

CHISHOLM INTRODUCES TITLE I BILL

Former schoolteacher and House Education and Labor member Shirley Chisholm, D-N.Y., will introduce ESEA Title I legislation today which she says is aimed at improving "what is already a good program."

Chisholm's bill would strengthen Title I parent involvement and auditing procedures and includes a provision for summer programs and a program for gifted and talented children.

Chisholm's measure calls for school parent advisory councils composed of not less than 19 members, with three-fourths of the PAC members to be parents of Title I children elected by parents in the school attendance area, with the remainder elected by the parent members. The bill says councils must meet at least nine times each year, with the first meeting no later than the second month of the school year. Districtwide advisory councils would be made up of representatives of each school advisory council, elected by the school advisory council members. The measure also spells out that PACs must be given program training set by the local education agency in consultation with parent members of the councils.

In addition, the bill calls for the U.S. commissioner of education to prepare and distribute to each of the parent councils a Title I policy manual containing an explanation of the purpose of each section of the regulations, a summary of responses by the Office of Education to state education agency inquiries for interpretations of regulations, model application forms, checklists for reviewing applications and recommended techniques for monitoring Title I programs. Chisholm also wants the manual to summarize "appropriate final decisions of the audit hearing board for Title I and appropriate final determinations of the Office of Education concerning audits which were terminated before being considered by such audit hearing board" The bill also says appropriate court cases should be summarized in the manual.

Chisholm wants an LEA's Title I application to be accompanied by any comments submitted by the parent advisory councils and assurances that the LEA has met all the parent advisory council requirements in the bill. This assurance must be approved by the councils.

Parent Workshops The measure also calls for the U.S. commissioner to sponsor regional workshops at least five times a year in each region, aimed at assisting parent advisory councils and increasing parental involvement in Title I. In addition, Chisholm wants the National Institute of Education to conduct a study of successful programs of parent involvement in Title I and report the results of the study to Congress so the programs can be used as models for schools and LEAs.

Administrative Enforcement For state Title I applications, Chisholm wants a new section added to the law calling for states to submit copies of regulations, guidelines and program instructions issued by the SEA under Title I and written descriptions of procedures for monitoring Title I programs in the state, including timetables for resolving complaints and audits.

In addition, the state application would include a plan for monitoring and auditing Title I programs, including on-site visits to LEAs. The bill also calls for the state application to describe the outcome of complaints, monitoring and auditing activities in the year preceding the year for which the application is made. This description would include identification of the LEAs which received on-site visits, analysis of deficiencies in program design or any violations of application requirements and a statement of corrective actions take by LEAs or the SEA where deficiencies

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or violations have been found. Furthermore, the bill would have state applications list audits that have resulted in unresolved financial exceptions, including a statement of why there was no resolution of an audit exception and a proposed schedule for such resolution. The application must also disclose the number and nature of complaints made to the SEA and identify the LEAs involved and the manner in which the complaints were resolved. The application would also describe the way in which the results of monitoring and auditing are disseminated to the public.

Commissioner's Role When a state application is received, the Chisholm measure stipulates that the commissioner of education must make specific written findings as to the compliance of the application. However, no application could be disapproved until "after reasonable notice and opportunity for a hearing to the state education agency."

Audit Resolution Chisholm would add a section to the Title I law spelling out audit resolution procedures. The bill calls for the commissioner to establish a step-by-step process, including definite deadlines for completing each step. Chisholm specifies that a state education agency has 30 days after receiving an audit report from OE to respond with a description of corrective actions to remedy the problem or with a statement of disagreement. If a state doesn't respond, the commissioner may issue an order directing the SEA to respond to why all or part of the Title I payments should not be withheld. If there's still no response from the state, the commissioner "shall promptly issue a notice of noncompliance and initiate proceedings for withholding ..." the Title I funds.

The Chisholm bill also calls for LEAs to develop and implement written procedures for resolving complaints by parent advisory councils, teachers, or other concerned citizens or individuals. In addition, each state agency must develop and implement written procedures for receiving appeals to decisions of LEAs. And a third step calls for the commissioner to develop an appeals process for final resolutions of SEA decisions on complaints concerning Title I violations.

Annual Enforcement Report The bill further amends the Title I law by calling for the commissioner of education to submit a report once a year detailing enforcement procedures in Title I.

Summer Bridge Under a special projects portion of her Title I bill, Chisholm has established what she calls a "summer bridge program." Cities with 5,000 or more poor children between the ages of 5-17 could apply to the commissioner to conduct summer academic enrichment programs for Title I students. In addition, the commissioner could use up to 5 percent of the funds authorized for summer Title I programs for pilot year-round programs. A report to Congress from the commissioner on the summer and year-round programs would be required by Jan. 1, 1982.

Gifted And Talented The Chisholm measure also contains a section for a program for gifted and talented children which is very similar to provisions for gifted and talented children in a bill (H.R. 7571) introduced by Rep. Albert Quie, R-Minn., ranking minority member of the House Education and Labor Committee.

Chisholm's bill, like Quie's, calls for the commissioner of education to make grants to state and local education agencies for planning, developing, operating and improving programs for gifted and talented children. However, the Chisholm bill, unlike Quie's measure, specifies that at least 25 percent of the grants must go to school districts that are already eligible for Title I. --HH