Schoolwide Flexibility Introduced (Rev. 5/14)

ISBE is introducing the option of using schoolwide flexibility to increase the flexibility in use of these funds to support comprehensive reform work as described in the Title I, Part A schoolwide program plan.

Background:
- A schoolwide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I, Part A school.
- Its primary goal is to ensure that all students, particularly those who are low achieving, demonstrate proficient and advanced levels of achievement relative to the state’s academic achievement standards.

New Flexibility:
- Schoolwide buildings will have the option to consolidate their Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A funds. This consolidation is optional.
- Once the district establishes that all schools in the district receive an equitable base amount, the traditional supplement not supplant test is replaced with a more flexible method of determining if expenditures are allowable, allowing for a truly comprehensive reform strategy to be put in place within a schoolwide building.
- All children in the schoolwide building may participate in activities funded (consistent with the school’s comprehensive schoolwide program plan), and the school does not need to demonstrate that those activities are supplemental to ones that would otherwise be provided by the school.
- Instead, the expenditures under this flexibility would be governed by the cost principles in (1) the reasonable and necessary test, (2) does the expenditure meet the intent and purpose of the law and is aligned with the schoolwide plan, and (3) does the school receive at least as much state and local resources as non-Title I schools.

For example:
- Title I, Part A funds must still be used to ensure that all students, particularly those who are low achieving, demonstrate proficient and advanced levels of achievement relative to the state’s academic achievement standards.
- Therefore, extraneous costs (football fields, excessive travel, etc.) would still be prohibited, but schools would be able to maximize the usefulness of consolidated funds to meet its schoolwide reform goals.
- However, there would no longer be a prohibition against using Title I, Part A funds for activities related to state-mandated initiatives (e.g., Common Core, RtI, textbooks), provided those activities and costs align with the schoolwide plan.

Schools operating Targeted Assistance programs of districts choosing not to provide an equitable base amount will have to comply with the traditional supplement not supplant test and continue to account for and track federal funds separately.
- A district must be able to show that every building in the district is receiving an equal allocation of local and state funds BEFORE the supplement vs supplant test changes and the schools will no longer need to demonstrate that the Title I (and/or consolidated Title II) funds are supplementary. Its method for allocating state and local funds must be neutral with regard to Title I funds and not reduce state and local allocations in light of Title I funds.

Where can districts go to apply for this new flexibility?
Modifications are being made to the NCLB Consolidated Application Schoolwide page to allow this new flexibility.
- The district will mark listed schoolwide buildings using this flexibility.
- The district must first affirm that ALL schools will receive an equal amount of state and local funds by:
  a. Entering the amount of state and local resources ALL buildings will receive in order to ensure Title I schoolwide buildings are receiving at least as much, AND
  b. Describing the process for calculating this base amount in the notes section at the bottom of the schoolwide page.

When can districts apply for this new flexibility and where can I get more information?
- ISBE plans to release information and directions about this flexibility with an e-bulletin and PowerPoint presentation via the Superintendent’s Bulletin on September 23rd and 30th.
- ISBE will be conducting a live webinar on Thursday, October 3, from 10 am - 12 pm which will be archived on the Innovation and Improvement homepage. Registration information for the webinar will be contained within the Superintendent’s Bulletin announcement referenced above.