



AVOID THE 5 COMMON ARRA TITLE I SPENDING PITFALLS

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

An unprecedented opportunity exists to improve education, close the achievement gap, and instill sustainable capacity and accountability with a level of funding previously unavailable.

Potentially conflicting pressures to spend ARRA funds quickly and wisely to realize the greatest impact on student learning is difficult to accomplish without careful planning and review. Educators are bombarded with options, many of which will not provide the intensive professional development or the capacity and sustainability required by ARRA.

This whitepaper has been written to explain ARRA funding, resolve confusion, and explain how an on-demand resource from School Improvement Network can help you to address specific needs that most effectively impact teaching and learning.

Understanding Education Funding from the ARRA

School systems have a unique opportunity to improve education through a Federal investment of over \$100 billion by the ARRA. The Department of Education has established principles that guide the distribution and use of ARRA funds and determined assurances that states must meet in order to advance core reforms at the heart of the act.

Title I federal ARRA funding will be allocated specifically to influence student's academic achievement. These funds are apportioned in the following areas* relating to educators professional development:

- Title I: \$13 billion for grants to help disadvantaged kids in nearly every school district and more than half of all public schools reach high academic standards
- Education Technology: \$1 billion for 21st century classrooms, including computer and science labs and teacher technology training
- Statewide Data Systems: \$250 million towards gathering and analyzing student data that improves educational tools and resources for educational success
- IDEA Special Education: \$13 billion for formula grants to increase the federal share of special education costs and prevent these mandatory costs from forcing states to cut other areas of education

- Improving Teacher Quality: \$300 million, including \$200 million for competitive grants to school districts and states to provide financial incentives for teachers and principals who raise student achievement and close the achievement gaps in high-need schools and \$100 million for competitive grants to states to address teacher shortages and modernize the teaching workforce

The 5 Common Spending Pitfalls

Following extensive research, School Improvement Network has identified five common spending hazards educators may face when determining how to spend ARRA Title I funds. This list has been designed to assist you in your decision making and explain how School Improvement Network can help you meet your specific needs.

1. Failure to Deliberately Plan Sustainability and Capacity

Building sustainability and capacity is one of the required components of ARRA, but it is not automatic in any program. Educators are in need of a staff development system that is designed to be job-embedded, ongoing, and scalable throughout an entire system. This will aid educators and their teams build internal capacity and create the sustainability effective leaders and teachers need.

School Improvement Network's PD 360 resource allows users to build sustainable capacity by aligning state, system, and school goals with video learning segments, forums, and resources to show teachers and administrators how to implement with fidelity. As teachers and administrators use these aligned segments, they will see what the standards and practices look like when implemented in the classroom.

2. Getting Caught Up in Spending at the Expense of Learning

With pressure to spend quickly, it is easy to fund traditional and expensive programs that have been proven not to impact learning fast enough or systemically help all students, teachers and leaders. PD 360's technology-based, on-demand professional learning system is proven to increase student achievement, enabling you to reach every teacher and administrator with the right message. It contains the results of nearly 20 years of researching the best schools and teachers and documenting evidence-based strategies that schools use in their classrooms to close achievement gaps.

3. Thinking the "Funding Cliff" is Only Talking About Money

ARRA funds must be thoughtfully invested to minimize the "funding cliff." But the "cliff" is not referring just to money. Purchases must be on services that become job-embedded and help build the capacity necessary for long-term, sustainable improvement. Programs that work with a great deal of outside support and end when funding dries up leave limited or no sustainability.

Focusing on job-embedded, on-going professional development, PD 360 builds internal capacity so educator's system improvement efforts have lasting impact. Able to scale to every teacher and staff

member, they can now build true common language and practices so student achievement and continuous improvement are permanently embedded in your system.

A cost-effective professional development tool, PD 360 leverages technology, and a subscription-based model to offer a significantly lower cost than traditional forms of staff development. An annual subscription does not lock your system into any long-term contracts. It is affordable and always keeps you current with the latest features and content.

4. Thinking Test Scores Are the Only Way to Monitor Progress and Improvement

By the time State test results are released, it is too late to intervene in challenging areas. More than student test data, accountability ensures teachers are effectively implementing successful practices that give immediate feedback. PD 360's powerful tracking and reporting system increases educator accountability and provides data to make informed decisions before the State tests for results.

By choosing a date range, administrators can easily create a usable report with graphs and charts showing PD 360 usage, the most viewed topics and learning segments, and a breakdown of usage by school and individual. Data can be downloaded into a spreadsheet showing the activities of each user. With these reports, school and district leaders can easily track each teacher's professional learning activity and progress—and intervene where progress is not being made while intervention can still make a difference. School Improvement Network can use PD 360 data and compare it to student achievement data—finally allowing educators to see the link between professional development and student achievement.

5. Believing More Training Days Equals "Intensive Professional Development"

Simply increasing training days in a traditional workshop has little impact in the classroom—despite the fundamental belief it does. An implementation plan is critical to ensuring training will be applied. Educators need a job-embedded, on-demand professional development system focused on implementation and growth in the classroom.

PD 360 includes the latest research-based strategies proven to close the achievement gap and improve learning for all students. With tools for follow-up and reflection, and support for coaches and professional learning communities, the strategies are available in an on-demand system designed to help teachers implement best practices in the classroom.

Every learning segment includes the best-known experts along with real classroom examples from urban, suburban, and rural schools. Most programs are available in elementary and secondary versions.

The Guiding Principles

To help educators avoid the common pitfalls of ARRA Title I spending, the Federal Department of Education has outlined specific guiding principles to ensure money is spent wisely and with impact. Following are these guiding principles and how PD 360 can help ensure educators spend these funds properly.

Invest One-Time ARRA Funds Thoughtfully to Minimize the "Funding Cliff"

ARRA funds are expected to be available only for two to three years, which means it is critical that schools invest them in ways that provide sustainable reforms and results. Creating sustainable solutions for schools lies at the foundation of School Improvement Network's mission. When implemented correctly, this company's products and services build internal capacity to enable systems to maintain and continue improvement on their own. PD 360, School Improvement Network's on-demand professional learning platform, empowers schools to develop a professional development model based on what research proves most effective. Our comprehensive consulting program, the Leadership and Learning Framework, provides administrators and teachers with a system for effective leadership and instruction that can last year after year.

Improve Student Achievement through School Improvement and Reform

Schools that consistently use PD 360 show improvements in math and reading scores up to fifteen times their district's average. Districts who implement the Leadership and Learning Framework have eliminated achievement gaps and increased test scores by more than fifteen percent in just one year. When School Improvement Network works with schools, it focuses on ensuring educators have the appropriate tools to help every student achieve high standards.

The Assurances -Teacher Effectiveness and Equitable Distribution of Them

One of the best ways to increase achievement is to improve teacher quality through professional development. Unlike other forms of professional development which are difficult to scale district-wide, PD 360 ensures that teachers of every experience level and any school can have access to research-based professional learning that features leading experts and best-practice classroom examples. An online learning community within PD 360 allows teachers and administrators to collaborate with other educators across the country. Because PD 360 contains information on hundreds of topics, teachers can access the information that is most relevant to the situations they face with their students.

Intensive Support and Effective Interventions for Lowest-Performing Schools

Struggling schools are in particular need of consistent, powerful professional development for every teacher. One particular New Mexico district implemented corrective action processes through PD 360 in one of its junior high schools. When the Department of Education visited to perform an evaluation, they were amazed at the changes.

College- and Career-ready Standards and High Quality, Valid, and Reliable Assessments for All

Students, including ELLs and Students with Disabilities

Effective professional development helps states and districts establish and reach high standards of student achievement. PD 360 and the Leadership and Learning Framework both include training on equitable assessments, particularly for English language learners and students with special needs. Hundreds of districts use School Improvement Network's training materials to make sure they provide reliable formal and informal assessments for all students.

Spend your ARRA funds where you can get the biggest gains in student achievement

PD 360 is a proven on-demand professional learning system used by hundreds of thousands of educators and thousands of schools—a system that will help you increase student achievement and build common language and practices with ongoing sustainability and capacity. PD 360 offers the programs you need with over 1,000 video learning segments with proven experts such as Michael Fullan, Doug Reeves, Rick Stiggins, and Gayle Gregory. Every segment includes exemplary classrooms that have experienced student growth and improvement. Topics include Classroom Instruction that Works, Differentiation, Equity, Classroom Management, Leadership and many others. PD 360 is designed to be affordable, effective, and long lasting with 2, 3, 4, and 5 year subscription plans available. Pricing includes all setup, technical support, initial training, and follow-up coaching. There are no hidden or additional costs associated—enabling you to avoid the “funding cliff” and meet the requirements of ARRA.

“Intensive Professional Development” that is Comprehensive and Lasting

School Improvement Network has put together straight forward implementation plans designed to avoid the “funding cliff” and give you an intensive professional development program that is sustainable over the long term.

With purchase options specifically designed to help educators spend ARRA funds wisely, School Improvement Network has created packages that include everything you need to effectively implement PD 360 to intensive professional development programs.

School Improvement Network's PD 360 is a proven on-demand professional development system that is being used by over 250,000 educators and thousands of schools across the country, providing intensive professional development that directly impacts student achievement. PD 360 has over 1,000 video learning segments, rich with classroom examples, designed to help teachers quickly implement research-based strategies and impact learning.

PD 360 is more than just an “online training program.” Educators are given the tools to help instructional coaches be more effective including facilitation guides and features for professional learning communities, rich reporting and tracking for effective accountability, and a learning community to foster collaboration and communication.

PD 360 was created to help educators build deep, sustainable internal capacity, so improvement efforts don't stall when ARRA funding ends.

School Improvement Network provides products and services that map both guiding principles and assurances because they are proven to increase student learning, improve teacher quality, and establish frameworks for sustainable change.

We invite you to visit our website at <http://www.schoolimprovement.com> or call us at (800) 572-1153, for additional information and guidance.

* “House passes stimulus package with Education and Title I as key components.” 2006-2009. 19 June 2009 <<http://www.titlei.org/node/627>>