



Ore. district uses ESEA funds to support pre-K, other programs



Olga Acuña, executive director of federal programs for Hillsboro (Ore.) School District

The Hillsboro (Ore.) School District is the fourth-largest public school district in Oregon. The local educational agency serves more than 18,000 students from preschool through 12th grade in 36 schools. Forty-one percent of students served are Hispanic, and nearly 14 percent of students receive special education services.

"One of the practices that is helping us make big gains in HSD is the braiding approach to services that are federally funded," said Olga Acuña, executive director of federal programs for HSD. "We also braid some Title I funds with other local and state funds to offer preschool services to families, primarily in Title I schools."

Acuña recently shared information with *ESEA NowSM* about how the district leverages federal funds to serve the diverse student population, including efforts to provide preschool to students.

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Q: *What are some of the key elements of the district's Title I plan? How does the district use its Title I funds?*

A: Title I funds support eight schoolwide Title I schools, which use their allocations primarily for supplemental staffing. Schoolwide programs also use Title I funds for materials, resources, technology, and family engagement activities.



In addition, HSD uses its Title I districtwide set-asides to provide preschool programming, extended day programming, family engagement/family literacy nights, and professional development activities.

Q: *How did you use ESSER funds? What plans are in place to retain any effective ongoing efforts funded by ESSER when funding ends?*

A: ESSER funds were used as intended, to provide relief and prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID pandemic challenges. The district redistributed funds throughout the various programs, and a greater part of that money was spent on the hiring of specialists, social workers, outreach liaisons, teachers, and support staff who provided supplemental services to students and families.

Q: *What other ESEA funding streams are you using to serve your students? How are you using those funds?*

A: Other funding streams include Title I, Part C; Title II; Title III; and Title IV. Title I, Part C is used to provide specific supports in the areas of literacy, math, school-readiness, and graduation-readiness for students who are migratory. The LEA uses the limited amount of Title II funds to provide professional development for teachers and administrators. Title III is also a small grant that provides supplemental staff to coordinate language supports and professional development for school staff, so they are advancing the learning of English learners. The LEA combines its Title IV funds with Title I to increase access and opportunity for students and increase student achievement in Title I schools and private schools that receive equitable services.

Q: *Which funds are you using to provide preschool services? What kind of documentation or evidence do you retain to show it's a necessary and reasonable use of funds?*

A: We use funds from Title I, Parts A and C; Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Program [a state program that supports transitions of children from early childhood into kindergarten]; Preschool Promise [a state program that serves 3- and 4-year-old students from families at or below 200 percent of the poverty line]; and general funds. Evidence to support funding includes enrollment data, how many slots are being filled by children that are representative of the various funds being used, and what outreach is being done to families who demonstrate high need.

Q: *What are some of the top issues you are facing this year? What changes are you anticipating?*

*Reprinted with permission from: **ESEANow.com**. © 2024 LRP Publications, 360 Hiatt Drive, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418. All rights reserved. **ESEANow.com** is education administrators' most trusted online resource for fiscal strategies and compliance guidance gathered from Title I experts. For FREE access or more information, please call 1-800-341-7874 or visit www.ESEANow.com. For more LRP resources, visit www.shoplrp.com.*



A: Limited funding for preschool expansion, which is greatly needed, and I am anticipating budget reductions going into the next school year. There's also an increased need for wrap-around services for families in the district and an increase in the number of children who are eligible for homeless services under McKinney-Vento at a time when resources are scarce. The lack of housing affordability for our families keeps me up at night.

[Charles Hendrix](#) covers education funding and other Title I issues for LRP Publications.

June 18, 2024

Copyright 2024© LRP Publications