



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 22, 2010

**MEMORANDUM**

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

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

SUBJECT: Additional Waivers of Title I School Improvement Grant Requirements

The United States Department of Education (USED) has released further guidance on the School Improvement Grants under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The grants, through state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) are for use in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. These schools must demonstrate the greatest need for, and the strongest commitment to use of, the funds in providing adequate resources that will substantially raise student achievement, and enable the schools to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) and exit identification/improvement status.

The USED has notified SEAs they are eligible for two additional waivers of requirements in the School Improvement Grants. On or before February 22, 2010, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will submit to the USED an amended application for the Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants that includes a request to waive the following requirements in the State application for these funds:

- a) The definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" contained in section I.A.3 of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program (74 FR 65618 (Dec. 10, 2009)) and incorporation of that definition in identifying Tier II schools under section I.A.1(b) of the final requirements, as amended (75 FR 3375 (Jan. 21, 2010)). A waiver of this requirement will allow Michigan to include Title I secondary schools in the Tier II grouping that are either identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or that are in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on performance on the state assessments.

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As is currently written, a Tier II school is defined as a low achieving secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funding and a Tier I school is a Title I school that falls into the category of the lowest achieving five percent of all Title I schools in the State. This waiver seeks to include Title I secondary schools in the Tier II grouping that otherwise could not be served as such because they do not meet the existing requirements to be included in either Tier I or Tier II.

- b) The definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" contained in section I.A.3 of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program (74 FR 65618 (Dec. 10, 2009)) and the use of that definition in section I.A.1(a) and (b) of those final requirements, as amended (75 FR 3375 (Dec. 21, 2010)) as it applies to small schools. A waiver of this requirement will allow Michigan to exclude low achieving "small schools" from the Tier I and Tier II groupings. A "small school" is defined as any school with less than 30 students used to calculate its "all students" performance when determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Small schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring will continue to be served through other means such as inclusion in Tier III or by the Statewide System of Support for High Priority Schools.

Please visit <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/090827.html> for more information on the School Improvement Grant and explanation of the "tier" system referenced above.

LEAs wishing to comment on the School Improvement Grant waiver request should submit comments to [ARRAWaiverResponse@michigan.gov](mailto:ARRAWaiverResponse@michigan.gov) by March 5, 2010. Please include the phrase "SIG waiver comments" in the subject line. Comments should be specific to waiver requests a) and b) outlined above.

Questions may be directed to Bill Witt at 517-373-4140 or by email at [ARRAWaiverResponse@michigan.gov](mailto:ARRAWaiverResponse@michigan.gov).

Attachment

cc: William Mayes, MASA  
David Martell, MSBO  
Dan Quisenberry, MAPSA  
Billie Wimmer, MCCSA  
Kathy Hayes, MASB