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# FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY AS AN ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

KENNETH K. WONG\*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The federal government has played a primary role in improving schooling opportunities for children of poverty. Since the 1960s, the federal government has relied on several major educational programs that are designed to promote racial integration, protect the educational rights of the handicapped, assist non-native English learners, and provide supplemental resources to children from at-risk backgrounds. By far the largest federal program in elementary and secondary education is Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was originally passed in 1965 at the height of the Civil Rights movement and social reforms. Despite several revisions and extensions, ESEA Title I continues to adhere to its original redistributive goal of federal assistance to learning-deficient children from low-income families. As declared in the 1965 Act, ESEA Title I was designed "to provide financial assistance . . . to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs . . . which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children."<sup>1</sup>

Thirty years later, the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act,<sup>2</sup> which reauthorized Title I, began to put greater emphasis

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1. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10, § 201, 79 Stat. 27 (1965) (codified as amended at 20 U.S.C. § 6301 (2002)).

2. Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-382, 108 Stat. 3518 (1994).

on academic accountability in Title I schools. In January 2002, President George Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,<sup>3</sup> which takes a significant step in sharpening the focus on school performance. Title I of the new law is labeled as "Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged," sending a clear signal on the nation's commitment on raising school performance. Clearly, these latest, bold legislative extensions of Title I constitute a new phase in the policy development of Title I during the course of its thirty-seven year history. In this article, I will not only synthesize the lessons learned from the current literature, but also trace the major phases of policy development that the federal policy has gone through over the last thirty-seven years. To avoid confusion, I have used Title I throughout this article even though the program's label was changed during the 1980s.<sup>4</sup>

For analytical purposes, I differentiate three phases in the development of Title I policy over time. Each of these phases, though interrelated, is connected to a particular policy challenge, faced with a distinct set of political factors, and involved with new institutional practices. Rationales behind these changes are also discussed. As shown in Table 1, the policy agenda in Title I has expanded from its original intent to address poverty in the 1960s to include instructional coherence and student achievement in the 1990s.

The first policy phase (1960s to 1980s) involved intergovernmental accommodation on targeting federal Title I funds for low-income children. Much of the research on Title I during the first ten to fifteen years focused on local response to federal direction in Title I as a "categorical" program. During this phase, local control was challenged by federal antipoverty objectives. The second phase emerged during the late 1980s when policy makers and educators began to pay greater attention to the quality of instruction and curriculum in the Title I program. With the passage of the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act, the schoolwide program gained prominence as a leading reform strategy to reduce "fragmentation" between Title I and the regular classroom in schools with high concentrations of poor children. Indeed, the number of schoolwide programs increased from about 1,300 in 1990 to over 9,000 in 1998, a jump from 10% to 50% in the number of eligible schools.<sup>5</sup> The third phase began

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3. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

4. The program was labeled "Chapter 1" from 1981 through 1994.

5. See MARY ANN MILLSAP ET AL., U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., THE CHAPTER 1 IMPLEMENTATION STUDY: INTERIM REPORT 3-1 (1992); see also State-by-State Sur-

around the mid-1990s when competing visions shaped the agenda to raise student performance in Title I schools. Frustrated by the lack of significant academic progress in most Title I schools, reformers made serious attempts to restructure Title I in different directions, namely, whole school reform, district-based support, annual testing, and consumer-based or voucher programs. Taken as a whole, Title I has reduced its focus on regulatory compliance but increased its emphasis on outcome-based accountability.

This article examines the politics, the knowledge base, and the institutional practices in the development and implementation of federal Title I policy in each of the three phases. This article synthesizes the literature and, where appropriate, draws on the author's own research on Title I. Finally, this article explores policy implications on school accountability and anti-poverty issues.

## II. FIRST PHASE: WHEN LOCAL PRACTICES ADAPTED TO FEDERAL ANTI-POVERTY DIRECTION, 1960s-1980s

The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) marked a significant turning point in the federal government's role in addressing poverty and inequity issues. At the time of the enactment of ESEA, the federal government declared "War on Poverty" and launched the Great Society programs. Federal activism in social issues followed the 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*,<sup>6</sup> and the congressional enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Hundreds of federal categorical (or single-purpose) programs were formulated to provide supplemental resources for local agencies to combat social and economic problems in poor communities. The passage of ESEA and other federal programs contributed to a significant increase in intergovernmental transfers. By 1980, there were approximately 500 federal categorical programs, including such major antipoverty programs as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, food stamps, low-income housing, bilingual education, school desegregation grants, and compensatory education (Title I).

The literature on federalism has looked for structural sources to explain why social redistribution is more likely to come from the national government. The federal government enjoys a broader revenue base in which taxes are raised primarily

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vey, Laboratory for Student Successes, Temple University (1998) (unpublished survey) (on file with author).

6. 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

on the ability-to-pay principle and represents a constituency with heterogeneous demands.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it has both the fiscal capacity and the political resources (often facilitated by interest groups) to respond to social needs. In contrast, localities are more limited in their ability to address social needs because their most active voters come mostly from the middle class, because they compete with one another for investment in an open system in which businesses and labor can move freely, and because they have a restricted tax base (namely, reliance on land values as a major source of income).<sup>8</sup> Consequently, both incentives and regulations are necessary in order to alter local practices.

The incentive for local government to meet anti-poverty objectives lies in the way federal funds are distributed. The territorial impact of federal grants has contributed partly to the popularity of Title I in Congress over time. For example, in 1990, the federal grant provided supplemental resources to sixty-four percent of all the schools in the nation, covering virtually every congressional district.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, big city districts are not the only beneficiaries of compensatory education funds. Indeed, over twenty percent of federal aid goes to districts with fewer than 2,500 students.<sup>10</sup> Districts with enrollments between 2,500 and 25,000 receive almost forty-five percent of the funds.<sup>11</sup> Because there are Title I programs in almost every congressional district, partisan conflict has generally been limited during the appropriations process.

To ensure its redistributive focus, Title I policy maintains federal direction to counteract the local tendency of anti-redistribution. Designed to alleviate poverty and create opportunities for the under-represented, Great Society programs required local governments to reformulate the way services were delivered. Because revenues in anti-poverty programs mostly came from the U.S. Congress, the federal government imposed numerous complicated guidelines upon local schools. These regulations were intended to make certain that disadvantaged pupils directly benefited from federal dollars.

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7. See Theodore J. Lowi, *American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory*, 16 *WORLD POL.* 677 (1964) (discussing the political theory behind America's national redistributive policies). See also PAUL E. PETERSON, *CITY LIMITS* (1981) (discussing the economic realities of local and federal government in a redistributive system); KENNETH K. WONG, *CITY CHOICES: EDUCATION AND HOUSING* (1990) (discussing the economic challenges for American cities and the federal government's role in redistributive policies).

8. See generally PETERSON, *supra* note 7; WONG, *supra* note 7.

9. See MILLSAP, *supra* note 5, at 1-4 ex.1.1.

10. *Id.* at 1-6 ex.1.2.

11. *Id.*

In the case of ESEA Title I, extensive local misuses of federal resources prompted the federal government to write tighter regulations during the 1970s. Most notably, a study conducted by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund during the first years of the program found that federal funds were being used for "general school purposes; to initiate system-wide programs; to buy books and supplies for all school children in the system; to pay general overhead and operating expenses; [and] to meet new teacher contracts which call for higher salaries."<sup>12</sup> Consequently, throughout the 1970s, the program acquired an exceedingly well-defined set of rules and guidelines that many state and local officials had difficulty putting in place. In Title I, local districts were required to use federal funds in schools with the highest concentration of poor students, to use federal dollars as a supplement instead of supplanting local revenues in Title I schools, to spend as many local dollars on these schools as any other school in the district (i.e., comparability requirement), and to commit at least the same level of local resources as they provided in previous years (i.e., maintenance of efforts requirement).<sup>13</sup> During the 1970s and the early 1980s, Title I required the formation of advisory councils composed of parents of children participating in the program.<sup>14</sup> Typical of a federal categorical program, only eligible students would receive federally funded Title I service.

As expected, there was local resistance to federal targeting on special needs populations. In a comparative study of four major federal education programs in four urban districts, Peterson, Rabe, and Wong found that local districts were tempted, to a greater or lesser extent, to divert funds away from these redistributive programs to other purposes.<sup>15</sup> Title I funds, for example, were used to benefit the entire school population during the 1970s and the 1980s. In my analysis of the 1978 federal audit reports on the Baltimore program, for example, a total of \$14.6 million in federal funds were allegedly used by the district to supplant local funding for general school purposes, including hiring of central office employees "handling requisitions for repair of equipment, preparing reports on a state-funded driver education

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12. R. Martin & P. McClure, *Title I of ESEA: Is It Helping Poor Children?* (Washington Research Project of the Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy and the NAACP Legal Defense of Education Fund, Washington, D.C. 1969) (on file with author).

13. See NAT'L INST. OF EDUC., U.S. DEP'T OF HEALTH, EDUC., AND WELFARE, ADMINISTRATION OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION ch.2 (1977).

14. See *id.*

15. See PAUL. E. PETERSON ET AL., WHEN FEDERALISM WORKS 136-40 (1986).

program, coordinating printing for the entire district, and budgeting control on personnel position and payroll authorization for the entire system."<sup>16</sup>

With the passage of time, a tendency towards increasing intergovernmental accommodation seems to have emerged in Title I policy. This shift from intergovernmental conflict to regulatory accommodation has been facilitated by several factors. At the district and school level, a new professional cadre more identified with program objectives was recruited to administer special programs, and local officials became more sensitive to federal expectations. At the federal level, policymakers began to doubt whether detailed regulations, tight audits, and comprehensive evaluations were unmixed blessings. Appropriate changes and adjustments occurred as a result of the state agency's role as an active mediator. By the 1980s, administrators developed program identifications that transcended governmental boundaries and a commitment to a coordinated effort gradually emerged.

To be sure, the pace of moving towards federal-local cooperation in the management of special programs has not been uniform. There are significant variations among districts.<sup>17</sup> Wong found that local reform in Title I services depends on the district's fiscal conditions, political culture, and the policymaking autonomy of the program professionals.<sup>18</sup> More severe and prolonged conflict is likely to be found in districts with a weak fiscal capacity and a program apparatus that is subject to strong patronage-based local practice. A combination of these fiscal and political circumstances hinders local reform towards redistributive goals. At the other end of the continuum are districts with strong fiscal capacity, autonomous program professionals, and most of all, teacher commitment to policy.<sup>19</sup>

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16. Memorandum from U.S. Dep't of Educ., Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, to David W. Hornbeck, Superintendent of Schools, State Department of Education, Maryland 9 (July 29, 1981) (on file with author).

17. Milbrey W. McLaughlin, *The Rand Change Agent Study Revisited: Macro Perspectives and Micro Realities*, EDUC. RES., Dec. 1990, at 11, 13.

18. See generally WONG, *supra* note 7, at chs. 5-6 (studying the effects of local environments on various government programs including Title I and comparing outcomes in Baltimore and Milwaukee).

19. On linking site-level variables to the design of macro policy, see Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, *Learning From Experience: Lessons From Policy Implementation*, EDUC. EVALUATION & POL'Y ANALYSIS, Summer 1987, at 171, 171-78; Richard F. Elmore, *Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions*, 94 POL. SCI. Q. 601-16 (1980); PAUL BERMAN & MILBREY WALLIN McLAUGHLIN, U.S. OFF. OF EDUC., 8 FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE (1978).

Further, state governments have played a facilitative role. Since the 1970s, an increasing number of states have assigned additional "weights" to students who fall below poverty in their funding allocation. Whereas only five states used the supplemental arrangement in the mid-1970s, a majority of the states did so in the 1990s.<sup>20</sup> In addition, of the twenty-eight states that maintain their own compensatory education program today, thirteen adhere to pupil weighting and fifteen retain categorical funding arrangement.<sup>21</sup> In short, changing policy practices at both the local and state levels has facilitated the transformation from the conflictual to the accommodative phase in Title I programs. This institutional process of adaptation (i.e. targeting resources to the eligibles) is a necessary condition for instructional and academic improvement in disadvantaged schools.

### III. SECOND PHASE: SCHOOLWIDE COORDINATION TO REDUCE FRAGMENTATION, 1988–PRESENT

As fiscal auditing requirements became more manageable, improvements in teaching and learning for disadvantaged students emerged at the top of the policy agenda. Concerns with student performance are in part due to global competition and in part to the dissemination of a more comprehensive assessment of our educational system. Based on a national survey of ECIA Chapter 1 district-level coordinators in 1990, a major evaluation study found that federal requirements on funding compliance—supplement not supplant, maintain efforts and comparability—are all ranked as far less burdensome than procedures that affect instructional practices.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, evaluation procedures, needs assessment, and student selection are viewed as the three most burdensome federal regulations that govern Chapter 1.<sup>23</sup> For example, very few districts develop reliable procedures for assessing the educational needs of students who remain in compensatory education for more than two years.<sup>24</sup>

In light of these concerns about classroom practices, the federal government and local school professionals began to look for ways to improve program effectiveness. A key strategy has been

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20. See Jack Leppert et al., *Pupil Weighting Programs in School Finance Reform*, in *SCHOOL FINANCE REFORM: A LEGISLATOR'S HANDBOOK* 27 (J. Callahan & Williams H. Wilken eds., 1976). See also KENNETH WONG, *FUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS: POLITICS AND POLICIES* ch. 5 (1999).

21. See DEBORAH VERSTEGEN & KENT MCGUIRE, *SCHOOL FINANCE AT A GLANCE* 45–47 (1988).

22. See MILLSAP, *supra* note 5, at 6-18 ex.6.7.

23. See *id.*

24. See *id.* at 2-44 ex.2.13.



to improve instructional and curricular coordination, a policy goal that is frequently undermined by the categorical nature of Title I. Fragmentation is nothing new, and it was found to be counterproductive in meeting the educational needs of disadvantaged pupils. Schools that receive Title I funding often "pull out" the program participants for special instructional purposes as a way to meet the accounting requirements. A 1983 survey of district-level program coordinators found that seventy-three percent of the respondents used pullouts mainly to comply with auditing regulations.<sup>25</sup> More often than not, "pull out" sessions offer inferior instruction and students are held accountable to low standards. "Only 18 percent of district administrators who used a pullout design indicated they believed it was educationally superior to any other mode of delivery."<sup>26</sup>

In the context of increasing public concern about competitiveness and reform, policymakers and local school professionals are beginning to shift their focus from administrative compliance to program effectiveness. As Michael Kirst observed, federal publication of "A Nation At Risk" has renewed concerns for blending Chapter 1 with a core academic curriculum.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the Commission on Chapter 1 urged that the federal program be redesigned in ways that would strengthen the school's overall organizational capacity in developing more comprehensive (instead of fragmentary) strategies toward the disadvantaged.<sup>28</sup> To paraphrase the Commission's central argument, federal policy should promote "good schools" and not merely provide good programs.<sup>29</sup>

The argument to improve the instructional quality of an entire school is further supported by research that found "concentration effects" of students, including those who come from non-poor families, in neighborhoods where the incidence of poverty is very high.<sup>30</sup> According to a national assessment of Title I,

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25. Marshall S. Smith, *Selecting Students and Services for Chapter 1*, in FEDERAL AID TO THE DISADVANTAGED: WHAT FUTURE FOR CHAPTER 1? 119, 130 (Denis P. Doyle & Bruce S. Cooper eds., 1988).

26. *Id.* at 130.

27. See Michael Kirst, *The Federal Role and Chapter 1: Rethinking Some Basic Assumptions*, in FEDERAL AID TO THE DISADVANTAGED, *supra* note 25, at 97, 103-04.

28. See COMMISSION ON CHAPTER 1, MAKING SCHOOLS Work for Children in Poverty (Council of Chief State School Officers 1992); see also Thomas Timar, *Program Design and Assessment Strategies in Chapter 1*, in RETHINKING POLICY FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS 65-89 (Kenneth K. Wong & Margaret C. Wang eds., 1992) (on file with author).

29. See generally *id.*

30. See WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON, THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED 56-58 (1987).

educational performance is just as adversely affected by living in a low-income neighborhood as by coming from a poor family. As the report illustrated, “[S]tudents were increasingly likely to fall behind grade levels as their families experienced longer spells of poverty, and . . . achievement scores of all students—not just poor students—declined as the proportion of poor students in schools increased.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, if both factors exist—a child comes from a poor family and lives in an impoverished neighborhood—the incidence of educational disadvantage is approximately twice as high as when neither factor exists. Similarly, a 1992 GAO report found that schools with a high concentration of poor children “have disproportionately more low achievers than schools with fewer children in poverty.”<sup>32</sup>

To reduce fragmentation within schools and to build up the overall capacity of Title I schools, Congress approved the schoolwide concept on an experimental basis in 1988 and then on a full scale in 1994. We shall first discuss the 1988 legislation and its impact on Title I schools and then examine the 1994 policy change.

#### A. *Lessons from the Early Implementation of Schoolwide Programs*

In 1988, Congress adopted the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments. The legislation required coordination of Chapter 1 with the regular instructional program, encouraged parental involvement, allowed schoolwide projects in schools with a high concentration of poverty children (without asking for local matching funds), and directed the district to take steps to address ineffective programs. Most importantly, the Hawkins-Stafford amendments allowed for schoolwide projects in schools where at least seventy-five percent of enrolled students live below the poverty line. This new flexibility doubled schoolwide programs within the first two years.<sup>33</sup> High poverty schools were now permitted to use federal funds to reduce class size, develop staff training, support parent involvement, and recruit new professional support personnel. A review of the literature during this early phase suggests the following patterns of implementation.

Title I funding at schoolwide program schools has been frequently used to hire additional staff to reduce class sizes. Princi-

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31. M. KENNEDY ET AL., *POVERTY, ACHIEVEMENT, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES* 107 (1986) (on file with author).

32. U.S. GEN. ACCOUNTING OFF., *COMPENSATORY EDUCATION: MOST CHAPTER 1 FUNDS IN EIGHT DISTRICTS USED FOR CLASSROOM SERVICES* (1992) (on file with author).

33. MILLSAP, *supra* note 5, at 3-1.

pals in slightly more than half of schoolwide program schools identified reduced class size during the 1991–92 school year as a result of Title I funding.<sup>34</sup> Schools reported that the average reduction in school class size was from 19 to 27 children.<sup>35</sup> The addition of new staff has not been limited to teachers or instructional aides. For example, counselors, social workers, school-family coordinators, and schoolwide program coordinators have also been hired to support schoolwide program services in efforts to strengthen the relationship between the school and families.<sup>36</sup> The schoolwide reform has also facilitated district activities to promote parental involvement. Between 1987 and 1990, more districts reported disseminating home-based education activities to reinforce classroom instruction, and using liaison staff to coordinate parent activities.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, principals reported that staff development activities had been implemented or significantly strengthened in over three-fourths of schoolwide program schools. During the first years of implementation, a majority of districts reported that staff development at schoolwide program schools was more inclusive of teachers and involved more total hours than regular Title I schools.<sup>38</sup> Staff development activities in schoolwide program schools have included training in reading and language arts instruction, instruction for low achieving students, and mathematics instruction.<sup>39</sup> According to principal reports, the average teacher at a schoolwide program school received an average of twenty-nine hours of staff development, which is six hours more than that received by the average teacher in a Title I school without a schoolwide program.<sup>40</sup> In a comparison of schoolwide and more traditional Title I schools, Wong and Meyer found that teachers in schoolwide programs were more likely to agree with the statement, “The principal is interested in innovation and new ideas.”<sup>41</sup>

The schoolwide program option encourages increased teacher input into decisions affecting the school, emphasizing

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34. E.A. SCHENCK & S. BECKSTROM, U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., CHAPTER 1 SCHOOLWIDE PROJECT STUDY: FINAL REPORT 24 (RMC Research Corp. 1993).

35. *See id.*

36. MILLSAP, *supra* note 5, at 4-1-4-22.

37. *See id.*

38. *See* SCHENCK & BECKSTROM, *supra* note 34, at 39.

39. *See id.* at 38.

40. *See id.*; *See also* MILLSAP, *supra* note 5.

41. Kenneth K. Wong & Stephen J. Meyer, *Title I Schoolwide Programs as an Alternative to Categorical Practices: An Organizational Analysis of Surveys from the Prospects Study*, in TITLE I: COMPENSATORY EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS 95–234 (J. Borman et al. eds., 2001).

teacher input into decisions about assessments. Based on reports by principals in one major urban school district, the majority of teachers had some level of input into decisions about assigning students and teachers to classrooms, hiring staff, and selecting materials or purchasing hardware.<sup>42</sup> Teachers, however, had the greatest input in decisions about selecting materials or purchasing hardware and had the least input in decisions about teacher assignment and replacement.<sup>43</sup> In-depth case studies, however, suggested that a school's change to a schoolwide program tended to be accompanied by a high degree of teacher control and site-based management arrangements.<sup>44</sup>

A central component of the schoolwide program is the provision of Title I activities and services to all students in the school. One indicator of a program's inclusiveness is the extent to which Title I services cannot be distinguished from services offered for all children (i.e., one that lacks "pull out" programs which serve only a subset of students). Sixty percent of schoolwide program school principals reported that their schools operated programs in which Title I services are indistinguishable from services for all children.<sup>45</sup> Among those schools in which Title I services were distinguishable from the regular program, the most common distinction was the provision of additional services to educationally disadvantaged students who would have received Title I services in a traditional, targeted program.<sup>46</sup> Only twelve percent of schools reported using a "pull out" model.<sup>47</sup> In one major urban district, principal reports indicated that schoolwide program schools transitioned toward the provision of Title I services to all children during the first years of implementation, with higher percentages of schools reallocating resources to provide instruction to all students each year.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps the most critical components of schoolwide programs are those that have the potential to directly influence what takes place in the classroom. Schoolwide program principals reported having introduced or significantly strengthened the following components related to curriculum and instruction: com-

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42. LINDA F. WINFIELD & RANDOLPH HAWKINS, LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS OF CHAPTER 1 SCHOOLWIDE PROJECTS ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS 22 tbl.4 (1993).

43. *See id.*

44. *See generally* SAM STRINGFIELD ET AL., U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., URBAN AND SUBURBAN/RURAL SPECIAL STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN: FINAL REPORT (1997).

45. *See* SCHENCK & BECKSTROM, *supra* note 34, at 29.

46. *See id.*

47. *See id.*

48. WINFIELD & HAWKINS, *supra* note 42, at 5.

puter assisted instruction (over three-fourths); provision of a coordinated and integrated curriculum and supplemental instruction (two-thirds); and provision of an extended school day (less than one-fourth).<sup>49</sup> Schoolwide program schools have adopted a range of programs and curricula, such as "Reading Recovery" or "Success for All," as part of their schoolwide programs.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the majority of "Success for All" schools are Title I schoolwide programs.<sup>51</sup>

It is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the particular ways in which the schoolwide program option actually impacts classroom instruction. Nonetheless, in-depth case study analysis begins to inform this question. For example, case studies of schoolwide programs identified a common theme of individualizing instruction to the needs of particular students.<sup>52</sup> Additional evidence indicates that schoolwide programs have increased the capacity of schools and teachers to provide instructional services more flexibly as particular student needs arise, whereas traditional Title I "pull out" programs have typically required a more formal process of student selection.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the components described above, schoolwide programs are frequently reported to have adopted practices associated with effective schools. State Title I coordinators reported that sixty-two percent of schoolwide programs in their states incorporated components of effective schools programs as a main feature of their programs.<sup>54</sup> Title I district coordinators reported that a number of effective schools components were implemented as part of schoolwide programs through activities such as needs assessment, staff development, changes in classroom instruction, and changes in school management.<sup>55</sup> The presence of characteristics associated with effective schools may, reciprocally, impact the successful implementation of schoolwide programs, in that the factors that make good schools may also facilitate innovation and change. Case studies suggested that factors which facilitate innovation include: strong principal leadership and management skills; meaningful, universally agreed

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49. See SCHENCK & BECKSTROM, *supra* note 34, at 23-24.

50. See MILLSAP, *supra* note 5.

51. Robert E. Slavin et al., *Success For All: A Summary of Research*, 1 J. OF EDUC. FOR STUDENTS PLACED AT RISK 41-76 (1996).

52. See STRINGFIELD, *supra* note 44.

53. See MILLSAP, *supra* note 5.

54. See B.J. TURNBULL ET AL., STATE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AMENDED CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM (Policy Studies Associates 1990); See also U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM: THE INTERIM REPORT v (1992).

55. See MILLSAP, *supra* note 5.

upon goals; a nurturing school culture; a well-qualified staff; and organizational mechanisms to support schools' problem-solving.<sup>56</sup>

B. *An Illustration of Schoolwide Implementation in a Big-City Setting*

While schoolwide reforms have become more popular in high-poverty schools, coordination between Title I and the regular curriculum remains a challenge in most Title I schools. In most schools, coordination relies almost entirely on informal meetings, and staff-planning sessions rarely occurs. Further, local districts remain largely uncertain about student needs assessment and program evaluation, areas where federal and state agencies can provide crucial technical assistance.

The ongoing challenge of improving the effectiveness of schoolwide programs can be illustrated by our research in Minneapolis.<sup>57</sup> This study makes comparisons between the schools with a Title I schoolwide program and the district as a whole to show how Title I students are distributed and what resources are available to service them.<sup>58</sup> In analyzing the data collected from the district office and the schoolwide programs in Minneapolis during 1993–94, three emerging trends were observed: (1) school and classroom practices are, to some extent, shaped by policies at the district-wide level, (2) variation in instructional practices exists between the schoolwide programs, and (3) these variations in practices may explain some of the differences in student outcomes.

Let us briefly consider each of the findings from Minneapolis. Several district-wide policies have reinforced the intent of the schoolwide program, granting greater flexibility and program-

56. See STRINGFIELD, *supra* note 44.

57. See KENNETH WONG ET AL., WHEN FEDERAL CHAPTER 1 WORKS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING IN INNER CITY SCHOOLS: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON SCHOOLWIDE PROJECTS IN MINNEAPOLIS (National Center on Education in the Inner Cities 1994) (on file with author).

58. The illustration of the two schools is drawn from the field study conducted by the author in Minneapolis Public Schools during 1995. The two case study schools constituted part of the larger study on the implementation and effects of schoolwide programs in Minneapolis and Houston. Information was gathered from principal and teacher interviews, classroom observations, analysis of student achievement data, and analysis of policy and programmatic guidelines at the district and school levels. The full report is available in, Kenneth Wong et al., *Redesigning the federal compensatory education program: Lessons from the implementation of the Title I schoolwide projects*, in IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL REFORM: PRACTICE AND POLICY IMPERATIVES 59–97 (Margaret Wang & Kenneth Wong eds., 1997).

matic autonomy in the high poverty schools. These include (1) efforts toward site-based management that, among other things, enable schools to select their own text books, (2) an increase in local tax revenues to reduce class size, and (3) a push for a collaborative services model that encourages coordination of services between regular program staff and other special needs program staff. District policies therefore support schoolwide programs in Minneapolis.

At the school site level, variation in instructional practices between the schoolwide programs was found. In Schoolwide Program 1, the school was 100% pullout for Title I students in 1986. Beginning in 1989, the school began to experiment with collaborative services and team teaching in which the Chapter 1 teacher worked in the classroom. Over the past two and a half years, the staff has creatively used the computer lab to promote individualized instruction, accommodate students' different ability levels, identify each student's strengths and weaknesses, and place a focused emphasis on academic skill building. These instructional efforts seem to have produced reasonably good outcomes. Analysis of School 1 shows that student performance in vocabulary and reading is generally positive with incremental gains over the years. Although "poor" students are performing at a lower level than the "nonpoor" students, the former group has made measurable progress over a four-year period. There is no significant difference in achievement scores between black and white students in School 1. Overall, this schoolwide program has had "an equalizing" effect upon the impact of race and poverty.

In contrast, Schoolwide Program 2 has not brought about substantial restructuring. Practices and organization that began during the 1980s have been left largely intact—staffing assignments, team teaching, and ability grouping within the classroom. Teachers have not given much attention to curricular changes, student assessment, or instructional practices that integrate the at-risk student populations. The only major change that has come with the schoolwide project has been the flexibility of teachers to work with any student in the building. This change, however, has not been enough to effect student performance. Indeed, students' gains in reading scores at School 2 tended to remain stable over time, while significant losses in math occurred. It should be noted that the lack of progress might also be related to the school size (with 1,000 students, the largest of the four schoolwide projects in the district) and its physical organization (it has no walls and uses white dividers to designate classrooms).

In sum, while the schoolwide initiative began to attract national attention in the late 1980s, research continued to lag behind during the early and mid-1990s. Evaluation of schoolwide programs in the initial years has shown some potential. On the one hand, findings suggest that, as a group, Title I students in schoolwide programs performed better than their peers in the more traditionally organized service programs, such as pull out instructional settings.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, nationwide evaluations suggest that schoolwide programs have continued to encounter a wide range of implementation difficulties. These challenges have included the need for assessment of student progress and a general lack of high-quality professional development activities.<sup>60</sup> Further, the data base on the implementation and outcomes of Title I schoolwide projects is scanty.<sup>61</sup> An extensive review of the literature examining Title I programs since the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford amendment suggests only thirteen major empirical studies on the implementation of Title I schoolwide programs.<sup>62</sup> Clearly, there is an empirical need to further understand whether the schoolwide strategy is affecting school performance.

### C. *Scaling up of Schoolwide Reform*

The 1994 Improving America's Schools Act established an ambitious agenda for systemic improvement in schools with a high concentration of students with at-risk backgrounds. For the first time in the history of federal involvement in public education, students receiving federally funded compensatory services (Title I) are no longer left at the margin of school reform. Two of the provisions in the 1994 legislation have significant implications for schooling opportunities. The first mandates that district-wide performance standards must apply to all students including those receiving Title I services, as indicated in the Administration's proposal that "Title I, bilingual education, and dozens of other federal programs must become integral to, not separate from, state and community education reforms that center on high standards".<sup>63</sup> The second provision included in

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59. See Wong & Meyer, *supra* note 41.

60. See *id.*

61. See Kenneth K. Wong & Stephen J. Meyer, *Title I Schoolwide Programs: A Synthesis of Findings From Recent Evaluation*, 20 EDUC. EVAL. AND POL'Y ANAL. 115 (1998).

62. See Wong & Meyer, *supra* note 41, at 116.

63. U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., REINVENTING CHAPTER 1: THE CURRENT CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM AND NEW DIRECTIONS 3 (1993).



this legislation promotes schoolwide initiative in Title I schools with at least fifty percent low-income students.<sup>64</sup>

The schoolwide programs create an opportunity for high-poverty schools to allocate Title I resources with fewer restrictions in order to meet the legislative expectations of academic performance as set forth in the 1994 legislation. The 1994 Act encouraged the adoption of schoolwide programs by lowering the eligibility threshold for schoolwide programs to schools with fifty percent low-income students beginning in the 1996–97 school year. Schoolwide programs are expected to reduce the historically fragmented or categorical character of Title I programs, improve the effectiveness of Title I programs, and improve the effectiveness of entire schools, rather than targeting services to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged subpopulations.<sup>65</sup> In other words, schoolwide programs are designed to replace regulatory compliance with instructional coherence and organizational coordination. Encouraged by the IASA legislation, the number of Title I schoolwide programs grew almost seven-fold between 1990 and 1998, representing an increase from about 10% to 50% of the eligible schools.<sup>66</sup>

Further, schoolwide reform is facilitated by additional federal resources with the passage of Public Law 105-78 in November 1997. Known as the Obey-Porter legislation, the 1997 law appropriated an additional \$145 million to support the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRDP) in Title I schoolwide programs.<sup>67</sup> The 1994 and 1997 laws provide a set of legislative expectations that research suggests is essential to any high-functioning school. These expectations include:

- A comprehensive assessment of student performance in relation to state/district subject-area content and assessment standards. Measurable goals and benchmarks for meeting the goals must be developed.
- An instructional program that is grounded in effective, research-based methods and strategies.
- High-quality professional development for teachers, aides, and other support personnel to enable all students to meet the state/district performance standards.
- The development and implementation of strategies to increase parental and community involvement.

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64. See Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-382, 108 Stat. 3518 (1994).

65. See Wong & Meyer, *supra* note 41.

66. See MILLSAP, *supra* note 5.

67. See Obey-Porter Act, Pub. L. No. 105-78, 111 Stat. 1497 (1997).

- Strategies to identify how resources from federal, state, local, and private sources will be utilized to coordinate services to support and sustain the reform program.<sup>68</sup>

These legislative expectations have the potential to transform Title I from its categorical and isolated character into an integral part of systemic reform, coherent with core academic standards. Together, the IASA and the Obey-Porter legislation provide a unique opportunity for high-poverty schools to raise standards and to raise student achievement. The first set of studies of the implementation of IASA suggests that the more effective schoolwide programs are more likely to meet legislative expectations.<sup>69</sup> Based on a national study of thirty-two schools in nine urban and three county-wide districts during 1997–98, Wang, Wong and Kim reported that higher performing schoolwide programs show strong implementation of student performance goals, academic standards and assessments, enriched curriculum, student-centered instruction, and evaluation of student performance.<sup>70</sup> This study also identified the importance of a district-wide academic accountability framework to support schoolwide implementation.<sup>71</sup>

#### IV. THIRD PHASE: COMPETING APPROACHES TO RAISE STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN TITLE I SCHOOLS, 1994–PRESENT

While the IASA and the Obey-Porter legislation depict bipartisan agreement over Title I, there is another side to the debate on the future of Title I. There are, indeed, competing visions of how Title I should be improved to raise student performance. For one thing, the mid-1990s was punctuated by a brief period of highly visible partisan contention over redistributive educational programs. To be sure, the Reagan administration during the 1980s succeeded in terminating several small categorical programs, slowing down funding support in others, and consolidating various categorical programs into broadly defined block grants. However, the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) Title VI for desegregation was the only major redistributive educational program that was terminated. Title I and other major grants remained largely intact due to bipartisan support.<sup>72</sup>

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68. See *id.*

69. See Margaret C. Wang et al., *The Need for Developing Procedural Accountability in Title I Schoolwide Programs*, in *HARD WORK FOR GOOD SCHOOLS: FACTS NOT FADS IN TITLE I REFORM* 175 (Gary Orfield & Elizabeth H. DeBray eds., 1999).

70. See *id.*

71. See *id.*

72. See WONG, *supra* note 20.

Congressional politics, however, took a sharp turn in 1995. The 1994 midterm elections produced the first Republican majority in Congress in forty years. The new congressional leadership claimed a public mandate to shrink the federal role in social programs and to shift programmatic authority to state and local governments. The new House Speaker Newt Gingrich tended to undermine long-term institutional practices in decision-making. He depicted the government as the major cause of poverty, the bureaucracy as the major source of waste of taxpayers' dollars, and the private sector as the only real solution to social inequality. Further, he circumscribed the seniority practice to make sure that his first-term allies gained greater representation in crucial committees. For example, he handpicked three "activist conservatives," sidestepping seniority consideration, to lead three major committees. Consequently, he was able to secure House approval on nine of the ten items in his "Contract with America."

The heightened political confrontation between Congress and the President became highly visible in education policy during 1995. The Republican leadership wanted to reduce Title I by nineteen percent, to cut bilingual education by two-thirds, and special education by seven percent.<sup>73</sup> To demonstrate its control over the government purse, the Republican leadership even shut down the federal government when the budget expired. In the end, the retrenchment tactics backfired. Within two years, education policy regained bipartisan support in the Republican Congress.

While Title I seemed to have survived budgetary retrenchment, its effectiveness was increasingly called into question in the new climate of outcome-based accountability. From a broader perspective, there are four directions in charting the future of Title I. While these reform perspectives may originate from distinct research, policy, and political sources, the convergence of these concerns can be seen in the 2001 reauthorization of the law.

First, Title I schools are encouraged to adopt externally designed models (or CSR models) that are proven to have been effective elsewhere. The 2001 Act specifically calls for the use of scientifically based research to improve whole school reform practices. In section 1910, Part A of Title IX, the 2001 law identifies six types of systematic and objective research design and procedures, including random-assignment experiments and multiple observations and measurements on program effects.

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73. See generally *id.*

However, evaluation of the first phase of CSRD reform has been largely mixed. The most comprehensive study of CSRD reform models was conducted by the American Institutes for Research in 1999.<sup>74</sup> The AIR study examined the design, implementation, and performance outcomes of twenty-four whole school reform models. The study synthesized student achievement information, conducted a survey of the support provided by the model designers during the start up phase, costs to the schools, the duration of the project, and the number of schools using the whole school reform approach. Using these diverse sources of information, the AIR observed that few reform models have substantiated their claims with hard evidence. Schools have adopted approaches without taking into full consideration local circumstances and needs. In terms of student achievement, only three of the twenty-four whole school reform approaches showed strong evidence of positive effects. In contrast to the AIR study, several case studies have identified effective strategies.<sup>75</sup> In short, the 2001 Act will encourage a lot more systematic research to address whether the whole school reform strategies improve performance at the district, the school and classroom levels.

Second, Title I schools are shaped by the level of state-wide and district-wide support and sanctions to raise academic standards, to make "adequate yearly progress," and to improve professional development. The 2001 Act grants the state substantial authority in taking corrective actions to turn around failing schools. In this regard, the new act relies heavily on the capacity of the local districts and state agencies. A multi-year evaluation of the New American Schools (NAS) conducted by Rand Corporation suggests several necessary functions that the district needs to perform in order to produce effective whole school reform.<sup>76</sup> These district functions include supporting appropriate matches between design teams and schools; providing adequate funding for design-based assistance; providing a conducive regulatory system, and mobilizing school personnel toward supporting whole school improvement.<sup>77</sup> To a certain extent, Chicago has begun to perform some of these supportive functions since the mayor took over the school system in 1995. In this latest reform, Chi-

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74. See AMERICAN INST. FOR RESEARCH, AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO SCHOOL-WIDE REFORM (1999).

75. See S. Bodilly & M. Berends, *Necessary District Support for Comprehensive School Reform*, in *HARD WORK FOR GOOD SCHOOLS*, *supra* note 69; at 111-19; see also STRINGFIELD, *supra* note 44.

76. See generally MARK BERENDS ET AL., *IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE IN NEW AMERICAN SCHOOLS: THREE YEARS INTO SCALE-UP* (2001).

77. See Bodilly & Berends, *supra* note 75.

chicago has sharpened its focus on low-performing schools and their students.<sup>78</sup> Beginning in 1996, the Chief Executive Officer and the school board launched an educational accountability agenda focused on raising standards and improving student achievement.<sup>79</sup> Low performing schools were put on probation and, in some case, reconstituted. Failing students are required to attend summer programs and social promotion has been terminated. The combination of sanctions and support seems to have improved the overall conditions and led to better student performance across the system. Since 1996, test scores have risen in many Title I elementary schools and in some of the more problematic high schools. The Chicago model of turning around low performing schools is now considered a viable reform strategy. In short, Title I reform is closely linked to district capacity, which may facilitate new linkages between Title I and other children-oriented services in the larger community.

Third, to improve accountability on educational performance for all children, including Title I students, the Bush administration has successfully included annual testing on reading and math between the third and the eighth grades in the 2001 reauthorization. Equally important is a new focus on closing the achievement gaps among racial/ethnic subgroups as well as income subgroups. In addition to an increase of \$1.7 billion in Title I money, which would total \$10.5 billion in fiscal year 2001, the President requested \$975 million for his Early Reading First and Reading First Initiatives.<sup>80</sup> Various interest groups, however, oppose the annual testing proposal. The National Conference of State Legislatures sent to Congress registering their concerns, "The testing requirement . . . is an egregious example of a top-down, one-size-fits-all federal reform. There is no compelling or convincing argument that an effective accountability system must include an annual testing in multiple subjects."<sup>81</sup> Other groups echo the NCLS concerns. Minority groups, teachers' unions, and professional educators, for example, are concerned about the effects of high-stakes testing on academic promotion and dropout rates.<sup>82</sup> District and state administrators are worried about the escalation in implementing the annual testing requirement. Above all, federally required testing is seen as undermin-

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78. Wong, Kenneth K., *Chicago School Reform: From Decentralization to Integrated Governance*, 1 J. OF EDUC. CHANGE 97 (2000).

79. *See id.*

80. Erik Robelen, *Spending Proposal Soars, But Some Seek More*, EDUC. WEEK, Oct. 10, 2001, at 30.

81. *Id.* at 31.

82. *See generally id.*

ing local and state control over educational affairs. While the final agreement allows for state flexibility in testing design, the notion that there ought to be system wide assessment is now institutionalized in the accountability framework in Title I policy.

Fourth, Title I schools, particularly low performing, inner city schools, have been the target of experimental vouchers, as proposed by Governor Jeb Bush, congressional leaders, and think tanks. Seeing virtually no cost efficiency in the billions of Title I dollars spent, proponents of this approach look for consumer-parents to pressure schools to improve.<sup>83</sup> Parents would decide whether their chosen schools meet their preferences and expectations. Dollars follow the students, even when they select non-public schools. In the long run, the consumer-centered process may create competition among schools, which may lead to the closure of failing schools.

Converting Title I grants into vouchers has been attempted in the course of Title I history. The Reagan administration tried three times to convert the federal program into a voucher arrangement. The most serious proposal was the Equity and Choice Act (H.R. 3821) in November 1985, also known as "TEACH." This bill would have allowed Title I students, at their parents' request, to attend any school in the district. No funding increase was proposed for Title I's conversion. None of the Reagan proposals were seriously considered by the Democratic-controlled Congress. However, since 1995, when the Republicans gained control over Congress, voucher proposals have gained support. In the spring of 2000, for example, Senate Republican majority pushed through major changes in the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. In the proposed Senate Bill 2, the GOP plan would allow ten states to turn Title I into a "portable" voucher program.<sup>84</sup> In these states, Title I funds would follow the students even when they enroll in non-public schools. The GOP plan also identified over 7,000 failing Title I schools where students would be allowed to transfer to other

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83. See Paul E. Peterson & Chad Noyes, *School Choice in Milwaukee*, in *NEW SCHOOLS FOR A NEW CENTURY* 123 (Diane Ravitch & Joseph P. Viteritti eds., 1997); Herbert Walberg, *Uncompetitive American Schools: Causes and Cures*, in *BROOKINGS PAPERS ON EDUCATION POLICY* 173-206 (D. Ravitch ed. 1998); *NEW SCHOOLS FOR A NEW CENTURY* (D. Ravitch & J. Viteritti eds., 1997); M. Kanstoroom & T. Palmaffy, *Using Market Forces to Make Title I More Effective*, in *ACCOUNTABILITY, EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY ISSUES IN TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION*, CHAPTER 1 (K. Wong & M. Wang eds., 2002).

84. See Andrew Beadle, *Senate Panel's ESEA Rewrite Allows State Block Grants, Private School Vouchers*, *CONG. Q. WKLY.*, Mar. 11, 2000, at 541, 542.

public schools if the schools' performance does not improve in four years.<sup>85</sup>

As a presidential candidate, George Bush showed a fairly firm commitment to experimental "vouchers" as a way to improve failing schools. However, during the legislative negotiations on reauthorizing Title I, the Bush administration was willing to set aside the voucher proposal in exchange for congressional support for annual testing. Bush's decision on not using private school vouchers as a key systemic reform initiative may also have been influenced by public opinions. According to the Public Agenda polls, a clear majority of the parents prefer public school choice to private vouchers as a strategy to improve school performance. Indeed, the 2001 Act allows for public school choice (as such charter schools) when schools fail for two consecutive years. Nonetheless, the latest legislation provides the mechanisms for alternative services outside of the public sector. As one option to turn around schools that are failing in three consecutive years, the district is required to set aside five percent of the Title I funds for supplemental services chosen by parents. The scope of the service provider is likely to be affected by the pending decision on the Cleveland school voucher case that will be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in the summer of 2002. If the Supreme Court affirms the constitutionality of religious oriented service providers, as in the case of the Cleveland school voucher program, then the 2001 Act will expand the range of services significantly.

#### V. CONCLUSION: FEDERAL TITLE I RESOURCES AS LEVERAGE TO IMPROVE LEARNING FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

The history of Title I implementation suggests a broadening agenda for school reform (see Table 1), thereby creating a paradox for the future of this major federal program. On the one hand, the original anti-poverty goal of Title I has received long term, stable, bipartisan support, albeit interrupted by partisan contention in congress during 1995. On the other hand, this federal commitment does not constitute "an entitlement" and is increasingly dependent on the program's track record of academic productivity. While it is not likely that Title I will significantly narrow the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers, it is important for the federal government to become more strategic in the use of resources to improve schooling opportunities.

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85. *See id.*

A major challenge for Title I policy, then, is to decide where to allocate federal resources that would bring about better life chances for at-risk students. I suggest four areas for greater federal attention. First, major federal support is needed to deal with the concentration effects in inner-city schools. Clearly, the ecological context of urban schools has changed significantly since the 1965 enactment of the original ESEA. At that time, the nation had extensive rural poverty, its central cities were economically stable, and suburbs were emerging as viable communities. By the 1990s, we see a widening educational gap between the central city and its surrounding suburbs. This is especially evident in major metropolitan areas, where schools in outlying suburban communities are predominantly white and those in central cities serve primarily minority, low-income pupils. Thus, to combat concentration effects in the classroom, schools in major urban centers need additional resources (federal and otherwise) to create incentives to attract highly qualified teachers, fill chronic staffing shortages in science and mathematics, and strengthen professional development in subject areas and new technologies.

A modest step that begins to address the concentration effects of poverty as undertaken by Congress is its adoption of the Improving America's Schools Act in 1994. The Act established a new funding formula, known as the Education Finance Incentive Program, which allocates supplemental federal money to states that have "higher levels of fiscal effort and within-state equalization."<sup>86</sup> Fiscal effort is measured in terms of the ratio between per student spending and per capita income. The equalization factor is based on the degree of interdistrict disparity in per pupil spending. However, even if the incentive program is fully implemented, which is not likely under the 2001 Act, its share of total federal Title I funds remains modest and its impact on spending equalization limited. Greater federal effort is needed to improve schooling services in poor neighborhoods.

Second, in promoting accountability and productivity systemwide, the federal government must encourage state and local agencies to develop and implement specific plans that address achievement gaps among racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups at the school and district level. Our National Study of Effective Schoolwide Programs found a significant gap between white and African-American and Latino students in test performance in core subject areas at benchmark grade levels in sample

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86. U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., *THE IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT OF 1994* (1995).



districts.<sup>87</sup> In most cases the within-school gap is wider than the district-wide aggregate figures. In other words, the achievement gap within schools is larger than the average gap between schools. The federal government needs to conduct ongoing evaluation of this issue, as schoolwide flexibility becomes more prevalent. Building on the legislative expectations in the 2001 Act, the Congress can encourage districts and states to design database and implement strategic plans aimed at narrowing the within school learning gap among varying racial/ethnic and income groups. But Congressional pressure alone is not sufficient to improve minority student performance in lower-performing schools. States and districts must provide professional and other strategic support to Title I schools as part of standards-based reform.

The third area in which a federal role can make a difference is in helping Title I schools to build and sustain their organizational capacity. Regardless of whether Title I is converted to a charter school, voucher experiment or restructured after a whole school reform model, what goes on inside the schoolhouse is critical to learning and teaching. To facilitate better conditions for learning, Title I policy can be less regulatory but more supportive in instructional and curriculum issues. Federal programs should focus less on auditing compliance and more on within-school coordination between Title I and regular instruction. Federal resources can provide incentives to schoolwide programs to monitor and address learning gaps among racial and ethnic groups. Technical training can also help teachers to conduct more effective assessment of progress and the needs of their students in meeting standards-based curriculum. To that end, disadvantaged children would be better served if they were taught the core academic curriculum in regular classrooms, placed in heterogeneous groups, and asked to live up to higher academic expectations.

Fourth, Title I schools can serve as a laboratory for educational innovation with diverse approaches. To turn around schools that have been failing for several years, the Congress, in its enactment of the 2001 Act, has created incentives for experiment and demonstration. For example, some communities may benefit from parental choice, such as charter schools and state-

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87. See Kenneth K. Wong & Kimberly Alkins, *Toward Systemic Reform in High-Poverty Schools: Title I Schoolwide Programs in Two Large Districts*, 17 READINGS ON EQUAL EDUC. (2001); see also Kenneth Wong and Jaek Yung Lee, *Interstate Variation in the Achievement Gap Among Racial and Social Groups: Considering the Effects of School Resources and Classroom Practices*, 4 ADVANCES IN EDUC. POL'Y 119-142 (1998).

funded vouchers, where the operation of the school enjoys greater autonomy from state and district regulations and union constraints. Other low-performing schools can initiate their own process of self-renewal, including union-management collaboration to address poor quality in the teaching staff. Finally, depending on the school context, whole school reform models may offer promising strategies to produce higher-performing communities. In short, federal educational policy can move away from the “compliance mentality” and become a supportive partner in making a difference in the life chances of the disadvantaged.

TABLE 1. THE BROADENING REFORM AGENDA IN FEDERAL TITLE I POLICY

	1960s - 1980s	1988 - 1994 to 2001	2002 - Present
Dominant Policy Paradigm	- Antipoverty	- Antipoverty - Reduce regulatory compliance	- Antipoverty - Reduce regulatory compliance - Improve achievement
Programmatic Mechanisms	- Categorical funding - Targeting aid to eligible students	- Schoolwide as experiment for high-poverty schools - Standards-based Accountability - Adequate yearly Progress - Targeted assistance for other schools	- Annual Assessment of 3-8 grades to measure accountability - Adequate yearly progress - Monitor Gaps among Racial/Ethnic and Income Groups - Schoolwide in full-scale expansion (lowered eligibility) - adoption of knowledge based practices in comprehensive school reform
Issues in Implementation	- Local non-compliance - Local Supplanting of Federal Funds	- Pull-out of students remains dominant - Coordination of curriculum / instruction as a challenge	- Quality of student data-driven measurements - Lack of student performance as basis for extensive reform (including parental choice & district/state direct intervention)

