

**NATIONAL TITLE I ASSOCIATION  
& DR. CHAD R. LOCHMILLER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON**

**AN AGREEMENT TO ENGAGE IN RESEARCH**

Study Title

**Assessing Resource Equity Provisions in Title I of ESSA: An Analysis of State  
Education Agencies Responses and Early Implementation Activities**

As an undertaking to coordinate future efforts with Dr. Chad Lochmiller, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University Bloomington (the Principal Investigator), the National Title I Association (the Association) is pleased to propose this Agreement to Engage in Research. This Agreement will be valid through December 31, 2018 and will be mutually considered for renewal at that time.

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**BACKGROUND**

The **National Title I Association** is a membership organization made up of Title I Directors, and their staff from the states and territories, charged with managing their state Title I program. They ensure compliance with federal regulations, but more importantly work to see that all children — especially those living in economically disadvantaged conditions — have the opportunity to receive a high quality education.

**Dr. Chad R. Lochmiller** is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University Bloomington (IUB). IUB is a public research university located in Bloomington, Indiana, United States.

**SCOPE OF COORDINATION**

Context

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) introduced new school improvement requirements for state education agencies (SEA), which require SEAs to work with local education agencies (LEA) to address persistent resource inequities as part of the state's school improvement planning process. Specifically, 20 U.S.C. § 6311 (2)(d)(1)(B)(iv) (2016) requires that a state's comprehensive support and improvement plan must identify resource inequities which contribute to low levels of academic achievement in the state's lowest performing schools. Such a review might include both LEA and school-budgeting practices related to the allocation of people, money, time, and programs. This requirement grants the SEAs and the Title I program a potentially influential role relative to allocation of education resources within schools and districts. As such, understanding how Title I program directors make sense of this provision and seek to implement it has significant implications for state, district, and school improvement efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how officials within state education agencies,

particularly Title I directors, are preparing to implement ESSA policies which aim to eliminate resource inequities within schools designated for comprehensive school improvement. The study will address four research questions:

1. How are state education agency officials preparing to implement the resource equity provisions required by ESSA within the context of their state's school improvement efforts?
2. What factors, including data/evidence, influence state education agency official's understanding of these provisions and to what extent do these factors shape their response(s) to the policy given their state's specific learning improvement priorities?
3. What barriers do officials within the state education agency encounter as they attempt to communicate their understanding of these provisions to colleagues within the SEA, LEA, and schools?
4. How, if at all, are the provisions prompting changes in program structure, design, or practice across SEAs related to the allocation of education resources?

#### Role of the Principal Investigator

The principal investigator will serve as the study lead and retains primary responsibility for completing this study. The study will be completed in two phases. The first phase will employ an interview only qualitative design. The second phase will employ a multi-case qualitative approach (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2014). Each is described below:

Phase 1. Led by the Principal Investigator, the research team will conduct structured telephone interviews with state education agency officials (e.g., Title I directors) in all fifty states to document early implementation efforts pertaining to the resource equity provisions found in ESSA. This phase will generate baseline data describing the SEA's understanding of the provisions. Interviews with participants will last approximately 60-minutes. In addition, the research team will obtain documents and other public records from state education agencies pertaining to the implementation of ESSA's resource equity provisions. Phase 1 will be supported with internal funding from the IU School of Education. The project will commence on August 1, 2017.

Phase 2. Pending receipt of additional external funding, the Principal Investigator and research team will focus on 4 to 5 case study sites and will conduct intensive fieldwork over a two- to three-year period (2018-19 through 2020-21). This work will consist of a series of "deep dives" into SEAs, LEAs, and schools. During each multi-day site visit, research team members will conduct interviews with SEA and LEA participants, observe pertinent SEA and LEA activities, and collect pertinent documents/artifacts. A primary goal for this phase of the study is to generate "images of possibility and practice" for SEAs and LEAs to follow as they implement and refine their local responses to the resource equity requirements. Phase 2 will be supported with external funding from a philanthropic partner.

#### Anticipated Benefits to SEA Participants

Upon completion, the study will inform scholarship related to the implementation of new ESSA provisions and broadly support SEA practice related to Title I school improvement. Phase 1 will produce important insights about current implementation and planning efforts in each state. This information is not readily available to Title I directors across state contexts. Information obtained in this phase might inform implementation activities. If funded, Phase 2 will yield detailed "images of possibility and practice" that will assist state education agencies and policy actors in developing successful responses to the resource equity provisions in ESSA. This information will be released in the form of policy/practice briefs as well as the development of a

knowledge base for Title I directors. Additional resources might include the development of an online knowledge base aimed at sharing practices across state contexts.

#### Role of the Association

The role of the Association in this study is two-fold. **First**, the Association will assist the Principal Investigator in recruiting SEA administrators to participate in the study. This assistance will include (1) the provision of an updated mailing list for current members of the Association; (2) the distribution of electronic announcements to association members that are distributed through newsletters, emails, and other association communications to raise awareness about the study; and (3) announcements at annual meetings and/or conferences during the study to recognize participation. **Second**, the Principal Investigator and members of the research team may collaborate with the Association to develop applicable sessions at the annual conference, policy/practice briefs specifically designed for association members, and potentially Webinars or Zoom conferences on specific topics. The extent of this collaboration depends on the availability of time, funding, and interest.

#### Ownership of Data and Intellectual Property

The Principal Investigator will retain ownership of the research data, serve as principal data custodian, and retain rights to any intellectual property derived from the completion of this research study.

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Given the national scope of this study, it is logical that the Principal Investigator and the Association establish a partnership in conducting the work. The signatures below indicate acceptance of the responsibilities listed and thereby establish the acceptance of this Research Agreement.



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4-18-2017

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Date



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4/25/17

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Date