



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

April 14, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D. *Sally*
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Section 1003(g), School
Improvement Grants Waiver Request

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is requesting a United States Department of Education (USED) waiver of certain requirements for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Section 1003(g), School Improvement Grants (SIG). This waiver applies to fiscal year 2010 funding supporting Michigan's as yet to be announced second round of SIG awards.

The request is necessary due to Section 1280c of Michigan's Revised School Code. Section 1280c is aligned with the SIG requirements, as reflected by language that requires the MDE to annually publish a list of Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools (PLAs) on or before September 1. As a result, the MDE developed and published its 2010 list of PLAs on August 16, 2010.

On November 1, 2010, the USED released additional guidance on the requirements for the second round of the SIG. This new guidance contained language that affected the classification of schools into one of three tiers of eligibility for the grant. However, the MDE had already submitted the state level application for the second round of the SIG, based on the state generated PLA list and tier classification released in August 2010.

When the MDE submitted the state application for the second round of the SIG, it omitted seven schools from the Tier II classification that had received a SIG award in the first round. However, the USED indicated that these schools should still be included in the eligible pool for the second round. Consequently, Michigan is seeking a waiver to use the current list of Tier II schools as contained in the SIG second round application. Without this waiver, Michigan would be required to recalculate and publish the PLA list, complete with tier level classifications.

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Such an enterprise would result in major delays in grant awards and implementation for the second round of the SIG.

The waiver request may be accessed online at www.michigan.gov/osi under "Current Topics."

Local Education Agencies wishing to comment on the request should submit comments to mde-ssos@michigan.gov by April 28, 2011.

Questions only may be directed to Bill Witt at wittb1@michigan.gov.