Frequently Asked Questions Related to the Integration of the Title I District Plan and Schoolwide Plans Into Rising Star

Title I District Plans

Q. Why do I have to do a District Title I plan?
A. Submission of a Title I District Plan is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Section 1101 et seq., and the specifics of the plan are defined in Section 1112. Until now, all districts requesting Title I federal funding must have an approved Title I District Plan on file in the Interactive Illinois Record Card (e-Plan system) at http://iirc.niu.edu/. Many of these Title I plans are from 2008. They have not been revisited since, and may not align with, what is articulated in current the Title I and II application. In an ongoing effort to have one continuous improvement plan, ISBE is migrating the Title I District Plan requirement from the e-Plan system to the Rising Star system.

Q. My Title I District Plan was submitted and approved by ISBE via IIRC in 2008. Do I need to submit a new Title I District Plan via Rising Star?
A. No, you are not required to submit a new plan since there is an approved plan on file. However, we strongly encourage you to assess the Title I District Plan indicators and update your plan so that it accurately reflects the ongoing work within the district. Furthermore, the whole purpose of integrating the Title I District Plan into Rising Star is to promote continuous improvement. We hope districts will take advantage of this opportunity to streamline their plans.

Q. I’ve decided to move my Title I District Plan into Rising Star. Who needs to approve it and how does that work?
A. We’re pleased your taking advantage of the one-plan system. Under the “Compliance and Submission” tab you’ll see a District Title I Plan box with two required forms. One is for Local Board Action and one include additional required elements that need to be filled out to complete the Title I District Plan. This form is necessary because the Rising Star indicators did not completely align with the statutorily required elements for the Title I District Plan. Once you have finished all indicators and received local board approval, click the submit button and your plan will be sent to ISBE for review and approval.

Q. How often does the Title I District Plan need to be updated?
A. The statute is silent on this issue. We recommend that the plan be looked at annually to ensure alignment. Major revisions could be made every 2-3 years. However, with the inclusion of the Title I District Plan on Rising Star, annual updates and clarification will be easier as only relevant indicators would need to be visited rather than the plan in its entirety. When substantial changes are made local board approval will still be needed.

Schoolwide Plan

Q. I am not currently schoolwide. Do I have to do my schoolwide plan in Rising Star?
A. Yes. ISBE supports an environment of continuous improvement. Schools that have recently become 40% poverty or more and have decided they want to move from targeted assistance to schoolwide must go thru a year of planning, conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, identify and commit to specific goals and strategies that address those needs; and create a comprehensive plan.

Q. Why do I have to do a schoolwide plan?
A. A comprehensive Schoolwide plan must address all of the components defined in the ESEA [Section 1114(b) of Title I of ESEA]. 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. Schoolwide programs are authorized under ESEA as an alternative means to serve all children in a building better by coordinating instructional programs and combining financial resources intentionally rather than operating categorical programs as separate services.
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Q. Why do I need a year of planning to become schoolwide?
A. Successful schoolwide programs reflect the vision and mission of the school as a learning community. Thoughtful planning brings focus to the educational priorities established by the school’s planning team, representing the school and community. With the information obtained through student assessments, surveys, profiles, and interviews, the planning team determines appropriate goals and objectives for effecting the desired changes in the school’s culture. The whole school, but especially the teachers and paraprofessionals, implements the curriculum/instructional reforms that provide a focused academic program within the school. The schoolwide program provides all students, especially those at risk of not meeting the State’s student academic standards, a learning experience that will enable them to meet the State’s challenging learning standards. Prior to implementing a schoolwide program, buildings must have 1) engaged in a thorough planning process, 2) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school, and 3) used data from that assessment to develop a comprehensive plan containing the required ten components [ESEA 1114(b); 34 CFR 200.27]. These three steps generally take at least one year.

Q. My schoolwide plan was locally board approved in 2008. Do I need to submit a new schoolwide plan via Rising Star?
A. Your schoolwide plan may currently be out of compliance. The law requires an annual review of the effectiveness of the schoolwide program and revise the plan as necessary. It is highly unlikely that a plan from 2008 would still reflect the needs of the current student population. As such, you should assess the schoolwide indicators and resubmit your plan for local board approval.

Q. I’ve decided to move my schoolwide plan into Rising Star. Who needs to approve it and how does that work?
A. We’re pleased your taking advantage of the one-plan system. Under the “Compliance and Submission” tab you’ll see a Schoolwide box with the required form. One is for Assurances and Local Board Action. Once you have finished all indicators and received local board approval, click the submit button and your plan will be sent to ISBE for the record. ISBE does not review and approve schoolwide plans.