DATE: March 30, 2009

TO: CLC Coordinators and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Carolyn Stanford Taylor
Assistant State Superintendent
Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

SUBJECT: Title I Funds Used for After-School Programs

With the increase in state and local Title I funds generated through the recently passed American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), there is a significant opportunity to utilize these additional resources for a variety of Title I needs. Among these are extended learning opportunities.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), in its strategy brief titled Using NCLB Funds to Support Extended Learning Time, states that “Title I provisions in NCLB specifically encourage the use of strategies such as extended day, extended year, and summer programs to increase learning time. In addition, schools are encouraged to use Title I funds to coordinate services and programs, increase parental involvement, and hire highly qualified staff.”

It appears timely for CLC program coordinators to begin having conversations with Title I coordinators, and other colleagues in their districts, about the benefits of extended learning opportunities. The increased Title I-Part A funding, to be received through ARRA, is subject to the original requirements and restrictions of Title I grants. Therefore, the broad objectives for Title I funded activities remain as follows:

• help LEAs improve the teaching of children who are failing, or are most at risk of failing,
• target schools with concentrations of children from low-income families, upgrade instructional interventions that contribute to student academic improvement, and
• establish and/or strengthen partnerships with parents.

After-school program services may utilize Title I dollars to support activities that are reasonable, necessary, and focused on attaining the broad objectives stated above. The district or eligible school must carefully plan and coordinate with appropriate parties for the specific utilization of Title I funds and develop procedures for the assessment of results related to meeting the Title I program objectives. Title I dollars may be used for:
• highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals,
• parent involvement and education,
• transportation services,
• professional development, and
• planning, coordination, and collaboration.

It is important to remember that Title I funds may only be used in Title I schools and that the specific program elements that may be funded by Title I dollars depend greatly on the Title I program design operating in a school. In general, Targeted Assistance programs are much more restrictive in the use of Title I funds than Schoolwide programs. In addition, maintenance of effort, supplement not supplant, and comparability requirements apply to Title I funds. As always, Title I funds must be allocated based on a comprehensive assessment of student needs.

Coordinators of CLC programs are encouraged to be involved in district discussions about the use of ESEA funds. Each district has an ESEA consolidated planning team that makes data-driven decisions about priority needs and considers effective approaches for delivering services to achieve the strongest impact on student achievement. District Title I coordinators are well-versed in the programmatic and fiscal constraints of Title I funds and should be made aware of what the CLC programs have to offer. They may be able to identify schools that are interested in extended day programs.

Ongoing assessment of student progress toward academic objectives must be part of an evaluation plan for all programs, regardless of funding source. Educational services provided through after-school programs, and other extended learning opportunities, should be well-coordinated with the day Title I program and district classroom curriculum, and should be subject to the same rigorous reviews to demonstrate effectiveness.

As you initiate these discussions in your district, we invite you to contact our CLC consultants, Alison Wineberg at (608) 267-3751 or alison.wineberg@dpi.wi.gov, and Gary Sumnicht at (608) 267-5078 or gary.sumnicht@dpi.wi.gov. You may also call Title I Program Consultant, Myrna Toney at (608) 266-2690 or myrna.toney@dpi.wi.gov.