

KIBSD - Grants and Grant Funding

(shared by Kerry Irons, KIBSD Board Member, March 2024)

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Hi everyone,

Grant funding is one part of the school district's revenues and expenditures that we don't hear a lot about because grant funds are NOT part of the General Fund. That means that they are not part of the foundation formula that determines funding from the state or the borough and thus are not part of the balanced budget presented to the state in July. It can be confusing to know what CAN be funded with grants, and what restrictions there are on those funds. I'd like to share some insights into grant funds and funding that have helped me better understand our district's expenditures - and I hope will help you too.

- Because the states have the primary constitutional responsibility to fund public education for their citizens, funds from the federal government can only **supplement, not replace**, state funding of education.
- In 1965, the first major federal education act - The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (or ESEA) was passed to provide equity in education for America's students (to supplement what states already provide).
- ESEA has been renewed by Congress over the ensuing years. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was one version of the Act. The current version is Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- The "Title Grants" are part of this Act. Their purpose is to improve the quality of education for elementary and secondary students in general, and to support districts and schools serving economically disadvantaged students specifically.
- The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) receives Title Grant funds from the federal government, which are then distributed to school districts. The amount each district receives each year is determined by formulas that are based on census data and the number of qualifying students.

The way Title grant funds may be used is very clearly defined. Here are the Title grants our district receives:

- **Title I-A** funds are meant to support students from low-income families, specifically to help them meet the academic standards adopted by each state. If at least 40% of a school's students qualify for free and reduced lunch, the school may use Title I-A money for school-wide programs. If less than 40%, the money must be targeted to support low-achieving students.
- **Title 1-C**, or Migrant Education, funds children whose families depend on seasonal or migratory income. In Alaska, this includes commercial and subsistence fishing, regardless of income.
- **Title II** funds support "job-embedded" professional development for teachers, principals, administrators, and staff. This can include recruitment efforts, travel to conferences, and training for mentors.
- **Title III** funds are specifically for students who are English Language Learners (ELL's) and immigrant students. Funds may not be used in classrooms with students who are not ELL's.
- **Title IV** funds are designated for academic enrichment, safe and healthy schools (including Social-Emotional Learning), and effective use of technology.

You may have also heard of these grants from the federal government which our district also receives:

- **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)** funds are directed to supporting (as supplements to state funding) special education services for students with disabilities and special needs, and their families.
- **IEA (Indian Education Act) or Title VI** funding supports learning outcomes for Alaska Native students. It comes from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.
- The **CARES** (Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security) Act of 2020 was short term funding for state and municipal governments impacted by COVID. This Act has expired.

- **ESSER** (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds were distributed in 3 stages under the CARES Act. The last funds were required to be spent by September 30, 2024, with no renewal possible.

In the near future, I hope to share more specifics about KIBSD's involvement in the Title grants, as well as other grants the district has applied for and received (both federal and state). Please stay tuned!