

Funding the Gearing Up for Kindergarten Program

Gearing Up for Kindergarten is a school readiness and parent education program. This document outlines various possibilities and resources available to districts and schools for funding a Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.

State Funds

Historically, the North Dakota State Legislative Assembly has appropriated state funding through the NDSU Extension Service to help support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.

No state funds were appropriated through the 2017 North Dakota legislative session. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction along with multiple stakeholder groups across the state are committed to providing support to keep the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. There are federal funds available to help support the program as outlined below.

Federal Title Funds

- **Title I, Part A** – Title I funds can be used for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program in Title I buildings. Schoolwide programs could serve all students and parents. Targeted assistance programs could only serve at-risk students and their parents as identified through a selection process. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program.
- **Title I Parent Involvement Set Aside** – If a district's Title I allocation is \$500,000 or more, then they are required to set aside 1% of their district's Title I allocation for parent involvement. Only 10% of these funds may be used at the district level, 90% must be given to the participating schools. Districts must document on their consolidated application that they have reserved, at a minimum, the 1% for parent involvement and specifically outline how these funds will be spent. These funds are ideal to help support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.
- **Title II, Part A** – Title II, Part A funds designated for professional development could be used to support professional development in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. Title II, Part A strategies, activities, and interventions must demonstrate that it is supported by data and that it is evidence-based.
- **Title IV, Part A** – Title IV, Part A is a new block program under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). If a district can document early childhood as a need through a comprehensive needs assessment required in the Title IV program, then a district could possibly use its funds to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program as a well-rounded education initiative.

- Transferability – School districts are allowed to transfer the funding under the federal Title programs and can use these funds for any authorized activity. Funds can be transferred into Title I to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regards to the program.
- Small Rural Schools Achievement Program Funds through REAP – Eligible schools can apply for these additional funds directly through the U.S. Department of Education. These funds can be used for authorized activities under the Title programs and can support any of the supplemental activities under the federal programs, including the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.
- Reallocated Title I Funds – These funds are available to school districts that would like to add to their Title I program, but need additional funds to accomplish their plan. The funds must supplement your current local and Title I budget. These funds are made available in October and could be used to support any additional activity that will enhance services for Title I students. Title I rules and regulations apply including only Title I eligible students and parents in a Targeted Assistance program and all students and parents in a Schoolwide program.

Other Options

- Pool Your Resources – In North Dakota, it is becoming quite common for districts to cooperate and share services. Federal regulations allow school districts to pool their resources to share services among several schools. One district would simply agree to be the fiscal agent and the funds would flow through that district to pay for the shared activities. Several area districts close in proximity could pool their funds to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.
- Another viable option would be to share resources through your local Regional Educational Association (REA).
- Gifted funds specifically for the program (e.g., gifts from community, trust fund from former student).
- Granted funds specifically for the program (e.g., fundraisers)
- Local United Way
- Tuition (i.e., parents pay a fee for the program)
- Donations specifically for the program (e.g., organized donations from city)

This information, as well as other early childhood information, can be found online at www.ag.ndsu.edu/gearupforkindergarten.

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