

SAMPLE Title I Comparability Compliance Procedures ESEA, Section 1118(c)
(insert LEA name)

Demonstrating comparability is a prerequisite for receiving Title I, Part A funds. Because Part A allocations are made annually, comparability is an **annual** requirement. The local educational agency (LEA) is required to **develop written procedures** for complying with the comparability of services requirement and implement those procedures annually. The comparability report is completed annually using the web-based system located in the CCIP Consolidated Application, Funding Option in the Left Menu Bar. It is approved **biennially** by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Office of Federal Programs. The comparability requirement does not apply if the LEA has only one building in each grade span. If grade spans overlap, however, the comparability requirement may apply (see further details in ODE Web-based Comparability Directions, found in the CCIP Consolidated Application Doc Library, Financial Information, Comparability Directions and Forms and the Help Link of the Comparability Web-based Application). The LEA may also exclude schools with one hundred or fewer students from its comparability determinations.

1. **Comparability Compliance:** It is the responsibility of _____ (insert job title or office name of designated staff) to ensure that LEA remains in compliance with the comparability requirement set forth in ESEA Section 1118(c). To be eligible to receive Title I funds, the LEA must use state and local funds to provide services in Title I schools that are **at least** comparable to services provided in non-Title I schools. If the LEA serves all of its schools with Title I funds within a particular grade span, the LEA must use state and local funds to provide services that are **substantially** comparable in each school.
2. **Deadlines:** The _____ office shall perform the comparability calculations **annually** using the ODE Comparability Web-based Application. It is essential that the calculations be made as close to the beginning of the school year as possible, but in no event later than _____ (insert date) to allow for any necessary reallocation of resources with minimum disruption to students should any school be found not to be receiving comparable services. The LEA will follow the ODE deadlines for reporting using the Comparability Web-based System.
3. **Comparability Web-based Reporting Option:** Comparability will be determined using EMIS Data or Self Report (circle the one that applies).
4. **Data Verification:** The _____ office will verify the data in the comparability web-based system and check comparability. *It is recommended that all figures be collected within a relative period of time (enrollment and instructional staff FTE) using the EMIS Comparability Reporting Period (October 1) in determining comparability based on the student/instructional staff ratio method); otherwise, the figures should be consistent with regard to what day of the year the data collected reflect.* Refer to ODE Comparability Directions for further details.
5. **Definition of Instructional Staff:** Provide the LEA's definition of **instructional staff** for reporting comparability, **excluding federally funded staff**, to be calculated on a FTE basis. If using the EMIS Data, simply include the position code, assignment areas and funding sources outlined on page 4 of the Web-based Directions. If using the Self Report option, choose either the same definition used by the EMIS Data or a variation taken in part or whole from the sample definition in the Web-based Directions, page 5. **Exclude preschool students and preschool staff.** If Self Reporting, determine if **students** will be counted as either full time equivalency or as a whole within each comparability report.
6. **Documents needed** (e.g. EMIS data, CCIP Building Eligibility Page, OEDS-R information, staff directories, staff schedules, instructional staff FTE documentation/spreadsheets, building resource schedules, enrollment data, payroll records, free and reduced lunch data, etc.): _____ .
7. **Method:** Indicate the method used in determining comparable services (circle the one that applies): student/instructional staff ratio, expenditures per pupil, or student/instructional staff salary ratio. Whichever method is used, it must be uniformly applied to each district-wide or grade span report. For help, refer to ODE's Web-based Comparability Directions.
8. **Reallocation:** If the calculation indicates that a school is not receiving comparable services, notify the _____ (insert job title or office name of designated staff) immediately. The LEA will then take immediate steps to reallocate resources as early in the school year as possible and with minimum disruption to the learning environment. Appropriate steps may include, but need not be limited to, reallocation of materials or supplies, or reassignment of personnel. The LEA may also wish to contact their ODE Federal Programs consultant for further assistance.
9. **Records:** The _____ office must ensure that all comparability reports, records and source documentation demonstrating the methods and results of the LEA's comparability analysis are retained for three years for audit purposes. A LEA **organizational chart** must also be included as part of the records. In addition, the LEA will maintain up-to-date records of having established and implemented an agency-wide salary schedule, a policy to ensure equivalence among

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schools in teachers, administrators, and other staff, and a policy to ensure equivalence among schools in the provision of curriculum materials and instructional supplies.

10. **Designate an office to take complaints:** The _____ (insert job title or office name of designated staff) will be responsible for handling complaints that a school is not receiving comparable services.

Sample Timeline

Attach or include timeline with written procedures.

January-July

- The LEA should keep the comparability requirement in mind as it plans for the allocation of instructional staff and resources to schools for the coming school year. This would enable the LEA to minimize the potential for disruption in the middle of a school year, should adjustments need to be made to ensure that Title I schools are comparable to non-Title I schools.
- Engage in LEA-level budget (state and local funds) discussions concerning staff assignments, and distribution of equipment and materials for the purpose of ensuring compliance with Title I comparability requirements for the upcoming school year.
- Identify LEA Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

August - September

- Conduct meetings with appropriate LEA representatives to discuss and review the requirements for completing the annual comparability calculations.
- Establish participants' roles and responsibilities.
- Review and update procedures, including the timeline for completion of the calculations.

October-November

- Obtain preliminary information from appropriate LEA staff.
- Assess which calculation methodology to use, which in turn may determine if the LEA will be using the Comparability Web-based System EMIS Data or Self Report Option.
- Determine the date (for example, EMIS October Count Week) and collection methodologies for gathering data needed to complete calculations.
- Check if the CCIP Title I Building Eligibility Page is up-to-date with correct school IRN, name and grade span. If not, make the necessary updates in OEDS-R.

December - January

- Periodically verify the data and check comparability using the Web Based Application System throughout the open window until EMIS officially closes at the end of January.
- Determine if you will be using the EMIS Data or Self Report Option.
- Make corrections to Title I schools shown not to be comparable once the method and reporting option is determined.
- If using the Self Report Option, determine the method to be used, verify and input the data, check comparability, and, if comparable, change the status to draft completed and then district representative approved by either the treasurer or superintendent.
- Contact the Office of Federal Programs if you need technical assistance.

February

- If using the EMIS Data option, wait until Comparability closes (check the comparability website) to run a final check on comparability.
- After the Comparability closing date, verify the official data and check comparability a final time. If comparable, the LEA can then "SAVE" the report and change the status to draft completed. Either the treasurer or superintendent can then change the status to district representative approved.

Records:

- File an official PDF copy of the completed comparability report(s) with the designated district office (usually the treasurer's office) for audit purposes. PDF Report copies are also maintained on the Web Based System.
- Maintain all required documentation supporting the comparability calculations and any corrections made to ensure that all Title I schools are comparable. Any report used for documentation should be signed and dated by the person issuing the report.

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References:

- ESEA, Section 1118(c)
- USDOE Title I Fiscal Issues Non-Regulatory Guidance (Revised February 2008)
- CCIP Consolidated Application Doc Library, Financial, Title I-Comparability: Web-based & Excel Comparability Directions, Excel Forms and Sample Procedures.
- Comparability Web-based Application Help Link: Web-based Directions, Q & A Document and Sample Procedures.

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