.pdf>>**

**"Only Title I schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under section 1116(b) may receive school improvement funds." (Page 10)**

**However, a district in improvement must set aside funds for professional development and those funds may be used for teachers throughout the LEA as described below. Per the October 2004 letter from the United States Department of Education's Student Achievement and School Accountability (SASA) Director sent to Chief State School Officers addresses this issue and can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/stateletters/uofcssos.html> <<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/stateletters/uofcssos.html>> :**

**"The statutory provisions clearly authorize a district to use the professional development set-aside for teachers throughout the district. In determining how to use these funds (i.e., 10 percent of the LEA's title I allocation), the district should examine the needs of all its schools—not just the ones that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — before spending the 10 percent. In other words, if a district is identified for improvement because its high school did not make AYP, this does not necessarily mean that professional development needs exist only at the high school. There may well be professional development needs in elementary and middle schools too; after all, those students feed into the high school. A district should thus look at all its needs to determine where these set-aside funds are best spent."**

**12. Can Title I money be used for schools that are in district improvement, to provide additional school days in this school year for professional development?**

**If the district professional development actions are already in place (07-08) with funding attached, the Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) would need to be revised to make adjustments to the funding sources and/or amounts. It may also be necessary to change the actions to correspond to the selected professional development. The deadline has passed (3-31-08) to make amendments for the current fiscal year. In addition, the district must be mindful of whether a revision to its existing school calendar days would be necessary.**

**13. Can district money be used for the Title I 10% set-aside for professional development?**

**No, when an LEA is identified for improvement, it must reserve not less than 10 percent of its Title I, Part A funds for high-quality professional development for instructional staff that is specifically designed to improve classroom teaching. The LEA must continue to reserve and use these funds for this purpose during each fiscal year it is identified for improvement.**

**LEAs may include in this 10 percent total the Title I, Part A funds that schools within the LEA reserve for professional development when they are in school improvement status. However, the LEA may not include in the total any part of the funds designated to help teachers who are not highly qualified become highly qualified, as specified in section 1119(l) of the ESEA. §1116(c) (7) (a) (iii)**

**14. Can district money make up the Title I ten percent set-aside from in-kind services?**

**No, the ten percent is a required set-aside for Title I.**

**15. Do transferability limitations apply to Special Needs/State Categorical Funds?**

**For transferability rules regarding Special Needs/State Categorical Funds, refer to the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Distribution of Student Special Needs Funding and the Determination of Allowable Expenditures of Those Funds. (See Rule 8.00 Financial Accounting for Special Needs Funding for ALE, ELL, NSLA, and Professional Development)**

**16. Please explain the Title I transferability limitations and where this information may be found.**

**The following excerpts are taken from the 2006 Guidance on Transferability Authority:**

**II-A-1. May any LEA transfer funds under the transferability authority?**

**Any LEA, except an LEA identified for improvement or corrective action under section 1116(c) of the ESEA, may transfer up to 50 percent of the funds allocated to it for a given fiscal year under each of the programs listed in II-b-1. The transferability authority of an LEA identified for improvement under section 1116(c) (3) is limited. (See II-A-2 through II-A-5.)**

**II-A-2. May an LEA identified for improvement under section 1116(c) (3) of the ESEA transfer funds?**

**Yes. However, an LEA identified for improvement may transfer no more than 30 percent of the funds allocated to it for a given fiscal year under each of the programs listed in II-B-1. If an LEA has been identified for improvement and wants to transfer funds, funds must be transferred either to its allocation for improvement activities under section 1003 or to one of the programs listed in II-B-1 for LEA improvement activities consistent with section 1116(c). (See II-B-4.)**

**II-A-3. Once an LEA has been identified for improvement, do the limitations on transferability apply immediately?**

**Yes. Once an LEA has been identified for improvement, any subsequent fund transfers must be consistent with the 30 percent limitation, and all transferred funds must be used for improvement activities as described in II-A-2. (See examples J through L in appendix C displaying additional calculations of funds available for transfer under improvement status.)**

**II-A-4. May an LEA identified for corrective action under section 1116(c) (10) transfer funds?**

**No. An LEA identified for corrective action may not transfer funds.**

**II-A-5. Once an LEA has been identified for corrective action, does it immediately lose its authority to transfer funds?**

**Yes. An LEA identified for corrective action may not transfer any funds during the period it is in corrective action status.**