

Program Evaluation of Randolph School District's Title 1 Program:

Parent Survey

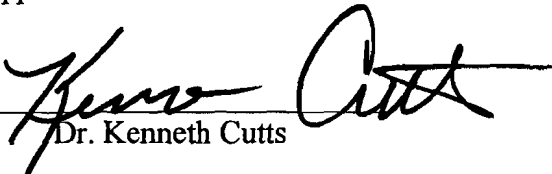
by

Amy J. Beattie

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in

Education

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Dr. Kenneth Cutts

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
August, 2008

**The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI**

Author: Beattie, Amy J.

Title: *Program Evaluation of Randolph School District's Title 1 Program:
Parent Survey*

Graduate Degree/Major: Master of Science Degree in Education

Research Adviser: Kenneth Cutts, Ph.D.

Month/Year: August, 2008

Number of Pages: 46

Style Manual Used: American Psychological Association, 5th edition

ABSTRACT

Since 1964 Congress has provided financial assistance to school districts that have qualified for programs such as Title 1. The purpose of Title 1 programs is to enable all children, elementary through secondary, to meet high academic standards. Parents and teachers build a close, cooperative partnership through Title 1 programs to ensure student success. Randolph School District is a targeted assistance school in which children are selected to participate in Title 1 by parent and/or teacher recommendation, classroom performance, and test results. The purpose of this program evaluation is to provide the Randolph school district: school board, parents, teachers, and students with conscious recognition of how the Title 1 functions and its success through parent/teacher involvement. This evaluation was accomplished through an in-depth survey of Title 1 participating students' parents. Analysis of data led to recommendations for this type of evaluation that could be applied to other units in the same format, as well as ways to adjust this evaluation process to provide more accurate and useful information for teachers and other stakeholders.

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin Stout

Menomonie, WI

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my husband, children, friends, and students. I would like to thank my husband for the emotional support he provided, and my children for their patience. I would also like to thank my special friend Jackie Drews for her guidance and advice. My students also deserve a special thank you for their understanding and forgiveness when my lessons weren't as polished as they could have been.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
List of Tables.....	vi
Chapter I: Introduction	1
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	2
<i>Objectives</i>	3
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	3
<i>Assumptions of the Study</i>	3
<i>Definition of Terms</i>	4
<i>Limitations of the Study</i>	4
<i>Methodology</i>	5
Chapter II: Literature Review.....	6
<i>Historical perspectives on Title One Programs</i>	6
<i>Federal Funding of Title One Programs</i>	8
<i>Benefits of Conducting an Evaluation</i>	11
<i>Study of a Program Evaluation</i>	14
<i>Characteristics of Successful Programs</i>	15
Chapter III: Methodology.....	18
<i>Subject Selection and Description</i>	18
<i>Instrumentation</i>	18
<i>Procedures</i>	19
<i>Data Analysis</i>	19
<i>Limitations</i>	19

Chapter IV: Results	21
<i>Item Analysis</i>	21
Chapter V: Discussion	32
<i>Limitations</i>	33
<i>Conclusions</i>	33
<i>Recommendations</i>	33
References	36
Appendix A: Title 1 Parent Survey	37

List of Tables

Table 1: My child's reading has improved.....	24
Table 2: Attending Title 1 nights is helpful	24
Table 3: My child is well served within the program.....	24
Table 4: My child is making good progress in Title 1	24
Table 5: Title 1 has made a difference with my child	25
Table 6: My child's writing/spelling have improved	25
Table 7: The Title 1 teacher knows my child's needs.....	25
Table 8: I can openly with the Title 1 teacher	26
Table 9: My child is positive about time spent in Title 1	26
Table 10: My child shares with me what they are doing in their Title 1 classes	27
Table 11: My child seems more motivated to learn	27
Table 12: I like the Family Nights the way they are	27
Table 13: I would like to be more involved in my child's learning process with Title 1	28
Table 14: I would be willing to participate on an advisory committee to help plan family nights	28
Table 15: The Randolph School District should maintain the Title 1 program	28
Table 16: Are you aware of some of the program ideas used in reading and/or mathematics lessons in the Title 1 program.....	29
Table 17: Do you feel confident with the selection process for the Title 1 program	29
Table 18: Do you know the grade expectations for your child	29
Table 19: Do you understand your child's Title 1 quarterly reports	30
Table 20: Is your child doing better in school because of the Title 1 program.....	30
Table 21: Does the Title 1 school-parent compact help to remind you about things you can do to help your child do better in school.....	30

Table 22: Are you aware that the federal government bases the Title 1 program upon the amount of students receiving Free and Reduced Hot Lunch	31
Table 23: What is the best way for the Title 1 teacher to share information about your child and family activities.....	31
Table 24: Rank order the importance of Title 1 services at K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	31

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Title 1 reading program at Randolph Elementary School grades Kindergarten through fourth grade focuses on parent involvement and student success.

The School District of Randolph's Parent/Student/Teacher Compact reads as follows:

Randolph School wants to create a positive learning environment where every child can succeed. To accomplish this goal, parents, teachers and students need to work together. Research tells us that student achievement increases with the increase in goal of success for all by completing and signing your part of this compact. (*Randolph School District Parent/Student/Teacher Compact*).

The Randolph Title one program services students grades Kindergarten through fifth grade in reading and math. The program is serviced by one full time reading teacher (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction certification #316) and a part-time reading specialist (part-time is defined as having one day of the school/working week off.) In order to be selected to participate in Title 1 a teacher or parent must ask for a referral to the program or a student must be identified. A student who is at risk of academic failure, because they are not responding to the curriculum and the intervention that have been tried in the regular classroom, can be selected for participation in the Title 1 program. Qualified Title 1 students are students who have scored at Basic or Minimal levels on state tests and need additional accommodations that cannot be provided in the regular classroom. Students involved in special education and speech and language programs can also participate in the Title 1 program. Teachers evaluate students according to a survey and the referred student is then screened by the Title 1 teacher (reading #316 teacher) or the reading specialist.

Statement of the Problem

Randolph School District has initiated focus on assessment because of the standardized testing and No Child Left Behind Legislation. Randolph School District has been working on re-formatting and re-writing curriculum to follow Wisconsin State standards. Because of localized accountability, it is important that a program evaluation is conducted. Furthermore, it is also vital to take into account parent feelings and attitudes regarding the success of Title 1 services.

According to the Wisconsin State Reading Association in their *Position Statement*, successful Title 1 teaching practices should reflect the following:

- services are designed and delivered to meet the educational, social, and emotional needs of eligible students,
- program components, including assessment, are based upon current literacy research findings
- instruction is designed to develop independent, strategic readers and learners
- district coordination across content areas focuses on the Wisconsin Content and Performance Standards
- cooperative planning between Title 1 and classroom teachers is essential (2002).

Evaluating the Title 1 program could help to determine if students are receiving what they need from program provided services in order to perform at proficient levels and deemed successful. Furthermore, The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) also puts pressure on school districts to have all students performing at a proficient or advanced level by the year 2014. Under No Child Left Behind, all students, including those learning English, will be assessed in the areas of reading, math, and eventually science (“Toolkit”, 2007). There is a strong push to make both school districts and teachers accountable. “Results from these tests will be made available in annual report cards so

parents can measure school performance and statewide progress, evaluate the quality of their child's school, the qualifications of teachers, and their progress in key subjects" ("Fact Sheet", 2002). If results on these standardized tests are being used for such evaluation, the Randolph school district needs to be sure that their programs, including the Title 1/reading programs, are meeting the needs of the students, and evaluation of the program is the best way to assess the programs success.

Objectives

1. *To evaluate the effectiveness of the current Title 1 program at Randolph Elementary and Middle School.*
2. *To analyze Title 1 student participant attitudes and feelings about the success of the Title 1 program.*

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of Title 1 programs is to enable all children, elementary through middle, to meet high academic standards and to continually improve upon resources for teachers and students alike. Including, but not limited to, literary sources and technology sources.

- focus on what all students are to learn and how they best learn it
- be driven by data analysis of differences between what all students should know and do and student performance demonstrated by multiple sources of outcomes
- be based on Wisconsin Department of Instruction Standards
- involve staff in identification of what they need to learn to improve teacher effectiveness
- develop a district culture that supports continuous learning
- utilize collaborative problem-solving research and action groups

Assumptions of the Study

- Students who participate in the Title 1 program through the Randolph School District will become more successful students.
- Students who participate in the Title 1 program through the Randolph School District also have parents who will actively participate.
- Students who participate in the Title 1 program through the Randolph School District will perform at a basic skill level on Wisconsin State standardized tests.

Definition of Terms

Title 1. Federally funded education program designed to improve educational opportunities. Accelerated and enriched instruction is provided in local eligible public and private schools for educationally disadvantaged students.

Targeted Assistance Schools. Title 1 services are provided to a select group of children—those identified as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state’s challenging academic achievement standards.

No Child Left Behind. This title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

Reading Excellence Act. Federal funding that supports two-year grants provided to at-risk schools to improve literacy instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Proficiency Scores. Students are scored based on four levels of performance called proficiency scores. The Department of Public Instruction labels these categories as Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Minimal Performance.

Advanced. Student has an in-depth understanding and skills in a content area.

Proficient. Student shows a competent level of achievement.

Basic. Student shows some weaknesses that should be addressed.

Minimal. Student shows limited academic knowledge in the area tested.

WKCE. The Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination is a standardized assessment administered each year by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to 4th, 8th, and 10th grade students throughout the state. Students are tested in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing.

Limitations of the Study

- Parents may not take the survey seriously or may not fully understand what is being asked of them.

According to Jennifer Good author of *Evaluating Developmental Education Programs by Measuring Literacy Growth* taken from the *Journal of Developmental Education*,

Difficulty in evaluating specific student outcomes, such as an increase in reading comprehension and writing competency, abounds, and it demands multiple measures to demonstrate improvement. In addition, the constraints of limited numbers of subjects in many real-world contexts makes most statistical tests inappropriate. Does such a method of evaluation exist that can be adopted by developmental education instructors in a natural and genuine context while capitalizing on multiple measures to capture complex skills? And, can this method be applied in a literacy context when only a small number of participants exists? (Good, 2000).

- Standardized tests are not always the best measure of student success. According to Guilfoyle (2006) states,

In this culture of ‘what gets measured gets done,’ the question that begs asking is, what happens to what doesn’t get measured? In an NCLB-driven world, the list of what’s not measured far exceeds any list of what is measured. That list includes such subjects as history, art, civics, music and physical education as well as intangibles like school culture and student health and well being (p. 5).

Methodology

Research Design: Single-Group evaluation.

Population: Parents of qualified or enrolled in Title 1 at Randolph Elementary and Middle school.

Data Collection:

1. Parents attend at least one Title 1 meeting or one conference.
2. Staff is qualified.
3. District wide literacy programs or functions exist for all students who qualify.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The Review of Literature will examine the historical perspectives of Title 1 programs. Title 1 programs have existed for decades but have not been fully realized until the No Child Left Behind Act. Federal funding for Title 1 programs is essential for at-risk schools to better serve students in becoming proficient on state tests. The literature will also explore the benefits of conducting an evaluation, the study of a program evaluation on a public school, and a discussion of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) characteristics of successful Title 1 programs.

Historical Perspectives

Federally funded programs, such as Title 1, have existed in our country for decades but were not considered hot topics or popular educational programs until more recently, especially with the creation of NCLB. According to Ed Trust (2007), an organization established in 1990 by the American Association for Higher Education as a special project to encourage colleges and universities to support K-12 reform efforts, “The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the federal government’s largest investment in K-12 education” (Ed Trust, 2007). In order to understand the history and purpose of Title 1, there needs to be an understanding of ESEA and federally funded programs for education.

The ESEA was founded many decades ago as a way to improve the country’s educational system and hold that system accountable. Archived information from *Using federal resources to support reform (1996)* states,

Established in 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty, the ESEA for 30 years has provided federal assistance to schools, communities, and children in

need. With current funding of about \$9.5 billion annually, the ESEA continues to be the single largest source of federal aid to K012 schools. Title 1, aimed at improving education for disadvantaged children in poor areas, remains the cornerstone of the Act. Over the years, Congress has amended, expanded, streamlined, and revised the ESEA eight times, creating programs to help migrant children, neglected and delinquent youngsters, limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, and other special children. Other programs have been added to the Act to stimulate school improvements benefiting all students. Programs have been launched to enhance math and science instruction and to rid schools of drugs and violence. Smaller ESEA programs have been created to advance school desegregation, stimulate educational innovation, and achieve other special purposes. Thirty years of sustained federal commitment under the ESEA has changed the face of American education in many ways. Title 1 has helped raise the academic achievement of millions of disadvantaged children, particularly in basic skills (1996).

According to the *U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Title 1: Interim Report Executive Summary (2006)* by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, “According to the NAEP, nearly 4 in 10 fourth graders read below the basic level. Historically, nearly three-quarters of these students never attain average levels of reading skills” (p. 5). The National Assessment of Educational Progress, otherwise known as the nation’s report card, has been operating since 1969. The Federal Government has been regulating, assessing, and funding programs for more than thirty years prior to NCLB. According to Chandler (1982), author of *Title 1 and learning disabilities: the creatures from the federal swamp*, “The concept of a federal excursion into the traditionally state’s rights area of public school

education was as controversial in 1965 as it is today” (p. 183). Also according to Chandler (1982)

Title 1 of ESEA followed the Great Society philosophy of trying to help lower-income families with programs designed to improve health and education. The assumption was that the program recipients, after becoming educated and healthy, would be able to become members of the middle class. Money was, and for Title 1 still is, given to school districts based on a census of low-income families within the district. Funds generated from district low-income families must be used in the schools which the majority of children from those families attend. However, those ‘target’ schools can use the money for a great many purposes that they consider of help to any underachieving child. A child receiving service from Title 1 in a target school does not have to meet any income requirement (p. 183).

The history of Title 1 is probably more lengthy and complicated than most educators, parents, and participants in school-wide programs realize. The implications of federally funding is that school districts need to qualify for monies in order to run such programs.

Federal Funding

School districts that are financially disadvantaged typically receive and need the money that Title 1 programs, NCLB, and ESEA offer. These government agencies and funding provide for more than simply pull-out reading programs. These monies are allocated for other purposes and programs to support the at-risk student and at-risk school districts. Many educators are unaware of how NCLB and Title 1 effects school aid and additional services given to schools and students. According to Edtrust (2007)

Title 1 of ESEA targets over \$11 billion in financial assistance to schools educating low-income students. ESEA allocates almost another \$10 billion for teacher recruitment and professional development, educational technology, after-

school programs, and other purposes. Along with providing additional resources, the No Child Left Behind legislation adds important accountability and in increasing parent involvement (Edtrust).

Disadvantaged school districts truly need the help of the federal government and NCLB in order to provide their at-risk students the tools and skills to be successful in the real world. According to the *Educational Assessment of Title 1, Executive Summary published by the U.S. Department of Education*, (2006) there does exist a profile of Title 1 participants and resources.

Funding for Title 1, Part A, has increased by 46 percent over the past five years, after adjusting for inflation, from \$7.9 billion in FY 2000 to \$12.7 billion in FY 2006. Title 1 funds go to nearly all of the nation's school districts and to 55 percent of all public schools, but are more strongly targeted to high-poverty districts and schools than are state and local education funds. Most Title 1 funds go to elementary schools, and three-fourths of Title 1 participants in pre-kindergarten through grade 6. Fueled by a growing use of Title 1 schoolwide programs, the number of students counted as Title 1 participants has more than doubled in recent years, rising from 6.7 million in 1994-1995 to 16.5 million in 2002-03 (a 146 percent increase) (p. 13).

The greater number of participants is due to how schoolwide programs are counted, but nevertheless, the funding is still needed and available. The school districts that receive the federal funding for Title 1 programs and services through No Child Left Behind must first qualify. According to Mann (2006) "The program has been designed to identify and honor those schools that also have doubled their Academic Performance Index growth target-also based on standards testing-for two consecutive years. Other eligibility criteria includes a poverty index that equals at least 40 percent of all students enrolled."

It is interesting to note that larger school districts in large urban areas receive the most funds from NCLB for Title 1 programs. According to Multimedia Schools (1999)

A total of \$6.7 billion in Title 1 funding is available to public schools in the 1998-1999 school year, according to a report by Quality Education Data (QED). The top five Title 1 funded states for the school year are California (\$807.9 million), New York, (\$659.5 million), Texas (\$597.5 million), Florida (\$331.2 million), and Pennsylvania (\$325.7 million). The top five Title 1 funded school districts are New York City Public Schools, Chicago Public School District, Los Angeles Unified Schools, Detroit Public School District, and Philadelphia Public School District.

As stated previously, qualifying schools have options as to how they allocate the funds as directed under Title 1 programs to better service their at-risk populations. Keeping in mind however, the long-term goal of funding is to create successful, proficient, or advanced state-test takers. According to the Title 1 committee for the Wisconsin State Reading Association, "Title 1 funds may be used for preschool through 12th grade. The majority of school districts have traditionally used Title 1 funds for preschool and elementary grade programs. The new Title 1 guidelines encourage greater flexibility, creativity, and innovation in designing programs based on the student's specific needs." It is predicted that Title 1 funding will only grow in the future due to schoolwide programs, a greater number of at-risk students, and flexibility when choosing what the funds will be allocated for.

Benefits of Conducting an Evaluation

Evaluating the Title 1 program could help to determine if students at the high school level are in need of program provided services. Furthermore, The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) also puts pressure on school districts to have all students performing

at a proficient or advanced level by the year 2014. Under No Child Left Behind, all students, including those learning English, will be assessed in the areas of reading, math, and eventually science (“Toolkit”, 2007). There is a strong push to make both school districts and teachers accountable. “Results from these tests will be made available in annual report cards so parents can measure school performance and statewide progress, evaluate the quality of their child’s school, the qualifications of teachers, and their progress in key subjects” (“Fact Sheet”, 2002). If results on these standardized tests are being used for such evaluation, the Randolph school district needs to be sure that their programs, including the Title 1/reading programs, are meeting the needs of the students, and evaluation of the program is the best way to find this out. Evaluating a Title 1 program is very important considering all of the funding, extra programs, and other benefits a school receives due to the program itself. The Federal Government insists on studies and records that assess how well the program is being implemented. Furthermore, there exist rules and regulations that govern the work being conducted under Title 1 and No Child Left Behind. This indicates then, that qualifying school districts must also conduct their own evaluation of schoolwide Title 1 programs, which indicate progress and performance in order to prove program success. According to the Educational Assessment of Title 1, Executive Summary published by the U.S. Department of Education, (2006)

To answer questions of program implementation, the Department will rely on surveys of states, districts, schools, and teachers as well as more in-depth case studies and analyses of state performance reports and other extant data sources. Findings from these kinds of studies are valuable to the Congress, the Department, and educators as they assess the degree to which federal programs are being implemented as intended, describe the problems and challenges to

implementation, and identify states and districts that have made significant progress (p. 3).

How a Title 1 program is run, and carrying out an evaluation, is crucial to its success and continuance. According to Targeted Assistance Schools (2006) “Records must document that Title 1 funds are utilized for activities and services designed specifically to benefit Title 1 students. Prioritized lists are maintained showing the selection and placement of Title 1 students, along with any reasons for not including particular children” (p. 66). Qualifying Targeted Assistance schools and qualifying Title 1 schools utilizing the federal funds and grants are not only required to keep and maintain records but have a timeline to do so. According to Ed Trust, (2007) “Every state and school district is responsible for ensuring that students meet state standards for proficiency in reading and math by 2014. Schools must use disaggregated data to ensure that ALL groups of students are making adequate progress.” Furthermore, because 2014 has been indicated as the deadline to prove success, programs should begin evaluation in order to be a part of the lawmaker’s renewal timeline. According to *Title 1: Key Performance and Evaluation Issues* (1999),

Evaluations of Title 1 that summarize outcomes at the end of a five-or six-year reauthorization cycle come too late to affect changes in program implementation and operation that can have an impact on results. Consequently, evaluations of Title 1 must provide information throughout the reauthorization cycle so that policymakers and practitioners can make midcourse corrections to improve program performance.

Furthermore, school districts must be aware that proving success through Title 1 programs will not happen overnight. To show a program’s success will most likely take years. Also according to *Title 1: Key Performance and Evaluation Issues* (1999),

Improved student performance will demonstrate the success of Title 1, but improvement takes time. Student performance will need to be assessed incrementally over the long term. We should not expect achievement gains to occur overnight, and not without sustained policy and programmatic changes at the federal, state, local, and school levels. When large federal programs go through as radical a restructuring as Title 1 has, the full effects of reforms are not known for years.

The benefits of conducting a Title 1 evaluation will also serve as an instrument to assess teacher instruction as well. A school district does need to take a step back past the red tape and remember that beyond the funding and extra program benefits, Title 1 is all about instruction and how that instruction reaches students. According to Nicholson, author of *Using the CIPP model to evaluate reading instruction*, “Yet quite apart from the need for accountability at the government level, the reality is that teachers must also be able to explain the reasoning behind their reading instruction programmes, and the effects of that instruction. And they must be able to communicate to a number of different audiences, including students, parents, their colleagues, and the principal”(p. 30). A program evaluation of Title 1 would benefit a school district in many ways that reach students locally and on a national level.

Study of a Program Evaluation

A program evaluation specific to a Title 1 program was done at Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas evaluating Title 1 in five middle schools. According to the *Austin Independent School District, Texas, Department of Accountability, Student services, and Research* (1998) In 1997-1998 the staff designed a plan to review and investigate the Title 1 programs at a group of schools and its impact on student achievement, and to provide information about successful practices in use.

The Texas Education Agency had given all schools involved an unacceptable rating in 1995. The schools implemented changes that sought to improve student success through innovative practices, parent participation, leadership, school climate, and teacher responses from a survey. The demographics of the school included, according to Curry (1998) “The percentage of economically disadvantaged students at the Title 1 middle schools (79.2) is much higher than the percentages at all middle schools (48.9) and all AISD schools (50.7)” (p. 12).

The survey taken by 163 teachers at the five middle schools consisted of five multiple choice questions. Questions ranged from topics on feelings of community to curriculum and professional development. The choices that the teachers could choose from included: strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree. According to Curry (1998) “In general, teachers responded positively to the statements about their campus. The question with the widest range of response across campuses referred to students having positive feelings about their school” (p. 37).

The result of this program evaluation for the Austin Independent School District’s Title 1 program in five participating middle schools found that “Strong leadership is key to the improvements that are occurring at the Title 1 middle schools” (Curry 1998 pg. 44). Furthermore, also according to Curry (1998) “An atmosphere of change can be detected at all of the Title 1 middle schools” (p. 44). The only negative factor as described by Curry (1998) was, “Only one of the Title 1 middle schools indicated that there was strong parent involvement at the campus” (p. 44).

Conducting a program evaluation of a Title 1 program’s success and performance provides parents, students, teachers, and administration with data on how to better serve their students and receive the much needed funding in order to provide students extra programs and incentives. According to Curry (1998) “Title 1 funds make many of the

innovations at the middle schools possible. Staff development, computer hardware and software, consultants, and new teaching strategy materials are some of the items that have been purchased at the Title 1 middle schools to enhance learning” (p. 46).

Characteristics of Successful Programs

A successful Title 1 program demonstrates specific traits congruent to proficient or successful students who are participating in Title 1 programs and services. According to the Wisconsin State Reading Association Position Statement (2002), successful Title 1 programs and services

. . . are designed and delivered to meet the educational, social, and emotional needs of eligible students. Program components, including assessment, are based upon current literacy research findings. Instruction is designed to develop independent, strategic readers and learners. District coordination across content areas focuses on the Wisconsin Content and Performance Standards. Cooperative planning between Title 1 and classroom teachers is essential. Shared decision making takes place by appropriate school staff and parents. Title 1 families are actively involved in their child’s learning. Community resources are utilized in a cooperative effort to enhance total student learning and family literacy.

The above listed characteristics are the essential tools that every school district strives for in most educational programs. If broken down into specific categories, successful Title 1 programs and school wide programs have a more specific purpose. According to Kysilka (2003),

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. This purpose can be accomplished by: ensuring that

high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training (meet) expectations for student academic achievement.

Kysilka furthers her argument by listing other factors such as “meeting educational needs of low-achieving” students, “closing the achievement gap,” “holding schools, local educational agencies and states accountable” and “distributing and targeting resources sufficiently” all characteristics of a successful Title 1 program.

In March of 2007 four schools in Clovis, California won Title 1 awards and received extra funding because of their efforts. According to one of the school’s principals Sierra Vista (Gabriel 2007) when asked about the program’s success, “ ‘I’d say it’s what each teacher is doing in their classroom. . . they’re differentiating the instruction and meeting the diverse needs of the students.” Each of the school receiving the award were honored for their test scores.

In conclusion, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction published a complete document on the *Characteristics of Successful (Title 1) Districts*. This document was published in 2006 and endorsed by Elizabeth Burmaster, Wisconsin State Superintendent. The document, which exceeds twenty pages and was compiled by a workgroup of team members from seven Wisconsin school districts, lists seven basic characteristics of successful schools. Those characteristics are: “vision,” “leadership,” “High Academic Standards,” Standards of the Heart,” “Family, School, and Community Partnerships,” “Professional Development,” and “Evidence of Success” (p. 3).

The district’s focus on vision and mission, communication with stakeholders, partnerships with community agencies/organizations, and promotion of positive school culture, results in learning environments that are focused on student learning and success in the neediest schools (p. 5).

In order for a Title 1 evaluation and school to be successful for disadvantaged students who need to become proficient by the year 2014 it is important to understand what makes a school successful.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Subject Selection and Description

The following survey was given to all Title 1 participating student's parents, grades kindergarten through fifth grade, at a family night function. The Title 1 program exists through the Randolph Elementary and Middle school in Randolph, Wisconsin. If a parent was not at the function, the survey was sent home with their child and returned to school. Out of 39 parents 30 responded to the survey (77%). The survey was given to guide the reading teacher and reading specialist evaluate the services they provide. The parents were given the instructions to not put their names on the surveys, and to read the directions and to answer to the best of their ability.

Instrumentation

The reading teacher, reading specialist and the outside evaluator at Randolph Elementary and Middle school developed the survey used for this study. The survey consists of 28 Likert-scale items designed to assess the parents' perceptions of the Title 1 program on their child's success with school and academics. The survey also provided staff information regarding interpersonal relationships and the program's overall strengths and weaknesses. The subjects were asked to rate statements that included elements of the services that the Title 1 program, reading teacher, and reading specialist provide by answering strongly approve or agree, okay, or strongly disapprove or disagree. Parent participants in the survey also answered questions using yes, no, and to some degree. Furthermore, the survey also included a simple yes/no section that questioned the parent's knowledge of the Title 1 program. Also included on the survey was a question on the best ways to contact parents and the last question on the survey asked parents to rank the importance of services according to grade.

Procedures

The outside evaluator (teaching in the English Department at Randolph High School) and reading teacher distributed the survey at the last Title 1 family night in the month of May, 2008. It was explained that the survey would remain anonymous and participants were instructed to leave their names off of the survey. The survey took participants between ten and fifteen minutes to complete. Participants seemed interested in the survey and were very pleasant and courteous.

Data Analysis

The data from this study was analyzed by using frequency counts and percentages. Frequency counts and percentages were calculated for each item on the survey. The first set of items (tables 1-7) assessed the parent's feelings on their child's involvement in Title 1 services. The second set of questions (tables 8-12) focused on teacher assessment. The third set of questions (tables 13 and 14) focus on family involvement and the fourth set of questions (tables 15-21) focus on parent knowledge of the Title 1 program. The last two questions of the survey (tables 22 and 23) focus on the best way to share information and the importance of Title 1 services based on the age of the child. Gathering this data provided information to the reading teacher and reading specialist on parent perceptions on how the Title 1 program's success.

Limitations

The instrumentation used within the study is limited due to the fact that it was not standardized, which questions the accuracy in terms of reliability and validity. The results are also limited because of the heavy reliability on parent knowledge, opinion, and bias to the program. Knowing that the instrument was designed for parents, and its purpose was to assess the Title 1 program and instructors and its use for other schools is questionable.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Item Analysis

The following section will address parent responses from kindergarten through fifth grade participants in the Title 1 program survey completed at Randolph Elementary School and Middle School. Table one through seven shows the results of question number two indicating frequency counts and percentages for each response given. Response indicators of strongly agree and agree were grouped together when figuring out the total percentages of agreed responses. Parents answered question number two (items 1-7) 1: (SA or A=87% my child's reading has improved), 2: (SA or A=48% Attending Title 1 nights is helpful), 3: (SA or A=81% My child is well served within the program), 4: (SA or A= 81% My child is making good progress in Title 1), 5: (SA or A=87% Title 1 has made a difference with my child), 6: (SA or A=71% My child's writing/spelling have improved), 7: (SA or A=84% The Title 1 teacher knows my child's needs). Table eight through thirteen indicate that parents answered this set of questions (focusing on teacher assessment) a little lower differing between yes and to some degree. Results of items eight through twelve are as follows: 8: (Y=87% I can talk openly with the Title 1 teacher), 9: (Y=88% My child is positive about time spent in Title 1), 10: (Y=47% My child shares with me what they are doing in their Title 1 class). 11: (Y=53% My child seems motivated to learn), 12: (Y=57% I like Family nights the way they are). Items thirteen and fourteen deal with family involvement, one of the requirements of the parent contract of the Randolph Title 1 program. The results are very low scoring in this section and are indicative of a lack of parent motivation to be involved with the Title 1 program. 13: (Y=43% I would like to be more involved in my child's learning process with Title 1), 14: (Y=2% I would be willing to participate on an advisory committee to help plan family nights). Item number fifteen blatantly asks parents if the Title1 program at

Randolph Elementary and Middle School should be maintained. The response was very positive. (Y=93% The Randolph School District should maintain the Title 1 program. Two surveys left the response to this question blank.) The next section, items numbered five through eleven address parent knowledge of the Title 1 program and are reflected in tables sixteen through twenty-two. The questions are numbered five through 11. 5: (Y=57% Are you aware of some of the program ideas used in reading and/or mathematics lessons in the Title 1 program), 6: (Y=83% Do you feel confident with the selection process for the Title 1 program), 7: (Y=60% Do you know the grade expectations for your child), 8: (Y=93% do you understand you child's Title 1 quarterly reports), 9: (Y=90% Is your child doing better in school because of the Title 1 program), 10: (Y=73% Does the Title 1 school-parent compact help to remind you about things you can do to help your child do better in school), 11: (Y=3% Are you aware that the federal government bases the Title 1 program upon the amount of students receiving Free and Reduced Hot Lunch). The item that really caught the evaluator's attention was the bases of federal funding questions, number eleven. Items in tables twenty-three address the best way for parents to be reached for communication purposes. The overwhelming means of communication that parents prefer is telephone call/discussions by 46% and written notice/story slip by 43%. For table 24 over 90% of parents surveyed found that the importance of Title 1 services goes in order kindergarten through grade 12.

After reviewing the results of the study, evaluators developed areas that they felt could be addressed during the following school year. The first area focuses on Title 1 Family Nights. Parents need to be made aware of what a Family Night is, what the purpose of a Family Night is, and why it is so important for them to be there. Ideas for communicating Family expectations would include a brief post card in August right

before the beginning of the school year, or a quick telephone call home inviting parents to attend a pre-school year Family Night.

A second area that needed attention after the results were found would be helping students share what they learn in Title 1 with their parents. This area could be improved and addressed through possibly having students write in their agenda and asking parents to respond via the agenda. Student postcards sent home with a list of objectives learned, activities completed, and what is coming up next, would also address the area in need.

The objectives for this study were met through the development of a Title 1 curriculum, Title 1 family nights, parent involvement, and the help of the reading teacher and reading specialist. It is fair to assume that the parents involved in the survey and evaluation process did so to better accommodate their student and progress made through the program. It is also a fair assumption that parents do find the Title 1 program very valuable and want to maintain its existence at Randolph Elementary and Middle School.

Table 1

My child's reading has improved.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	27	87%
Okay	3	10%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	0	0%

Table 2

Attending Title 1 nights is helpful.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	15	50%
Okay	8	27%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	8	27%

Table 3

My child is well served within the program.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	25	83%
Okay	3	1%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	2	.06%

Table 4

My child is making good progress in Title 1.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	25	83%
Okay	5	17%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	0	0%

Table 5

Title 1 has made a difference with my child.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	27	90%
Okay	3	1%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	0	0%

Table 6

My child's writing/spelling have improved.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	22	73%
Okay	8	27%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	0	0%

Table 7

The Title 1 teacher knows my child's needs.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Strongly Approve/Agree	26	87%
Okay	4	13%
Strongly Disapprove/Disagree	0	0%

Table 8

I can talk openly with the Title 1 teacher.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	25	83%
No	0	0%
To Some Degree	5	17%

Table 9

My child is positive about time spent in Title 1.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	26	87%
No	1	.03%
To Some Degree	3	1%

Table 10

My child shares with me what they are doing in their Title 1 classes.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	14	47%
No	3	1%
To Some Degree	12	4%

Table 11

My child seems more motivated to learn.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	16	53%
No	0	0%
To Some Degree	14	47%

Table 12

I like the Family Nights the way they are.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	17	57%
No	5	17%
To Some Degree	8	27%

Table 13

I would like to be more involved in my child's learning process with Title 1.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	13	43%
No	8	27%
To Some Degree	9	30%

Table 14

I would be willing to participate on an advisory committee to help plan family nights.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	4	13%
No	15	50%
To Some Degree	11	37%

Table 15

The Randolph School District should maintain the Title 1 program.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	28	93%
No	0	0%
To Some Degree	2	.06%

Table 16

Are you aware of some of the program ideas used in reading and/or mathematics lessons in the Title 1 program?

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	20	93%
No	10	33%

Table 17

Do you feel confident with the selection process for the Title 1 program?

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	25	83%
No	5	17%

Table 18

Do you know the grade expectations for your child?

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%

Table 19

Do you understand your child's Title 1 quarterly reports.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%

Table 20

Is your child doing better in school because of the Title 1 program.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%

Table 21

Does the Title 1 school-parent compact help to remind you about things you can do to help your child do better in school.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	22	73%
No	6	20%

Table 22

Are you aware that the federal government bases the Title 1 program upon the amount of students receiving Free and Reduced Hot Lunch.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Yes	10	33%
No	20	67%

Table 23

What is the best way for the Title 1 teacher to share information about your child and family activities.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
Telephone call/discussions	17	57%
Written Notice/Story Slip	13	43%

Table 24

Rank order the importance of Title 1 services at K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12.

Response	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage
K-2 (1)	21	70%
3-5 (2)	22	73%
6-8 (3)	20	67%
9-12 (4)	20	67%

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The use of a program evaluation for the Randolph Elementary and Middle School Title 1 program has shown many benefits. Other Title 1 assisted schools can learn a lot regarding how to help their students become more proficient, and feelings and attitudes regarding parent involvement through a program evaluation. Without conducting an evaluation the teachers and administration would be unaware of the thoughts and feelings of parents in regards to student achievement and parental involvement. Parental involvement is one of the keys to a successful Title 1 program and is a requirement of a Title 1 program.

It is obvious today that children and youth are facing more disadvantages such as single-parent families, financial adversity, and families in which both parents work full-time outside of the home. In order for successful services to take place in Title 1 programs parental attitudes, feelings, and level of commitment needs to be assessed. Once assessed, a Title 1 program can move forward to re-organize its services to better fit the needs of the students in order to create proficiency.

The Literature Review focused on the historical perspectives of Title 1 programs, federal funding of Title 1 programs, benefits of conducting a program evaluation, and the characteristics of successful Title 1 programs. By gaining parental insight on their child's involvement in Title 1, reading teacher assessment, family involvement, maintenance of the program, parent knowledge, communication with parents, and importance of services by grade, programs will become more efficient and will produce successful students. The literature review also gave broader insights into the purpose of Title 1 programs, why they are needed, and what is expected. Furthermore, by examining an external Title 1 program evaluation, the purpose for a Title 1 program evaluation at Randolph Elementary

and Middle School was made clear. It is also clear that communication, assessment, and parent involvement are important factors when laying out curriculum and service procedures for future Title 1 programs.

Limitations

Again, the limitations of the study include the seriousness with which the participants (the parents) choose to use when taking the survey. The other limitation of the study would be the amount of participants. Nine out of thirty-nine parents did not complete a survey. This was not an optimal completion rate, but sufficient for the purposes of this evaluation. It would be beneficial to achieve a 100% completion rate with a study of this nature.

Conclusions

An important aspect of any Title 1 program is parent involvement. In fact, parent involvement is required to be a part of Title 1 services. According to the *Parental Involvement: Title 1, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance* document issued April 23, 2004,

Three decades of research provides convincing evidence that parents are an important influence in helping their children achieve high academic standards. When schools collaborate with parents to help their children learn and when parents participate in school activities and decision-making about their children's education, children achieve at higher levels. In short, when parents are involved in education, children do better in school and schools improve.

Furthermore, the government document, *Parental Involvement* (2004) goes on to define what parental involvement means and its importance with the Title 1 program.

Parental involvement always has been a centerpiece of Title 1. However, for the first time in the history of the ESEA, it has a specific statutory definition. The statute defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-

way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.

According to the Title 1 Parent survey conducted at Randolph Elementary and Middle School, parent involvement and family nights can be improved upon. It is clear that parents need to be more motivated to attend family nights and become involved in the services provided to their child. Children involved in the Title 1 program should be given many varied opportunities to communicate with the parents about what they are learning in the Title 1 program and how they are learning it. Students also need to be given the opportunity to share if and how they are motivated to learn, and how and what they enjoy about learning. Parent involvement and communication is a key perspective that could be improved for the Randolph Title 1 program.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that creating an advisory committee to direct family nights into the right direction and to create more parent involvement would be some positive action taken. Gaining the involvement of the Parent/Teacher Association may be helpful in this endeavor. According to the survey (Table 14) only 13% of parents would be willing to be on such a committee.

Recommendations

The current Title 1 program at Randolph Elementary and Middle School can be improved upon regarding parental involvement, commitment, and the means by which the parents are involved. Therefore, specific committees and activities need to be targeted to improve this area. Another recommendation would be to continue professional conversations between the reading teacher, reading specialist, other teachers, administration, and the Parent/Teacher Association. In order for parental involvement and family nights to be improved upon, more communication must exist between the groups. Finally, it may be necessary to conduct an in-depth survey every school year in

September and in May to evaluate parent attitudes and feelings regarding progress made through Title 1 services. This process should be an on-going cycle for all parties involved. Furthermore, this type of development in the Title 1 program would nurture other teacher's understanding of the services provided and the district expectations regarding the program. This type of evaluation can be carried out without specific district responsibilities because this would be a part of the teacher's professional role.

References

- Alexander, G. Four title 1 schools get academic honor: cusd students' test scores earn awards. (2007, March, 30). *Clovis Independent*.
- Archived information: No child left behind: A toolkit for teachers.* (2007). Retrieved December 4, 2007, from ED.gov Web site.
- Archived information: Title 1 key performance and evaluation issues.* (1999, February 10). Retrieved June 25, 2008, Web site.
- Archived information: Using federal resources to support reform: Background and brief history of the ESEA.* (1996, September). Retrieved June 25, 2008. Website: www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/Guidance/intro.html.
- Bruner, Darlene Y., & Greenlee, Bobbie J. (2001). Effects of success for all reading programs on reading achievement in title 1 schools. *Education*. 122, 177-186.
- Chandler, H. (1982). Title 1 and learning disabilities: the creatures from the federal swamp. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. 15, 183-185.
- Curry, J., & Griffith J., & Washington, W., & Zyskowski, G. Austin Independent School District, TX. Department of Accountability, Student Services, and Research. (1998). *Title 1 middle school evaluation, 1997-1998* Austin, TX.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act.* (2007). Retrieved June 25, 2008, from The Education Trust Web site: <http://www.2.edtrust.org/edtrust/ESEA>.
- Fact sheet: No child left behind act.*(2002). Retrieved November 23, 2007, from The White House Website.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2007). Implementing a schoolwide literacy framework: Improving achievement in an urban elementary school . *The Reading Teacher*. 61, 32-43.

- Good, J. (2000). Evaluating Developmental Education Programs by Measuring Literacy Growth. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 24(1). Retrieved December 4, 2007, from EBSCO database.
- Guilfoyle, C. (November, 2006).Nclb: is there life beyond testing?. *Education Leadership*. 55.
- Hayes, L., & Robnolt, V. J. (2007). Data-driven professional development: The professional development plan for a reading excellence act school. *Reading Research and Instruction*. 46, 95-119.
- Kysilka, Marcella L. (2003).No child left behind: what does it really mean?. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*. 5, 99-105.
- Mann, Kymm Y-S schools excel to win title 1. (2006, March 14). *Appeal-Democrat*.
- McHugh, L. M. (1982). Similarities among diagnostic and prescriptive decisions made by reading specialists and ld, title 1, and fourth-grade teachers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. 15, 545-548.
- Title 1 funding stats. (1999). *Multimedia Schools*. 6, 10.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *National assessment of title 1: Interim report* Washington D.C.: ED Pubs, Education Publications Center.
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2006). *Characteristics of Successful Districts* Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Targeted Assistance Schools. (2006, November, 10). Retrieved June 25, 2008, from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
- Wisconsin State Reading Association: *Position Statements* on Title 1.

Appendix A: Title 1 Parent Survey

Title 1 Parent Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey about your experience with the Title 1 program. Your input means **a lot!** Thank you!

1. How do you feel about your child's involvement in the Title 1 program?

	Strongly Approve Or Agree	Okay	Strongly Disapprove or Disagree
My child's reading has improved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending Title 1 Nights is helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child is well served within the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child is making good progress in Title 1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title 1 has made a difference with my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child's writing/spelling have improved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Title 1 teacher knows my child's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Yes	No	To some degree
I can talk openly with the Title 1 teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child is positive about time spent in Title 1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child shares with me what they are doing in their Title 1 classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child seems more motivated to learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like the Family Nights the way they are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Would you like to please comment on the following areas:

	Yes	No	To some degree
I would like to be more involved in my child's learning process with Title 1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would be willing to participate on an advisory committee to help plan family nights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Randolph School District should maintain the Title 1 Program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Are you aware of some of the program ideas used in reading and/or mathematics lessons in the Title I program?

Yes No

6. Do you feel confident with the selection process for the Title I program?

Yes No

7. Do you know the grade expectations for your child? (*Academic Content Standards*)

Yes No

8. Do you understand your child's Title I quarterly reports?

Yes No

9. Is your child doing better in school because of the Title I program?

Yes No

10. Does the Title I school-parent compact help to remind you about things you can do to help your child do better in school?

Yes No

11. Are you aware that the federal government bases the Title I program upon the amount of students receiving Free and Reduced Hot Lunch?

_____ **yes** _____ **no**

12. What is the best way for the Title I teacher to share information about your child and family activities? Check the best way:

- E-mail
- Written notice/Story Slip
- Telephone Call/Discussions
- Parties/Family Events
- Other

Rank order the importance of title I services at K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12.

Use 1-4. #1 would be the most important grades to have Title I help.

K-2 _____ 3-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____