

ESEA Alert

March 27, 2003

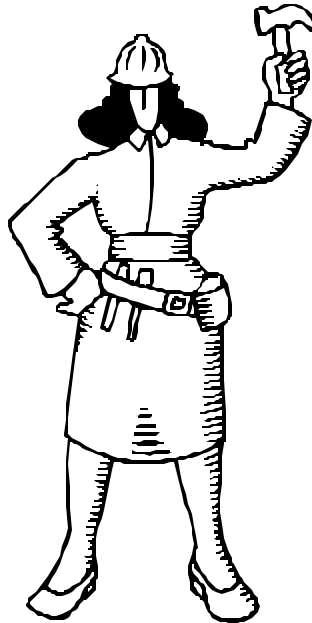
California Teachers Association

Teachers Urged to Work With Districts on Development of 'Local Plans' Under ESEA

June 1, 2003 has been established as the state deadline for school districts to submit a Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan to verify compliance with ESEA. As a requirement for receiving federal funds, all local educational agencies must develop a five-year plan demonstrating adherence to five performance goals to be established by the State Board of Education by May 2003.

Association leaders are encouraged to initiate conversations with District administrators about the content of the District's Local Plan. In addition, teachers should monitor components of the Local Plan to identify those items that might directly impact the working conditions of their bargaining unit members.

District Superintendents received detailed instructions about the ESEA Local Plan from Calif. Supt. of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell in late February. They outlined the requirement for school



districts to conduct a "needs assessment" to determine their strengths and weaknesses in the areas of: (1) academic performance; (2) professional development and hiring and (3) school safety.

The LEA Plan must include descriptions of District actions, such as the coordination of services, school choice, supplemental services, needs assessments, consultations and services to homeless students. In determining specific areas of need, the LEA should review its demographics, test results and resources.

Ideally, locals will work collaboratively with their Districts to ensure that teachers play a major role in the development of the local agency plan, as well as teacher involvement in all phases of ESEA implementation.

Components of the Local Plan

The District plan must include:

- *How the District will meet ESEA's Highly-Qualified Teacher and Paraprofessional requirements*
- *How the District will assist their low-performing (high priority) schools*
- *How the District will implement effective parental involvement*
- *How the District will implement public school choice*
- *How the District will implement after school and school-year extension programs*

ESEA Title II Grants May Assist Teachers in Designing Their Professional Development

A common complaint among teachers is the less-than-meaningful staff development activities they are required to attend. Now, under ESEA Title II, professional development programs will be the focus of the new federal *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants*.

These grants are designed to increase the academic achievement of all students by helping school districts improve teacher and principal quality. State and local agencies will receive federal funds on a formula basis as long as they ensure that their activities are grounded in scientifically-based research.

This professional development is designed for teachers of all academic core subjects (*English, reading or language arts, science, mathematics, foreign language, economics, civics and government, economics, arts and geography.*)

Improving Teacher Quality State Grants provide local districts with the flexibility to use funds creatively to address challenges to teacher quality, whether they concern teacher preparation and qualifications of new teachers, recruitment and hiring, induction, professional development, teacher retention, or the need for more capable principals and assistant principals to serve as effective school leaders.

However, it is critical to note that under the ESEA's definition of professional development, a one-day or short-term workshop or conference, by itself, does not qualify and Title II, Part A funds may not be used to pay the costs of registration and attendance at such activities. To qualify, participation at such workshops must reinforce or lay the groundwork as part of a larger, systemic, professional development plan.

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The Road Ahead...

ESEA implementation issues must be on the radar screen of our local associations. Some of our members will be excited about expanding the Association's involvement beyond traditional bargaining and representation issues.

Working with the District to design meaningful professional development opportunities could be a primary focus for a local IPD committee. Similarly, a bargaining support committee could track grant monies and other federal dollars.

Please keep your CTA primary contact staff informed of any ESEA discussions you have with District administration or any local activities related to ESEA implementation.

Other Grants Available to Improve Teacher Quality

Aside from *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants*, there are other key ESEA programs that provide funds which can be used to improve teacher quality. . .

TITLE I, PART A- Requires LEAs to use at least 5% of their Title I funds for professional development activities to ensure that teachers who are not currently highly qualified meet that standard by the end of 2005-06. In addition, any school identified as in need of improvement for failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) must spend 10% of its Title I, Part A funds on professional development, including teacher-mentoring programs.

TITLE I, PART B- Establishes the *Reading First* program. Grantees build on scientifically-based reading research to implement comprehensive K-3 instruction. From the 20% State set-aside funds, 65% may be spent preparing teachers to develop tools to effectively help their students learn to read. These grants amount to more than \$6000 per classroom. Due to a recent court decision, the application deadline has been extended until April 16th.

TITLE III, PART A- Authorizes LEAs to use formula grant funds for professional development of teachers providing instruction to students needing *English language acquisition and language enhancement*.

TITLE V, PART A- Authorizes LEAs to use formula grant funds to provide professional development activities carried out in accordance with Title II, Part A, as well as to recruit, train, and hire highly qualified teachers to reduce class size.

TITLE VII, PART A- Requires a comprehensive program for meeting the needs of *Indian, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native* children. Funds can be used to provide professional development opportunities to ensure that teachers and other school professionals have been properly trained.

TITLE II, PART B- Establishes the *Mathematics and Science Partnerships* program, which the DOE is implementing jointly with the National Science Foundation. Financial support is available to enhance the quality of teaching in mathematics and science.

TITLE II, PART C- Establishes the *Troops-to-Teachers* and *Transition to Teaching* programs, which support efforts to help school districts hire, train, and retain individuals from other careers and backgrounds as teachers in high-need schools.

TITLE II, PART D- Establishes the *Enhancing Education Through Technology* program. Each local recipient must use at least 25% of funds for ongoing, sustained and high-quality professional development on the integration of advanced technologies into curriculum and instruction and on the use of those technologies to create new learning environments.

Local associations are encouraged to discuss the scope of their District's involvement with these federal programs/grants and to bargain teacher compensation for participation in professional development activities.

