

Baltimore City Public Schools
FY21 Title I, Part A Frequently Asked Questions
Updated 4/20/2020

1. How will Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) determine the poverty rate for Title I allocations for FY21?

The poverty rate for Title I is based on the ratio of the number of directly certified students as of October 31st and the official September 30th district enrollment.

Example poverty rate calculation:

9/30/19 Official enrollment = 340

10/31/19 Count of directly certified students = 233

FY21 Poverty rate for Title I = $233/340 = 68.5\%$

2. What does it mean for a student to be directly certified?

Based upon guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the direct certification of a student is based on student eligibility for the federal support programs of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Additionally, any student that is identified as homeless or in foster care meets the criteria for direct certification.

3. What criteria must be met for a Baltimore City Public School to be designated as a Title I school for SY2020-21?

A City School that serves any students in grades PreK – 8, with a poverty rate of 35.4% or higher, will be designated as a Title I school for SY2020-21. This eligibility criteria includes middle/high schools. A total of 108 City Schools meet this criterion to be designated as a Title I school for SY2020-21.

For SY2020-21, there are two exceptions to the Title I eligibility criteria:

1. Special Education Centers and Alternative Option Programs (AOP) that serve students in grades preK – 8 with a poverty rate above the cut point of 35.4%. Instead, these schools receive an equivalent allocation of “Skipped Schools Funds” in place of being served as a Title I school. Skipped Schools funds are supplemental general funds provided to the school equivalent to the amount they would have received if they were a Title I School
2. Any school that served as a Title I School in SY2019-20, whose poverty rate dropped below the federal minimum threshold of 35% for SY2020-21. As allowed by ESSA, three City Schools fall into this category and will remain a Title I school for an additional year.

4. Is the criteria for a City Schools Title I s designation different for SY2020-21?

Yes. Annually, City Schools must establish the poverty rate cut point for schools to be identified as a Title I school. The poverty rate cut point for SY2017-18 was 45.0%, 36.6% for SY2018-19 and 37.5% for SY2019-20. For SY2020-21, the poverty rate cut point has been set at 35.4%.

Federal law requires the poverty rate cut point must be set between 35% and 75%. For SY2020-21, setting the poverty rate cut point at 35.4% is the lowest level that ensures current Title I schools, with a poverty rate above the federal minimum level, remain a Title I school.

5. Are students that previously qualified for free or reduced meals through FARMS applications included in direct certification?

No. The federal programs that result in a student being identified as directly certified align with the family income threshold for a student to be identified as free lunch eligible, as established annually by the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA.

It is important to note that prior to shifting from FARMS data to direct certification data for Title I purposes, City Schools only included free lunch eligible students in the poverty rate for Title I funding calculations.

6. What role does the poverty rate play in determining if a school may be supported by Title I funds?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that:

- Title I funds support schools with higher poverty rates before schools with lower poverty rates are served. Schools are provided funds, based on rank order, by poverty rate.
- Schools with a poverty rate of 75% or higher must be identified as Title I or be provided supplemental general funds as a skipped school.
- A school that serves students in grades Pre K – 8, with a poverty rate less than 35%, may not be identified as a Title I school unless MSDE approves the request to grandfather the school into this designation for one year.
- A high school (grades 9 -12) with a poverty rate less than 50% may not be identified as a Title I school.

7. Does City Schools identify high schools as Title I?

City Schools does not typically designate high schools as Title I schools. If a high school has a poverty rate of 75% or higher, the school is identified to receive Skipped School funding. Skipped schools receive an allocation of supplemental general funds equivalent to what they would have received if they were a Title I school. For SY2020-21, City Schools does not have any high school (grades 9 – 12) with a poverty rate greater than 75%.

8. Are any schools no longer identified as Title I for SY2020-21?

Yes. Three Title I schools are scheduled for closure in June 2020 (#073: Sarah M. Roach, #254 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and #349 NACA II), therefore, these schools exit Title I status.

9. How does the Per Pupil Allocation (PPA) for SY2020-21 compare to the SY 2019-20 PPA?

Beginning in SY2017-18, City Schools has allocated Title I funds using a tiered PPA model and is being continued for SY2020-21, with the PPA amount provided to each tier being greater than SY2019-20 PPA levels.

Tier Level	SY2019-20 (FY20)		SY2020-21 (FY21)	
	Poverty Rate Band	PPA Amount	Poverty Rate Band	PPA Amount
1	Greater than 69.0%	\$1,200.00	Greater than 66.7%	\$1,285.00
2	Between 44.0% and 69.0%	\$ 940.00	Between 41.7% and 66.7%	\$ 990.00
3	Between 37.5% and 44.0%	\$ 775.25	Between 35.4% and 41.7%	\$ 880.00

10. How did City Schools determine the SY2020-21 Title I allocation for schools?

Title I funds are allocated to schools based on a Per Pupil Allocation (PPA). The PPA is provided for each student in a Title I school identified as directly certified as of October 31, 2019.

For FY21, City Schools is implementing a tiered PPA model. With a tiered PPA model, schools with a higher poverty rate have a higher PPA, specifically:

- Schools with a poverty rate of greater than or equal to 66.7% receive a PPA of \$1,285.00
- Schools with a poverty rate between 41.7% and 66.7% receive a PPA of \$990.00
- Schools with a poverty rate between 35.4% and 41.7% receive a PPA of \$880.00

For FY21, 111 City Schools will be designated as Title I schools:

- 38 schools have a poverty rate greater than or equal to 66.7%
- 60 schools have a poverty rate between 41.7% and 66.7%
- 10 schools have a poverty rate between 35.4% and 41.7%
- 3 schools have a poverty rate less than 35%, but a request to grandfather the schools to maintain Title I status for an additional year has been submitted to MSDE

Example calculation for a school's Title I Allocation

- Poverty rate = 82.6%
- Number of directly certified students = 382
- PPA = \$1,285.00
- School's Title I allocation = $382 * \$1,285 = \$490,870.00$

Note: The Title I allocations being released to schools in the SY2020-21 budget tool are preliminary allocations based on the projected amount for the FY21 Title I, Part A grant. MSDE will not provide LEAs with the allocation amount until June 2020. If the actual grant allocation is significantly lower than the projected amount, adjustments to school allocations may be necessary.

11. Does the PPA allocation include funds that must be spent on Title I parent involvement activities?

No. FY21 funds to support parent involvement activities are a separate allocation. Information regarding the amount of FY21 parent involvement school level funds will be shared with schools in fall 2020.

12. If a school is no longer identified as a Title I school for SY2020-21, when does this change in designation become effective?

Title I status for SY2020-21 is effective as of July1, 2020.

13. If a school is no longer identified as a Title I school for SY2020-21, can they continue spending FY20 Title funds after June 30, 2020?

No. A school may only continue spending FY20 Title I funds after June 30, 2020 if they remain identified as a Title I school for SY2020-21. Additionally, schools that are closing at the end of SY2019-20 only had until February 15, 2020 to encumber Title I funds.

14. Do schools receive adjustments to the Title I allocation?

Typically, no. Title I allocations are determined based on the official September 30th enrollment count and the October 31st official direct certification count from the prior school year. For SY2020-21, the Title I allocation is based on the September 30, 2019 official enrollment count and the October 31, 2019 official direct certification count.

The Title I allocations being released to schools in the SY2020-21 budget tool are preliminary allocations based on the projected amount for the FY21 Title I, Part A grant. MSDE will not provide LEAs with the allocation amount until June 2020. If the actual grant allocation is significantly lower than the projected amount, adjustments to school allocations may be necessary.

15. Is there a difference in the calculation of a school's Title I allocation if the school implements a targeted assistance or a schoolwide Title I program?

No. The Title I allocation for a school is based solely on the PPA and number of students identified as living in poverty.

16. When can a school start spending OTPS funds budgeted on the FY21 (SY2020-21) Title I allocation?

Two actions must occur before a school can spend FY21 funds allocated for OTPS categories (e.g. contracts, materials and supplies, stipends). First, MSDE must approve the district's Title I plan and release the funds to the district. Second, the school must have an approved Title I plan in place. In SY2020-21, the School Performance Plan (SPP) is required for traditional Title I schools and the Title I Charter School Plan for charter schools. Title I Targeted Assistance schools must complete the Title I targeted assistance plan template. Additionally, for schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), the CSI plan approved by the district and MSDE will serve as the Title I plan.

Typically, in early December, schools are notified that Title I funds in OTPS categories are available to begin spending through the District's Leadership Action Update posting.

17. What is the spending window for a school’s FY21 Title I allocation?

FY21 Title I funds are allocated to schools to provide evidence-based supplemental supports and services aligned with the approved plan during SY2020-21. It is anticipated that schools may begin spending the funds in early December 2020, if an approved Title I plan is in place (see question #16). The latest a school can enter a requisition on FY21 Title I funds is September 15, 2021. All encumbrances on FY21 Title I funds must be paid or liquidated no later than November 15, 2021. Any encumbrances that are not resolved as of November 15, 2021 will be canceled and the school will have to identify an alternate funding source to pay the expense.