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Title I, Education for the Disadvantaged: Perspectives on Studies of Its Achievement Effects

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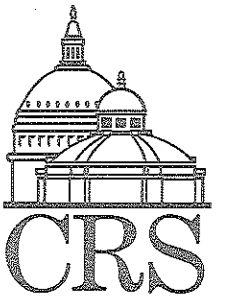

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TITLE I, EDUCATION FOR THE DISADVANTAGED: PERSPECTIVES ON STUDIES OF ITS ACHIEVEMENT EFFECTS

SUMMARY

Since the program's initiation in 1965, there has been substantial interest in evaluations of the effects of federal aid for the education of disadvantaged children, authorized under Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). While findings of different studies have varied over time, certain general patterns regarding the academic achievement of participating pupils tend to recur: (a) the achievement gains of Title I participants are generally found to be modestly greater than projections or estimates of what they would be without Title I services; (b) the most recent study's findings are the most negative, but this is largely due to its reference to a "comparison group" that cannot be truly comparable; (c) Title I participants tend to increase their achievement levels at the same rate as nondisadvantaged pupils, so "gaps" in achievement do not significantly change; (d) programs tend to be more effective among pupils at early elementary grade levels than at later grade levels; (e) achievement gains are greatest for pupils served for 1 year or less by Title I, while those who participate in Title I for relatively long periods of time, who are likely to be the most disadvantaged, tend to have minimal gains; and (f) achievement of participants tends to increase more in mathematics than in reading.

There are several qualifications to the significance of these findings of somewhat modest aggregate effects of Title I participation on pupil achievement. The tests that have been used for virtually all evaluations are not linked to the curriculum of Title I participants and measure performance only in comparison to the hypothetical performance of average students, rather than measuring knowledge or skills relative to a standard of what pupils should know. Aggregate evaluation results combine numerous local Title I programs with large differences in instructional methods and substantially varying levels of effectiveness. The structure of the program makes evaluation of its effects difficult in many ways; in particular, it is virtually impossible to establish a true "comparison group" of pupils to which the performance of Title I participants can be compared. Finally, the applicability of existing evaluation findings to the current program is qualified by the fact that legislative provisions regarding several major aspects of the structure of Title I programs were substantially changed in 1994 amendments (the Improving America's Schools Act) that are just beginning to be implemented.

In spite of the limitations to the significance of Title I pupil achievement data, most observers of the program would agree that the aggregate impact of Title I on pupil achievement has been less than might be desired. Possible explanations for these modest results include the typical marginality of the program and its resources to the overall educational program of participating pupils; and a lack of extensive guidance on the relative effectiveness of alternative approaches to the education of disadvantaged children.

A recent emphasis in national evaluations on the limited success of Title I was cited during congressional consideration of legislation to extend and amend Title I in 1993-94 in support of significant changes in the program's statutory framework. While many of the plausible explanations of somewhat modest effects of Title I on pupil achievement were addressed by the 1994 reauthorization legislation, some have argued in favor of strategies substantially different from even the amended Title I, especially in the highest poverty schools.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TITLE I, EDUCATION FOR THE DISADVANTAGED: PERSPECTIVES ON STUDIES OF ITS ACHIEVEMENT EFFECTS

INTRODUCTION

Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),[1] authorizes formula grants to states and local educational agencies (LEAs) for the education of disadvantaged children -- children with low academic achievement attending schools serving relatively low-income areas. Since the program's initiation in 1965, there has been substantial interest in evaluations of the effects of federal aid for the education of disadvantaged children, authorized under participating states and LEAs have always been required to evaluate the effects of Title I programs under their jurisdiction on the academic achievement of the pupils served by the program. Title I was reportedly the first major social program to require regular evaluations by grantees of its effects. In addition, a large number of evaluations or assessments of the program's aggregate effects on pupil achievement and other outcomes nationwide have been conducted by and for the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and its predecessor agencies.

The findings of these local, state, and national studies have served a variety of purposes over the past 30 years. Many studies in Title I's earliest years concluded that funds were often not adequately targeted on services to the most educationally disadvantaged pupils. This led to a number of amendments intended to improve targeting and enhance fiscal accountability. Later findings that Title I funds were generally targeted on those intended to be served, with moderately successful effects on pupil achievement, were frequently quoted in support of growth in Title I funding. A more recent emphasis in national, although not state or local, evaluations on the limited success of Title I in raising the academic achievement level of educationally disadvantaged pupils was cited during congressional consideration of legislation to extend and amend Title I in 1993-94 (the Improving America's Schools Act) in support of significant changes in the program's statutory framework of regulations and incentives.[2] At all times, evaluations have been

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[1]While reference is made to ESEA Title I in general in the title and introduction of this report, it actually deals only with ESEA Title I, Part A grants to local educational agencies (LEAs), which is by far the largest and best known Title I program. Programs authorized in Part B through E of ESEA Title I -- Even Start Family Literacy Programs (Part B), Education of Migratory Children (Part C), Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk of Dropping Out (Part D), or Demonstrations and Transition Projects (Part E) -- are not included in this report. In addition, throughout this report the program will be referred to as "Title I" in all cases, including periods when its formal designation was "Chapter 1 of Title I" of the ESEA (1988-94) or "Chapter 1" of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (1981-88).

[2]See: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Education for the Disadvantaged: Analysis of 1994 ESEA Title I Amendments Under P.L. 103-382.* CRS Report for Congress No. 94-968 EPW, by Wayne Riddle. Washington, 1994. 44 p. (Hereafter cited as U.S. Library of Congress, *Education for the Disadvantaged)*

conducted in order to provide evidence of the program's effects, to help justify continued funding for the program, and to help identify schools or LEAs with Title I programs in need of improvement.

During the 104th Congress, the most recent ESEA Title I national evaluation findings have been cited by some as justification for reducing the level of federal funds appropriated for the program, either as a response to its purported ineffectiveness or to provide an incentive to increase program effectiveness.[3] It is probable that congressional interest in the effects of Title I programs and services on academic achievement and other desired outcomes for participating pupils will intensify further in the immediate future. There are at least four reasons for this: (a) it is likely that competition for limited federal appropriations among such domestic, discretionary spending programs as ESEA Title I will increase, due to efforts to reduce federal budget deficits, and competition from other priorities; (b) new findings from a congressionally mandated study of the effects of Title I participation on a nationally representative cohort of pupils are scheduled to be published early in 1996, with additional findings from this and other studies following in succeeding years; (c) there will be particular interest in efforts to gauge the impact on Title I's effectiveness of the 1994 amendments to the program; and (d) the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), which affects all executive Branch agencies, places new emphasis on measurement and reporting of program effects for federal programs.

The general **structure** of this report is to provide:

1. A discussion of different perspectives on the basic nature and purpose of Title I (i.e., what are the desired effects of the program, and to what extent are they different from or go beyond increasing the academic achievement of participating pupils?);

2. A review of the major sources of information on the effects of Title I participation on pupil achievement, and general patterns in these findings;

3. A discussion of the primary difficulties in evaluating the academic achievement or other effects of Title I, as well as qualifications to the significance of the currently available findings on the pupil achievement effects of Title I;

4. An analysis of alternative possible explanations for why the achievement effects of Title I participation appear to be somewhat limited in the aggregate, even after consideration of the qualifications on their significance;

5. A discussion of the strategy of the Improving America's Schools Act for enhancing Title I's effectiveness, and the extent to which the possible

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[3]See, for example, remarks by Representatives John Porter and William Goodling during House floor debate on H.R. 2127, FY1996 appropriations legislation for the Department of Education and other agencies, in the *Congressional Record* for Aug. 2, 1995, especially p. H8198 and H8201-02.

explanations for limited Title I effects on pupil achievement in the past have been addressed by that strategy; and

6. A discussion of strategies substantially different than even the amended Title I that some analysts believe are necessary for programs to be effective in some cases, especially in the highest poverty schools.

The **primary** purpose of this report is to provide **perspective** on the findings of Title I evaluations, especially the **limitations** of all such studies that have been completed thus far. The emphasis is on increasing the reader's understanding of the significance of national studies of Title I's effects, including the findings scheduled to be released early in 1996. The report also provides a discussion of possible **explanations** for the apparently limited effects of Title I participation on pupil achievement thus far, and an analysis of the extent to which these explanations have been addressed by the 1994 amendments to Title I.

Major **highlights** of the report include the following:

- A variety of national, and especially state, assessments have generally found a modestly positive effect of Title I services on the academic achievement of participating pupils overall. While a recent evaluation found essentially no significant achievement effect for the program, this is largely due to its reference to a "comparison group" that cannot be truly comparable.

- There are numerous, substantial limitations to the significance of evaluations of the aggregate impact of Title I that are currently available. These include problems with the types of tests used in the evaluations, the virtual impossibility of comparing test scores for Title I participants with those of a "true" comparison group, and the fact that all available assessments refer to the program before its substantial revision in 1994 reauthorization legislation that is just beginning to be implemented.

- Possible explanations for these somewhat modest results include the typical marginality of the program and its resources to the overall educational program of participating pupils; and a lack of extensive guidance on the relative effectiveness of alternative approaches to the education of disadvantaged children.

- The 1994 amendments to Title I addressed most, but not all, of these explanations for Title I's somewhat modest impact. The primary explanation not addressed is the possible need for a different strategy in at least some of the nation's highest poverty schools.

- Several analysts believe that in at least certain cases, especially in schools with very high proportions of pupils from poor families, strategies substantially different from even the amended Title I are necessary in order to effectively increase pupil achievement. Strategies they have recommended include

expanded school choice options for pupils in high poverty areas -- choice, charters, and residential schools; comprehensive efforts to address the educational, safety, housing, health care, employment, and other needs of pupils and parents in high poverty areas; and substantially higher Title I grants per poor child, and more intensive technical assistance, for the highest poverty schools.

THE NATURE AND PURPOSES OF TITLE I -- WHAT ARE THE DESIRED EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM?

Academic Achievement Gains Versus Other Program Purposes

Title I is frequently referred to as the "education for the disadvantaged" program, although its formal name (as revised in 1994) is "Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards." As will be discussed later, this most recent name change is intended to reflect a new emphasis on setting content and performance standards that Title I participants, as well as all pupils, will be expected to meet. There has always been a substantial level of ambiguity regarding the program's intended nature and purpose since the original ESEA was enacted in 1965. While it is generally (but not universally[4]) agreed that the program is intended to serve low-achieving children attending schools with concentrations of children from low-income families ("eligible children"), there have been at least four basic perspectives on the program's primary purpose(s) or goal(s) in this respect:

- It is intended to provide *supplementary educational services* to eligible children.
- It is intended to provide *additional revenues* to *schools or LEAs* with substantial concentrations of children from low-income families.
- It is intended to increase the *attention* of educators to the special needs of eligible children, and induce school systems to adopt certain general *practices*, such as increased parental involvement, that are assumed to be associated with enhanced performance by these pupils.
- It is intended to improve the *academic achievement* of eligible children sufficiently to eliminate, or at least substantially reduce, *gaps* in achievement between eligible children and their nondisadvantaged peers, and/or sufficiently for eligible children to meet *high academic standards*.

While these four perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, each is associated with a somewhat different focus in evaluating Title I's effectiveness. Further,

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[4]For example, some have apparently believed that Title I is intended to serve children from low-income families, whatever their achievement level (under an assumption that all pupils in poor families are disadvantaged and would perform better with supplementary assistance), rather than low-achieving children living in areas with concentrations of children from low-income families. However, the program's statutory language and legislative history do not support this.

it is noteworthy that **only one of these perspectives leads directly and primarily to a focus on improving the academic achievement of participating pupils**. Perspectives other than the last one listed above would lead to a focus in program operation and evaluation on nonachievement effects of Title I such as reduced drop-out rates, improved attendance or attitudes, increased parental involvement, allocation of funds to targeted LEAs or schools, or adoption by schools of purportedly "effective practices." At least partly as a result of this ambiguity regarding the program's purpose(s), national assessments or evaluations of Title I have focused on many aspects of the program in addition to its effects on the academic achievement of participating children. These other aspects of the program have included such topics as the extent to which funds are targeted on eligible pupils and schools, characteristics of pupils served, kinds of services provided, instructional techniques or strategies, and implementation of specific policies.

Nevertheless, a primary interest of policymakers has been in the effects of Title I services on the academic achievement levels of the children served by the program. This has been reflected not only in the language of legislative mandates for the various national assessments of Title I, but in the requirements for regular evaluations of program effects by every participating LEA and state.

What Sort of Tests Have Been Used to Measure Achievement Gains, and How Will This Change in the Future?

Even if assessment of the effects of Title I participation is limited to academic achievement by participating pupils, questions arise regarding what sort of tests should be used to measure this achievement. The 1994 reauthorization legislation substantially changed provisions for regular evaluations by LEAs and states. Previous to 1994, LEAs and states were required, in effect, to use norm-referenced,[5] standardized achievement tests to evaluate the achievement of pupils before and after their participation in Title I each year. This was required primarily so that test results could be aggregated from individual pupils to schools, LEAs, and states as a measure of overall program effects. Another major purpose was to enable policymakers to compare the performance of Title I participants to that of "average" pupils both before and after being served by Title I.

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[5]With norm-referenced tests, scores are compared to those of a nationally representative sample of pupils, and scored accordingly, usually with an overall scale of 0-100, a national average score of 50 and scores expressed as percentiles. For example, a "40th percentile" score would indicate that nationwide, 60% of pupils may be expected to score above the given pupil, and 40% below. These scores are based on an implicit assumption that scores are distributed among pupils on a "normal (bell-shaped) curve" basis, thus, the term "norm-referenced." Under Title I, scores have usually been reported as "normal curve equivalents," percentile scores that can be aggregated and compared over time -- see footnote 24. These scores are all relative, bearing no direct relationship to the adequacy of the knowledge gained by pupils. Critics of norm-referenced tests have argued that they provide little, if any, information on what a pupil has learned; are designed much more for sorting pupils than diagnosing their educational strengths and weaknesses; and artificially and unnecessarily assume that one-half of pupils are performing poorly (the ones scoring below the 50th percentile), even if a much higher percentage of pupils are performing adequately in terms of knowledge and skills acquired.

However, many have criticized the use of such tests in Title I as having little instructional value and as requiring states and LEAs to conduct tests that were often quite different from the tests that they developed or selected for pupils in general as part of state reform plans.[6] Many have argued that these standardized, norm-referenced tests are of limited value or significance because: they are not linked to the curriculum of Title I participants; they provide little information that could be used to diagnose pupils' learning problems and help improve their performance; they generally focus on a relatively narrow range of pupil skills; scores on such tests are inherently variable to the extent that school or LEA averages could change substantially from year to year with little or no change in actual pupil competencies; and they measure performance only in comparison to the hypothetical performance of average students, rather than measuring knowledge or skills relative to a standard of what pupils should know. This criticism applies not only to the annual state and local evaluations but also such national evaluations as the most recent Prospects study (described below).

In contrast, under the new law, states and LEAs may use whatever assessments they determine are best aligned with "challenging" state standards for curriculum content and pupil performance. These assessments need not be tied to national norms or be either comparable or aggregateable across states. In order to continue receiving Title I grants in the future, states will have to submit to ED plans that include curriculum content standards applicable to Title I participants, as well as all other pupils in the state.[7] The state plans must also include standards for pupil performance on assessments tied to the content standards. The plans must include content and performance standards at least in the subjects of mathematics and reading/language arts.[8] The performance standards must establish three performance levels for all pupils -- advanced, proficient, and, partially proficient.

Transitional assessments may be used by states that do not already have state content and performance standards, and assessments tied to them. States must develop or adopt content and performance standards, at least in the subjects of mathematics and reading/language arts, within 1 year after the first year that funds are received under authority of the IASA,[9] and must develop or adopt assessments tied to these standards within 4 years after such first year, with an additional year extension authorized at the

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[6]U.S. Department of Education. Advisory Committee on Testing in Chapter 1. *Reinforcing the Promise, Reforming the Paradigm.* Washington, May 1993. 44 p.

[7]Although such an option is not explicitly mentioned in the Title I statute, program regulations published on July 3, 1995 (34 CFR 200.2) allow states to establish standards that apply only to Title I participants, if they have not established, and do not intend to establish, such standards for all of their pupils.

[8]**If** a state has developed content and performance standards with assistance under Title III of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, or under a similar procedure, then those standards are to be used for Title I programs.

[9]According to program regulations published on July 3, 1995 (34 CFR 200.2), this must be done by the 1997-98 school year.

discretion of the Secretary of Education. States not meeting these deadlines for standards and assessments may continue to receive Title I grants by adopting standards and assessments approved by ED for other states.

These new assessment provisions address four major concerns about the pre-1994 testing requirements for Title I programs -- that they: (a) have not been sufficiently challenging academically, and address a narrow range of academic skills, perpetuating low expectations for the achievement of participating pupils; (b) have not been well integrated with the "regular" instructional programs of participants; (c) have required extensive pupil testing that is of little instructional value and is not linked to the curriculum to which pupils are exposed; and (d) have measured only the achievement of participating pupils relative to other pupils, with no consideration of the level of knowledge or performance that any pupils should meet. While the IASA's response to these concerns is direct and substantial, it relies upon processes that generally have not been established or proven. States are now at widely varying stages of developing instructional goals, curriculum frameworks, and assessment systems tied to these.

Some analysts believe these weaknesses of the tests that have been used to evaluate Title I's effects on pupil achievement are so basic and serious that test results "provide little meaningful information."[10] For other analysts, such criticism of the tests used for Title I evaluations in the past goes too far, and the problems with these assessments imply that they should be interpreted very cautiously, but not completely ignored.

How Much Improvement is Enough?

Another basic question regarding assessment of the achievement effects of Title I participation for pupils, in addition to the issue of what sort of tests should be used, is what level of measured achievement gain is "enough?" Under the pre-1994 testing regime, when scores for pupils were expressed in comparison to national averages, the varying expectations of program administrators, policymakers, advocates, and analysts ranged from a minimum of any gain in percentile ranking of pupil achievement (e.g., an increase in a pupil's reading achievement from the 20th to the 21st percentile), to the somewhat more rigorous expectation of a "statistically significant" gain in percentile ranking (e.g., a gain sufficiently large that it is unlikely to have occurred by chance), to a most optimistic expectation of complete elimination of gaps in achievement levels between Title I participants and "average" pupils. With the 1994 legislative revisions, performance of Title I participants will in the future be measured by the extent to which pupils meet state-specified levels of performance relative to state-specified standards of curriculum content -- i.e., how much they have learned relative to a standard of how much they should be expected to know, not relative to each other.

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[10]RAND. Institute on Education and Training. *Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students. Volume I. Findings and Recommendations.* Santa Monica, Ca., 1993. p. 19. (Hereafter cited as RAND, *Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students, Volume I)*

Thus, the IASA tries to raise the instructional standards of Title I programs, and the academic expectations for participating pupils, by tying Title I instruction and pupil performance standards to state-selected curriculum content standards. Further, the legislation attempts to make Title I tests and evaluations more meaningful and less time consuming by using state-developed or -adopted assessments, tied to the content standards, for determining the effectiveness of Title I programs. These assessments will also become the basis for implementing program improvement requirements, including financial rewards to "distinguished" schools and LEAs or corrective actions for "unsuccessful" ones.

MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON TITLE I EFFECTS

The following table provides an outline of the most substantial and comprehensive national studies that have been conducted of the Title I program since its inception in 1965. This listing includes only the major and comprehensive studies that have focused, at least in part, on the program's effects on the achievement levels of participating pupils. This listing includes all of the most comprehensive assessments of Title I for the Nation as a whole since the mid-1970s. However, it **excludes** a large number of less comprehensive studies that do not include substantial information on pupil achievement effects, as well as a number of reports published during the initial years of the program. The early reports are excluded because they were frequently considered to be methodologically flawed, and because they covered periods before the Title I program was well established. Also, only studies that are national in scope are included; annual reports on Title I's achievement effects by individual states are discussed in the section after the national studies.

National Studies and Assessments

The table includes the name of each study, the years during which it was prepared and published, the legislation that mandated and/or authorized the study, and the primary source(s) of pupil achievement data developed for or used by the study. The studies are listed in chronological order, beginning with the most recent (including those that are currently being conducted). Following the table is a very concise listing of the primary findings of each study regarding the academic achievement of participating pupils.

TABLE 1. Major National Studies of Impact of the Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Program on Pupil Achievement

Study name	Legislative mandate or authorization	Dates	Primary source(s) of pupil achievement data
National Assessment of Title I	Sec. 1501(a), ESEA, as amended by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) (1994)	Mandated in 1994; interim report due by Jan. 1, 1996 and final report by Jan. 1, 1998	Prospects and National Evaluation of Part A of Title I (see below); state evaluations; National Assessment of Educational Progress (subject to revision, as this study is still evolving)
National Evaluation of Part A of Title I	Sec. 1501(c), ESEA, as amended by the IASA (1994)	Mandated in 1994; under current legislation, this study is to be ongoing, with no specific completion date	Will collect achievement data on a nationally representative sample of schools serving educationally disadvantaged pupils
Prospects -- also known as the National Longitudinal Study of Title I	Sec. 1462, ESEA, as amended in 1988 (P.L. 100-297)	Mandated in 1988; began collection of achievement data in 1991; first interim report published in 1993, with a second scheduled to be released early in 1996; a final report to be completed by Jan. 1, 1997	Collects achievement data on nationally representative sample cohorts of pupils that were, at the beginning of the study (1991), in the 1st, 3rd, and 7th grades (initial achievement data have been reported only for the 3rd and 7th grade cohorts)
National Assessment of Chapter 1	Sec. 2 of the 1992 National Assessment of Chapter 1 Act, P.L. 101-305	1990-1993	Prospects (see above); state evaluations

Table continued on following page.

TABLE 1. Major National Studies of Impact of the Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Program on Pupil Achievement

Study name	Legislative mandate or authorization	Dates	Primary source(s) of pupil achievement data
National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program	Sec. 559, ESEA, as amended by the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act Technical Amendments Act of 1983, P.L. 98-211	1983-1987	Reanalyses of data collected under the Sustaining Effects Study (see below); state evaluations
Sustaining Effects Study	Not specifically mandated; it was deemed by the Department of Education to be authorized by the general provisions for evaluation of Title I programs (Sec. 151 of the ESEA, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1974, P.L. 93-380, as well as Sec. 417(a)(2) of the General Education Provisions Act)	1975-82	Included a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of elementary school pupils over 3 years, beginning with the 1976-77 school year
Compensatory Education Study	Sec. 821, ESEA, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1974, P.L. 93-380	1975-78	Utilized first-year results from the Sustaining Effects Study (see above); included an Instructional Dimensions Study on achievement and services received by pupils in a sample of Title I programs; state evaluations

Findings of Major Studies of the Effects of Title I

Following are very brief summaries of the findings regarding the academic achievement of participating pupils of a number of studies of the Title I program. The studies included are the major, legislatively mandated studies conducted by (or under the supervision of) the U.S. Department of Education (ED) or its predecessor agencies since the mid-1970s (i.e., those listed in table 1), plus two nongovernmental studies published in 1993. The latter two reports are included because they offer recent judgements by knowledgeable, unofficial groups of analysts on trends in the effectiveness of Title I and the significance of available evaluation data following extensive reviews of the program, although neither study was legislatively mandated or based on new achievement test data for pupils in Title I programs (and for those reasons they were not included in table 1).

The summaries below are very brief and therefore cannot fully convey the findings of these studies. The study reports themselves (see footnote references) should be consulted for a more complete description of their findings. Also note that the findings summarized below are limited to the effects of Title I on the academic achievement of participating pupils. Therefore, findings regarding other sorts of program effects that are considered by many observers to be very important -- e.g., effects on the degree of parental involvement in the education of disadvantaged children, effects on the level of educational revenues or resources available to disadvantaged pupils, etc. -- are not included in the following discussion.

Findings are listed for each major study below. Studies are in reverse chronological order, with the most recent listed first.

Prospects, First Interim Report (1993)[11]

These were first-year findings of a multiple-year study. They were based on nationally representative samples of pupils in the third and seventh grades. Second-year results are scheduled to be available in early 1996.

- Among a sample of third and seventh grade Title I participants, relative achievement over 1 year increased significantly only for seventh grade pupils in mathematics, and that effect was small. Overall, the rate of achievement gain was the same for Title I participants and nondisadvantaged pupils, so achievement gaps between these groups were not reduced.

- Achievement gains for Title I participants and a "comparison group" of disadvantaged non-participants were not significantly[12] different. (See the

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[11]U.S. Department of Education. Planning and Evaluation Service. *Prospects: The Congressionally Mandated Study of Educational Growth and Opportunity. Interim Report*. Washington, July 1993. 396 p.

[12]The term, "significant," is used in the technical, statistical sense, meaning that there is a low (usually 5%) probability that the reported results occurred by chance.

discussion of the comparison group concept with respect to Title I evaluations later in this report.)

National Assessment of Chapter 1 (1993)[13]

This study's findings were based on the Prospects study first-year results and, to a lesser extent, annual state reports on Title I achievement gains.

- The basic achievement findings reported in this study were the same as those for the first interim report of the *Prospects* study (see above), on which they were based.

- Annual state reports on the achievement gains of Title I participants show gains in each grade level and subject area. Gains are especially substantial in early elementary grades.

Commission on Chapter 1 -- "Making Schools Work for Children in Poverty" (1993)[14]

This study did not collect new data on the achievement of Title I participants, rather it analyzed data from other studies.[15]

- Title I has been the primary cause for a reduction of approximately one-half in the gaps in National Assessment of Educational Progress test scores between white and Hispanic or African-American pupils.

- Title I has generally been successful in helping disadvantaged children attain basic academic skills, but has typically not been successful in imparting the more advanced academic skills that pupils are increasingly expected to master.

- The tests that are generally used to measure the effectiveness of Title I programs are not well-designed for this purpose; they are not adequately aligned with the curriculum studied by participating pupils, nor do they focus on high academic standards or advanced skills.

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[13]U.S. Department of Education. Office of Policy and Planning. Planning and Evaluation Service. National Assessment of the Chapter Program. *Reinventing Chapter 1: The Current Chapter 1 Program and New Directions*. Washington, Feb. 1993. 256 p. (Hereafter cited as ED, *Reinventing Chapter 1)*

[14]Commission on Chapter 1. *Making Schools Work for Children in Poverty*. Washington, Dec. 1992. 101 p.

[15]In addition to the findings directly related to academic achievement, the Commission asserted that Title I has been the primary cause for a substantial decrease in drop-out rates for students from low-income families and for African-American students.

- While the relative achievement levels of the longest-term, most disadvantaged Title I participants neither increase nor decrease over time, it is most likely that their achievement would have declined further if they did not receive Title I services.

Sustaining Effects Study (1982)[18]

This study was based on a nationally representative sample of pupils beginning in grades 1-3; data were collected for these pupils for 3 consecutive school years.

- Over a single school year, the achievement gains for Title I participants are significantly greater than those of disadvantaged nonparticipants in mathematics in grades 1-6, and in reading in grades 1-3. The achievement gains for Title I participants in grades 4-6 in reading were not significantly different than those for disadvantaged nonparticipants.

- The rate of achievement gain for Title I participants was generally the same as the rate of achievement gain for nondisadvantaged pupils. Thus, achievement gaps between Title I participants and nondisadvantaged pupils were not reduced.

- Over a period of 3 school years, achievement gains were largely a function of the amount of time that pupils received Title I services, which was itself a function of the degree of pupil disadvantage. Students served for only 1 year, after which they "graduated" out of the program, tended to maintain their gains afterward. These were generally the less disadvantaged Title I participants at the beginning of the 3-year period. In contrast, the relative achievement level of students who were served by Title I all 3 years generally did not improve. These were typically the most disadvantaged Title I participants at the beginning of the 3-year period. Thus, the longer a student participates in Title I, the less he or she gains in relative achievement level, primarily because the long-term participants are the most disadvantaged students.

- It is unrealistic to expect gaps in achievement between Title I participants and nondisadvantaged students to be completely closed. Achievement gains are significant for all but the most disadvantaged participants, but whether these gains are sufficient to justify the level of funds devoted to Title I is a "moral and political judgement."[19]

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[18]System Development Corporation. *Does Compensatory Education Narrow the Achievement Gap? Technical Report No. 12 From the Study of the Sustaining Effects of Compensatory Education on Basic Skills.* Prepared for the Office of Program Evaluation, U.S. Department of Education. Dec. 1981. See also other reports in this series, as well as *The Receipt and Effectiveness of Title I Compensatory Education*, testimony by Launor F. Carter before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, House Committee on Education and Labor, Mar. 24, 1982. 13 p.

[19]Testimony of Launor F. Carter, System Development Corporation, before the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, Mar. 24, 1982. p. 8.

RAND -- "Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students" (1993)[16]

This study did not collect new data on the achievement of Title I participants, rather it analyzed data from other studies.

- On average, Title I "achieves modest short-term benefits."
- Many individual Title I programs "achieve outstanding results," but this is masked by the averaging of effective and ineffective programs in tabulating national average results.
- Because of the averaging of large numbers of both effective and ineffective programs, and the use of tests that have minimal relationship to the curriculum of Title I programs, aggregate evaluations of Title I's effects provide very little meaningful information.

National Assessment of the Chapter 1 Program (1987)[17]

These findings were based primarily on reanalyses of data from the Sustaining Effects Study, described below.

- Since 1965, the achievement levels of disadvantaged pupils have increased relative to those of nondisadvantaged pupils.
- Achievement levels of Title I participants increase more in mathematics than in reading.
- Gains are greater for Title I participants in early elementary grades than in later grades.
- In general, achievement gains for Title I participants are (statistically) significantly greater than those of disadvantaged non-participants, but these gains are not sufficient to substantially bring participating pupils to the level of nondisadvantaged pupils.
- Achievement gaps between Title I participants and nondisadvantaged pupils increase during the summer.
- Pupils who "graduate out" of Title I programs gradually lose their achievement gains in subsequent years when they no longer receive services.

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[16]RAND, *Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students, Volume I.*

[17]See especially: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. National Assessment of Chapter 1. *The Effectiveness of Chapter 1 Services*. Washington, July 1986. 97 p.

Compensatory Education Study (1978)[20]

The findings in this study were based on a nationally representative sample of pupils in grades 1 and 3. Initial findings from the Sustaining Effects Study were also used to a limited extent.

- Title I programs that substantially increased total instructional time, or emphasized the specific skills on which they are tested, were most effective.
- On average, "mainstream" Title I programs were more effective than "pullout" programs.[21]
- First and third grade pupils (the only grade groups that were evaluated in depth), tested in the fall and spring of the same school year, made gains sufficient to somewhat reduce the gaps in their achievement compared to the achievement of nondisadvantaged pupils. Achievement gains for Title I participants were also significantly greater than those for nonparticipating disadvantaged pupils.
- Achievement levels of Title I participants decline no more over the summer months than do the achievement levels of nondisadvantaged children.

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[20]U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. National Institute of Education. *The Effects of Services on Student Development*. Washington. Sept. 1977. 68 p. Also, *Compensatory Education Study. Final Report from the National Institute of Education.* Washington, Sept. 1978. 190 p.

[21]In "mainstream" programs, Title I participants are served in their regular classroom setting. For example, Title I funds might be used to pay the salary of a teacher aide who provides additional tutoring or other assistance to Title I pupils while the entire class works on an assignment. In contrast, "pullout" programs involve removing Title I participants from their regular classroom to receive assistance -- e.g., tutoring by a reading specialist teacher paid with Title I funds in small groups while other pupils in the class receive their "regular" reading instruction.

Sources of Information on Title I Effects Other Than National Studies: Annual State Reports on Title I's Achievement Effects[22]

As was discussed earlier in this report, each LEA and state participating in Title I has been required to regularly evaluate the effects of the program on the academic achievement of participating children. While these requirements were substantially revised in the 1994 amendments to Title I, the results currently available were prepared under the pre-1994 requirements for annual evaluations using, in general, standardized, norm-referenced tests administered to pupils on an annual cycle.[23] LEAs and states could limit their reports to pupils who were served for the entire school year in the same Title I program; as a result scores were generally not reported for pupils who are highly mobile, or pupils whose rapid achievement gains resulted in their being "graduated out" of Title I during the course of a year. For each of the last several years, ED has compiled the state reports and published them.

The following discussion is based primarily on the most recently published of these reports.[24] This report provides information on Title I participant achievement scores before and after receiving annual Title I services in both basic and advanced skills in the subject areas of reading, other "language arts," and mathematics, by individual grade level. Data are presented for most, but not all, states and other areas receiving Title I grants in 1992-93. According to these test results:

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[22]A final possible measure of the effects on pupil achievement of Title I participation that is sometimes cited by analysts is an indirect one -- comparison of trends in scores on tests administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by groups of pupils who are likely to be Title I participants versus the scores of groups of pupils who are unlikely to participate in Title I. For example, scores are compared over time for African-American and Hispanic pupils versus white pupils, since the former are more likely to participate in Title I than the latter. Others compare trends in scores for pupils in disadvantaged urban areas versus advantaged urban or suburban areas. Over a period of roughly 20 years, from 1970 to 1990, gaps in average NAEP tests scores between both these pairs of pupil groups tended to decline in most subjects and age/grade levels. However, in the most recent years, these gaps have generally been stable or marginally increasing.

This method is much less direct than those used in the Title I studies and evaluations described above. It is generally not possible to obtain valid and reliable NAEP scores specifically for pupils who actually have participated in Title I. Therefore, this method of measuring Title I's impact on pupil achievement will not be discussed further in this report.

[23]That is, pre- and post-service tests must be separated by approximately 12 months, as opposed to fall and spring test administration which is assumed to inflate reported score gains because loss of achievement over the summer (which is assumed to be greater for disadvantaged than other pupils) is not considered.

[24]U.S. Department of Education. *State Chapter 1 Participation and Achievement Information--1992-93.* Washington, 1994. 64 p. (Hereafter cited as ED, *State Chapter 1 Participation and Achievement Information)*

- Scores for Title I participants, whether expressed as percentiles or normal curve equivalents (NCEs),[25] increased at virtually every grade level, subject area, and skill level. However, at some grade levels and subject areas, the increases were very small (as low as 1 NCE point).

- In general, increases were much greater in the early elementary grades (particularly grades 2-4) than at upper elementary or secondary levels.

- In every subject area and skill level, the average pre-service scores for Title I participants were well below the hypothetical national norm of 50, and remained so in the post-service tests as well.

General Patterns Common to These Findings

Because they cover an extended period of time and use different survey methods and assessment techniques, as well as being subject to the limitations on their significance that are discussed in the following section of this report, it is not possible to rigorously combine the results of the various assessments of the Title I program described above. Further, contradictory findings have been made by different studies regarding such questions as whether the achievement levels of Title I participants decline during the summer more than those of nondisadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, a small number of general patterns that tend to be repeated in several of these studies are worthy of note. These general patterns include the following:

- While the achievement gains of Title I participants are generally (although not always) found to be significantly (in a statistical sense) greater than projections or estimates (based on comparison groups or other methods) of what they would be without Title I services, the gains are nevertheless not adequate to raise most participants to "adequate" or "average" levels of achievement. On average, Title I participants tend to increase their achievement levels at approximately the same rate as nondisadvantaged pupils, so "gaps" in achievement do not significantly change.

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[25]"Normal curve equivalent" (NCE) scores are derived from percentile scores on norm-referenced, standardized tests. While the percentile score indicates the percentage of all pupils scoring below a pupil on a particular test (e.g., a pupil's percentile score of 25 means that 25% of all pupils taking the test would be expected to score below that pupil), they have the disadvantage of not having equal size intervals at different points on the scale. Because many more pupils receive scores near the 50th percentile than at either the upper or lower end of the scale, the amount of increased achievement (or number of additional correct answers) associated with a pupil's movement of, for example, 5 percentiles is much greater if that movement is from the 15th to the 20th, or the 80th to the 85th, percentile than if it is from the 47th to the 52nd percentile. The NCE scale adjusts for this by "smoothing out" the percentile scale into equal interval units, so that the change in learning (or correct answers) associated with a score change of any size is the same at any point in the scale, which still runs from 0 to 100. A desirable mathematical characteristic of NCE scores is that they can be averaged over a number of pupils, unlike standard percentile scores.

- The most recent study's findings are the most negative, but this is largely due to its reference to a "comparison group" that cannot be truly comparable. (See the discussion of the comparison group concept with respect to Title I evaluations later in this report.)

- Programs tend to be more effective among pupils at early elementary grade levels than at later elementary or secondary grade levels.

- Achievement gains are greatest, and most likely to be sustained after services are no longer provided, for pupils served for 1 year or less by Title I. Those who have participated in Title I for relatively long periods of time (3 years or more), who are also generally the most disadvantaged pupils served by the program, tend to have minimal gains and the gains are unlikely to be sustained over time. In general, pupils have difficulty sustaining gains from Title I participation in succeeding years when services are no longer provided.

- The achievement levels of Title I participants tend to increase more in mathematics than in reading.

QUALIFICATIONS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE EVALUATION FINDINGS

As was stated in the introduction, a major purpose of this report is to provide perspective on the previous and current studies of the effects of Title I participation on the academic achievement of the pupils served, especially to emphasize the qualifications or limitations to the significance of these findings. The major reasons why these studies are of limited significance are discussed below. This is followed by a discussion of possible explanations for the general patterns of findings of these studies (taking the qualifications to their significance into account).

One major basis for qualifying the findings of existing studies of Title I's effects on pupil achievement was discussed earlier in this report -- the nature of the tests used to measure pupil achievement. Other major qualifications to the significance of the studies' findings are discussed below.

Local Variation in Program Effectiveness

There is substantial evidence that individual school or LEA programs can have a notably positive impact on the achievement of participating pupils. Such evidence comes from sources such as studies of limited numbers of "exemplary" programs for the education of disadvantaged children, or programs nominated by states for ED recognition as being especially effective.[26] At the same time, there is considerable evidence of schools where Title I participants have experienced no improvement or a net decline in their

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[26]For example, the Secretary's Initiative to Identify Effective Projects for Disadvantaged Children; or U.S. Department of Education. Office of the Under Secretary. *School Reform for Youth At Risk: Analysis of Six Change Models. Volume I: Summary and Analysis*. Washington, 1994. 59 p.

measured achievement. This evidence comes primarily from annual reports on the number of schools selected for "program improvement" action.[27]

National or even state aggregate evaluation results combine numerous LEA and school Title I programs with presumably substantially varying levels of effectiveness. Even if it were determined that Title I programs nationwide had a relatively small positive effect on pupil achievement, this would result from combining large numbers of programs with significantly positive measured effects with many programs having no significant positive effect or even a negative measured effect. Thus, the primary implication of even such a pessimistic finding would not be that "[T]itle I is ineffective," but rather that "[T]itle I is substantially effective in many places, but associated with very ineffective schools in many other locations."

These patterns of school and LEA variation in Title I's effectiveness may be associated with specific differences in instructional approach or such other factors as curricular focus, teacher qualifications, integration of "regular" and "special" (Title I) instruction, expenditure levels, degree and nature of pupil disadvantages, etc. Unfortunately, research published thus far has not provided much assistance in identifying these relationships on a broad, national scale. The planned longitudinal study of Title I, based on the 1994 reauthorization legislation, is intended to help identify relationships between school characteristics, instructional strategy, and the effectiveness of Title I and other federal programs.[28]

Further, annual tests may not include a group of pupils who may receive the greatest measurable benefits from Title I participation -- those who are served less than a year before being "graduated out" of Title I because they no longer are sufficiently educationally disadvantaged to be eligible.

Structure of the Program

Variation in Local Program Contexts

Title I programs are conducted in widely varying local school contexts. While the program is intended to serve educationally disadvantaged children in the relatively high poverty schools of participating LEAs, many schools with Title I programs actually have low pupil poverty rates.[29] At the same time, numerous Title I schools have very high pupil poverty rates.

Existing evidence on the relationships between pupil and school average poverty rates and pupil achievement indicates that achievement levels decline substantially for both poor and nonpoor pupils as a school's overall poverty rate increases. However, Title I funds

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[27]ED, *State Chapter 1 Participation and Achievement Information*, p. 51-52.

[28]Omnibus Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance.

[29]ED, *Reinventing Chapter 1*, p. 53.

are generally allocated among participating schools in amounts proportional to their number of children from low-income families -- i.e., the amount per child is not increased to account for the "more than proportional" disadvantages associated with high poverty rates. While high poverty schools do receive the advantage of greater flexibility in using their Title I (and certain other federal program) funds under schoolwide programs if they meet the relevant poverty rate thresholds, they do not receive higher grants per poor child than participating schools with low poverty rates in the same LEA.[30]

It is likely that a substantial proportion of the relatively ineffective Title I programs are in such high poverty schools. Unfortunately, existing studies provide insufficient data on the relationships between school poverty rate and Title I achievement effects to verify this. An indirect verification may be indicated by the finding of several Title I studies that the most disadvantaged pupils, who have been served by Title I for multiple years, experience the least achievement gains.

Lack of a "Comparison Group"

Another important implication of the structure of Title I that qualifies the significance of evaluations is the virtual impossibility of establishing a true "comparison group" -- pupils with characteristics similar to those of Title I participants overall but who are not served by the program. Many of the national evaluations of Title I, especially the current *Prospects* study, feature comparisons of achievement gains for a sample of Title I participants with those of a purportedly similar group of disadvantaged nonparticipating pupils. Occasionally, legislation authorizing or mandating a Title I evaluation will specify that achievement levels for Title I participants are to be compared to those of a comparison or comparison group of similar pupils not served by Title I.[31]

Regardless of legislative requirements and the apparent "logic" of comparing achievement gains of Title I participants with the gains of similar non-participants, it is actually virtually impossible to do this. LEAs and schools are to select for Title I the **most** educationally disadvantaged pupils in the **highest** poverty schools of the LEA. Assuming that these targeting requirements have been complied with (and available evidence indicates that this is generally the case), the comparison or comparison group in any LEA can only be either: (a) pupils in Title I schools who are at least slightly less educationally disadvantaged than the **least** educationally disadvantaged pupils selected for Title I in that school; or (b) low-achieving pupils in schools that do not participate in Title I because they are not among the highest poverty schools in the LEA (at the relevant grade level). In any case, whether due to lack of resources or because school staff do not judge them to be among the most educationally disadvantaged pupils in their school (even

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[30]Previous to the 1994 amendments, LEAs could allocate funds among eligible Title I schools on the basis of the number of pupils to be served and their needs. Under this rather broad authority, LEAs could, and apparently sometimes did, allocate additional amounts of funds per pupil to high poverty schools, including schoolwide programs, than to schools with lower poverty rates.

[31]See, for example, the legislation which authorized the Prospects study, Sec. 1462 of the ESEA, as in effect between 1988 and 1994.

if objective test scores for nonserved pupils are similar to those for pupils selected for Title I), the "comparison group" pupils have not been selected to receive Title I services. The group of Title I participants will include pupils ranging from marginally to extremely educationally disadvantaged, and comparison group pupils will, on the whole, be less disadvantaged and/or from schools with lower poverty rates. **As a result, the Title I pupils will inevitably be a more disadvantaged group on the whole than any possible "comparison group" with which they are compared, even if the comparison group is constructed as carefully and comprehensively as possible.**

Thus, evaluations that compare the achievement gains of Title I participants with that of a "comparison group" of "similar" non-participants cannot really compare truly similar populations. On the whole, the nonparticipant group will be less disadvantaged than the Title I group, and will presumably experience achievement gains that are greater than would obtain for the Title I participants if Title I services were not available.

A related issue is the question of predicting what would be the trends in achievement scores of educationally disadvantaged pupils if Title I services were not provided. With respect to percentile (or NCE) scores on norm-referenced tests, it is usually implicitly assumed that a pupil's score would remain unchanged over the course of 1 or more school years in lieu of Title I services. However, there is substantial evidence that percentile scores of educationally disadvantaged pupils are not stable in lieu of special service intervention, rather that they tend to decline over time. Thus, *analysts have argued the effect of Title I participation should be measured not against a "zero change" assumption but rather an assumption that otherwise the percentile scores of disadvantaged pupils would have declined by some estimated amount.* Authors of the National Assessment of Chapter 1 completed in 1987 employed this technique to argue that Title I achievement gains are usually significantly understated.[32]

Lack of Relevance to Title I as Revised in 1994

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the significance of existing evaluation findings on the achievement effects of Title I is qualified by the fact that legislative provisions regarding several major aspects of the structure of Title I programs were substantially changed in 1994 amendments that are just beginning to be implemented. Some of these policy changes, such as those regarding state and local assessments, have been discussed above. A thorough review of all of the major structural revisions to Title I would be beyond the scope of this report,[33] but they can be briefly mentioned:

- There will be a substantial expansion of the number of schools eligible to operate Title I on a schoolwide basis -- i.e., use the aid to improve schoolwide services to all pupils, rather than limiting services to particular pupils deemed

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[32]See: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. *The Effectiveness of Title I Services*. Washington, 1986. 97 p.

[33]See: U.S. Library of Congress, *Education for the Disadvantaged*.

to be the most disadvantaged. By 1996-97, the child poverty rate threshold for schoolwide program eligibility will fall from 75% to 50%.

- Title I's formulas for allocating funds to states and LEAs are modified to increase the targeting of future appropriations in excess of the FY1995 level (if any) on high poverty areas. However, if appropriations do not substantially rise above the FY1995 level, there will be very little increase in targeting on high poverty LEAs.

- Local discretion over selection of schools is reduced somewhat, and new requirements set minimum levels of grants per child to individual schools, in an effort to increase the concentration of Title I funds on relatively high poverty schools. In addition, schools could be automatically qualified to participate if their percentage of children from low income families is at least 35% (up from 25%).

- As noted earlier, participating states will be required to adopt curriculum content and pupil performance standards, plus related assessments. These standards and assessments will be used as the basis for rewarding successful programs and taking corrective actions against unsuccessful ones.

- There is increased stress on professional development, and an attempt to assure that instructional aides paid with Title I grants are adequately qualified and supervised.

- The 1994 amendments establish new requirements for the coordination of Title I with a variety of educational and other programs and services, such as health and social services.

- Title I funds may now be used to pay the costs of school choice programs involving Title I-eligible schools.

- State and local flexibility in the operation of Title I is increased in several ways, especially through a broad regulatory waiver authority (title XIV, part D) that applies to all of the ESEA.

- Parental involvement requirements are expanded to include development of a parental involvement plan by the LEA, and school-parent compacts establishing shared responsibility for supporting the achievement of Title I participants.

- There are substantial new planning requirements for participating states and LEAs.

Obviously, none of the currently available evaluations of Title I are based on the program as reauthorized in 1994. In fact, given the extended period of time allowed for

full implementation of the new Title I provisions regarding standards and assessments[34], it may be **several** years before comprehensive national evaluation data on the revised program become available.

POSSIBLE "EXPLANATIONS" OF THE FINDINGS OF LIMITED TITLE I EFFECTS ON PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

In spite of the limitations on the significance of existing Title I pupil achievement data described above, these findings nevertheless probably have some relevance for current programs. Few would argue with the proposition that the aggregate impact of Title I on pupil achievement has been less than might be desired. As was described above, there are also certain patterns that appear consistently in the Title I evaluations -- e.g., gains that are greater in the early elementary grades than in later grades.

This section provides a discussion of possible explanations of the most consistent patterns of achievement results thus far in Title I evaluations. Please note that these explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive -- each of them may apply to at least some individual Title I programs. At the same time, it is impossible to precisely or rigorously determine the validity of any of these explanations or their individual contribution to existing patterns of Title I effects. Also, please note that, as with the available achievement data, these explanations apply to the program prior to implementation of the 1994 amendments. As is discussed in the next section of this report, the 1994 amendments address at least some of the concerns raised by these possible explanations of the previous impact of Title I.

Marginality of the Program and Its Resources

The impact of Title I alone on the overall education program of participating pupils has almost always been marginal in the past, whether measured in terms of instructional time, resources, or funds. At least before the 1994 amendments, Title I programs have generally operated in substantial isolation from the schools' regular instructional program. Participating children have typically received only a few hours of instruction per week by a teacher paid with Title I funds in a pull-out setting, the services of a classroom aide with often limited qualifications, or a schoolwide program where funds may have been used as a spur to general improvement or simply to reduce average class size by a few pupils.[35]

In terms of funding and resources, Title I funds per pupil served have been equal to approximately 15% of total average expenditures per pupil -- a relatively marginal increase, and well below the authorized level in the statute of 40%. Further, in many cases, unequal distribution of state and local funds among a state's LEAs may mean that

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[34]The new Title I requirements regarding state content and performance standards, and assessments linked to them, need not be fully implemented by all states until the 2000-01 school year. In the meantime, states are to select transitional assessments if they have not yet established standards and assessments that fully comply with the amendments.

[35]See: ED, *Reinventing Chapter 1*, p. 107-120.

Title I funds may simply make up part of the gap in overall funding between high-wealth and low-wealth LEAs, rather than providing a true supplement to an "adequate" base of state and local funding.[36]

This has resulted from four factors: (1) LEA efforts to spread funds relatively thinly across a large number of schools, and school efforts to serve as many of their educationally disadvantaged pupils as possible; (2) allocation formula provisions that did not substantially target high poverty areas; (3) program policies intended to enhance targeting on eligible pupils and accountability, but that had the unintended consequence of tending to isolate Title I from regular instructional programs; and (4) limited total appropriations, in comparison to the authorized level of funding or the amount necessary to serve all eligible pupils.

Variation in Effectiveness Among Different School or LEA Programs -- Need For More Systematic Research and Development

As noted earlier, aggregate reporting of limited effects of Title I participation on pupil achievement masks the apparently substantial variability of measured effectiveness in different LEA and school programs. While ED and others have undertaken efforts to identify specific characteristics of more versus less effective Title I or other educational programs for disadvantaged pupils, it may be argued that these efforts have not been sufficiently funded, sustained, or widely disseminated to provide clear guidance to states, LEAs, and schools on how to improve program effectiveness. They have also been hampered by problems (discussed earlier) with the tests typically used to measure effectiveness. Guidance specifically on relationships between the effectiveness of different approaches and their costs might be especially useful, but very little information of this sort is available.

Total federal funding for research, development, demonstrations, and dissemination of information on effective practices is relatively modest. Funds appropriated for these purposes would include amounts for Title I evaluation, studies, and technical assistance ($3.7 million for FY1995[37]); and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's (OERI's) National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students ($4.7 million for FY1995). A new authority enacted in 1994 to test, evaluate, and disseminate findings regarding innovative practices in the education of disadvantaged children (ESEA Title I, Sec. 1502) has not yet been funded. An unknown portion of the funds for OERI's National Diffusion Network (NDN), which disseminates information on all sorts of

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[36]RAND. Institute on Education and Training. *Federal Policy Options for Improving the Education of Low-Income Students. Volume III. Countering Inequity in School Finance*. Santa Monica, Ca., 1994. 48 p.

[37]The initial appropriation for these activities was $8,270,000, but $4,606,000 of this amount was rescinded under P.L. 104-19.

exemplary education programs, should also be included.[38] When these amounts are combined (including a rough estimate for the NDN[39]), the resulting total is a relatively small 0.21% of total Title I grants for FY1995. Nevertheless, some might oppose increasing funds for Title I-related research and development by pointing to the limited knowledge gained from existing research.

Another aspect of this topic is that such research and development activities on the education of disadvantaged children as have been undertaken have generally focused on preschool and early elementary pupils and programs. While this follows from the long-term tendency for LEAs to focus Title I services on these grades, and a common assumption that supplementary services are generally more effective for younger children, the relative lack of attention by researchers may also help to explain why Title I services appear to be less effective for secondary level pupils than for younger ones.[40]

Program Structure and Strategy

There are several aspects of at least the pre-1994 structure and implicit strategy of Title I that may help to explain its somewhat limited effects on pupil achievement.[41] First, although there have been efforts since at least 1988 to focus on more advanced academic skills in Title I programs, all evidence indicates that most Title I programs still emphasize *basic skills* instruction. While there is an apparent logic to such an emphasis, given the basic skills deficits of most Title I participants, and Title I programs have often been successful in imparting such skills to participants, many analysts have argued in recent years that "too much" emphasis on addressing basic skills deficits may simply leave disadvantaged pupils further behind their more advantaged peers. A related factor has been the pre-1994 lack of requirements that Title I pupils be expected to meet "challenging" academic content and performance standards.

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[38]Total NDN funding for FY1995 was $11,780,000. The initial FY1995 appropriation was $14,480,000, but $2,700,000 was rescinded under P.L. 104-19. It cannot be precisely determined what share of NDN funds were used to disseminate programs for the education of disadvantaged children.

[39]An arbitrary assumption is made that since appropriations for Title I LEA grants constitute approximately one-half of total funds for ED's elementary and secondary education programs, then one-half of NDN appropriations may be devoted to disseminating information on exemplary programs for the education of disadvantaged children. Since NDN activities involve all aspects of elementary and secondary education, including many in which there is no substantial federal programmatic role, this is more likely to be an overestimate than an underestimate.

[40]ED has recently (Aug. 1995) attempted to address this concern by publication and dissemination of *Raising the Achievement of Secondary School Students*, an "idea book" with "profiles of promising practices."

[41]Another structural factor limiting the effects of Title I was discussed in the preceding section -- the generally *marginal* characteristic of Title I programs, in relation to the regular education program. This was mentioned separately above because it is such a major factor underlying almost all of the explanations discussed in this section. The relatively small scale of most Title I programs, and their lack of substantial linkages to the regular instructional program, have provided little basis for a positive impact by Title I on the quality of the overall instructional program of participating pupils.

The *incentives* faced by Title I program administrators and staff in the past have been problematic. They have often faced stronger and clearer incentives to meet high standards for auditing and fiscal accountability than high levels of program effectiveness. In some cases, improved pupil performance could result in reduced Title I grants, since grant amounts to schools often took pupil achievement into account, providing funds at least partially in proportion to the number of low-achieving pupils in each school, in contrast to the 1994 amendment that school grants be based solely on the number of pupils from low-income families. While Title I has had program improvement requirements since 1988, the performance standards were often minimal, and they were based on assessments about which there were serious concerns. The legislation has also authorized bonus payments to especially effective schools since 1988, but few LEAs have exercised this authority.

Some have also argued that the program has been insufficiently *flexible*, and has sometimes stifled innovative approaches. At the same time, as evidenced by the pre-1994 experience with schoolwide programs, many Title I administrators and staff have seemed to lack sufficient incentives or motivation to use increased flexibility imaginatively and productively.

Many LEAs may have chosen relatively *unproductive uses* for their Title I funds. For example, a substantial percentage of schoolwide programs have used their increased flexibility to simply decrease class size by a couple of pupils per teacher -- i.e., a level of class size reduction that research indicates is unlikely to significantly improve pupil achievement. Another example is the widespread use of Title I funds to pay the salaries of teacher aides, who generally lack a bachelor's degree, and often do not even have a high school diploma or equivalent, rather than using the funds for fewer, but better qualified teachers, or instructional equipment. Some have also argued that Title I programs typically provide too little professional development services for all staff. A final example is the common practice of pulling pupils out of regular instruction in reading or mathematics in order to provide small group instruction in that subject by a Title I teacher. While this does not apply to all "pullout" methods of providing Title I services, the result frequently is that total instructional time is not increased, and Title I funds have not provided the net supplement to learning time that disadvantaged pupils may need. This exemplifies a tension that has existed throughout the life of Title I between a preference in maximizing local flexibility in deciding how to use Title I funds to serve disadvantaged pupils, while attempting to make LEAs aware of instructional methods that are potentially most effective, and to provide incentives for LEAs to adopt such techniques. While the federal government has generally avoided being prescriptive about instructional methods in Title I programs, it might possibly provide more active advice regarding the potential productivity of various uses of funds under a program such as Title I.

Another factor that may explain the limited effectiveness of Title I in raising the academic achievement of participating pupils is the relatively high rate of mobility of children from low-income families among different schools and LEAs, described and

analyzed in a recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report.[42] High rates of pupil mobility into and out of various Title I programs and schools likely reduces their effectiveness for all pupils involved. This may be especially true if pupils transfer between schools using substantially different instructional strategies or curricula.

A final structural characteristic of typical Title I programs that may limit their effectiveness is a lack of follow-up services for "graduates" of the program. Studies have generally indicated that the relative achievement levels of pupils begin to decline when they are no longer served by the program, especially as pupils leave elementary school. This results from a combination of insufficient funds to serve all eligible pupils, a general emphasis on earlier ages and grades in targeting Title I funds, and an eventual loss of eligibility for participants if their achievement gains are sufficient so that they are no longer among the most educationally disadvantaged in their school. While providing Title I services on at least the current scale to pupils throughout their school career may be unrealistically expensive, a continuation of a modest level of services to pupils no longer in regular Title I programs might maximize longer-term achievement gains.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF LIMITED TITLE I EFFECTS ON ACHIEVEMENT BEEN ADDRESSED BY THE IASA?

Major elements of the 1994 IASA amendments to Title I have been discussed earlier in this report, both as a whole and with respect to several individual aspects of Title I. In concluding this report, we review the extent to which these amendments, which are now beginning to be implemented, do or do not address the categories of explanations for the program's limited effectiveness in raising pupil achievement in the past. This is discussed with respect to each group of possible explanations below.

Overall, while the 1994 amendments to Title I may be said to have addressed, at least partially, most of the plausible explanations for Title I's limited effectiveness, it is unclear how effective these legislative changes are likely to be. It will be several years before some of the amendments, such as those involving curriculum standards and assessments, are fully implemented. Since they focus primarily on increased targeting of appropriations above the FY1995 level, it seems very unlikely that IASA Provisions for greater targeting of funds on high poverty areas will have substantial impact in the near future. Further, there is evidence of substantial inertia in local Title I programs -- responses to previous legislative changes have often been found to be relatively slow and minimal.

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[42]According to this report, approximately 30% of a nationally representative sample of third grade pupils from low-income families had attended three or more different schools since they began first grade, compared to approximately 10% of third grade pupils from nonpoor families. The report also found that pupils who change schools frequently are much more likely to have low achievement levels than similar students who do not change schools frequently. (U.S. General Accounting Office. *Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently, Harming Their Education*. GAO/HEHS-94-45. Washington, Feb. 1994. 55 p.)

Marginality of the Program and Its Resources

In several respects, the 1994 Title I amendments attempt to make typical programs a less marginal part of the overall educational program for participating pupils and schools. However, the actual legislative changes, coupled with subsequent funding decisions, may not have the intended result with respect to some of these provisions.

As noted earlier, Title I programs have frequently been marginal in two respects: (1) they have had limited relationship to, coordination with, or influence on, the regular education program of participating pupils; and (2) their funding level has been relatively low in comparison to either total funding or level of funds needed to serve all eligible pupils, especially in high poverty schools or LEAs. With respect to the first aspect of marginality, the provisions for states and LEAs to establish content and performance standards for Title I pupils that are applicable to all other pupils as well,[43] and to base Title I pupil assessments on those standards, are likely to enhance linkages and coordination of Title I to regular education programs. The substantial expansion of authority to operate schoolwide programs under Title I -- lowering the eligibility threshold from 75% to 50% of pupils from low-income families, and expanding the authority to include several federal programs beyond Title I -- should significantly increase the number of cases where Title I and regular education programs are closely linked.

Regarding the second aspect of marginality, Title I was amended by the IASA in ways that might increase somewhat the targeting of available funds on the highest poverty schools **within** LEAs. LEAs are required to allocate funds among participating schools solely on the basis of their number of children from low-income families, and in an amount equal to at least 125% of the Title I grant received by the LEA per low-income child. Finally, the "automatic" school eligibility threshold was raised from a 25% to a 35% low-income pupil rate. Although some of these provisions may, in some cases, actually reduce the targeting of funds on the highest poverty schools,[44] in general they were intended, and seem likely, to somewhat increase such within-LEA targeting.[45]

Finally, with respect to targeting funds on the highest poverty **LEAs**, the 1994 amendments provided that almost all such targeting would occur with respect to appropriation increases **above** the FY1995 level; however, it appears likely that there will be no such increases in the immediate future, leaving the new "targeted grant" allocation

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[43]See footnote 7 regarding a waiver of this requirement that is provided in program regulations.

[44]For example, in the past at least some LEAs have apparently allocated to schoolwide programs a higher amount per pupil than they allocated to participating schools with lower poverty rates; now, they must allocate the same amount per pupil from a low-income family to each participating school.

[45]Participating LEAs are also now generally required to serve all schools with a low-income child percentage of 75% or more, no matter what their grade level, in contrast to the previous law under which LEAs could choose to serve only schools at certain grade levels, even if this left very high poverty schools at other grade levels unserved. However, it is not clear how large an impact this change will have -- i.e., how many schools with 75% or more low-income pupils have not been served due to a local focus on other grade levels.

formula unimplemented. The one LEA targeting provision that will be implemented eliminates from eligibility the small number of LEAs with fewer than 10 children from low-income families or a low-income pupil rate of less than 2%. This is likely to have minimal impact on the overall allocation of funds.

Thus, the IASA has addressed some of the major aspects of the program's past marginality, but at present it appears that efforts to better integrate Title I and regular instruction may be more effective than efforts to better target resources on high need schools and decrease the marginality of Title I resources in those schools.

Variation in Effectiveness Among Different Title I Programs/Need for More Systematic Research and Development

The IASA and other 1994 legislation attempted to support increased systematic research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance to Title I programs in a number of ways, although the possible impact of these is unknown, especially given funding limitations. With respect to research and development, the IASA authorized a new program of Title I demonstration grants -- competitive grants by the Secretary of Education to test and evaluate the effects of innovative approaches in Title I programs. However, this program has not yet been funded. Separate legislation in 1994 authorizes the establishment of a new National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students under the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in ED. This Institute would support research and demonstration projects, and is just beginning to be implemented. The IASA also authorized a new national assessment of Title I, and a longitudinal study of the effects of Title I and other federal education programs (discussed earlier).

Regarding dissemination and technical assistance, the IASA provides for the replacement of previous series of separate technical assistance centers (TACs) for Title I and certain other ED programs with a new series of comprehensive TACs, as well as a continuation of the National Diffusion Network (discussed earlier). The new TACs are currently being established. It remains to be seen whether the comprehensive TACs will be more effective than the previous system, which had the advantage of specialization but the disadvantage of very limited resources compared to the broad scope of their responsibilities. The IASA also required states to establish a new structure of assistance to LEAs and schools through school support teams and "distinguished educators."

On the whole, the IASA and related legislation authorize federal support for more systematic research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance for Title I programs. However, some of these may be implemented on a relatively small scale or not at all due to funding decisions (including FY1995 rescissions discussed earlier).

Program Structure and Strategy

The ways in which the IASA addresses the specific aspects of Title I's structure and strategy discussed above include the following:

- Advanced Versus Basic Skills -- The IASA adds relatively little to the emphasis on more advanced skill instruction added in the Hawkins-Stafford Act in 1988. That pre-IASA legislation stated that programs should focus on improving both advanced and basic skills of participating pupils, and specifically required that pupils be assessed in both these areas. However, it is not evident that these provisions had substantial effects on most local programs other than assuring that purported tests of "advanced skills" were administered. The IASA contains similar general guidance that programs should emphasize advanced skills, but otherwise addresses this issue somewhat indirectly, though with potentially greater impact, through requirements for "challenging" content and performance standards, applicable to Title I participants and all other pupils, that "encourage the teaching of advanced skills." (Sec. 1111(b)(1)(D)(i)(III))

- Marginalism -- This topic was discussed immediately above.

- Incentives -- The IASA removes one possible disincentive to improve performance through its requirement to base individual school grants solely on the number of pupils from low-income families. Previously, there was a more broad requirement to base school grants on the number of children to be served and their needs, which could have resulted in lower grants to a school that reduced its number of low-achieving pupils. The IASA also attempts to establish a positive incentive through authorizing states to use a share of their program improvement funds for bonus grants to schools with especially successful programs, and authorizing LEAs to reward such schools in nonmonetary ways (e.g., greater decisionmaking authority). However, a pre-IASA authority for LEAs to use a share of their grants for bonuses to especially successful schools was infrequently used, and current Title I appropriations legislation for FY1996 would eliminate all funding for state program improvement grants.

- Flexibility -- There are several important ways in which the IASA and related legislation increased potential state and local flexibility in operating Title I programs. In Title I itself, several provisions increase flexibility -- substantial expansion of eligibility to operate schoolwide programs, and extension of authority to combine Title I funds with those under several other federal programs in these schools; and the authority for states to use pupil assessments of their choice for accountability purposes. More broadly, the IASA contains a general authority for states and LEAs to request the waiver of many types of regulations affecting all ESEA programs (ESEA Title XIV, Part D). Finally, two varieties of authority to waive a wide range of regulations affecting almost all ED programs were authorized under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Thus, there has been a very substantial increase in the potential degree of flexibility available to administrators and staff of local Title I programs.

  However, some types of regulations may not be waived under any of these authorities (e.g., regulations regarding allocation of funds, fiscal accountability, or services to private school pupils), and in some cases requests to waive

regulations must be made on a case-by-case basis. There are also certain respects in which flexibility has actually been reduced under the IASA (e.g., new requirements for states to establish content and performance standards for Title I participants, development of program plans by states and LEAs, coordination of Title I with other human and social service programs, and tighter provisions for school selection and allocation of funds among them, reflecting a common tension between the goals of targeting and flexibility).

- Possibly unproductive uses of Title I funds by LEAs -- There are relatively few IASA provisions that directly address specific, possibly unproductive uses of Title I funds. A requirement was added that teacher aides must generally have at least a high school level of education. A new emphasis is placed on professional development of Title I staff, although there are still relatively few concrete requirements in this area. As noted above, new forms of technical assistance to support innovative approaches are provided, but it is not yet clear that these will be more substantial than previous efforts. Overall, the issue of productivity and efficacy is addressed more broadly, through the revised standards, assessment, and program improvement provisions, while leaving LEAs generally free to select program structures and strategies.

POSSIBLE NEED FOR A SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT APPROACH, IN AT LEAST SOME CIRCUMSTANCES

A final possible explanation for the limited achievement effects of Title I participation is that even with the 1994 amendments, Title I as currently conceived is frequently inadequate to address the needs of some of the most disadvantaged pupils, and different approaches are needed to effectively serve such pupils. There is substantial direct and indirect evidence that Title I participants in schools with the highest poverty rates gain least in achievement. *Overall, the program appears to be moderately effective with marginally disadvantaged pupils (who tend to relatively quickly "graduate out" of the program) and/or participants in low- to moderate-poverty schools, but not effective in very high poverty schools or with longer-term participants whose achievement does not increase sufficiently for them to "graduate out" of the program.* One probable reason is found in the evidence that achievement levels for all pupils tend to decline significantly when school poverty rates become very high. In addition, the highest poverty schools and their pupils are most likely to be affected by such environmental influences as high rates of crime, inadequate housing, high rates of parental unemployment, parents with limited capacity to be active partners in their children's education, health problems, deteriorating school facilities, etc.

While the statute addresses the special needs of such schools by authorizing them to operate schoolwide programs and placing new emphasis on coordination of education with other human services for pupils and their families (health care, housing, etc.), this may not be sufficient in some cases. As noted earlier, the last national assessment of the program found that a large percentage of such schools used their increased flexibility in limited, unimaginative, and probably not very productive ways.

Given the likelihood that Title I has been least effective in the highest poverty schools, and that this may continue to be the case under the post-1994 statute, it might be appropriate to consider alternatives to Title I as currently conceived in these situations. It is beyond the scope of this report to describe in detail these proposals, or their potential advantages and disadvantages. Three of the numerous possible types of alternatives to the current Title I program for the highest poverty areas are discussed briefly below:

Expanded School Choice Options for Pupils in High Poverty Areas -- Choice, Charters, and Residential Schools

For several years, a number of analysts have recommended that increased school choice options should be provided particularly to pupils living in high poverty areas. The rationale for such targeting of school choice options is that public schools have been relatively ineffective in raising pupil achievement in many high poverty areas, some private schools or public schools in lower-poverty areas might be more effective, and poor families lack the financial means to pay tuition and other costs of attending private schools or public schools in more affluent areas (especially if they are in a different LEA). The single public-private school choice program that is currently in operation (Milwaukee),[46] as well as another that is authorized to begin next year (Cleveland), and a scholarship program that would have been authorized for District of Columbia students under the House-passed (but not the conference) version of FY1996 appropriations legislation (H.R. 2546),[47] are limited to children from low-income families.

The Title I statute currently has a provision allowing use of funds for school choice options involving only public schools that participate in Title I. This might be modified to expand the options to include non-Title I public schools, in the same or other LEAs, as well as private schools. Other approaches that have been recently proposed include demonstration programs of public-private school choice for children in low-income families living in relatively high poverty areas (H.R. 1640, S. 618, S. 1210), or living specifically in "empowerment zones" (S. 1252).

Another possible option for schools serving very high poverty areas is charter schools. Charter schools are public schools, either established as new schools or created from existing public or private schools, that are released from many types of regulations that would normally apply to public schools, in return for accountability in terms of outcomes for students. Although the charter school concept has been developed only recently, legislation authorizing such schools has been adopted in the past couple of years by several states, and several such schools have been recently established. Support for

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[46]See: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Federal Support of School Choice: Background and Options.* CRS Report for Congress No. 95-344 EPW, by Wayne C. Riddle and James B. Stedman. Washington, 1995. p. 5-6. (Hereafter cited as U.S. Library of Congress, *Federal Support of School Choice)*

[47]See: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *District of Columbia Public Schools: Status of Federal Legislation Affecting Them.* CRS Report for Congress No. 95-1030 EPW, by Wayne Riddle. Washington, 1995. 14 p. (Hereafter cited as U.S. Library of Congress, *District of Columbia Public Schools)*

charter schools is premised on the hypothesis that a key barrier to increased effectiveness of public schools is the range of state and local regulations to which the schools are subjected, as well as the extensive influence of local school boards over them, and that reducing such regulation and influence will give school staff the flexibility to design and implement more effective instructional approaches.

However, because the concept is new, the validity of this hypothesis has not been substantially tested or evaluated. Further, charter schools remain subject to a number of at least state and (in general) federal regulations, and it is not clear that the most "burdensome" regulations have been eliminated in the states with charter school laws. A national program of grants to support state and local charter school programs is authorized by the IASA, and support for charter schools in the District of Columbia would be authorized under legislation recently passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate (H.R. 2546).

The multiple problems inherent in the environment of many high poverty areas might also be addressed by residential public schools for students from low-income families living in those areas. The assumption here is that removing students from a highly disadvantaged environment may be the most direct and efficient way to deal with a multiplicity of severe social problems. However, costs per pupil would be relatively high, the environmental factors would remain unaddressed (except with respect to the particular pupils served, and for them only while resident at the school), and relationships between parents and children might be weakened. Several states support a limited number of public residential high schools; however, these schools are intended to serve selected groups of gifted or disabled pupils, not pupils from low-income areas. Legislation has recently been passed by the House of Representatives (H.R. 2546) that would authorize support for establishing a residential school for District of Columbia pupils.[48]

Comprehensive Efforts to Address the Educational, Safety, Housing, Health Care, Employment, and Other Needs of Pupils and Parents in High Poverty Areas

It is possible that no education program alone can significantly improve pupil achievement in many of the Nation's highest poverty schools. A comprehensive effort to simultaneously address the multiple human service needs of high poverty areas might be more productive, albeit also much more expensive and difficult to coordinate through a multiplicity of federal, state, and local agencies. The concept of comprehensively addressing human service needs in high poverty areas could be combined with regulatory flexibility to maximize state and local flexibility in using federal aid from several sources to serve high poverty areas. Programs or proposals to provide at least several of the comprehensive range of relevant services in recent years have included the Bush Administration's "Weed and Seed" program -- an Administration initiative to focus a share of funds from several different programs and agencies on selected high poverty areas -- the Family and Community Endeavor Schools (FACES) authorized by the Violent Crime

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[48]For a description and analysis of school choice programs and proposals, including charter schools, at federal, state, and local levels, see: U.S. Library of Congress, *Federal Support of School Choice*. Also see: U.S. Library of Congress, *District of Columbia Public Schools*.

Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and 104th Congress legislation to establish "empowerment zones" in certain high poverty areas (see S. 1252). However, these proposals either have not been enacted, or have not consistently received substantial funding over time.

An approach that is less broad than those described in the preceding paragraphs, yet more comprehensive than the typical Title I program, is the Even Start program authorized under Part B of Title I. Under Even Start, young children living in relatively high poverty areas are provided with early childhood education, while their parents are given both basic (high school level) education and instruction in parenting skills. Even Start programs may provide these services directly or, more often, coordinate their provision by other agencies and programs (e.g., Head Start, Adult Education Act, etc.). While Even Start does not address needs in such areas as crime or housing, it does focus on the educational (and certain related) needs of disadvantaged young children and their parents jointly.

Substantially Higher Title I Grants Per Poor Child, and More Intensive Technical Assistance, for the Highest Poverty Schools

A third type of alternative to the current Title I strategy for meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils in very high poverty areas would be to provide assistance similar to that currently available, but on a much more intensive basis. This approach is predicated on the assumption that the basic strategy of Title I is appropriate for even the highest poverty schools, but in practice the level of funding and technical assistance provided to these schools is inadequate. LEAs might be authorized, or even required, to allocate higher Title I funds per child from a low-income family to very high poverty schools. However, additional funds alone will not address the reported failure of many schoolwide programs in the past to employ innovative, more potentially effective instructional approaches. Thus, substantially increased technical assistance, whether from states, federally supported technical assistance centers, or other sources would likely be needed to assure that increased aid is used productively.

Not expectedly, the IASA does not substantially address most of the issues and alternatives discussed above that are based on an assumption that a very different approach may be needed to meet the needs of disadvantaged children in at least some high poverty areas. The authorization for use of Title I funds for school choice programs is limited to public schools already selected to participate in the program. There is a separate, relatively small authority in the IASA for federal aid to charter schools, but it is not especially focused on disadvantaged pupils. Efforts to go beyond service coordination to direct, joint support of comprehensive education, housing, health, safety, employment, and other services to high poverty areas are beyond the scope of the IASA or any other current ED program. And efforts to provide substantially higher Title I grants per poor child, and more intensive technical assistance, for the highest poverty schools, by definition exceed the level of support to these schools that is provided under the IASA, at least at current funding levels.