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ABSTRACT

Using data from a study of local practices under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), this paper focuses on budget-related decisions in districts that experienced either level funding or significant budget cuts from 1978 to 1982. Following a general discussion of the allocation of Title I funds, the author examines the effects of Title I budget changes on services to children in public and nonpublic schools and on specific grades and subjects. Findings indicate that (1) Title I funds to instruction tend to decline in proportion to overall budget reductions, (2) the number of children served by Title I programs tends to parallel the percentage change in the budget, (3) the percentage change in the number of schools served tends not to be as pronounced as budget changes, and (4) administrators tend to maintain services to the elementary grades and to provide reading services by cutting early childhood and secondary programs and math and other services. The study concludes by encouraging research into the effects of Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, which has superseded Title I since its passage in 1981. (JBM)

THE INFLUENCE OF TITLE I BUDGET CUTS ON LOCAL ALLOCATION DECISIONS: SOME PATTERNS FROM PAST AND CURRENT PRACTICES

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Advanced Technology

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A SPECIAL REPORT
FROM THE
TITLE I DISTRICT PRACTICES STUDY

THE INFLUENCE OF TITLE I BUDGET CUTS ON LOCAL ALLOCATION DECISIONS: SOME PATTERNS FROM PAST AND CURRENT PRACTICES

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PREFACE

The Title I District Practices Study was conducted by Advanced Technology, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Service. One goal of this study was to describe how local districts operated projects funded by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] in the 1981-82 school year. A second, related goal was to document local educators' rationales for their program decisions, their perception of the problems and benefits of requirements contained in the 1978 Title I Amendments, and their assessments of the expected effects of Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act [ECIA] on school district operations of Title I projects. The study was designed specifically to draw cross-time comparisons with the findings of the Compensatory Education Study conducted by the National Institute of Education [NIE] and to provide baseline data for subsequent analyses of Chapter 1, ECIA's administration.

The results of the Title I District Practices Study are presented in this and eight other special reports (see back cover), plus the study's Summary Report. These reports synthesize data collected from a mail questionnaire sent to Title I Directors in more than 2,000 randomly selected school districts, structured interviews and document reviews in 100 nationally representative Title I districts, and indepth case studies in 40 specially selected Title I districts.

To meet the objectives of this major national study, a special study staff was assembled within Advanced Technology's Social Sciences Division. That staff, housed in the Division's Program Evaluation Operations Center, oversaw the study design, data collection and processing, analysis work, and report preparation. The study benefited from unusually experienced data collectors who, with Advanced Technology's senior staff and consultants, conducted the structured interviews and case studies. Two consultants, Brenda Turnbull of Policy Research Associates and Joan Michie, assisted in major aspects of the study including authoring special reports and chapters in the Summary Report. Michael Gaffney and Daniel Schember of the law firm Gaffney, Anspach, Schember, Klimaski, & Marks applied their longstanding familiarity with Title I's legal and policy issues to each phase of the study. The author of this paper wishes to acknowledge the helpful comments of Richard Jung, Ward Keesling, Victor Rezmovic, Joel Sherman, and Brenda Turnbull. Thanks also go to Jeffrey Ludin, who produced the computer graphics. Of course, any errors in fact or interpretation are solely the author's responsibility.

The Project Officers for the study, Janice Anderson and Eugene Tucker, provided substantive guidance for the completion of the tasks resulting in these final reports. The suggestions of the study's Advisory Panel and helpful critiques provided by individuals from the Title I programs office, especially William Lobosco and Thomas Enderlein, are also reflected in these reports.

Members of Advanced Technology's analytic, management, and production staff who contributed to the completion of this and other reports are too numerous to list, as are the state and local officials who cooperated with this study. Without our mentioning their names, they should know their contributions have been recognized and truly appreciated.

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THE INFLUENCE OF TITLE I BUDGET CUTS ON LOCAL ALLOCATION DECISIONS: SOME PATTERNS FROM PAST AND CURRENT PRACTICES

SUMMARY

Using data from a study of local Title I practices, this paper examines the influences of changes in Title I, ESEA budgets on several local Title I decisions: how Title I funds are allocated between instructional and noninstructional activities, how many schools and students are served with Title I funds, whether Title I services to students in nonpublic schools are altered, and what grades are served and subjects provided with Title I resources.

Given the possibility that the funding of Chapter 1 of ECIA--which supercedes Title I in school year 1982-83--will decline because of the effects of inflation and Federal budget reduction, the paper focuses on budget-related decisions in districts that experienced either level funding or significant budget cuts from 1978 to 1982. Data from the former districts provide clues about larger impacts if national funding for Chapter 1 remains roughly the same over the next few years but declines in real terms because of inflation. Data from the latter districts provide some clues about districts' behavior if budget cuts are more severe under Chapter 1.

Data from the Title I Districts Practices Study show that local school districts spend a large proportion of their Title I funds (between 75 and 80 percent) on instructional services to

children. Moreover, allocations to instruction tend to parallel overall changes in the Title I budget. In districts with level funding between 1978 and 1982, the instructional budget remained about the same but declined in real terms because of inflation. In districts that experienced significant overall cuts, Title I instruction was cut by similar proportions.

Although decisions on the number of schools and children to serve with Title I funds are complicated by the various options available to local districts, the number of children, on average, parallels overall budget cuts while changes in the number of Title I schools is less pronounced than changes in local Title I budgets. Districts with level funding served 3 percent fewer schools and 5 percent fewer children in school year 1981-82 than in school year 1978-79, which indicate some of the influence of inflation on those districts. Districts with significant budget cuts (averaging 19 percent) served 7 percent fewer schools and 17 percent fewer children.

The District Practices Study found no clear relationship between budget changes and Title I services to children in non-public schools. Very few districts significantly increased or decreased such services. Fifty-five percent of those that significantly increased services experienced level funding or significant declines. Forty-three percent of districts significantly reducing services had significant budget increases between school years 1978-79 and 1981-82.

The data from this study show that budget changes have some influence on the grades served by Title I funds and on the subjects provided. When budget reductions due to inflation or to actual funding cuts forced Title I administrators to reduce the number of grades served, they were more likely to drop Title I services from preschool and secondary school programs in order to preserve services to the elementary grades. Similarly, Title I administrators most often acted to preserve Title I reading services by cutting Title I math and programs in other subjects.

Predicting future actions must always be done with care, but the data from this study provide some clues about local decisions under Chapter 1, ECIA. If Chapter 1 funding declines in real terms because of inflation or if Federal funding for Chapter 1 is significantly reduced, one could reasonably expect the following:

- Local allocation of Chapter 1 funds to instruction will decline in proportion to reductions in the overall budget.
- The number of children served by Chapter 1 programs will parallel the percentage change in the budget.
- The percentage change in the number of schools served will not be as pronounced as budget changes.
- Chapter 1 administrators will strive to maintain services to the elementary grades and to provide reading services by cutting early childhood and secondary programs and by cutting math and other services.

THE INFLUENCE OF TITLE I BUDGET CUTS ON LOCAL ALLOCATION DECISIONS: SOME PATTERNS FROM PAST AND CURRENT PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

This is an era of declining resources for compensatory education. One indication of declining national support is the failure of appropriations for Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]* to keep up with inflation, which has regularly risen at a double-digit rate since 1978. Between school years 1978-79 and 1981-82, Title I appropriations rose about 8 percent. During the same period, the Consumer Price Index [CPI] rose 30 percent.

Not only has Title I funding failed to keep pace with inflation, but recent Federal budget actions have actually reduced the program's appropriations. Table 1 shows that the 1982 Continuing Resolution has cut FY82 appropriations** for Chapter 1 basic grants by 4 percent. In addition to this reduction, the Administration's revised budget asks for additional cuts of $316 million, and the FY83 budget calls for $1.7 billion for basic grants, a reduction of 31 percent from FY81 appropriations.

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*Title I, ESEA, was superseded by Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act [ECIA] in August 1981. The provisions of Chapter 1, ECIA, become effective in school year 1982-83. In this paper Title I will refer to the program prior to school year 1982-83; Chapter 1, or ECIA, will refer to the program beginning in school year 1982-83.

**FY82 appropriations will fund Chapter 1 in school year 1982-83.

TABLE 1

PAST, CURRENT, AND REQUESTED APPROPRIATIONS FOR CHAPTER 1, ECIA, BASIC GRANTS

	1981 APPROPRIATIONS	1982 CONTINUING RESOLUTION	1982 REVISED BUDGET REQUEST	1983 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET
	(dollars in thousands)			
Chapter 1, ECIA basic grants	$2,512,614	$2,412,756	$2,096,312	$1,726,526

Source: Education Daily, April 12, 1982, p. 5.

The Congressional Budget Office points out that:

> When inflation is taken into account, recent and proposed cuts in Title I have been substantial . . . . In constant 1980 dollars, current funding for Title I as a whole is . . . down 26 percent from the 1980 level . . . . The Administration's proposed level for 1983 would be a 51 percent reduction from 1980 in real terms. Reductions in grants to LEAs have been roughly proportional to reductions in the program as a whole (Congressional Budget Office, 1982, p. 4).

This report, which uses data from the Title I District Practices Study,* examines the influence of declining resources on local Title I allocation decisions. It first examines how districts allocate funds between instructional and noninstructional activities and how district size and budget changes affect these allocations. The report next examines the impact of Title I funding levels on district decisions about how many schools and how many children to serve with Title I money. The report also investigates the influence of budget decreases on services to children in nonpublic schools. Finally, the report explores the relationships between changes in funding and local decisions about which grades Title I serves and which subjects Title I provides.

In addition to describing past and present patterns of influence, clues from these patterns are used to anticipate

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*Hereafter referred to as the District Practices Study or DPS. This study, which was conducted by Advanced Technology, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Education [ED], used three research strategies: a mail questionnaire sent to 2,000 randomly selected local Title I Directors, structured interviews and document reviews in 100 representative Title I districts, and case studies in 40 specially selected Title I districts.

behavior that might result from future budget reductions. This report concludes with suggestions on how local districts might apply lessons learned from Title I and from other organizations in decline to cope with the potential of shrinking resources for educationally deprived children.

THE ALLOCATION OF TITLE I FUNDS

One important decision that school administrators must make is how to allocate their Title I funds between instructional and noninstructional activities. As background to the influences of budgeting changes on that decision, it is necessary to examine the amount of money available for the "average" (i.e., the mean) Title I program. An inspection of Table 2 shows that districts on average had 8 percent more Title I money in school year 1981-82 than in 1978-79. Table 2 also shows some different ways to describe local average budgets.*

Three important allocation questions are: How do districts allocate their total Title I budget between instructional and noninstructional activities? Do large and small districts allocate Title I funds differently? And, how do overall budget changes affect these allocations? Table 3 shows that in both

*The average budgets of $174,931 and $189,182 are calculated from data weighted to reduce the influence of large Title I districts, which were purposively over-represented in our sample. The unweighted averages show the effects of large budgets on the overall data. Weighted data are usually reported; however, unweighted data are used when budget figures are broken down by district size.

TABLE 2

TITLE I BUDGET FIGURES AND THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX IN 1978-79 and 1981-82

	SCHOOL YEAR 1978-79	SCHOOL YEAR 1981-82	PERCENT CHANGE
Consumer Price Index	223.4 (Sept. 1978)	290.6 (June 1982)	30%
National Title I Appropriations	$2,300,000,000	$2,500,000,000	9%
Weighted Local Average Budget	$ 174,931	$ 189,182	8%
Unweighted Local Average Budget	$ 309,000	$ 335,000	8%
Lowest Title I Budget (in this survey)	$ 450	$ 300	-
Highest Title I Budget (in this survey)	$ 13,080,000	$ 12,940,000	-

TABLE 3

TITLE I BUDGET ALLOCATION DATA

	1974-75*	1978-79**	1981-82**
Instruction (Percent of Total)	74%	79%	79%
Auxiliary Services (Percent of Total)	5%	3%	3%
Administration (Percent of Total)	4%	5%	5%
Operations and Maintenance (Percent of Total)	2%	1%	1%
Fixed Charges (Percent of Total)	11%	6%	7%
Capital Outlays (Percent of Total)	1%	1%	0.5%

*From a memorandum to John Jennings and Jean Froelicher from Paul Hill, August 11, 1977.

**Based on weighted averages and a sample size of 1,377.

school years, district administrators allocated the preponderance of Title I funds (nearly 80 percent) to instruction.* Much smaller amounts were allocated to auxiliary services (such as Title I nurses and counselors), administration, operations and maintenance, fixed charges (which include fringe benefits to teachers and administrators), and capital outlay (equipment purchases).** Moreover, as Table 3 illustrates, these allocations vary little from the findings of the National Institute of Education [NIE] study, which examined the Title I program in the 1975-76 school year. The only discrepancies--in instruction and fixed charges--may be due to some respondents' including fringe benefits to teachers in the instruction category.

Figure 1, which depicts percentage changes from 1978-79 to 1981-82, shows that some allocation decisions appear to be proportional. That is, the percent changes in some budget

*These are self-reported budget figures, which should be interpreted cautiously. For example, we know from case study data that some Title I Directors include in their instructional budget Title I resource teachers who provide services to classroom teachers but never serve children directly. One could argue that these salaries could be included in the administration category.

**The mail questionnaire did not give detailed definitions of these budget categories. Thus, some of the conclusions about budget allocations must be tentative. One difficulty with these aggregate budget data is that the subcategories do not sum exactly to the total budget allocations. This may be explained in part by the failure to include an indirect costs category in the mail questionnaire. When Title I Directors added this category, indirect costs--which can include costs allocated to locally provided accounting and payroll services, computer time, space rental, and utilities--typically ranged from 2 to 5 percent. If assigning these expenses to indirect costs is widespread, this would account for the money missing from the subcategories.

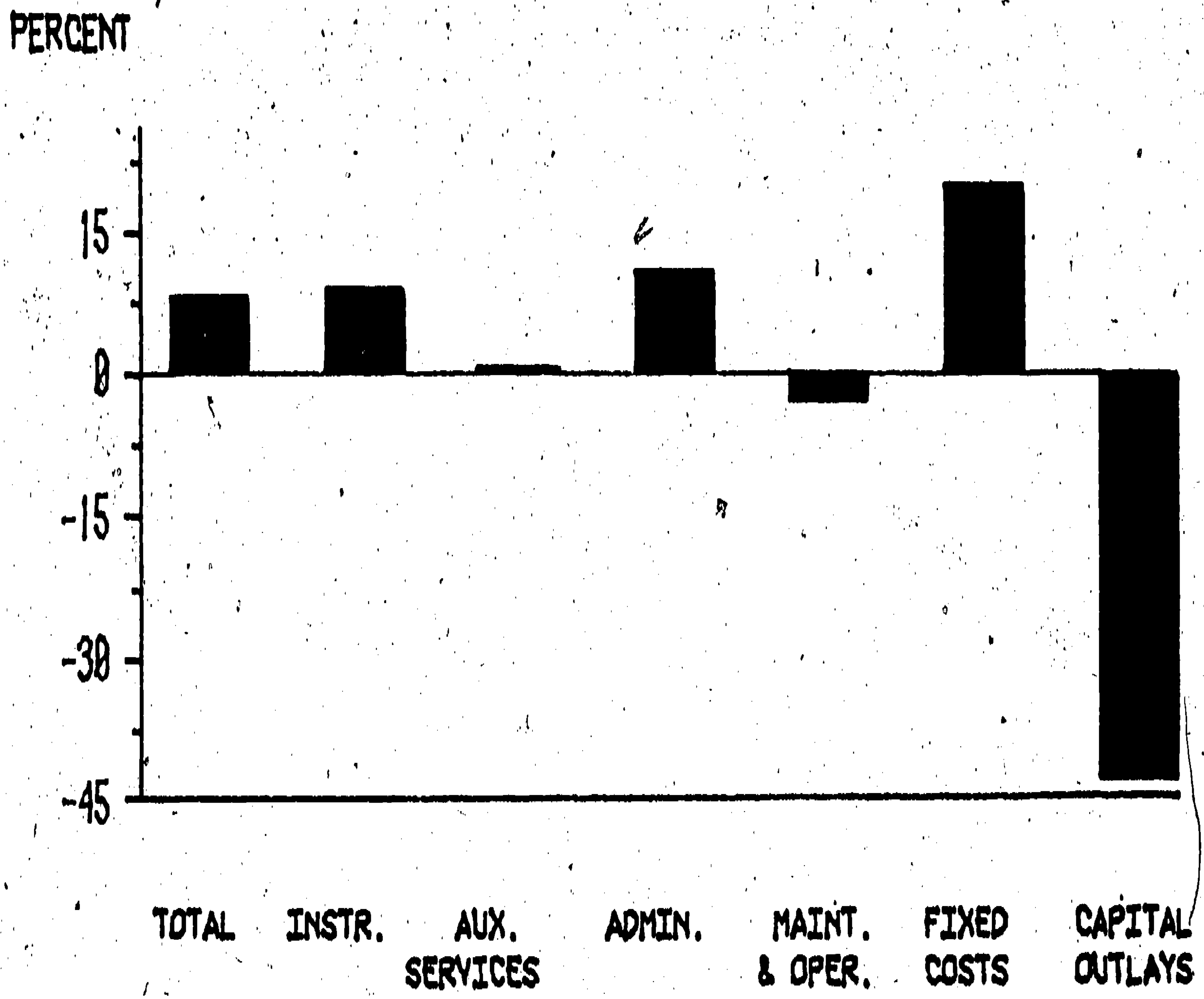

FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN TOTAL BUDGET AND BUDGET COMPONENTS BETWEEN 1978-79 AND 1981-82 categories parallel the percent change in the overall budget. For example, an 8 percent increase in total Title I funds seems to lead to similar increases in instruction and administration. Allocations to other categories, such as fixed charges, are not so closely linked to overall budget changes. On average, fixed charges rose at more than twice the rate of total budgets, perhaps reflecting the lack of control that Title I administrators have over funds earmarked for Social Security, insurance, and retirement benefits. To adjust for these uncontrollable increases, Title I administrators apparently make proportionately larger cuts in auxiliary services, operations and maintenance, and capital outlay.

The numbers just noted represent the "average" Title I budget allocations. But do districts with $50,000 and $5,000,000 Title I budgets allocate their funds the same way? Table 4 shows that districts receiving vastly different amounts of Title I money distribute their funds in much the same fashion. As one would expect, Title I districts, regardless of size, allocate the largest proportion of their Title I budget to instruction. However, there appears to be some variation in the percentage that goes for instruction. In 1978-79 and 1981-82 large and very large districts* spent about three-quarters of their Title I

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*A small district is defined as having a total enrollment of less than 2,500 children; a medium district as fewer than 10,000 children; and a large district as at least 10,000 children. Very large districts are those among the 60 largest in the nation.

TABLE 4

ALLOCATION OF TITLE I FUNDS IN SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE, AND VERY LARGE DISTRICTS*

(Budget figures are in thousands of dollars)

	VERY LARGE**			LARGE**			MEDIUM**			SMALL**		
	78	81	% Change	78	81	% Change	78	81	% Change	78	81	% Change
Total	$4,796	$5,058	6%	$912	$1,003	9%	$226	$240	7%	$54	$58	7%
N	(14)			(262)			(480)			(581)		
Instruction (% Total)	75.7%	77.1%	9%	77.1%	77.0%	9%	78.8%	80.0%	7%	79.6%	79.3%	7%
Auxiliary (% Total)	2.9%	2.0%	-41%	4.3%	4.0%	3%	2.7%	2.5%	-2%	1.9%	1.7%	-4%
Administration (% Total)	5.0%	5.2%	11%	4.7%	4.9%	14%	6.2%	6.7%	14%	5.6%	5.2%	-7%
Operations & Maintenance (% Total)	1.0%	0.7%	-26%	1.4%	1.1%	-15%	1.8%	1.7%	0%	1.9%	1.7%	-4%
Fixed Charges (% Total)	7.0%	9.6%	44%	5.3%	5.7%	19%	8.0%	9.2%	22%	7.4%	8.6%	25%
Capital Outlays (% Total)	2.7%	0.1%	-54%	0.7%	0.3%	-50%	0.9%	0.4%	-50%	1.3%	0.9%	-28%

*Based on weighted averages.

**Very large districts are among the 60 largest in the nation; large districts have at least 10,000 children; medium districts have between 2,500 and 9,999 children; and small districts have fewer than 2,500 children.

budgets on instruction. Medium and small districts allocated a somewhat larger percentage.

Data from the representative site visits may explain this difference. Larger districts usually fund most or all noninstructional Title I salaries and activities (for example, Title I administrators and evaluators) with Title I money. Many smaller districts do not have large enough budgets to justify a Title I administrator or evaluator and often fund some or all of these activities with local funds. In medium districts, these jobs are often performed by a Coordinator of Federal programs, whose salary may be paid only in part by Title I. In small districts, the curriculum coordinator, Principal, or even a teacher handles Title I administration in addition to his or her regular job. In such districts, administrative costs may be partially or wholly paid by local funds or they may be included in instructional costs. Thus, a relatively large proportion of Title I money is allocated to instruction. For example, 22 percent of the districts with fewer than 2,500 Title I students allocate all of their Title I budget to instruction.

As Table 4 also shows, budget changes have similar impacts regardless of district size. Some budget decisions are made in proportion to the overall budget changes. Most notably, changes in money allocated to instruction parallel overall changes. Other budget decisions do not closely track overall budget changes. Allocations to fixed charges and to administration (except in small districts) tend to outstrip total budget increases. Allocations to auxiliary services, operations and maintenance, and capital outlay show little change or are reduced even though the total budget increases slightly.

Budget allocations appear to be similar across Title I programs of quite different sizes. But do different magnitudes of budget changes affect local allocation decisions? To examine this question, it is necessary to look at budget allocations in districts that had different budget experiences between school years 1978-79 and 1981-82. Three types of districts are examined. The first set of districts experienced little change in their Title I budgets and as a result did not keep up with inflation. Districts in the next set experienced budget increases of 10 percent or more. The third set includes districts that experienced cuts of at least 10 percent in their Title I funding between 1978 and 1981.

Table 5 shows that 40 percent of the districts for which there is complete information had nearly the same budget in 1982-82 as in 1978-79. Despite little or no increase in their total Title I budget, these districts managed modest increases in instructional allocations. Fixed charges, which are largely outside the control of Title I administrators, rose at a rate higher than the overall increase. Funds allocated to administration also increased significantly despite the stability of the overall average budget. To make these increases, Title I administrators apparently made relatively large cuts in areas where they had some budgetary discretion: auxiliary services,

TABLE 5

CHANGES IN TITLE I BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FROM 1978-79 TO 1981-82 IN DISTRICTS WITH DIFFERENT BUDGET EXPERIENCES*

BUDGET CATEGORY	ALL DISTRICTS	LITTLE BUDGET CHANGE	AT LEAST 10% INCREASE	AT LEAST 10% DECREASE
Total Increase	8%	1%	24%	-19%
Instruction	9%	2%	26%	-19%
Auxiliary Services	0.3%	-20%	20%	-33%
Administration	11%	11%	20%	-28%
Operations and Maintenance	-3%	-33%	0%	-20%
Fixed Charges	20%	15%	40%	6%
Capital Outlay	-43%	-30%	-50%	-50%
Sample Size	1,337	536	573	226

*Based on weighted data.

operations and maintenance, and capital outlay. Thus, Title I programs with level funding appear to have cut "extras" to maintain more important program areas and to meet budget demands outside their control.

As indicated in Table 5, 43 percent of the districts had Title I budget increases in excess of 10 percent. In these districts, major program areas increased in proportion to overall budget increases. On average, allocations to instruction, auxiliary services, administration, and operations and maintenance all rose between 20 and 30 percent, while the overall budget rose 26 percent. Fixed charges rose at a somewhat higher rate and capital outlay was cut substantially, in part, perhaps to make up for extra increases in fixed charges.

The last column in Table 5 shows that 17 percent of the districts not only failed to keep pace with inflation but experienced actual dollar reductions in their Title I budgets. Allocation patterns in these districts are especially important given the likelihood of future Chapter 1 budget cuts. Some allocation decisions appear to be proportional to total budget cuts. Most significantly, cuts in instruction seem to parallel overall budget reductions. Other decisions, however, do not follow the total budget pattern. Fixed charges have actually increased despite significant reductions in total budgets. To make up for this increase, other "discretionary" categories--auxiliary services, administration, and capital outlay--are cut more drastically relative to other budget categories.

In brief, past district behavior indicates how budget cuts can affect local Title I allocation decisions. The data suggest that, when substantial budget reductions occur because of inflation or actual dollar cuts, proportionally large cuts in direct services to children must occur because the only source of large cuts is Title I instruction. Postponing equipment purchases and reducing funds to auxiliary services cannot make up for large overall funds reduction. Exacerbating this problem are funding requirements largely outside the control of the Title I administration. For example, if the overall Title I budget is cut by 20 percent, administrators may not be able to make commensurate cuts in fringe benefits. As a result, instructional funds and noninstructional categories over which administrators have some control may have to be cut even more severely than the overall budget.

INFLUENCES OF BUDGET CHANGES ON SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN SERVED

Services to Children in Public Schools

In addition to decisions about allocating Title I funds between instructional and noninstructional activities, Title I administrators must also decide how many schools will be designated project schools and how many students within those schools will receive Title I services. Title I funding levels can have considerable influence on those decisions. Once local districts receive their Title I allocations, however, they have substantial discretion on how to spend that money* (and ECIA is aimed at increasing that discretion). For example, a district receiving 5 percent fewer funds can choose to serve fewer schools, fewer children within existing Title I schools, the same number of schools and children but with diminished services, or some combination of these options.

Table 6 shows that between 1978 and 1981 districts served 3 percent fewer schools and 5 percent fewer children, despite an average increase of 8 percent in Title I budgets. Districts with level Title I budgets served 7 percent fewer schools and 9 percent fewer children in 1981 than in 1978. The effects of inflation can be seen in these districts; the same dollars in 1981 supported fewer schools and fewer students than in 1978. In districts with substantial budget increases (24 percent on average), the same number of schools were served while the number of children served rose 3 percent. Districts with large budget cuts (averaging 19 percent) served 7 percent fewer schools and 17 percent fewer children.

Decisions on allocating Title I dollars among eligible schools and children are complex because of options available to local Title I administrators and because of larger issues within districts such as changes in the overall district budget, declining enrollment, and desegregation orders. Data from the

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*See Michael Gaffney and Daniel Schember, "Current Title I School and Student Selection Procedures and Implications for Implementing Chapter 1, ECIA," a special report in this series, for further discussion of selection and targeting procedures.

TABLE 6

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN SERVED IN DISTRICTS WITH DIFFERING BUDGET EXPERIENCES*

	ALL DISTRICTS	LITTLE BUDGET CHANGE	SUBSTANTIAL BUDGET INCREASE	SUBSTANTIAL BUDGET CUTS
Average Number of Schools (1978)	3.7	4.3	3.5	2.8
Average Schools (1981)	3.5	4.1	3.5	2.6
Average Children (1978)	367	423	343	225
Average Children (1981)	345	388	357	185
Average Budget (1978)	174,931	208,855	165,400	108,867
Average Budget (1981)	189,182	211,520	205,898	88,034

*Based on weighted data.

case studies of local Title I programs illustrate the complexity of these decisions. Table 7 presents the budgets as well as schools and children served in eight case study districts for the four school years between 1978 and 1981.

In some districts, the number of Title I schools and children closely track budget increases and decreases. For example, the Title I budget for District 1 rose from 1978 to 1979, stayed about the same from 1979 to 1980, and dropped from 1980 to 1981. The schools and students served followed these changes fairly closely. Numbers of Title I schools and students rose between 1978 and 1979, dropped between 1979 and 1980 (perhaps because of inflation), and dropped significantly from 1980 to 1981.

In other districts, Title I budgets and schools and students served do not parallel each other as closely. In District 2, numbers of Title I children rise and fall with the Title I budget; however, the number of schools remained the same between 1980-81 and 1981-82, despite a 13 percent cut in funds. When funds became available in 1980-81, administrators in this district added a new middle school program in 4 schools, and 700 additional children were served. When funds were cut the next year, local administrators found it politically difficult to take funds away from schools that had just received them, but they did cut children from the program. To do this, they cut the Title I preschool program because its per-pupil cost was high and, since this was the only preschool program in the district, they were afraid they were using Title I funds to supplant (rather than

TABLE 7

CHANGES IN BUDGETS, SCHOOLS, AND CHILDREN SERVED BETWEEN 1978 AND 1982 IN EIGHT CASE STUDY SITES*

BUDGET

	1978-79		1979-80		1980-81		1981-82	
District	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I
1	$61	$2.7	73	3.1	77	3.2	89	2.4
2	32	1.2	35	1.3	38	1.4	NA	1.2
3	34	1.3	39	1.5	42	1.5	47	1.5
4	30	1.6	34	1.8	40	1.8	40	1.8
5	22	0.3	23	0.4	25	0.3	26	0.4
6	18	1.7	22	1.9	22	1.6	26	1.5
7	NA	4.1	70	4.8	NA	4.9	NA	4.6
8	160	1.1	NA	1.2	NA	1.3	191	1.1

SCHOOLS

District	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I
1	58	17	58	26	60	24	62	15
2	43	10	42	10	42	14	92	14
3	41	23	40	23	40	23	90	20
4	28	16	30	13	NA	16	31	10
5	26	11	24	10	24	13	22	12
6	26	26	26	26	23	23	26	23
7	69	32	63	32	63	32	68	33
8	108	21	NA	NA	NA	NA	106	23

CHILDREN SERVED

District	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I	Tot.	Title I
1	39	4.0	38	4.4	38	4.0	37	2.1
2	22	2.0	21	2.1	20	2.8	20	1.9
3	22	2.0	22	2.1	21	2.0	20	1.5
4	21	3.3	21	4.6	20	4.0	21	2.5
5	12	0.3	11	0.5	11	0.5	10	0.6
6	14	3.1	15	3.3	13	2.5	13	2.0
7	63	12.0	61	10.6	61	11.4	61	11.4
8	80	1.7	NA	1.8	NA	1.7	79	1.4

NA = Not available

*Budgets are in millions of dollars; children served are in thousands.

supplement) local education efforts. In addition, the Title I Director persuaded the district administration to lower the cut-off score on the selection test so that fewer students would be served in all grades. Thus, increased funds led to more schools and children being served. When funds were cut, the number of children served was reduced, but schools added during a more prosperous time remained in the program.

District 3 shows what can happen when actual cuts are not as great as expected.* Prior to the 1981-82 school year, the Title I Director in this district believed that congressional action would lead to budget reductions of up to 20 percent. As a result, he dropped the Title I high school program, which had lowest priority and had only been added recently when funds became available. In addition, although three high schools were cut from Title I, only six teachers were affected. When actual cuts were much smaller than forecast, the Director decided to stand by his decision, thus allowing him to increase his carry-over funds for 1982-83 to cover future cuts that might be made.

In District 4, Title I funds dropped by about 4 percent, but numbers of schools and children served declined by 38 percent. A newly implemented desegregation plan accounts for some of the schools dropped in 1981-82. Two of the three schools added in

*This can be a widespread problem because local administrators make program and staffing decisions based on proposed national budgets. When actual appropriations are significantly different from proposed levels, it may be difficult to change local decisions.

1980-81 barely had enough eligible children to qualify for Title I. Implementation of a desegregation plan changed the populations of these schools and made them ineligible for Title I funds in 1981-82. Moreover, the Principals in these schools did not support Title I and did not want the program in their buildings. As a result, the Title I Director made no special effort to preserve services for these schools. A third school became a sixth-grade center to which all sixth graders were bused. This school, which previously had a large number of educationally deprived children, now has a more diverse population and is no longer eligible for Title I. As a result, many sixth graders who would have received Title I before desegregation now do not receive it because they attend a non-Title I school.

District 5 illustrates a strategy of cutting the most expensive program component when Title I funds are reduced. Between 1979 and 1980, this district experienced a 21 percent reduction in its Title I budget. Instead of cutting the numbers of schools and children served by similar large percentages, Title I administrators reduced the Title I prekindergarten program by one-third. This program was expensive because it provided food and transportation in addition to educational services. By making major cuts in this program, district administrators preserved Title I services to children in later grades and actually were able to add Title I services to three schools.

In District 7, basic Title I services to children were also retained and an additional school received Title I aid despite a

6 percent budget cut. This was done by eliminating or reducing services that administrators and the community saw as less important. Title I counselors were cut by one-third, all Title I nurses were eliminated, and the Title I home-school liaison program was curtailed.

Results from the case studies show how national averages can oversimplify the relationships between changes in Title I budgets and the numbers of schools and children served. Similar budget reductions in several districts can result in different decisions. Some districts might make cuts in Title I schools and children in proportion to budget cuts. Others might use a distributive principle, that is, reduce the number of children served while maintaining at least some Title I services in as many schools as possible. Still other school districts might cut schools (as well as students), using a principle that the last schools to receive services will be the first to lose them. Finally, although Title I services are intended to be completely supplementary, decisions about which schools and students to serve are often made in the larger context of districtwide decisions, which must take into account the demographic change, court-ordered desegregation, and alterations in funding from other compensatory programs.

Influence of Budget Reductions on Title I Services to Children in Nonpublic Schools

Title I budget changes can potentially influence local decisions on the kind and amount of services provided to Title I eligible students who attend nonpublic schools. Since the original enactment of ESEA, Title I programs have been required to service nonpublic school children, and there has been continuing concern about the quality and equality of those services.*

An important concern is that cuts in Title I allocations to local districts would be translated into fewer nonpublic services. However, limited data from site visits to 100 representative Title I districts show little relationship between Title I funding and changes in nonpublic services. Table 8 shows that 55 percent of the districts that increased nonpublic services by 10 percent or more had level funding or experienced budget decreases of at least 10 percent. Similarly, 43 percent of the districts that significantly reduced nonpublic services had budget increases of at least 10 percent.

When asked why they increased or decreased nonpublic services, Title I Directors never give budget changes as a reason. The most frequent explanation for reducing services is a reduction in eligible students in nonpublic schools. The main reasons reasons for increased services are greater numbers of eligible students and increased lobbying by nonpublic school officials.

One cannot conclude from these data that deeper and more widespread cuts would not disproportionately affect services to children in nonpublic schools. But there is no evidence from

*See the special paper by Richard Jung ("Nonpublic School Students in Title I, ESEA, Programs: A Question of 'Equal' Services") for an indepth discussion of services to nonpublic children.

TABLE 8

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHANGES
IN BUDGET AND SERVICES TO
CHILDREN IN NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1978-82

Services to Children in Non-public Schools	Title I Budget Changes: At Least 10% Incr.	Little Change	At Least 10% Decr.	N
At Least 10% Increase	44%	33%	22%	9
Little Change	44%	41%	15%	41
At Least 10% Decrease	43%	29%	29%	7
N	25	22	10	57

past practices that budget changes are directly translated into more or fewer Title I dollars for nonpublic school children.

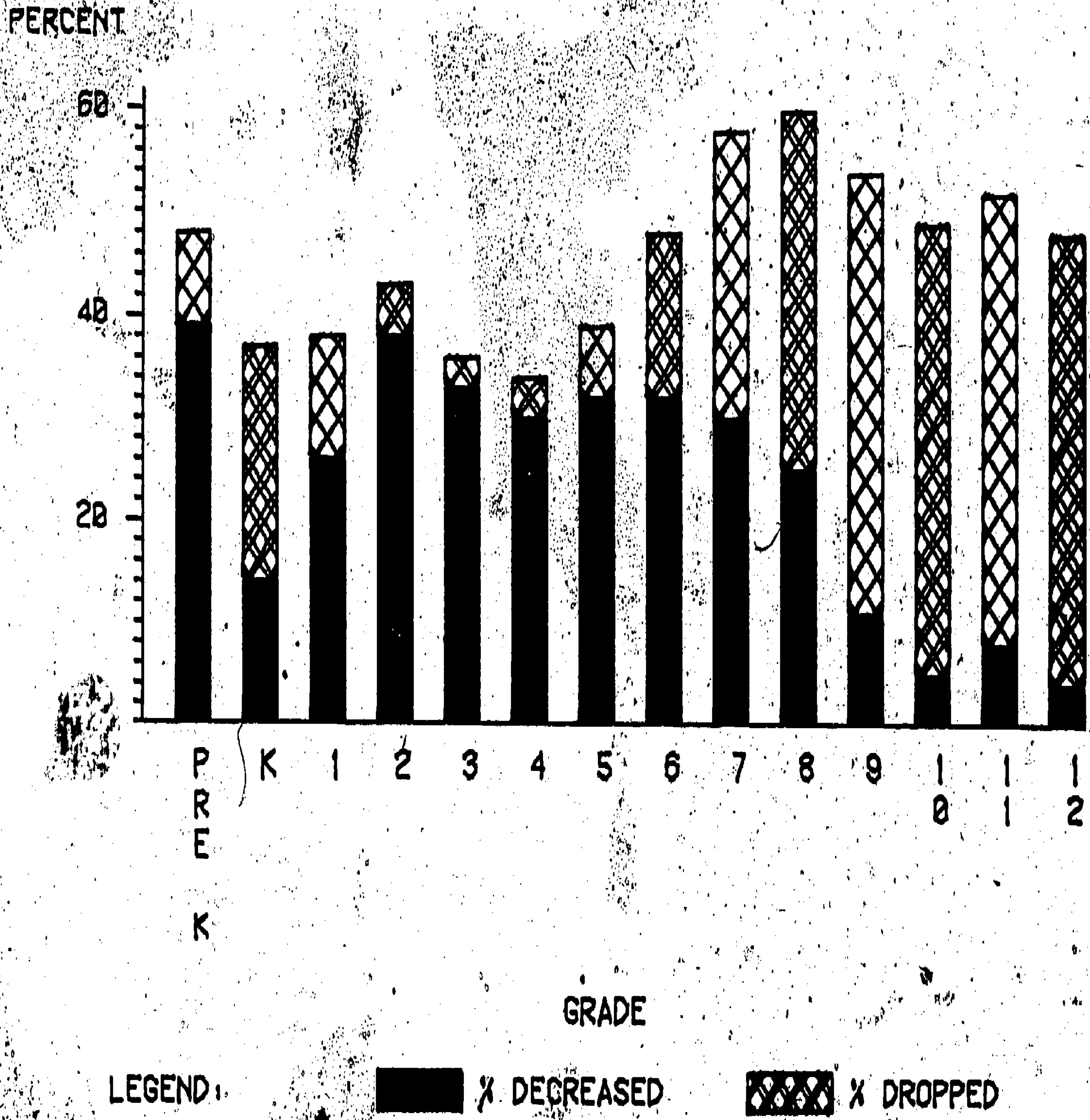
BUDGET EFFECTS ON GRADES AND SUBJECTS

Title I budget changes can also affect district administrators' decisions about which grades will be served with Title I funds and which subjects Title I programs will provide. Data from the District Practices Study show that Title I from 1978 to 1981 continued to be primarily a reading and mathematics program provided to elementary school children.* Of course, many districts also serve students in preschool and secondary programs and provide other services such as English for the limited-English-proficient, special education, and vocational education.

Between 1978 and 1982, budget changes affected decisions on which grades to serve and which subjects to provide. Possible future budget reductions may have a similar impact. Figure 2 shows the results from Title I Directors who say that budget decreases influenced their decisions to reduce or drop services to a particular grade or grades.** The percentages are the proportion of Directors who had Title I services in a given grade and decided to reduce or drop those services because of budget

*See the Summary Report of the District Practices Study (Advanced Technology, 1982) for a more comprehensive description of Title I services.

**Some questions on reduction in grades and subjects were included in only one-fourth of the questionnaires to reduce the burden on respondents. Thus, the data in Figures 2 and 4 are based on a response rate of 444 rather than the rate of 1,769 for questions that were in all questionnaires.



Percentages are calculated using the number of districts that offer Title I services in a given grade and reduced or dropped services to some grades because of budget cuts.

FIGURE 2

DISTRICTS THAT DECREASED OR DROPPED
SERVICES TO GRADES BECAUSE OF BUDGET CUTS

cuts. For example, 23 of the Directors who reduced or dropped grades had prekindergarten Title I programs. Of those, 39 percent report they reduced prekindergarten services by at least 10 percent. Another 9 percent say they dropped their prekindergarten programs because of budget reductions.

Clearly, budget reductions influence Title I services to all grades. Even the elementary grades, which Title I has traditionally served, have been significantly cut or even dropped in some districts. For example, 52 districts out of 444 (12 percent) significantly reduced or dropped Title I services to third-grade children because of budget reductions.

Although Title I services to elementary grades are not immune from cuts due to budget reductions, districts are much more likely to maintain some services for those grades rather than drop them altogether. Figure 2 shows that the proportion of districts reducing services to grades 1 through 6 is much higher than that of those dropping services from those grades. On the other hand, districts with Title I programs in kindergarten and grades 7 through 12 more often drop those grades when budget reductions require cutting services. For example, 44 percent of districts that have eleventh-grade programs and that made budget-related reductions dropped services to that grade. Another 8 percent kept the eleventh-grade program but reduced services by 10 percent or more.

Thus, as Figure 2 indicates, several patterns emerge. When budget reductions force costs in services to elementary grades, Title I Directors are more likely to reduce, rather than drop, service to those grades. If they have early childhood or secondary programs, they are more likely to drop, rather than reduce, services to students in prekindergarten and in junior and senior high school.

Figure 3 indicates that similar behavior can be expected if significant cuts are more widespread. This figure--based on responses from 1,769 questionnaires--reports responses of Title I Directors who were asked which grades they would cut or drop if their funding was reduced by at least 10 percent. Of course, many of the cuts would come in the elementary grades because many districts only have programs in those grades. But in districts that have prekindergarten, kindergarten, or secondary programs, the proportion that would cut these grades is much higher.

Interviews with 100 Title I Directors provide some insight into the reasoning behind those decisions. Fifty-five percent of these Title I Directors say they would preserve services to earlier grades and cut later grades because they believe services to younger children are more effective in preventing later difficulties. Similarly, some Directors believe that later programs have less impact on the students they serve and report that students in later grades are often too far behind to be helped by Title I. At the same time, not all Directors would make larger cuts in later programs. Twenty percent say they would reduce services in equal proportions to all grades.

Budget reductions also can influence the subjects Title I provides. To examine these influences, respondents to the mail

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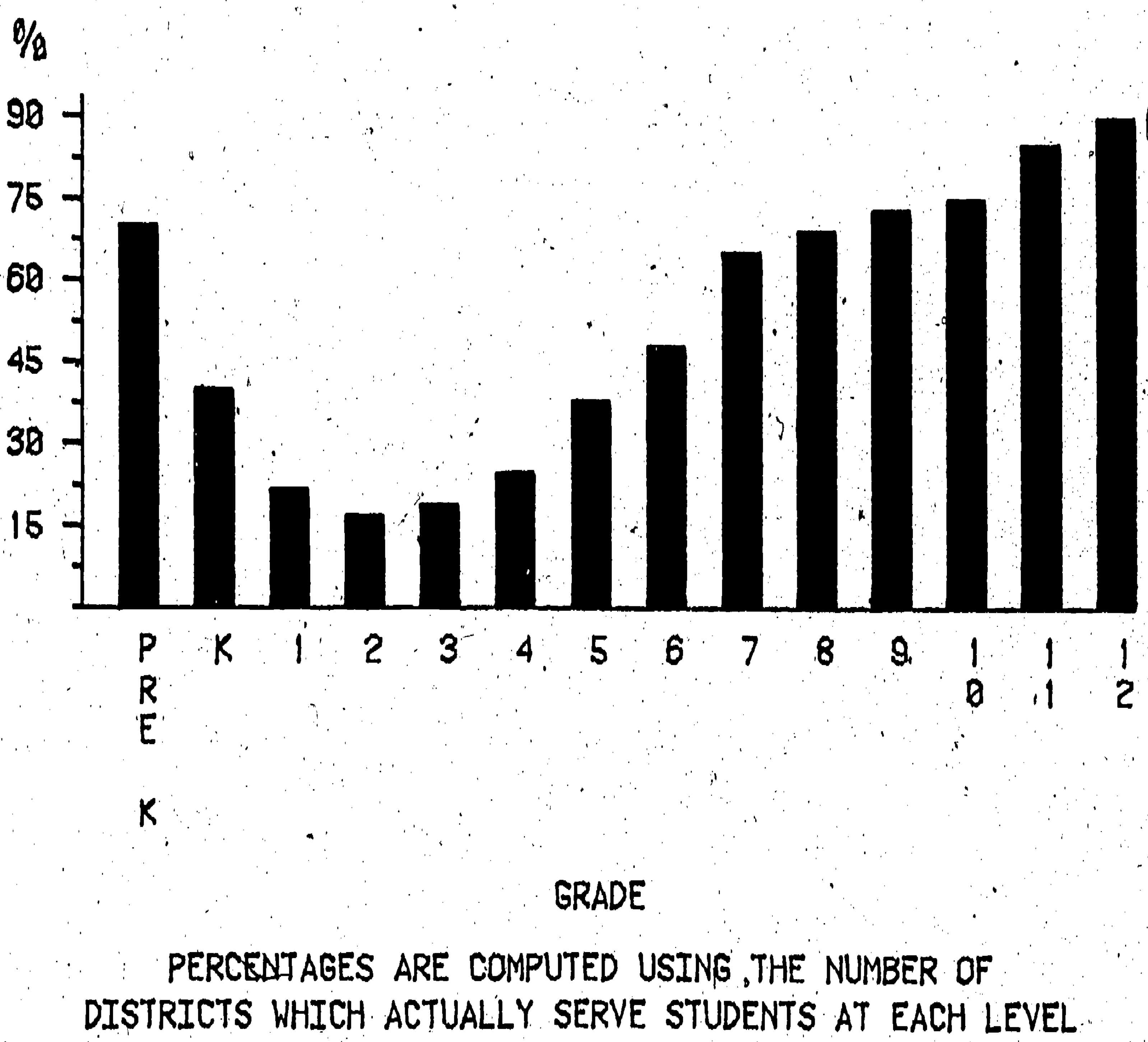


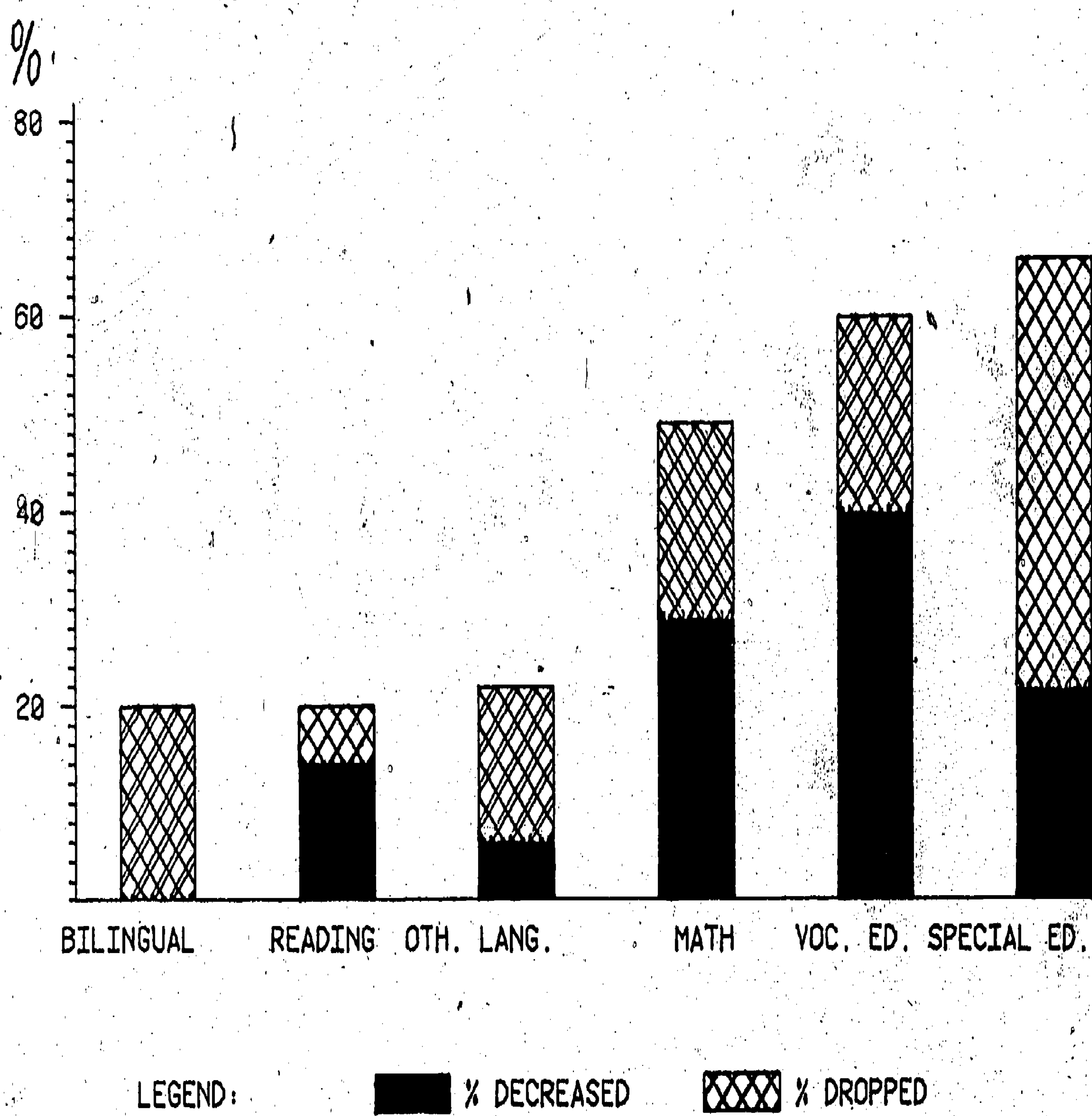
FIGURE 3

PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICTS WHICH WOULD DECREASE TITLE I SERVICES AT THE VARIOUS GRADE LEVELS IF FUNDS WERE REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY questionnaire were asked whether they made significant changes in the subject offered, and, if so, whether Title I budget allocations influenced those changes. Overall, only 18 percent of the 444 respondents say they significantly altered offerings because of budget changes. Figure 4 displays the responses of those Directors.

The interpretation of Figure 4 is similar to that of Figure 2. For example, 66 Title I programs that made budget-related changes in some subject provided services in reading. Of those, about 15 percent significantly reduced reading services; another 5 percent dropped reading all together. Thus, 2 percent of all 444 districts significantly reduced reading and 0.7 percent dropped reading services because of budget reductions.

Title I math programs were more likely to be cut when budgets were reduced. Of the 56 districts that offered math and made some cuts in subject areas due to budget reductions, about 30 percent of those cut math services by at least 10 percent. An additional 20 percent eliminated math programs altogether.

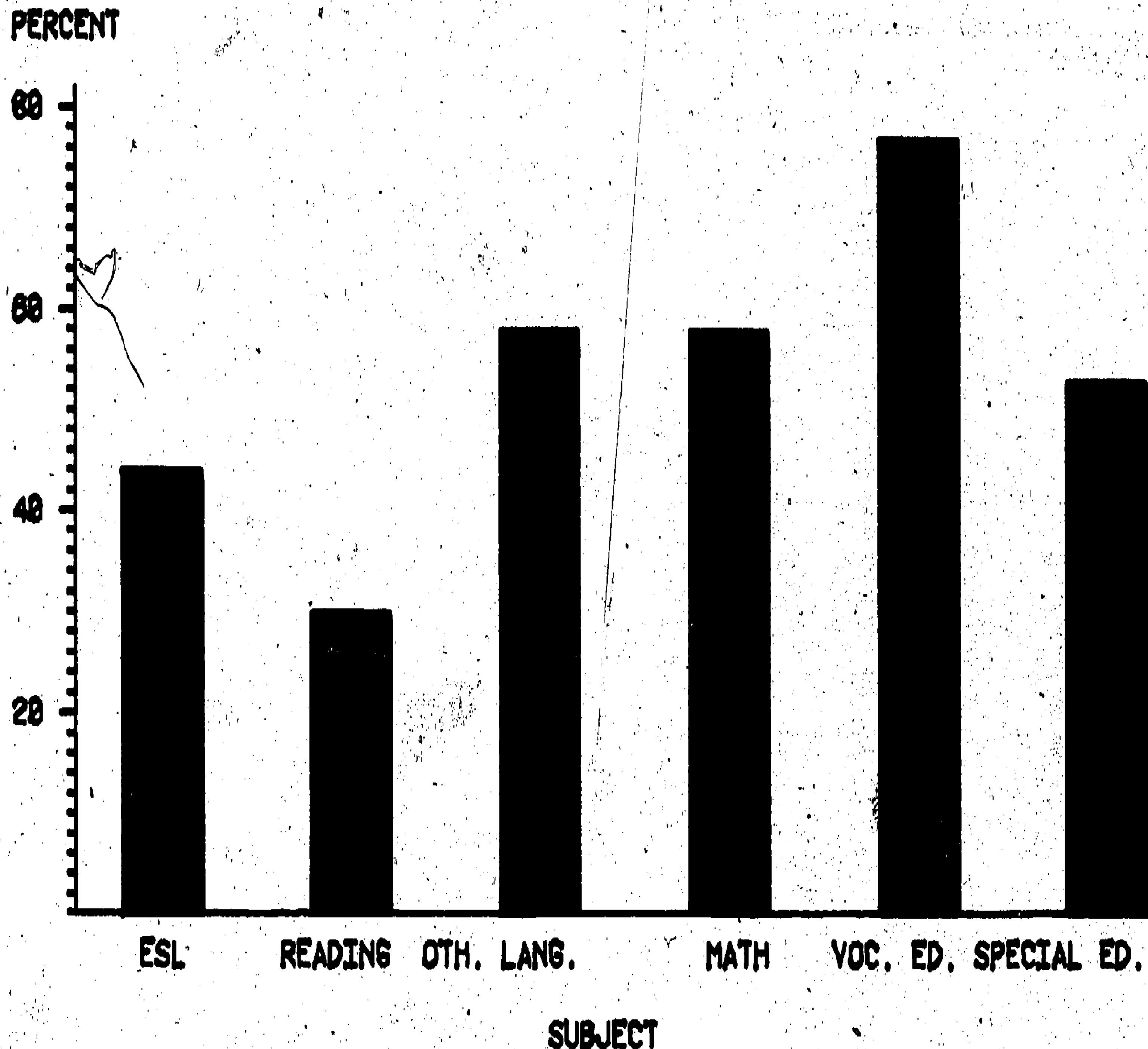
Figure 5 reports the subjects Directors would reduce or cut given a 10 percent funding reduction. Of course, reading programs would be cut because many districts only provide reading and would have no other choice. But the proportion of districts with math programs that would cut these programs is much higher than other proportions. Again, the representative interviews help explain these decisions. Thirty-five percent of the Directors say that reading instruction is the fundamental service provided by Title I. Math and other subjects, many believe, are



Percentages are calculated using the number of districts that offer Title I services for a given subject and reduced or dropped some subjects because of budget cuts.

FIGURE 4

DISTRICTS THAT DECREASED OR DROPPED SUBJECTS BECAUSE OF FUNDING CHANGES



Percentages are computed using the number of districts which actually provide Title I services in a given subject.

FIGURE 5

PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICTS THAT WOULD
DROP TITLE I SUBJECTS GIVEN SIGNIFICANT BUDGET DECREASES

less crucial to aiding educationally deprived children. Thus, these Directors would reduce or eliminate math and other Title I programs to preserve basic reading services. On the other hand, 10 percent say they would reduce all Title I subjects by an equal proportion.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: LESSONS FROM PAST TITLE I BUDGET PRACTICES

In part, this paper aims at describing the influence of Title I budget changes on local decisions regarding how to allocate Title I funds, how many schools and students to serve with Title I programs, whether to alter Title I services to children in nonpublic schools, what grades to serve, and which subjects to provide with Title I resources. But this paper also focuses on past patterns in budgetary practices to anticipate behavior that might result from future budget reductions. Of course, any predictions of future decisions and actions from past practices must be made cautiously. This is especially true because of the important changes in the law creating Chapter 1 and uncertainties about future Chapter 1 budget decisions at the national level. At the same time, it is likely that experience and past practices will influence the future behavior of local decision makers if they must deal with significant reductions in Chapter 1 funds.

If funding for Chapter 1 remains constant over the next few years but is reduced in real terms by the effects of inflation, past practices lead to the prediction that local spending for

Chapter 1 instruction will also remain constant (but decline in real terms), that spending for fixed charges and perhaps for administration would rise, and that Chapter 1 funds allocated to auxiliary services, operations and maintenance, and capital outlay will be significantly cut. If Chapter 1 funding is significantly reduced, a reasonable prediction is that instruction would be cut in proportion to the overall budget reduction and that all other categories, except for fixed charges, may be cut by even greater percentages. Of course, cuts in real terms would be larger because of the additional effects of inflation.

Past Title I budget practices also give some clues about future decisions on the number of schools and children Chapter 1 will service. Overall, changes in the number of children served will probably parallel budget changes, while changes in the number of schools serviced may be less pronounced than changes in local funding. Since 1978, districts that have experienced level funding have, on average, reduced the number of children served by 9 percent and the number of Title I schools by 7 percent. These changes can reasonably be attributed, at least in part, to the influence of inflation and similar reductions could be expected if Chapter 1 funding remains at the same level and inflation resumes double-digit rates.

If Chapter 1 funds are significantly reduced, one would expect substantial reductions in the number of children served and somewhat fewer schools served. If patterns from those districts experiencing average cuts of 20 percent can be extrapolated to the future, one would expect that 7 percent fewer schools and 17 percent fewer children would receive Chapter 1 aid.

Past practices, together with the predictions of Title I Directors, also provide some idea about future influences of Chapter 1 budget changes on the grades Chapter 1 will service and the subjects it will provide. If Chapter 1 budget cuts force local administrators to reduce or eliminate services to various grades, Chapter 1 is likely to become even more of an elementary school program than it already is. Large proportions of Title I Directors say they would cut or eliminate existing services to pre-school and secondary school students in order to maintain services to the elementary grades. Of course, districts that serve only elementary grades would be forced to reduce or eliminate services to some of those grades. Title I Directors also indicate that significant cuts would lead them to reduce or eliminate math and other subjects in order to preserve Chapter 1 reading programs. If these predictions are correct, Chapter 1 would become even more of a reading program than Title I has been.*

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*Although reading programs are highest priority for many Title I Directors, this priority could change in some districts when other administrators become involved in curriculum decisions. One Title I Director reports that Title I personnel in his district favor preserving reading services and cutting other Title I programs when budget reductions make some choices necessary. But Principals and non-Title I teachers prefer to reduce reading and maintain math services. As a result, the Superintendent and the Title I Director followed the preferences of the larger group and reduced the Title I reading program.

In addition to these specific predictions about local decisions and action flowing from possible future Chapter 1 budget changes, the literature on organizations in decline gives some clues about difficulties local administrators face if Chapter 1 funds are significantly cut.* Among the problems resulting from decline are:

- Reduced slack resources (for example, carry-over funds) to cope with uncertainty, to reward achievement, and to promote innovation
- Reduced or eliminated resources for analytic tools, which may be most needed in times of decline
- Hiring freezes or reductions in force, which limit the ability to attract new talent and tend to discriminate against minorities and women
- Lowered morale leading to the departure of the most talented employees, who can more easily change organizations or careers than other employees can

More generally, organizational structures and management systems in this country are often predicated on the assumption of continued growth (Levine, 1978; Whettan, 1980). Growth is seen as a signal of success--decline, as a sign of failure. When growth slows or ceases, solutions based on growth models may become inappropriate. Few models exist for dealing with permanent or long-term conditions of resource scarcity. Moreover, administrators' experiences, until recently, are drawn from periods of growth when new programs were implemented and existing programs

*For useful discussions of organizations in decline see Freeman and Hannan (1975, 1981), Mitnick (1978), and Whetton (1980).

were expanded, and lessons learned during prosperity are not necessarily useful in reducing or curtailing programs.

Fortunately, evidence from interviews with Title I Directors and from case studies gives some suggestions on how to manage program decline resulting from budget reductions. One management strategy is to seek consensus (through a formalized process such as needs assessment) on what components* of the Chapter 1 program have high and low priority. If budget reductions are necessary, the low priority components can be cut first. In one district we visited, parents on the District Advisory Committee, regular teachers, and Title I teachers annually are asked to rank the objectives of the Title I program. The results of this process for the 1980-81 school year placed Title I kindergarten and elementary language art ahead of Title I math and secondary language arts. When projected budget reductions in 1981-82 led to program cuts, the district eliminated the math and secondary programs. When additional funds unexpectedly became available, the math program was reinstated. The secondary language arts program, which had lowest priority, was not reinstated.

In addition to determining priority of program components, it is useful to have agreement on priorities before significant budget cuts are necessary. In another district, the core Title I program is protected from budget cuts by a ranking system created in the early 1970s. Realizing even then that Federal funding is

*Examples of program components are grades which Chapter 1 serves and subjects which it provides.

never secure, district administrators developed a system of priorities to define the order of cutbacks. This system ranks Title I schools by the number of eligible students and establishes a rule that schools with the fewest eligible students have services reduced or eliminated first. The system also establishes that math services will be cut before reading and that Title I reading will be cut before language services are reduced. Because these priorities were set and widely understood in advance, there was little resentment or resistance when budget cuts in the last three years led to significant Title I program reductions.

Another management strategy is to cut expensive program components and expand components that serve more children with fewer dollars. We have already mentioned one district that dropped its Title I prekindergarten program, in part, because it was very expensive. As a result, the district realized significant savings while serving just slightly fewer children. Another district sought to serve more children with fewer dollars. District administrators adopted, on a small scale, a National Diffusion Network project called Catch Up/Keep Up. On the basis of teacher recommendations, children are selected because of evidence that they can benefit from a short exposure to this program. For example, some children are selected because they need help in just one or two specific skills. Because children are in the program for just a few weeks and then return to their regular classes, many more children can be served.

Another cost saving measure is to find less expensive means to deliver instructional services. One large district found that using two part-time aides to replace one full-time aide saved money because part-time employees do not receive finge benefits. The same district also hired work-study students from local universities to serve as aides. Many of these students are in teacher-training programs and are less expensive than other aides with less training because the work-study program pays part of their salaries.

Of course, deciding on program and personnel changes should not be made solely on cost. It is also important to take into account local priorities and influences on the overall effectiveness and equity of the Chapter 1 program. An early childhood program may be expensive relative to services in later grades, but it may also have significant impact on preventing later educational difficulties. To cut or eliminate an effective preschool program solely because of its high cost may be false economy if additional Chapter 1 services must be provided later on to remedy problems that such a program could have prevented.

Similarly, adding or enlarging a program component solely because its costs-per-child are low does not take into account the effectiveness of such a program. Serving 10 times as many children by offering each child a few weeks of service may seem to be more efficient than serving 1 group of children for the whole year. But if few children benefit from short-term intervention, the saving is an illusion.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER INQUIRY

This paper examines the impact of budget changes on local Title I practices between schools 1978-79 and 1981-82 and uses those practices to speculate about future practices under Chapter 1 of ECIA. Some important topics, however, are not covered. Because the data collection and analysis of this study focus on Title I district practices, this paper does not discuss larger questions of the interaction of Title I and districtwide budget decisions. In many districts, decisions about Title I funds allocation and the extent and nature of Title I services influence and are influenced by similar decisions about programs for the limited-English-speaking, programs for handicapped children, and state compensatory programs.

Because data for this paper were collected prior to the implementation of Chapter 1 and before budget reductions for school year 1982-83 went into effect, it is only possible to speculate about the impact of these changes. Services for the educationally disadvantaged may be reduced by degrees greater than projected budget costs would suggest if districts enlarge the eligibility pool for Chapter 1 to include less disadvantaged children. On the other hand, cuts in Chapter 1 services may be less pronounced if the effects of inflation continue to abate or if some funds available under Chapter 2 of ECIA are earmarked for the educationally disadvantaged. Only data collected over the next few years can determine the impacts of recent budgetary and legislative changes.

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