

Rochester School District Newsletter

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Understanding the Basics of Title I Funds
- Top Ten Ways You Know You Are In a Literary Focused School
- Special Education Services or Section 504 Accommodations? That is the Question!
- Want to Help Build Your Child's Mathematical Thinking? Play a Game!
- Commercial Games that Use Mathematics

RSDNewsletter@rochesterschools.com

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF TITLE 1 FUNDS

~Marty Brennan, Title I Director/
Homeless Liaison

Taken from *The Hub for Bright Minds*,
<http://www.brighthub.com>

Title 1 funds aim to bridge the gap between low-income students and other students. The U.S. Department of Education provides supplemental funding to local school districts to meet the needs of at-risk and low income students.

What is a Title 1 School?

Most educators, parents and community members have heard the term Title 1 School. Being able to answer what is a title 1 school as established by the U.S. Department of Education, however, is more difficult. Title 1 is the nation's oldest and largest federally funded program, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

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TOP TEN WAYS YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN A LITERARY FOCUSED SCHOOL

~Sally Riley

#10: Data, Data, Data...Data Teams

Rochester schools and the school district are working to create a seamless system of program and instructional support for our students. One approach to accomplishing this goal is by continuous review of assessment data.

Through our data warehouse, Infinite Campus we can store

test data to look at it over time to determine our strengths and weaknesses. Schools and the district meet in "data teams" that consist of both regular and special educators that review test results from NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program), MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic

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SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES OR SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATIONS? THAT IS THE QUESTION!



~Sharon Pray

Section 504 is one part of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which was enacted by Congress as part of this nation's effort in the early 1970's to combat discrimination against many of the more vulnerable groups in our society. This Section bars discrimination against persons with disabilities in the services and programs that are administered by any entity that receives federal funds. An entity that receives federal funds agrees as a condition for the receipt of the funds that it will not discriminate against persons with disabilities. To be covered under these laws, there must be a finding that a person is an "individual with a disability".

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UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF TITLE 1 FUNDS , CONT.

Annually, it provides over \$7 billion to school systems across the country for students at risk of failure and living at or near poverty.

Originally, the idea of Title 1 was enacted in 1965 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This policy committed to closing the achievement gap between low-income students and other student. The policy was rewritten in 1994 to improve fundamental goals of helping at-risk students. With the implementation of No Child Left Behind, schools must make adequate yearly progress on state testing and focus on best teaching practices in order to continue receiving funds.

What is the Purpose of Title 1 Funding?

According to the U.S. Department of Education the purpose of Title 1 funding, "is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

The basic principles of Title 1 state that schools with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting student's educational goals. Low-income students are determined by the number of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. For an entire school to qualify for Title 1 funds, at least 40% of students must enroll in the free and reduced lunch program.

How are Title 1 Funds Used?

How to use Title 1 funds rests with each school. Title 1 funds can be used to improve curriculum, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, increase staff and program improvement. The funding should assist schools in meeting the educational goals of low-income students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Title 1 funds typically support supplemental instruction in reading and math. Annually, this program reaches over six million students, primarily in the elementary grades.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES OR SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATIONS? THAT IS THE QUESTION!, CONT.

In the public school setting, this would be a student who has a "physical or mental impairment that **substantially limits** one or more major life activities", who has a "record of such an impairment" and/or is "being regarded as having an impairment."

Federal Special Education laws (IDEA) and Section 504/ADA do not have the same definitions for who is disabled and who is covered by those laws. The IDEA does not use the term "substantially limiting". Instead, it refers to 14 disabling categories that "adversely affect" educational performance and require special education services for the student to benefit from school.

As public school officials, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a student might require "special education services" (specialized instruction) or whether a student might require accommodations. In an effort to determine this, Section 504 Teams and IEP Teams gather together to review assessment data with ongoing progress monitoring to assist with these very important decisions.

One might ask, what is the REAL difference between an IEP (Individual Education Plan under IDEA) and a Section 504 Accommodation Plan? Both refer to a "person with a disability". However, the important questions for the public school teams are.....does the student's disability "substantially limit" a major life activity or does it "adversely affect" his or her educational performance? Does the student require "specialized instruction" or modifications in the general curriculum or specific accommodations to provide him or her with equal opportunity to access the general curriculum?

The Rochester School Department provides ongoing professional development for staff members in an effort to assist them when they are asked to participate in making these very important decisions. Our children are our future! It is our responsibility to give them the tools they need to succeed!



For more information about differences between Section 504 and IDEA, feel free to contact the Special Education Office at 332-3687.

90% READING GOAL, CONT.

Early Literacy Skills) as well as district adopted program assessments; i.e., Reading Street (Grades K-6) and Reading Edge (Grades 7 & 8). By looking at the test data over time we can identify trends and coordinate our efforts to adjust our instruction and link it to future programming needs.

#9: Using explicit, direct language in front of children is appropriate.

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children's reading comprehension. "Systematic instruction results in better growth in children's ability to read the words in text than non-systematic or no phonics instruction. This is not surprising because the ability to read the words in text accurately and quickly is highly related to successful reading comprehension." (Put Reading First, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, 2001.)

#8: The person called "Coach" is not the gym teacher.

Elementary schools and the middle school have Reading Specialists/Reading Coaches who not only work with students to improve their reading skills, but also coach teachers on how to improve their instructional skills.

#7: People say "DIBELS" without laughing.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills is a scientifically

validated assessment tool used to assess early reading skills. Dibels benchmark assessments are given three times a year: at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Dibels measures emphasize both accuracy and fluency and are powerful indicators of the early skills that predict reading success.

#6: Woe to the unfortunate soul who interrupts the reading block.

#5: More data.

We understand the importance of continuously looking at the data to make sure that we are on the right path for our students.

#4: Everyone knows that the Focus Five Plus One are NOT phonics, phonics, phonics, phonics, phonics, and more phonics!

The Focus Five Plus One is Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Writing. All these components are found both in our curriculum and our adopted reading materials.

#3: Interventions are not when your friends and family tell you that you need help.

Students at different times may need extra help to improve their reading skills. By looking at student data, teachers can determine if a student needs help in one or several areas: e.g., fluency skills, vocabulary

development, phonics and/or comprehension skills. In addition to regular 90 minute reading class, students can receive additional instruction through intervention programs that target specific skills. Once the program data indicates that they have mastered the skill (s), they no longer need to attend.



#2: Parents/guardians/grandparents/siblings read to a child 20 minutes a day.

This community-wide campaign supports the goal that all our students will read by third grade and beyond. The school and community work together to make a difference for our children now and in the future. Have you read to a child today?

And the number one way that you know that you are in a literacy focused school is...

#1: It has a dedicated faculty that is working tirelessly to ensure that every child becomes a proficient reader!



Commercial Games That Use Mathematics

Counting, Adding, and Subtracting

Chutes and Ladders® (3+)

Hi-Ho! Cherry-O® (3+)

Sorry!® (6+)

Trouble® (5+)

Uno® (6+)

Attributes, Patterns, and Geometry

Crazy Eights - traditional card game (4+)

Guess Who?® (6+)

Guess Where?® (6+)

Jigsaw puzzles

Rummikub® (8+)

Tangrams (5+)

Strategy and Spatial Perception

The a-MAZE-ing Labyrinth® (8+)

Battleship® (7+)

Checkers (3+)

Clue® Jr. (5+) and Clue® (8+)

Connect Four® (7+)

Jenga® (6+)

Mancala (6+)

Memory (many names exist for this game of matching face-down pictures) (3+)

Mille Bornes® (8+)

Othello® (8+)

Pretty Pretty Princess® (5+)

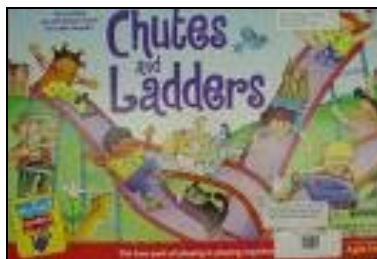
WANT TO HELP BUILD YOUR CHILD'S MATHEMATICAL THINKING? PLAY A GAME!

~ Mary Moriarty

Did you ever spend a summer afternoon or cold winter night playing round after round of *Crazy Eights* or *Sorry!*® or take pleasure in making one's sibling say the dreaded words, "You sank my battleship!"? You were probably having fun playing these games, (unless it was your battleship being sunk), but what you probably didn't know is that you were actually improving your mathematical thinking.

In 2007, Geetha B. Ramani and Robert Siegler of Carnegie Mellon University conducted a study of preschool students enrolled in Head Start to see what the impact of playing linear board games (such as *Chutes & Ladders*®) would have on "enhancing young children's numerical knowledge". They concluded that "playing such a game for roughly one hour (spread out over four fifteen to twenty minute sessions) increased

(the preschoolers) proficiency on four diverse numerical tasks: numerical magnitude (how much a number is worth) comparison (is 4 less than or more than 5), number line estimation (on a number line from 1 - 10, where would 5 go), counting (1, 2, 3...), and numerical identification (the symbol 3 represents what number). The gains remained nine weeks later." (Ramani, Siegler, 2007)



It doesn't stop with *Chutes and Ladders*®, such games as *Jenga*® and *Guess Who?*® help children to develop their mathematical thinking as it relates to strategy, spatial perceptions, attributes, patterns

and/or geometry. The benefits of playing these games, extends beyond the mathematics, and opens the door to a wonderful opportunity for children to learn about: turn taking, being a good sport, interacting with others, understanding and following directions and having fun without the television or computer being on!

Consider setting aside one night a week to have *Family Game Night*. You will not only help build your child's mathematical knowledge, but are sure to create some lasting family memories!

