

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)  
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

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Department of Education and Cultural Affairs in April/May 2000.  
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**State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)**

*1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

The state has been conducting the South Dakota Achievement and Ability Testing Program for over fifteen years but the program was significantly modified in 1997 with the passage of the SDCL13-3-55 in January 1997. This law mandated that every school district shall administer the same academic achievement test rather than different ones.

*2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s):* Stanford Achievement Test (SAT9), Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT7), and Stanford Writing Test.
- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested:*
  - The SAT9 is administered in grades 2, 4, 8, and 11 in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, language arts, science, and social science.
  - The writing test is administered at grades 5 and 9, and students in grades 4 and 8 also take the OLSAT 7.

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced:* These tests are norm-referenced, however, the state has conducted an analysis for alignment between the SAT9 and state curriculum. This analysis was conducted to inform districts about the degree of alignment between assessment and curriculum and to address Title I requirements for alignment. The state legislature recently allocated funds to develop criterion-referenced exams.
- *Matrix or Census Testing:* Census
- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.* Multiple choice, with the exception of the writing test. The criterion-referenced test may be a multiple-choice test, due to funding constraints.
- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)* The SAT 9 and OLSAT are administered in the spring (late March/early April) and the writing test is administered in the fall.
- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)* South Dakota does not have a high school exit examination.

- *Other Assessments:*

Children receiving alternative instruction who are in grades tested under the state testing program shall take a nationally standardized achievement test of the basic skills. The test may be provided by the state and used in the public school district where the child is instructed or another nationally standardized achievement test may be selected and provided at the expense of the child's parent, guardian or school giving alternative instruction. The Special Education office of the South Dakota Department of Education is now field testing an alternate assessment.

In addition, over 70% of the 1999 graduating class in South Dakota took the ACT test, and South Dakota officials regard this as a relatively strong indicator of academic performance in the state.

- *Transitional or Final Assessment System* Final

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

- *State Department of Education*
- *Commercial Testing Organization*
- *State teachers and administrators*
- *Assessment Committee*

The SAT9 and OLSAT assessments were developed and published by Harcourt Educational Measurement. The new criterion-referenced assessments were developed by EdVision, of San Diego, California.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments*

*and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

Title I schools are required to assess student's achievement in reading and math in grades 4, 8, and 11 using another assessment tool in addition to the SAT9. Districts were given a choice in the assessments they may use to meet the requirement of multiple measures of student achievement. Plans detailing their choice of assessment options were submitted to the SEA. The following are assessments to be used by districts beginning in the fall of 2000: Growth Portfolios, Criterion Reference Tests, PLATO, Work Sampling Observation Assessment, STAR reading and math, Stanford Open Ended, Integrated Assessment System, SuccessMaker, and Curriculum Based Measurement. These results will be reported to the SEA according to proficiency levels to be established summer 2000 using a common set of rubrics. Local assessment reporting according to proficiency levels will mirror the reporting of SAT9 results.

*5. Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards?*

The SAT9 analysis for alignment with the state standards was conducted by McRel in the Fall of 1999.

*Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?*

- *Refining standards*
- *Revamping assessments*
- *Adding components to assessments*

*What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?*

A study of alignment between the SAT9 and the state standards has been completed. In addition, South Dakota will be implementing new criterion-referenced assessments that will be directly aligned with the state standards.

*6. What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The state has conducted a comparison analysis with the SAT9 and the South Dakota Content Standards. School districts have been informed about the standards not measured by the SAT9. Responsibility for assessing standards not addressed by the SAT9 will rest with the local school districts.

One comparison report is available on the Internet: [A Report on the Matches Between the South Dakota Standards in Mathematics and Language Arts and Selected Stanford Achievement Tests](#). The tests were analyzed for both direct and indirect matches between assessments items and content standards.

*7. How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification*
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability*
- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)*
- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.*

- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers*
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)*

State assessment data is primarily used in instructional guidance to local administrators and teachers. In addition, assessment data is used for Title I purposes. The tests allow comparison of the scores of South Dakota with the scores of pupils across the nation. Parents receive a report which allows them to assess their child's strengths and weaknesses. Local school districts receive data that allows them to compare their results and individual student results with state norms. The results also provide the teacher, principal, and district administrators with information to assist in curriculum decision and efforts to increase pupil achievement. However, data is not used for student accountability (retention, graduation) or school/district accountability.

*8. Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

In 1999-2000, the South Dakota legislature allocated money for the development of criterion-referenced assessments. These assessments were recently completed for grades 2 through 12 in Reading and Math, and will be available for on-line testing in the fall of 2000. However, testing will not be mandatory in 2000-2001, although schools will be strongly encouraged to administer the assessment to their students.

*9. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

South Dakota officials identified the following challenges in the area of state assessments:

- Appropriate accommodation of students with disabilities on the Stanford 9.
- Other challenges concern communicating results to the public; i.e. explaining that on a norm-referenced test, 50 is the average, and not failing.
- Finances and staff limitations pose challenges in the area of assessment in South Dakota, particularly in the development of criterion-referenced test.

## **Inclusion Policies for Assessment**

*1. What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Policies regarding students with disabilities: Students with disabilities must be included in statewide and districtwide assessments. A very small number of students have disabilities that cannot be accommodated on standardized tests. The decision to exclude a student from participating in a state or district wide assessment should be made by the student's IEP team.

Policies regarding students with Limited English Proficiency: LEP students may be exempted from the state assessment for three years as their English skills develop.

*2. What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Every student who requires accommodations in order to participate in the statewide or district wide assessment must be provided with that accommodation. IDEA requires that IEPs include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of a state or districtwide assessment that are needed in order for the child to participate in those assessments. Some accommodations that a team might consider are: oral administration, large print, Braille version, individual administration, small group administration, extended time, multiple test sessions, audiotaped test or answers.

*3. Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

South Dakota does not offer an assessment in any language other than English.

*4. Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

South Dakota is developing an alternate assessment, to be in place not later than July 1, 2000.

*5. Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

The state has the goal of full inclusion and is working on further elaborating inclusion policies for students with disabilities and LEP students.

*6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

South Dakota is in the process of developing such policies.

## **Performance Standards**

*1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

South Dakota utilizes four performance levels on the SAT9 assessment, at the moment exclusively for Title I purposes.

The four levels are as follows:

- Below Basic: Denotes little (if any) mastery of the most elementary knowledge and skills

- Basic: Denotes partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for satisfactory work.
- Proficient: Represents solid academic performance indicating that students are prepared for the next grade or responsible adulthood.
- Advanced: Signifies superior performance beyond grade-level mastery.

The national norm-referenced cut scores were set by teachers from all over the United States. This process took place at Harcourt in San Antonio. The state cut scores were set by a group of 75 teachers from across the state of South Dakota. The process was a modified Angoff process. Teachers had to review each item, rate it, discuss, re-rate, and come to a conclusion on where the cutoffs would be.

*2. Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required:*

The only state target is with regard to Title I schools, for which South Dakota expects a 5% gain annually.

*3. How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

As the criterion-referenced assessments are implemented, performance levels for these tests will be developed. The system of performance standards is not fully operationalized. Currently, performance levels are only in effect for Title I purposes.

*4. Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

The performance standards system is not fully operationalized.

*5. Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The performance standards system is not fully operationalized.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Not applicable at this point.

## **Reporting Performance Data**

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports:*

Parents receive a report on their child's performance that allows them to assess strengths and weaknesses.

- *School reports:*

There are no requirements for schools to produce public reports on school data, although the state provides them with all the data necessary to do so. The larger school districts do report individual school data in the newspaper, but smaller schools may choose not to. Title I schools are required under the Improving Americas Schools Act section 1116 to report assessment results to parents, students and community. School-level data is available on the internet through the district reports.

- *District reports:*

District profiles are included in the state report, and contain the following information:

- ✓ K-12 fall enrollment and ADM
- ✓ Enrollment disaggregated by special needs students, students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and minority students.
- ✓ Number of graduates
- ✓ Attendance rate
- ✓ Dropout rate
- ✓ Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition results for grade 2 in math, environment, language arts, reading, and complete battery.
- ✓ SAT9 results for grades 4, 8, and 11 in math, science, social studies, language arts, reading, and complete battery.
- ✓ Stanford Writing Assessment Program, Third Edition results for grades 5 and 9.
- ✓ ACT composite score
- ✓ Board of Regents Feedback Report: Percent of graduates entering regental institutions enrollment in remedial classes; GPA of graduates entering regental institutions

- *State reports:*

South Dakota produces an **Annual Report on Academic Progress**, which is available in print format or may be downloaded from the state education website. This report includes the following information:

- ✓ K-12 fall enrollment and ADM
- ✓ Enrollment disaggregated by special needs students, students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and minority students.

- ✓ Number of graduates
- ✓ Attendance rate
- ✓ Dropout rate
- ✓ Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition results for grade 2 in math, environment, language arts, reading, and complete battery.
- ✓ SAT9 results for grades 4, 8, and 11 in math, science, social studies, language arts, reading, and complete battery.
- ✓ Stanford Writing Assessment Program, Third Edition results for grades 5 and 9.
- ✓ ACT composite score
- ✓ Board of Regents Feedback Report: Percent of graduates entering regental institutions enrollment in remedial classes; GPA of graduates entering regental institutions

- *Title I reports:*

Title I evaluation data is collected at the end of each school year for all grade levels served by the program. These include information such as poverty levels of schools, delivery systems, eligible and participating student numbers, and staff information, and required disaggregation.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

District and state data is available on the state Department of Education website, the print version of the state report is available upon request, or may be downloaded from the state department of education website.

Title I achievement data is available on the web, or schools may e-mail the Department of Education for a copy of the full Title I report.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported? Check on the following categories required by federal regulation:*

- *Gender*
- *Race* Diploma recipients, enrollment, ACT scores, disaggregated at state level on the web.
- *LEP status*
- *Migrant Status*
- *SWD* Assessment results disaggregated
- *SES* State level Title I achievement scores in Math and Reading Comprehension are disaggregated by poverty level of the school unit.

South Dakota is able to disaggregate data by ethnicity, gender, special education, LEP, and Title I, however, South Dakota's ability to disaggregate data is restricted by staff constraints. Reporting of disaggregated data is limited, for other reasons: South Dakota has one significant minority group in the state, and the performance level of that group can be a sensitive issue. However, this data is available for anyone who requests it.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments?*

SAT9 complete battery data is available since FY 96, Board of Regents Feedback Report data since 1995.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

Results from students with disabilities and limited English proficiency are included in the aggregate scores if they participated in the assessments. Currently, results for students with disabilities are disaggregated and reported publicly. The reporting of results from LEP students is the next step for the state.

6. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

Assessment data is used for Title I school improvement efforts.

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

The performance levels are being fully operationalized, when this is completed, reporting will reflect these levels.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Like other plains states, South Dakota has many small districts in which there is only one school. Reporting data could infringe on individual students' privacy.

## **State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)**

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

Other than the public reporting of data, South Dakota does not have an accountability system that calls for sanctions and/or rewards based on school performance, although this is a possibility in the future.

At the moment, accountability in South Dakota is essentially an inputs-based system of accreditation. Accreditation is a fairly simple process in which schools must adhere to state guidelines in the areas of: school calendar, staffing, the course offerings to students, high school graduation requirements, and other legal issues. There are no requirements for student achievement or academic processes. The state checks to make sure each school has met the minimum statutory requirements. Schools are not required to submit any plans as part of state

law, but many schools do participate in the North Central Association accreditation system, in which school planning is an important component.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?*

- *Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?*
- *For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?*
- *Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?*
- *To what targets or performance levels?*
- *With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?*

*Student accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

There are no student accountability measures currently in place in South Dakota.

*School accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

School accountability in South Dakota is based on the accreditation system. An accredited school meets all state rules and laws pertaining to the K-12 system, including administration, staffing and services, and curriculum. Schools are issued a certificate of accreditation for a 4-year period, subject to annual review. If full compliance is not maintained, the school is subject to loss of its accredited status. Basic requirements for accreditation are a 175-day calendar; a 5-1/2 hour school day for grades 4-12 and a 5-hour day for grades 1-3; documentation of class schedules; and a personnel record form for each teacher and administrator.

If a school does not maintain compliance with state requirements, a school's accreditation could be denied, which may result in the loss of state education funding, federal program assistance and school lunch commodities. In addition, students may not qualify to participate in activities sanctioned by the South Dakota High School Activities Association.

*District accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

There are no district accountability measures currently in place in South Dakota.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
- *Other*

Not applicable

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded?*

Not applicable

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The Title I system for accountability is the only system of accountability in South Dakota that includes any requirements for academic performance or progress. The general state system is a relatively simple accreditation system. Hence, the two are not aligned.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Not applicable.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Accreditation of non-public schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal schools is voluntary; however, if these schools are not accredited, the parent/guardian of students attending these schools must file a "certificate of exemption" certificate for each student of compulsory school age. The form is available from the Office of Policy and Accountability. Also, students in non-accredited schools may not be eligible to participate in activities under the direction of the South Dakota High School Activities Association.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The governor has indicated that he plans to appoint a citizens' panel to look at a range of educational issues, and accountability may be within the range of issues they examine.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

South Dakota officials did not identify any particular challenges in the area of accountability.

## **Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts**

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

The only system of identifying low-performing schools is the Title I system. For more details please refer to the subsequent section on Title I.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

The state identifies schools for program improvement.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

South Dakota offers assistance in the areas of planning, expert assistance, and financial assistance in the form of grants. The state assists districts and schools in interpreting and using evaluation data, in performing needs assessments for professional development, workshops for identifying and using best practices. In addition, the state organizes school reform conferences.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

- *State support team*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*

Please refer to the section on Title I, below.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

Currently, the support available for low-performing schools is through the Title I system. For further details, please refer to the Title I section, below.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

Please refer to the Title I section, below.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Schools have to submit an amended or revised consolidated plan to the state for approval.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

A citizens task force is being established and will be charged with school related issues such as helping low performing schools improve.

## **Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress**

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

The primary measure used in determining adequate yearly progress in South Dakota is the Stanford Achievement Test Series, 9th Edition, for grades 4, 8, and 11. This data is supplemented by local evidence of progress to define adequate yearly progress. The state has identified a number of acceptable multiple measures, and the districts elect which measure they would like to use. Approximately seventy percent of South Dakota schools use Star Reading and Math, fifteen percent use Curriculum Based Measurement, and the remainder use Successmaker, Portfolios, Stanford Open Ended, Integrated Assessment System, Work Sampling System, Plato or criterion referenced tests. The state will convene a representative group to set cut scores for these exams to ensure uniformity in performance levels.

Targeted assistance schools may choose to report all students in a class receiving Title I assistance or only those served. Schoolwide programs must report all students in the grades served.

Subgroup performance is not included as a criteria: South Dakota has insufficient staff to fully analyze data and to take this into consideration.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

*Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?*

South Dakota has established the same definition for all schools, whether schoolwide or targeted assistance: schools must demonstrate a 5% increase in the number of students moving from Below Basic to the Basic level, **or** from Basic to the Proficient level.

South Dakota does not have a definition of district adequate yearly progress and does not identify districts in this manner. Because South Dakota has a high percentage of single-school districts, a district definition is irrelevant in many cases.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The state is responsible for identifying schools that are not making adequate yearly progress. As noted, local measures may be included, but the state makes the final determination.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

South Dakota is in the process of implementing a new system of identifying schools in need of improvement. In South Dakota, the state is responsible for identifying schools in need of improvement. This system will be used for the first time in the analysis of 1999-2000 assessment data, and includes the following phases of school improvement:

Preceding stage – alert stage

Includes schools that are in danger of not meeting adequate yearly progress. These schools are informed that they are precariously close to being identified for program improvement. They have access to the state's school support team and SEA staff, are encouraged to revise their local plan and may participate in any workshops sponsored by the SEA that focus on school improvement efforts.

Phase one – schools are formally identified for program improvement

These schools must reserve 10% of their allocation over a two-year period to support professional development in their building. They must submit a plan to the SEA for school improvement. They have access to the state's school support team. They will be encouraged to contact the regional centers for assistance. Assigned staff from the SEA will contact these buildings frequently to check on progress. These schools will be required to attend all workshops/conferences that are sponsored by the SEA that focus on improvement efforts. They will be eligible for mini grants through the state's program improvement fund set-aside.

Phase two – critical stage

Includes schools that have either failed to make the required increase in any of the levels and/or have been identified for corrective action. Schools in phase two will also be required to reserve 10% of their allocation for professional development over a two-year period. The existing school improvement plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary. Changes to the school improvement plan must be submitted to the SEA. Regional centers will be provided with a list of schools in this phase and encouraged to provide support for them. These schools will be required to attend all workshops/conferences that are sponsored by the SEA that focus on school improvement. Both assigned SEA and school support team staff will provide technical assistance on a frequent and regular basis. Schools in phase two of program improvement will be eligible for mini grants through the state's program improvement fund set-aside. Schools in the second phase of program improvement will be eligible to apply for the additional school improvement appropriation dollars that were established in FY 2000 for a maximum of two years.

As noted, all schools in need of improvement are required to complete a school improvement plan. To be removed from school improvement status, a school must make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*

- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

South Dakota offers assistance in the areas of planning, expert assistance, and financial assistance in the form of grants. The state assists districts and schools in interpreting and using evaluation data, and in performing needs assessments for professional development, and conducts workshops for identifying and using best practices. In addition, the state organizes school reform conferences.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*

School support teams, composed essentially of classroom teachers and school administrators, are active in South Dakota. These teams work with schools in need of improvement in developing their school improvement plan, and with schools that are working on schoolwide planning. State Department of Education staff who assist with school improvement include curriculum specialists, who address alignment between curriculum and assessment, and assessment specialist who focus on particular testing concerns. Included in the State Department Title I staff is a school improvement coordinator who facilitates and organizes efforts among school improvement teams, department of education staff, and program representatives.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers have not played a significant role in South Dakota – only with regard to the required percentage of low-income students to qualify for schoolwide Title I programs.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

After implementing the new system for identifying schools in need of improvement, South Dakota will address modifications to the definition of adequate yearly progress. Namely, officials intend to incorporate the new on-line criterion-referenced assessments into the new definition. However, the criterion-referenced tests will not be mandatory for the academic year 2000-2001, although the State Department of Education is strongly encouraging Title I schools to administer these new assessments.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

Title I is the only system for identifying schools that are low-performing.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The most significant challenge for Title I in South Dakota is insufficient staff. Officials note that it has been difficult for small states to implement all the Title I requirements: the requirements for Title I are broad and many of the components are out of the direct control of Title I staff members. Moreover, South Dakota has a firm commitment to local control in education.

The characteristics of some schools in South Dakota – small rural schools, or Native American schools – adds complicating factors to the implementation of Title I. One concern is that of statistically validity. In some classrooms, test scores may be reported for as few as three students. On the other hand, school improvement funds, even only \$5000, can make a significant impact in a small school.

Finally, travel for teachers and administrators, to and from training sessions or programs, is a logistical concern raised by Title I officials.

## **Contact Information**

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