

Title I Alternative Poverty Method

History and Process



Objectives

- Determine whether ND should return to an Alternative Poverty Method in the future, effective for the 2027-2028 school year.
- Understand the transition from the approved ND Alternative Poverty Method to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) Method for Title I, Part A allocations in the 2025-2026 school year.

Consultation Channels

- NDDPI Messenger
- Formal Memos
- Committees and Advisory Groups
  - ESSA Committee
  - Title I Committee of Practitioners
  - Tribal Consultations
  - ND Indian Education Advisory Committee
- NDDPI Website



- Title I, Part A is an ESEA program intended to:
  - Ensure **all** children have the opportunity to **obtain a high-quality education** and **reach proficiency** on **challenging** state academic **standards** and **assessments**,
  - Provide **funding** to **supplement** educational opportunities for students in **higher-poverty schools**,
  - Provide **professional learning** for school staff, and
  - Implement other **strategies** for **raising** student **academic achievement**.
- The USED allocates Title I grants to states using a comprehensive approach, considering several factors.

Why Consider an Alternative Poverty Method in North Dakota

Funding is driven by poverty data, but how we measure poverty directly impacts:

- Which districts qualify for funding
- The amount each district receives
- Whether poverty data aligns with the district educating the student
- Planning, budgeting, and staffing decisions

Why the methodology matters just as much as the funding itself:

- The USED methodology is standardized and may overlook local poverty conditions.
- Census data shows where students live, not where they are educated, which can misrepresent district-level need.
- Real-time school-reported data more accurately reflects current student needs.
- Reliance on outdated census estimates is minimized.
- Funding allocations better account for open enrollment and cross-district student mobility.

What is being proposed?

Proposed Method (2027-2028)	USED Method (2025-current)	ND Alternative Poverty Method (1992-2024)
• Used for districts with a total population under 20,000. • Would included a weighted formula (aggregate units) that includes U.S. Census Bureau estimates (50%), free and reduced lunch (50%) • Districts with 10 or more aggregate units would be eligible for a Title I grant.	• Used for all districts beginning in 2025 rather than just those with a total population of over 20,000. • Includes the U.S. Census Bureau estimates of income and poverty for all states and counties, provided in four different formulas derived from statistical models using census data, household survey data, population, and other poverty data records (taxes, SNAP benefits, etc.). • USED's approach aims to provide accurate estimates (not direct counts) of income and poverty for administering federal programs and allocating federal funds. • Districts with 10 or more students based on the census data will be eligible for a Title I grant.	• Used for districts with a total population under 20,000. • Included a weighted formula (aggregate units) that included U.S. Census Bureau estimates (15.5%), foster care (15.5%), free lunch (46%), and reduced lunch (23%) data. • Districts with 10 or more aggregate units were eligible for a Title I grant.

Effects on Other Title Programs

When NDDPI adjusts the Title I formula, it does the following:

There are no impacts for Title II.

- Title II, Part A is a formula allocation that uses census poverty data and total population data to generate district allocations.
- Eighty percent of the district's Title II, Part A allocation is based on poverty, and the remaining twenty percent is based on total population.

There are impacts regarding Title IV.

- Title IV, Part A is based on a formula using the same proportion as the school district's prior year's Title I, Part A allocations.
- If Title I allocations change, then the following year, a district's Title IV allocation is impacted.
- NDDPI is required to ensure that no eligible district receives an allocation of less than $10,000.

2025 Title I Funding Task Force

- ✓ **Ongoing Consultation:** NDDPI adopted the USED methodology for Title I allocations alongside 40+ states and sought input and discussion to ensure the approach best meets ND's needs.
- ✓ **Task Force:** Included representatives from districts of varying sizes, with funding increases/ decreases, and interested individuals; met jointly with the Title I Committee of Practitioners (COP).
- ✓ **Meeting Schedule:**
  - ✓ **October 30, 2025**
  - ✓ **November 20, 2025**
  - ✓ **December 9, 2025**
  - ✓ **January 28, 2025 (Title I COP only)**



Task Force Participation

- ✓ Title I Committee of Practitioners:
  Title I Committee of Practitioners
- ✓ Task Force Members:
  - ✓ Daniel Warcken, Superintendent, Sargent Central
  - ✓ Martin Bradtrud, Superintendent, Glen Ulin
  - ✓ Kent Dennis, Minnewauken
  - ✓ Mike McNeff, Superintendent, Rugby
  - ✓ Deb Bohn, Elementary Principal, Title I Coordinator, Mott-Regent
  - ✓ Shane Robinson, Superintendent, Minto
  - ✓ JR Wilson, Superintendent, Flasher
  - ✓ Brian Palmer, Superintendent, Bottineau
  - ✓ Rob Lech, Superintendent, Jamestown
  - ✓ Keith LaVallie, Superintendent, St. John
  - ✓ Jennifer Stenerson, Grants Manager, Bismarck
  - ✓ Tina Pletan, Title I Coordinator, Bismarck
  - ✓ Demeka Norwood, Grants Management Coordinator, Grand Forks

Committee of Practitioners −

Title I Policy Committee of Practitioners Title I, under the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires that the Office of Educational Improvement & Support establish a Committee of Practitioners. The Title I law is very specific in outlining membership representation for the Committee of Practitioners. The Committee of Practitioners must include:

- Representatives from local educational agencies as a majority of its members
- Administrators, including the administrators of programs described in other parts of this policy
- Teachers, including vocational educators and higher education
- Parents
- Members of the local school boards
- Representatives of private school children
- Pupil services personnel

It is the role of the Committee of Practitioners to "...review, before publication of, any proposed or final State rule or regulation" pertaining to Title I. Committee members are often asked to review and be aware of various issues in Title I, including standards development, the state assessment system, and other current issues.

When selected, committee members are asked to consider serving on the committee for at least a three-year period, basically to ensure consistency within the committee's membership. However, agreeing to be on the committee only commits service for one year; each year the Office of Educational Improvement & Support contacts each individual on the committee to verify membership for the upcoming school year.

The committee is asked to assist in selecting the recipients of several awards administered in the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and review applications and reports before being submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

2025-2026 NDDPI Title I Committee of Practitioners

Name	Organization	Stakeholder Group Represented
Casaundra Francis	Dickinson Middle School	Administrator/Principal
Justin Fryer	Lisbon Public School	Administrator/Superintendent
Jennifer Wallender	Hazen Public School	School Board Member
Mary Beth Traynor	St. John Paul II Catholic Schools	Private School Sector
Dr. Kelli Odden	Mayville State University	Early Childhood Education
Dave Wheeler	Manvel Elementary School	Migrant Education
Kelly Pierce	Career Development & Career Advisors	Vocational/Adult Education
Dr. Lisa Borden-King	Minot State University	College/University
Liz Mackowick	West Fargo Public Schools	Coordinator (Title I and 21st Century)
Jacki Harasym	Pathfinder	Parent
Gloria Odden	Strasburg Public School	Superintendent/Counselor



01

Agenda Topics: Review the USED allocation method and formulas. Share data and discuss additional factors affecting North Dakota's overall funding levels. Generate initial questions for follow-up.

02

Agenda Topics: Presentation from other states (i.e., Kansas, Nebraska, etc.) on their alternative allocation method. Identify members to research and respond to questions raised.

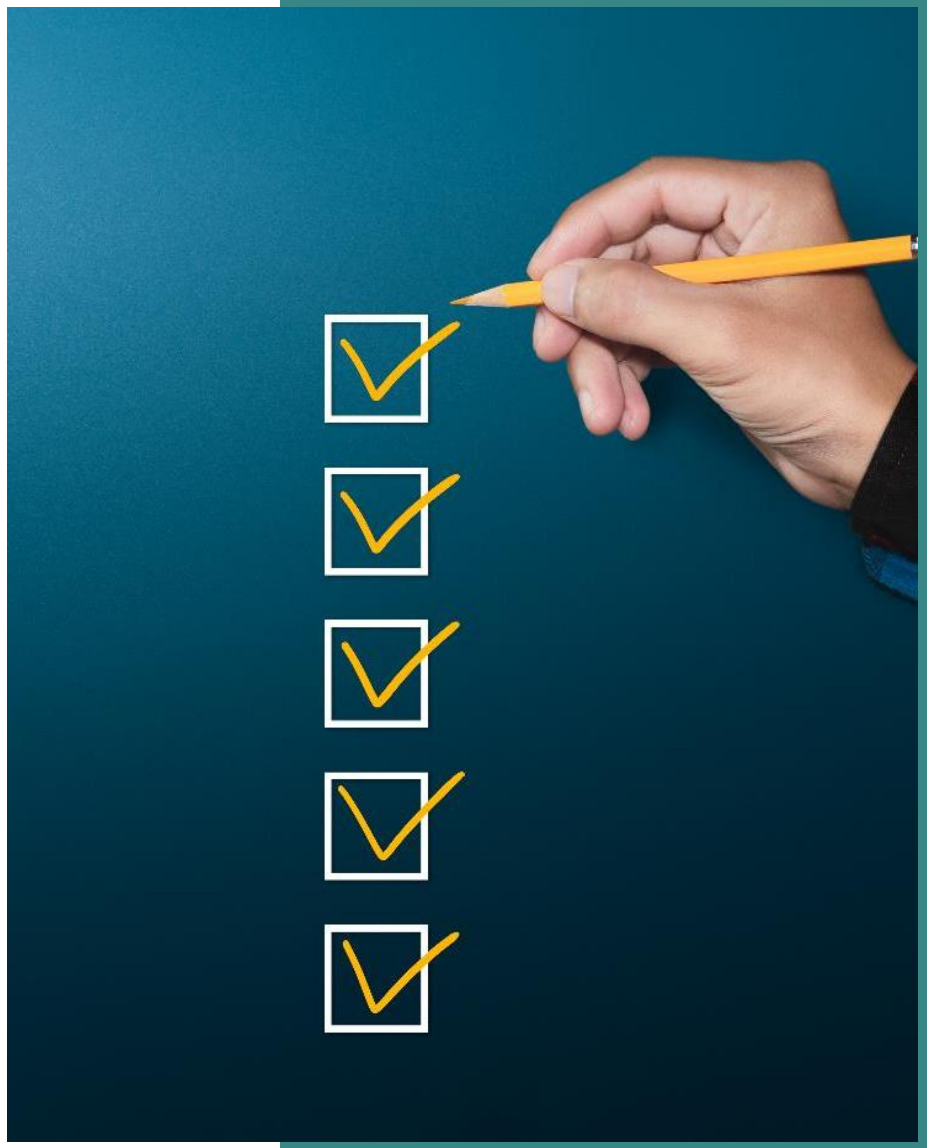
03

Agenda Topics: Open discussion to develop consensus on what members believe is the most effective allocation method for North Dakota. Determine next steps.

Background Information

Summary of Task Force/COP Process

- ✓ NDDPI compiled all materials, notes, and documents discussed to date.
- ✓ Task Force and COP researched outstanding questions, consulted with stakeholders, and reviewed comparison charts for decision-making.
- ✓ Task Force and COP made recommendations on the funding formula option that best served the needs of the state and rural areas.
- ✓ COP officially voted to recommend that Superintendent Bachmeier seek USED approval for an alternative poverty method of ND.
- ✓ Superintendent Bachmeier approved the recommendation, which initiated the public comment period.



Ongoing Process

- ✓ NDDPI initiated the public comment period at the same time as the ESSA Plan Amendment: **November 9, 2026 – December 7, 2026.**
- ✓ Stakeholder feedback will be reviewed and incorporated into the final submission to the USED.
- ✓ NDDPI will publish a summary of stakeholder feedback prior to submission.
- ✓ Superintendent Bachmeier makes the decision on whether to move forward with an approved poverty method.
- ✓ If needed, NDDPI will prepare a request for USED.
- ✓ USED makes the final decision.
- ✓ Any changes could impact the 2027-2028 school year.



Commitment to Transparency & Clear Process

Throughout NDDPI has:

- ✓ Provided background on federal Title I statute and regulatory requirements
- ✓ Reviewed the current USED methodology in detail to ensure shared understanding
- ✓ Presented comparison data, allocation modeling, and fiscal impact scenarios
- ✓ Allowed time for questions, clarification, and thoughtful discussion at each meeting
- ✓ Offered follow-up materials and technical explanations as needed
- ✓ Ensured members fully understand both the policy implications and practical district impact before any recommendation is made

NDDPI reaffirms its commitment to full transparency—sharing survey results, outlining each step, and keeping stakeholders fully informed of all actions and decisions. This work was conducted through an open, collaborative, and well-documented approach, ensuring every opportunity for thoughtful and informed decision-making before being submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.