

Albuquerque Public Schools

**Title I Private School
Program Evaluation**

2004-2005

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December 2005



ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Title I Private School Program Evaluation 2004-2005 Albuquerque Public Schools

Executive Summary

Under Title I - Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Albuquerque Public School (APS) district is required to provide educational services for private school students who have academic need and reside in Title I public school attendance areas.

Research, Development and Accountability conducted an evaluation of APS' 2004-05 Title I program for private school children to satisfy federal and state requirements and to provide information for program improvement. Highlights from the evaluation are below.

Achievement Outcomes - Annual Progress

- ◆ Over 80% of private school students receiving Title I services improved their reading comprehension and basic math skills by 0.5 grade level equivalents over the course of one year.
- ◆ Only one out of eight private school programs fully achieved the annual progress goal of improving the reading comprehension or basic math skills of 100% of its Title I students by 0.5 grade level equivalents over the course of one year.
- ◆ None of the 8 identified special needs students in 2 schools met the annual progress goal.
- ◆ Features of APS' top achieving private school Title I programs included having an APS teacher on-site to provide direct student instruction as well as staff development, and using Accelerated Reader, STAR Reading or Developmental Reading Assessment.

Title I Services

- ◆ Eight private school programs provided direct instructional services, mostly in reading and language arts, to 174 students in 2004-05. This was an increase of 35 students compared to 2003-04 but almost half the number served in 2000-01 (310).
- ◆ The average student had shorter and less frequent Title I instructional sessions compared to 2003-04.
- ◆ About half the students originally identified for Title I services actually received direct Title I instructional services.
- ◆ The amount, frequency, context and duration of instructional services provided by most private school Title I programs were not aligned with research-based recommendations and may have been inadequate to achieve significant gains in academic achievement.
- ◆ Private school officials reported vastly improved communications and support from APS compared to previous years.

Evaluation results suggest that more cost-effective Title I programming for private school children could be achieved by returning to APS' historical model of providing one centralized program staffed with APS Title I teachers. A centralized approach has the potential to provide more services for more students, reduce administrative burdens, and improve compliance with federal expectations.

Title I Private School Program Evaluation 2004-2005

Background and Purpose

Since it was first authorized in 1965, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has required local education agencies (LEAs) to use federal Title I funds to provide supplemental educational services to private school students. Eligible private school students meet two criteria: (1) they live in Title I designated public school attendance areas, and (2) they are at risk of failing to meet high academic standards.

For many years, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) provided a computer-assisted instructional (CAI) program for Title I-eligible private school students. APS teachers staffed the program, which was held in APS portables on private school grounds.

APS' Title I program for private school students shifted dramatically in 2002-03. The ESEA's 2001 reauthorization, called No Child Left Behind (NCLB), ended funding for non-public capital expenses. This forced APS to terminate the CAI program. Starting in 2002-03, APS' Grants Management and Title I offices asked each private school to develop its own proposal for using Title I funds. This practice paralleled the public school Title I grant allocation process.

APS' department of Research, Development and Accountability is responsible for evaluating Title I programs for private school children in accordance with the following state and federal expectations:

1. Consult annually with private school officials about evaluation methods, measures and the use of evaluation results.
2. Define academic "annual progress" goals against which to evaluate the effectiveness of Title I programs for private school students (similar to Adequate Yearly Progress for public schools).
3. Evaluate services and "annual progress" outcomes on an annual basis.
4. If students fail to meet annual progress goals, recommend how Title I services will be improved.

RDA used the following data collection tools for the 2004-05 evaluation:

Table 1. 2004-05 Evaluation Data Collection Tools and Sources

Data Collection Tool	Source
Spreadsheet documenting services provided to each student	Title I teachers and/or private school officials
Structured narrative report	Title I teachers and/or private school officials
Allocation and expenditure records	Title I Instructional Coordinator

Annual Progress

Federal law states that private school students who participate in Title I programs must be held to the same challenging standards that the state expects all public school students to meet. The law further states that the “LEA must annually assess the progress of the Title I program toward enabling private school Title I participants to meet the agreed-upon standards.” To do this, “every year the LEA and private school officials must consult on what constitutes ‘annual progress’ for the Title I program.”¹

Guidelines related to defining and evaluating “annual progress” are relatively new and fairly general. The October 2003 Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title I Services to Private School Children provides the following parameters:

- Annual progress goals should align with state content and student achievement standards or with private school standards that are just as challenging as state standards.
- The LEA only needs to assess private school students in the subjects in which the LEA provides Title I services.
- Private school officials may provide the LEA with assessment data it has collected as part of its testing program. Alternatively, Title I funds may be used to assess private school children if the assessment is used only for Title I purposes.
- The LEA has flexibility to group student data in ways that will produce the most accurate information about student progress.
- The LEA must evaluate the effect of all Title I services, including professional development services, on academic achievement.

¹ Title I Services to Eligible Private School Children: Non-Regulatory Guidance, October 17, 2003, page 31.

2004-2005 was the first year that APS defined annual progress goals for Title I private school students. Title I and RDA staff facilitated a number of group meetings and one-on-one discussions with private school officials. Consultations culminated in the following annual progress goals and related assessments, all of which were administered as part of the private schools' regular testing programs.

Table 2. 2004-05 Annual Progress Goals and Assessments

Annual Progress Goal	Assessments & (Number of Schools)
100% of Title I students will improve their <i>reading comprehension</i> skills by 0.5 grade level equivalents (GE's).	Early Literacy (2) STAR Reading (5) Developmental Reading Assessment (1) Iowa Test of Basic Skills (2)
100% of Title I students will improve their <i>basic math</i> skills by 0.5 grade level equivalents (GE's).	STAR Math (3) Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills (1) Iowa Test of Basic Skills (2) Early Prevention of School Failure (1)

Results

Title I Allocations and Expenditures

APS allocated a total of \$170,885 for 12 private school Title I programs in 2004-05, while actual expenditures totaled \$139,103 for programs at 10 private schools (81% of total allocations). Individual school expenditures ranged from a low of \$800 to a high of \$48,372.

Eight private school programs used all or a majority of their Title I funds to pay for teacher or tutor salaries. One school used Title I funds for instructional materials only. Another used Title I funds for teacher professional development.

Service Results

Private school Title I services reached 174 students in 2004-05, an increase of 35 students compared to 2003-04, possibly suggesting a slow return toward historical levels of activity. The increase was due partly to an expansion in the number of private schools providing direct Title I services, from 6 in 2003-04 to 8 in 2004-05.

Table 3. Private Schools Delivering Direct Title I Instructional Services:
2004-05 Compared to Previous Years.

School	Total Served 2000-01	Total Served 2001-02	Total Served 2003-04	Total Served 2004-05
Holy Ghost	25	44	34	21
Immanuel Lutheran	29	34	7	6
Queen of Heaven	NA	25	24	17
St. Charles	31	26	18	44
St. Mary's	58	24	35	41
San Felipe de Neri	57	52	21	25
Our Lady of Fatima	26	16	0	10
St. Therese	36	NA	0	10
Our Lady's Assumption ²	48	40	0	0
TOTALS	310	237	139	174

NA = Not available.

² Used Title I funds for teacher professional development. Did not provide direct Title I instructional services.

Only half the eligible students actually received direct Title I instructional services in 2004-05.³ Some schools showed they did not have the administrative capacity to establish viable Title I programs. For example, they initiated services late in the school year and/or did not expend the program budgets they were allocated. In addition, the small size of most school-level allocations made it difficult or impossible to provide intensive Title I services and to serve all students in need. Private school officials explained that they often chose to serve a smaller number of students deeply rather than trying to serve a larger number of students more superficially.⁴

Contexts of Instructional Service

The most common approach to providing Title I instructional services to private school students involved pulling students out of their regular classes. This contradicted Title I statutes, which require the LEA to “give primary consideration to providing extended learning time.”⁵ The pullout approach also contradicts research showing that struggling students need more hours of instruction than low-risk students.⁶ Furthermore, the emphasis on pullout services may have limited the number of Title I service hours that students received. Some Title I teachers reported that scheduling conflicts during the school day occasionally constrained the regularity and length of their Title I sessions.

The 2003-04 APS Title I Private School Program Evaluation Report recommended reducing pull-out services and increasing extended-day services.

³ Excluding students who dis enrolled or whose parents declined Title I services, about 104 students who were eligible for Title I services in participating schools did not receive services in 2004-05. Approximately 80 more students did not receive instructional services because their schools did not establish a Title I instructional program.

⁴ October 18, 2005 consultation meeting.

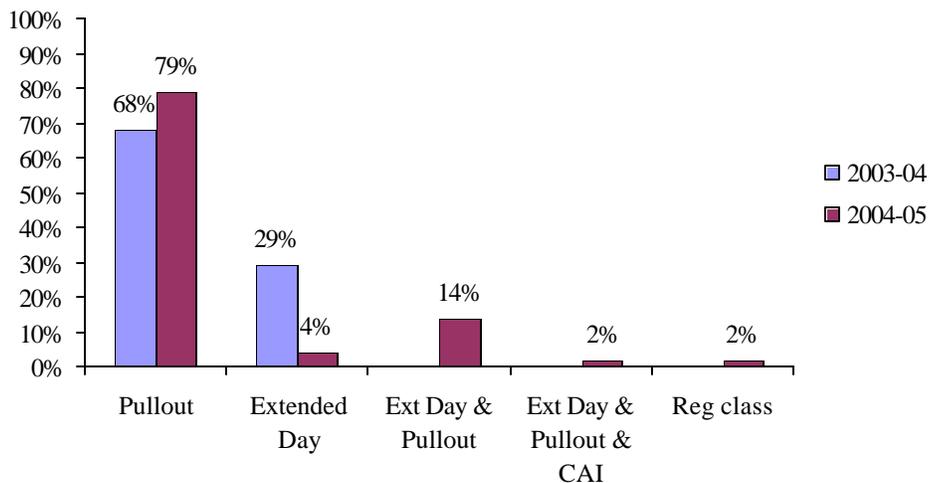
⁵ Title I Services to Eligible Private School Children: Non-Regulatory Guidance, October 17, 2003, page 21.

⁶ Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (1998), Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, National Research Council, edited by Catherine Snow, M. Susan Burns, & Peg Griffin, pp. 273-274.

Nevertheless, the pullout approach was even more common in 2004-05 than in 2003-04, as evidenced in Figure 1 and outlined below:

- ◆ The proportion of students receiving pull-out services alone increased from 68% to 79%.
 - Including combination approaches, almost all private school Title I students (94%) received at least some pull-out services.
- ◆ The proportion of students receiving extended day services alone decreased from 29% to 4%.
 - Even when combination approaches are included, the proportion of students receiving at least some extended day services decreased, from 29% in 2003-04 to 20% in 2004-05.

Figure 1. Percentages of Private School Students by Title I Instructional Approach: 2004-05 Compared to 2003-04.⁷



Reasons cited for the predominance of pullout services include:

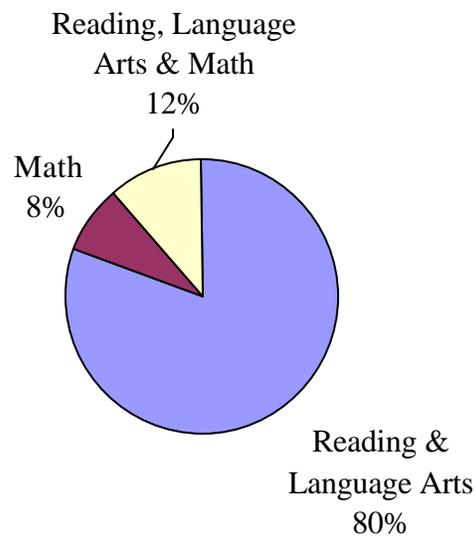
- ◆ Schools with sizeable Title I allocations used APS Title I reading teachers to work directly with Title I students as an integral part of the school day;
- ◆ Title I reading teachers and private school classroom teachers collaborated closely to coordinate intervention efforts;
- ◆ Title I reading teachers blended supplemental reading strengthening activities and materials with classroom activities and materials to complete subject-related assignments; and
- ◆ The collaborative pullout approach afforded individual and small group learning opportunities based up on student needs.

⁷ CAI is Computer Assisted Instruction.

Curricular Focus

Reading/language arts was the most popular focus of private school Title I services. Eighty percent of students received instruction in reading and language arts, and another 12% received instruction in reading, language arts and math. The remaining 8% received math assistance.

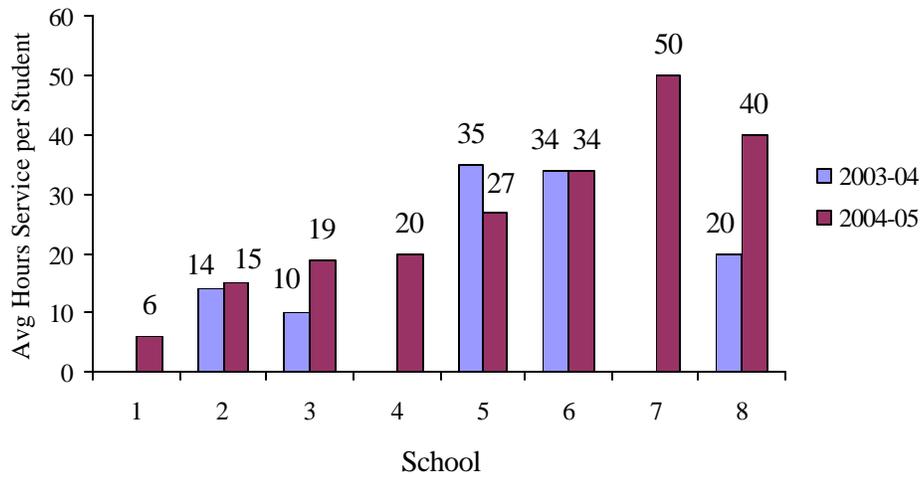
Figure 2. Percentages of Private School Students by Title I Curricular Focus, 2004-05.



Total Hours of Instruction

The total hours of instructional services delivered by each school's Title I program in 2004-05 ranged from an average of 6 hours per student to 50 hours per student. Two schools provided more hours of service than did any school during 2003-04, when the greatest number of total instructional hours per student averaged 35. However, 4 of the 8 schools provided 20 hours or fewer.

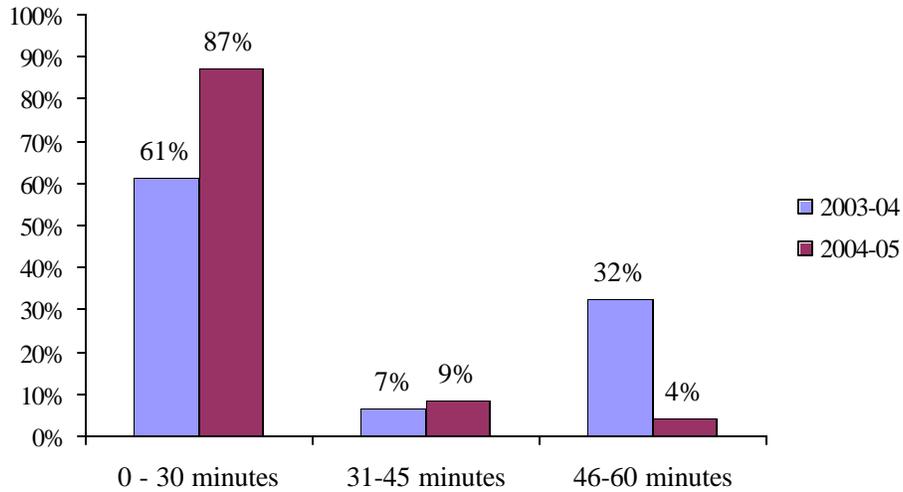
Figure 3. Total Hours of Title I Instruction Received on Average Per Student by School, 2004-05 Compared to 2003-04.



Duration and Frequency of Instruction

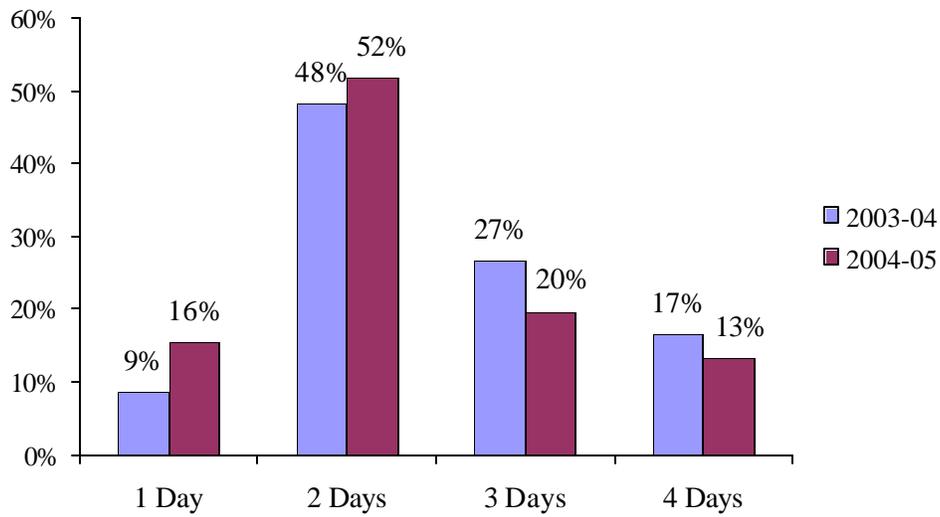
Overall, private school students received shorter Title I instructional sessions than in 2003-04. The majority (87%) had sessions of 30 minutes or less. Only 4% (7 students) received 45 minutes or more of instruction per session, compared to 32% the previous year.

Figure 4. Percent Students by Length of Title I Instructional Sessions, 2004-05 & 2003-04.



Decreases in the length of Title I sessions for many students were not counterbalanced with increases in the frequency of instruction. Just as in 2003-04, about half of private school students received 2 days of Title I instruction per week. The proportions of students receiving 3 or 4 days of instruction per week decreased slightly compared to 2003-04. Moreover, 10 of the 23 students receiving 4 days of instruction per week received services for only 3 months.

Figure 5. Percent Students by Number of Days Per Week of Title I Instruction, 2004-05 Compared to 2003-04.



Annual Progress

Over eighty percent of private school students receiving Title I services improved their reading comprehension and basic math skills by 0.5 grade level equivalents over the course of one year. However, only one out of eight private school programs fully achieved the annual progress goal of improving the reading comprehension or basic math skills of 100% of its Title I students by 0.5 grade level equivalents.⁸ Three private school programs missed the 100% goal by one student.

Overall, seven of the eight schools showed gains of 0.5 grade level equivalents for three-fourths or more of their Title I students. The eighth school did so in math but not in reading.

Table 4. Percentages of Students Improving Reading and Math Scores by 0.5 Grade Level Equivalents or More, by School.⁹

School	Reading		Math	
	Percent	Number/ Total Tested	Percent	Number/ Total Tested
1	100.0%	12/12	87.5%	7/8
2	97.2%	35/36	93.3%	14/15
3	91.7%	33/36	NA	NA
4	77.8%	7/9	NA	NA
5	80.0%	4/5	NA	NA
6	72.0%	18/25	NA	NA
7	52.6%	10/19	100.0%	1/1
8	44.4%	4/9	77.8%	7/9
TOTALS	81.5%	123	87.9%	29

Special needs students were much less likely to meet the Title I private school annual progress goal. None of the eight students identified by two schools as having special needs (e.g., special education referrals, etc.) improved their reading comprehension skills by half a grade level or more. At a Title I collaboration meeting convened to review annual progress results, private

⁸ Another school achieved the goal in math, but the significance of this is diminished by the fact that it submitted math achievement scores for only one student.

⁹ The school numbers are not consistent with school numbers used in Figure 3.

school representatives proposed the following steps to improve the academic progress of special needs students:

- ◆ Maintain the same annual progress standard for special needs students as for regular education students.
- ◆ Identify which students have “special needs,” based on teacher observation, 504 or IEP status, or special education referral or evaluation.
- ◆ Use instructional programs that better meet the needs of special needs students.
- ◆ Analyze special needs students as a separate sub-group in order to track whether instructional changes have improved their academic progress.

At private school officials’ request, RDA investigated whether older students had more difficulty achieving annual progress goals than younger students. Annual progress results showed no clear association with grade level. Fourth and sixth graders were least likely to meet annual progress goals. However, fifth and seventh graders were just as likely as K-3 students to meet annual progress goals.

The top achieving private school Title I programs included the following features:

- ◆ They were staffed by an APS teacher who worked on-site at the private school.
- ◆ Curriculum and assessment programs included Accelerated Reader, STAR Reading, and Developmental Reading Assessment.
- ◆ APS Title I teachers provided professional development and support to private school teachers and staff.

Annual progress results suggest that more effective Title I programming could be achieved by expanding the services of APS teachers to more private schools. According to schools’ narrative reports, APS teachers not only provide direct instruction to students but also provide professional development to classroom teachers, thus enhancing the instruction that students receive in their regular classrooms.

Private School Satisfaction

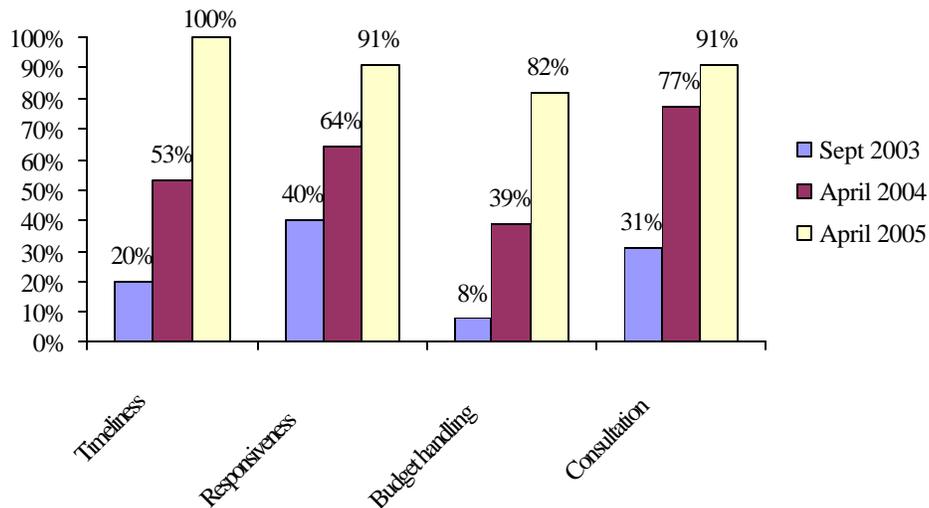
APS' Title I office began working to reestablish positive relations with private schools in the fall of 2003, after federal changes and APS staffing and accounting problems had compromised Title I services for private school students. To measure the effects of APS' efforts, RDA has conducted three surveys of private school officials. The first one in September 2003 asked private school officials to comment on the 2002-03 school year. The second one, conducted in April 2004, showed improved satisfaction and understanding among school officials. Results from the third survey, conducted in April 2005, indicate almost universal satisfaction with APS' handling of Title I affairs. For example, out of eleven respondents:

- 91% reported satisfaction with APS' frequency of communication;
- 100% reported satisfaction with the availability and quality of APS' administrative and technical support;
- 100% said APS' meetings for private schools were productive; and
- 91% said they knew and understood NCLB requirements.

Moreover, survey results suggest a progressive improvement in APS-private school relations since the first survey conducted in September of 2003. As illustrated in Figure 6, marked improvements were made in the proportion of private school representatives reporting satisfaction with:

- the timeliness of information provided by APS;
- APS' responsiveness to private school needs;
- APS' handling of budgetary matters; and
- APS' consultative approach to decision-making, i.e., a sense that APS takes private school views and interests into account when making decisions.

Figure 6. Percent Survey Respondents Expressing Satisfaction with APS' Handling of Title I Affairs: Changes Over Time.



Written survey comments and program coordinator reports indicated continued room for improvement in the area of budgeting. In particular, the process of making Title I funds available for use (“loading”) suffered lengthy and repeated delays. One official wrote: “Last time I checked – in March – I was told money was still not loaded!”

As in 2003-04, many private school officials credited APS’ NCLB Private School Coordinator for the improvements in APS-private school relations. One official wrote:

APS’ NCLB Private School Coordinator has been an outstanding liaison to the nonpublic schools. I am more informed about the entitlement program than I ever have been due to the information she provides.

Conclusions

Eight private school Title I programs provided direct instructional services, mostly in reading and language arts, to 174 students in 2004-05. Another two schools used Title I funds for instructional materials and teacher professional development.

Small increases in the number of schools providing services and in the number of students receiving services, compared to 2003-04, may suggest a slow return toward historical levels of activity. However, the average student had shorter and less frequent Title I instructional sessions compared to 2003-04, and the total number of students served was still almost half the number served in 2000-01 (174 compared to 310). Further, only about half the students originally identified as needing and eligible for Title I services actually received direct Title I instructional services. Some schools declined to offer direct instructional services because their Title I allocations were too small, most school representatives reported that they couldn't serve all the students who needed Title I services, and some schools did not have the administrative capacity to establish and run viable Title I programs.

Over eighty percent of private school students receiving Title I services improved their reading comprehension and basic math skills by 0.5 grade level equivalents within one year. However, only one out of eight private school programs fully achieved the annual progress goal of improving the reading comprehension or basic math skills of 100% of its Title I students by 0.5 grade level equivalents. None of the 8 identified special needs students met the annual progress goal.

The amount, frequency, context and duration of instructional services provided by most private school Title I programs in 2004-05 may have been inadequate to achieve significant gains in academic achievement. Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (1998), a report of the National Research Council, provides an extensive review of research on the most highly regarded supplemental literacy programs. According to the report, successful supplemental literacy interventions have the following characteristics:

- ◆ Occur on a daily basis for the duration of a school year or most of the school year;
- ◆ Involve more time in reading and writing than for children not at risk;

- ◆ Ensure well-trained, highly skilled staff; and
- ◆ Include carefully planned assessments that closely monitor the response of each child to the intervention.¹⁰

By contrast, in APS' Title I program for private school students:

- ◆ Over half of the students received 1- 2 days per week of instructional services, some for only a few months;
- ◆ Most students received pullout services, which did not provide them extended time compared to low-risk students, and which also contradicted Title I statutes; and
- ◆ Some students received Title I instruction from Level I teachers (3 years of teaching experience or fewer).

Features of APS' top achieving private school Title I programs included having an APS teacher on-site to provide direct student instruction as well as staff development, and using Accelerated Reader, STAR Reading, and Developmental Reading Assessment.

Annual progress and service utilization results suggest that the fragmented approach to funding and operating private school Title I programs – via 10 independent program designs and budgets – may limit Title I services and outcomes. It may be possible to improve cost-effectiveness by returning to APS' historical model of providing one centralized program staffed with APS Title I teachers. Re-creating a centralized private school Title I program would have the following advantages:

- ◆ APS would meet federal expectations that “the LEA is responsible for *planning, designing and implementing* the Title I program and may not delegate that responsibility to the private schools or their officials.”¹¹;
- ◆ Pooling resources would create an economy of scale, allowing more students to be served and/or providing more hours of service per student;
- ◆ APS would no longer conduct the burdensome, time-consuming process of soliciting proposals from private schools for Title I instructional programs of their own design;

¹⁰ Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (1998), pp. 273-274.

¹¹ Title I Services to Eligible Private School Children: Non-Regulatory Guidance, October 17, 2003, page 21.

- ◆ Private school officials and APS staff would significantly decrease the amount of time they spend preparing proposals, purchase orders, budgets and service reports;
- ◆ Title I services for private school children could start more promptly at the beginning of the school year because payroll funds are not subject to the same delays as are professional services agreements;
- ◆ APS would have more control over the quality and quantity of services provided to Title I children;
- ◆ APS teachers can support the professional development of private school staff, thus enhancing the instruction that Title I students receive in their regular classrooms;
- ◆ APS would be in a better position to implement consistent assessments to measure the effect of Title I services on private school children, an NCLB requirement; and
- ◆ A core staff of APS teachers, rather than staff from 8 or more different private schools, would be responsible for tracking and reporting student information, which could increase reporting reliability.

The proposal to return to a centralized private school Title I program staffed by APS teachers is bolstered by support from many private school officials and teachers. School representatives had the opportunity to review preliminary summaries of their Title I students' annual progress at an APS-sponsored meeting in September 2005. They themselves recommended expanding the services of APS teachers in order to improve the academic achievement of as many students as possible.

Recommendations

RDA recommends the following actions to strengthen APS' Title I private school program, increase its benefit for students and meet federal requirements:

1. Return to the pre-2001 centralized program model in which APS teachers provided Title I services to all private school Title I students using a common curriculum and consistent assessments.
2. Increase the number of students receiving extended-day services rather than pullout services. This has the potential to accomplish the following purposes:
 - ◆ To comply with federal law;
 - ◆ To align Title I services with research that recommends extending the amount of instructional time high-risk students receive compared to their low-risk peers; and
 - ◆ To alleviate some of the scheduling conflicts that occur during the school day, thus potentially allowing students to receive more hours of Title I service (although out-of-school-time services may introduce other scheduling and transportation problems).
3. Identify special needs students, provide them with specialized instructional services (that may or may not be funded by Title I) and track their academic progress.