

Supplemental Educational Services Under NCLB



Your child may be eligible for free tutoring!

This issue of *Pointers* is about an important option for parents¹ under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB): Supplemental Educational Services (SES). Read on to learn what supplemental services are, how to ask for them, and where you can go for more information.

What is NCLB?

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) is the main federal education law. The goal of NCLB is to improve the academic achievement of *all* students in the nation's public schools. This law has a special interest in closing the achievement gap. Some parts of NCLB apply to all public schools, but some apply only to Title I schools. The Title I program—the largest part of NCLB—gives extra money to schools with high numbers of students from low-income families. All schools must improve under NCLB. But only low-performing schools that receive Title I funding

1. In this issue of *Pointers*, we use “parents” to mean a child’s primary caregivers, whether they are parents, grandparents, legal guardians, or other adult.

must offer *free* Supplemental Educational Services to eligible low-income children.

What are Supplemental Educational Services?

“Supplemental educational services” are *free* tutoring or other extra academic help in English-language arts (reading and writing) and/or mathematics. This extra help must be given outside the regular school day. It could be before or after school, on weekends, or in the summer.

These services are designed to help low-income students who are having trouble learning reading, writing, and/or math. The school district or other organization that gives this extra help is called the “provider.”

Are they really free to families?

Yes! They are free to eligible students. One thing that stopped many parents from applying for these services in the past was the belief that they couldn’t *really* be free. In fact, the school pays the provider directly. Families do not need to pay anything at all. For an individual child, these services

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could be worth anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000, or more.

Who can get these services?

Eligible students must:

- be enrolled in a Title I school that has been “**in need of improvement**” for two or more years in a row, and
- be eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program.

Eligible students include those in regular education, special education, and bilingual programs. If more children apply for the services than there is money for, priority must go to the lowest achieving children from the lowest income families.

Eligible students can choose between transferring to a better-performing school or using supplemental services (but not both). Keep in mind that SES is not the only option for extra help. If your child is not eligible for SES, you can look for other low-cost tutoring, after-school, or summer programs in your area.

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When is a school “In Need of Improvement”?

NCLB says that schools must make progress each year toward a national goal. The goal is that all students will be “proficient” in reading and language arts and math by the year 2014. (“Proficient” means that students have a strong grasp of the subject matter.) Progress is mostly measured in terms of student performance on state exams (the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)). Each state says how much progress schools and districts must make each year to meet the 2014 goal. That amount of progress is defined as “adequate yearly progress” (AYP). Schools that do *not* make AYP for two years in a row are identified as “in need of improvement.”²

How will I find out if my child is eligible?

Your school district should let you know if your child is eligible for

2. For more information on AYP and schools in need of improvement, please call Parents’ PLACE toll free at 1-877-471-0980 and ask for a free copy of the *Pointers* on “School Report Cards.” It is also available in Spanish and Portuguese and online at www.pplace.org

Sometimes the notices from the school can be confusing, get lost in the child’s backpack, or simply be overlooked. The timelines between getting the letter, and when the forms are due, can be short.

It is important to act fast.



supplemental educational services. All families can look at their school’s **School Report Card** (which is different from a student report card). The school report card shows if the school has met its AYP goals.³

Your school district will also send eligible families a *letter* telling them about the SES option. This letter will include:

- a list of the groups that can provide this extra help, along with information on each group, and
- directions for how to sign up for SES.

Sometimes the notices from the school can be confusing, get lost in the child’s backpack, or simply be overlooked. The timelines between getting the letter, and when the forms are due, can be short. ***It is important to act fast.*** We strongly encourage parents to ask about supplemental educational services if your child needs some extra help. In addition to contacting the principal of your child’s school, parents may also call Parents’ PLACE, toll-free, at 1-877-471-0980.

3. See the first issue of *Pointers* on “School Report Cards.”

How do I find a good Supplemental Educational Services program for my child?

Your school district will give you a list of state-approved providers in your area. If you decide to use SES, you must choose a provider from that list. Pick the provider you feel best meets your child’s needs. Parents of English-language learners should check to see if the provider speaks the child’s native language or has a way to communicate with her (and you). Parents of children with disabilities should make sure that the provider has experience with your child’s special learning needs. Your child’s general education goals in the IEP should be considered in designing the supplemental program. Also, all students who have scored in the warning/failing range on the MCAS tests must have an academic plan for improvement called an Individual Student Success Plan (ISSP). Providers should use the ISSP to see in what areas the student needs help. To help design a good program, providers will have access to a child’s school records. Schools must help parents select a provider if they ask for help.

Among other things, providers of supplemental educational services must:

- Have a record of success in improving student academic achievement;
- Show that the teaching methods they use are high-quality, and based upon research;
- Align their services with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks;
- Inform parents and teachers of children receiving services—in a form and language the parents can understand—about the students' progress; and
- Keep confidential the names of any students who are being tutored or who are eligible for tutoring.

Will the school provide transportation?

No, the school is not required to provide, or pay for, transportation. Some schools may choose to do so.

What happens after I've chosen a provider?

Once you and your child have chosen a provider, you and someone from your child's school will meet with the provider to plan the program for your child. The services must be based on your child's learning needs. They should be aimed at helping your child make



Quick Reference

1. What are supplemental educational services (SES)?

SES are free academic support services, such as tutoring, that take place outside the school day.

2. Who can receive them?

Eligible children include low-income students in Title I schools that are in their second year or more of "in need of improvement" status.

3. Who do I contact to sign up for SES?

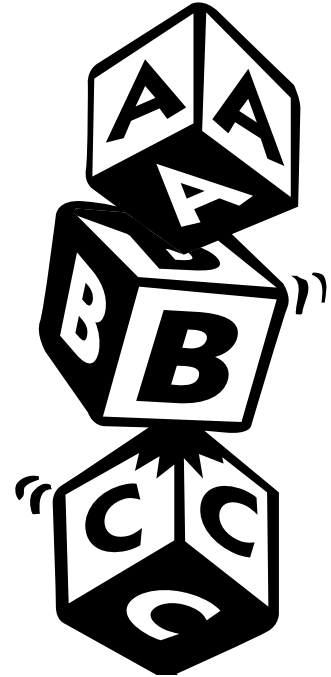
Your school or school district. Or call Parents' PLACE at 1-877-471-0980.

4. Who provides the services?

The state will give you a list of approved providers.

5. Can I change providers?

Yes, if you are not happy with the provider you first chose, contact your school district.



academic progress in the areas where she needs help. Parents and providers will work together to:

- set goals,
- set up a schedule for services, and
- decide how the child's progress will be measured.

If the student is disabled and on an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or has a Section 504 Plan, these decisions must be consistent with those plans.

For how long must a school offer SES?

A school must continue to offer SES until it has made adequate yearly progress for two years in a row.

What if it doesn't work out with the provider I chose?

If you are not happy with your child's provider, you can cancel the services and can choose a new provider if one is available. You should contact your school district to end the contract. If your district does not assist you to make this change, contact the Massachusetts Department of Education. The person who coordinates the Supplemental Educational Services Program in Massachusetts is:

Judi Reardon, SES Specialist
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street, 4th Floor
Malden, MA 02148
Tel: (781) 338-6328
sesproviders@doe.mass.edu

Some questions to consider when selecting a SES service provider

Parents, it is up to you to decide which provider is best for your child. The school may recommend a provider if you ask for help, but the final decision is yours. Here are some questions to consider when selecting a SES service provider for your child:

- Where are the services provided: at the school, at another building in the community, or by computer? If the services are provided by computer, do the students need their own computer and Internet access?
- Is the atmosphere where the services are being provided comfortable and inviting?
- Is transportation provided? (School districts are not required to provide transportation for SES.) How much time would transportation to and from services take?
- How many sessions will your child receive and how long will each session last?
- Will a qualified teacher teach your child? If not, will a qualified teacher supervise her instruction?
- What is the student-to-teacher ratio? (One-to-one tutoring is best. For group instruction, there should be one teacher for every three students.)
- Will students work with the same instructor each session?
- What kind of materials will the teacher send home so you can continue to work at home with your child?
- Will the provider give you references from other parents?
- For children with disabilities: is the facility accessible? Are the materials and accommodations available and appropriate for your child's special instructional needs? Are IEPs taken into consideration?
- For children learning English: can the instructors communicate in a language that you and your child can understand?

Excerpted and adapted from "NCLB Action Briefs: Supplemental Educational Services for Schools Identified as Low Performing," by the Public Education Network and the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. Online at www.ncpie.org/nclbaction/supp_edu_services.html.



The *No Child Left Behind Act* views parents as key partners in helping their children succeed in school. Parents' PLACE helps parents get the information they need to make important decisions about their children's education. If you would like to receive more information on school report cards, public school choice, supplemental education services, MCAS tests and standards, or any other aspect of NCLB, Parents' PLACE is here to help! We offer print resources, workshops, a toll-free helpline, and a website and regular publications on education in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Call us toll free at
1-877-471-0980

Visit us at
www.pplace.org

Available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and online at www.pplace.org

For More Information

The list of approved Massachusetts SES providers is online at www.doe.mass.edu/ses/results.asp.

For more information, visit the Mass. Dept. of Education's SES website at www.doe.mass.edu/ses/, and its MCAS website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas.

Or, call Parents' PLACE or visit our website!

Other useful websites include:

www.tutorsforkids.org/families/infoforfamilies.asp


www.nea.org/parents/parents-guidesuppservs.html

schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=780 (information on SES for students with disabilities)

www.wrightslaw.com/info/nclb.index.htm

(links to NCLB info on various topics, including students with disabilities)

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PARENTS LEARNING ABOUT CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

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