STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

August 11, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents, Public School Academy Directors, and Principals with 2012, 2013, and 2014 Cohort Title I Priority Schools

FROM: Linda Forward, Director
Office of Education Improvement & Innovation

Natasha Baker, Director and School Reform Officer
State School Reform/Redesign Office

SUBJECT: 2014-2015 School Year Title I Set-asides, Required and Optional Interventions for Title I Priority Schools and Letters of Identification and Notification for Parents

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provides districts and schools with this information regarding the changes in the approved amendment to the ESEA Flexibility Waiver of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). The status of elementary and middle schools, alternative schools, and high schools that are 2012, 2013, and 2014 cohort Priority Schools in your district is based on the academic achievement, improvement, and achievement gap status of the schools and the ranking on the Top to Bottom List as determined by the MDE. Required and optional activities and interventions are summarized in the enclosed documents. Also articulated are the required Title I set-asides for these purposes. **Title I schools** that are identified as Priority Schools in the 2012, 2013, and/or 2014 cohorts must engage in the requirements associated with this identification. These requirements apply to schools which are identified in any one or more of the 2012, 2013, or 2014 cohorts.

- **Letter of Identification and Notification** – A letter must be sent to parents of students enrolled in a Priority School, both those named to the 2012, 2013, and 2014 cohort of Priority Schools. The letter must be sent to parents of those students enrolled in the 2013-2014 school year and those anticipated by the district to enroll in a Priority School for the 2014-2015 school year. Also to be included in the letter are the reasons for its identification and the school's and district's plans to improve student achievement. The MDE has determined the required letters should be sent so that parents will receive them no later than 10 days following public release of the Top-to-Bottom List, or August 26, 2014, whichever date is later.

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NOTE: A school identified as Priority in 2012, 2013, or 2014 remains part of a four-year cohort of schools supervised by the MDE State School Reform/Redesign Office even if the school is not re-identified as a Priority School in the 2014 cohort.

Please note the following information about the amended ESEA Waiver effective with the 2014-2015 school year and applicable to Title I Priority Schools in any one or more of the 2012, 2013, or 2014 cohorts:

- Schools identified as Priority Schools are no longer required to offer Choice/Transfer and Transportation for students.
- Schools and districts are no longer required to continue transportation for students whose parents had in past years chosen to transfer students under the Choice/Transfer option (districts and schools are encouraged to be sensitive to the burdens that this will place upon families and students affected by this change).
- Districts **may elect** to provide or to pay for transportation costs to allow students in the 2014 cohorts of Priority Schools to attend a Choice/Transfer option school chosen for the 2014-2015 school year and/or to continue to attend a building already elected by parents in prior years using the district's Title I funds to pay for transportation costs.
- Districts that elect Choice/Transfer and Transportation **may determine the amount budgeted** using Title I funds for Choice/Transfer and Transportation based upon locally determined need and anticipated actual costs for transportation. Such funds should be identified in the Consolidated Application budget as Pupil Transportation Services, Function Code 271.
- If a district elects to implement Choice/Transfer and Transportation for students it **must** have a written policy and procedures in place for implementation of the Choice/Transfer option.
- If a district elects to implement Choice/Transfer and Transportation in the 2014-2015 school year and/or to continue to allow students to attend a school already elected by parents in prior years, Title I **set-asides** may **not** be used to pay for Choice/Transfer and Transportation costs.
- The building level Title I set-aside is required during Year 1 of Priority School identification and continues throughout its four year cohort. No district set-aside is required in Year 1 of Priority School identification.
- During Year 2 the required district Title I set-aside will be calculated as the sum of 10 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget, up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10 percent of the Local Education Agency (LEA) Title I allocation.
- During Year 3 the district set-aside increases to 15 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 15 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation.
- During Year 4 the district set-aside is increased to 20 percent of each Priority School's previous year school Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 20 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation.
- In a District with both Title I Focus and Priority Schools, the minimum required Title I aggregate district set-aside is determined by the oldest cohort of identification of the Priority School(s) in the district. If all of the district's Priority

Schools are in year one, then set asides must be determined as if the district only has Focus Schools. Refer to the Focus School set-aside guidance for more information with one exception:

  - If, in addition to having one or more Title I Focus Schools in Year 3, a district has one or more Priority Schools identified by cohort as Year 1, the aggregate district set-aside shall be determined as that required by the oldest cohort of the Focus School(s) of the district, not to exceed 10 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.

- A district with both Title I Priority and Focus Schools required to do the set-asides will determine the aggregate maximum district set-aside of the LEA Title I allocation as follows:
  - The required district Title I set-aside will begin in Year 2 of a Title I Priority School's identification and will be calculated as the sum of 10 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget, up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. If, in addition to the Year 2 Priority School, the district has one or more Focus Schools identified as Year 3, then the district set-aside increases to 10 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget; plus 10 percent of each Focus School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
  - During Year 3 of Priority School identification, the district set-aside increases to 15 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 15 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
  - During Year 4 of Priority School identification, the district set-aside is increased to 20 percent of each Priority School's previous year school Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 20 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
  - Districts with one or more Title I Priority Schools may choose to continue to implement Title I district set-asides as in the original waiver language, setting aside a straight 20 percent reservation of the current year LEA Title I allocation in Years 1, 2, 3 or 4 of the Priority School's cohort identification.
- Districts with one or more Title I Priority School **may** choose to continue to implement Title I district set-asides as in the original waiver language, setting aside a straight 20 percent reservation of the current year LEA Title I allocation in Years 1, 2, 3, or 4 of the Priority School's cohort identification.
- The district may determine how the district set-aside is allocated to each identified Title I Focus and Priority School; however, the set-aside may only be used for the MDE-identified activity options, and must serve all of the identified Focus and Priority Schools.

Specific questions regarding the amounts of set-asides required in the Consolidated Application should be directed to the district's Office of Field Services (OFS) Regional

Consultant. An enclosed document provides a summary of the Title I set-asides and required interventions, and strategies for the 2014-2015 school year.

To reiterate, the above requirements apply only to **Title I schools**.

District Parent Letters of Identification and Notification must be submitted to the MDE later this year as evidence of compliance with these requirements for Title I schools identified as a Priority School. A future communication will be sent notifying districts to upload the letters and documents into the MDE Michigan Electronic Grants System Plus (MEGS+).

Sample/template letters are attached to this correspondence. All template letters must be revised by the district to reflect current and accurate information for the building and the district before the letters are sent to parents.

Thank you for your attention to these requirements. If you have questions about this communication or need more information, please feel free to contact Greg Olszta at 517-241-4715 or olsztag@michigan.gov.

Enclosures

Set-Aside Requirements for Title I Priority Schools
All Set-Aside requirements must be approved by the LEA's Office of Field Services Representative through the Consolidated Application Process
District Title I Obligation begins in Year 2 of a Title I Priority School's identification (All regular Title I rules apply when using set-asides). During Year 2, the required district set-aside will be calculated as the sum of 10% of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget, up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10% of the LEA Title I allocation. During Year 3, the district set-aside increased to an additional 15% of each Priority School's previous year school Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 15% of the current year LEA Title I allocation. During Year 4, the district set-aside is increased to 20% of each Priority School's previous year school Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 20% of the current year LEA Title I allocation OR Districts with Title I Priority Schools may choose to continue to implement Title I district set-asides as in the original waiver language, setting aside 20% of the LEA Title I allocation in Years 1, 2, 3 or 4 of the Priority School's cohort identification.
All regular Title I rules apply when using set-asides. **The District must choose from the options below:**
Option 1: Support Increased Learning Time
Option 2: Implement or strengthen a multi-tiered system of supports that includes scaffolded instruction for ELL and SWD students if the professional dialogue has identified this as a primary turnaround strategy for lifting whole-school performance.
Option 3: Professional learning for the staff aligned to the building's needs assessment paying particular attention to the needs of SWD and ELL students as appropriate.
Option 4: Obtain a process improvement consultation for district system-level redesign in service of rapid school turnaround
Option 5: Release time for a teacher-leader from the Priority School for one year to provide technical assistance to school and district stakeholders to understand the school's reform-redesign requirements, and to incorporate elements of the Priority School's reform-redesign requirements into the school and district improvement plans during the planning year. Hire a full-year replacement teacher for the released teacher-leader's classroom. *Allowable in Year One of identification only*
Option 6: Administer interim baseline assessments which will supplement the district's universal screening assessment with additional diagnostic data and progress monitoring of student achievement.
All regular Title I rules apply when using set-asides. **Building Level 10% Obligation Begins in Year One of Identification**
Select any of the options below that are aligned with the building's needs:
Option 1: Professional learning on implementation of strategies aligned to the data-derived School Improvement/Reform-Redesign Plan, including adoption of rapid turnaround practices.
Option 2: Contract with a local ISD/ESA for a School Improvement Review or with AdvancED Michigan for a School Diagnostics Review, which will give the school an external perspective on the processes that best support student achievement
Option 3: Provide daily/weekly time for teacher collaboration
Option 4: Culture/climate interventions, use of time analysis, or culturally responsive teaching interventions as needed

SAMPLE 2014 COHORT PRIORITY SCHOOL NOTIFICATION LETTER TEMPLATE

<Date>

<Parent>
<Address>
<City, State, Zip>

Dear <Parent>:

Your child is a student at <ABC School>. You know that your child is important to us and that we want to provide every opportunity for success. Each school in Michigan is required to test students every year using the <Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests/Michigan Merit Exam (MME)>. The results of these tests, as well as participation on the tests are used to determine whether our school is meeting Michigan School Proficiency Targets and where it ranks in a "Top to Bottom" list of schools and their performance. As a result of this ranking in a "Top to Bottom" list of schools and their performance, a low achieving school may be identified as a Priority or Focus School. This year, <ABC School> is a Priority School in the 2014 cohort because it is among the bottom 5 percent of the Top to Bottom list. A school identified as Priority for the 2014 <and/or 2012 and/or 2013> cohort remains in that cohort of schools supervised by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) until Spring <2016, 2017, 2018>.

In order to address this problem, <explain what the school is doing to address the problem and how the district is helping-see enclosed document Priority School Identification Letter Requirements>.

To discuss this information further, please call <name and number> and <he/she/they> will be happy to help you.

Sincerely,

School Official

Enclosures

SAMPLE 2012 AND 2013 COHORT PRIORITY SCHOOL NOTIFICATION LETTER TEMPLATE
(PRIORITY SCHOOLS IN THE 2012 AND/OR 2013 COHORT
BUT NOT THE 2014 COHORT)

<Date>

<Parent>
<Address>
<City, State, Zip>

Dear <Parent>:

Your child is a student at <ABC School>. You know that your child is important to us and that we want to provide every opportunity for success. Each school in Michigan is required to test students every year using the <Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests/Michigan Merit Exam (MME)>. The results of these tests, as well as participation on the tests are used to determine whether our school is meeting Michigan School Proficiency Targets and where it ranks in a "Top to Bottom" list of schools and their performance. As a result of this ranking in a "Top to Bottom" list of schools and their performance, a low achieving school may be identified as a Priority or Focus School.

This year, <ABC School> is at the <XXth percentile> of the Top to Bottom list, but will continue to be identified as a Priority School until Spring 2016 <or 2017> because it was among the bottom 5 percent of the Top to Bottom list in 2012 <and/or 2013>.

We are proud of the improvements in student achievement made at <ABC School> last year. In order to continue to improve student learning and to address this problem, <explain what the school is doing to address the problem and how the district is helping-see enclosed document Priority School Identification Letter Requirements>.

To discuss this information further, please call <name and number> and <he/she/they> will be happy to help you.

Sincerely,

School Official

Enclosures

Priority School Identification and Notification Letter Requirements
For Use in Customizing the Template

☐ Letter explains what identification as a Priority School means.

☐ Letter explains the reasons for identification as a Priority school in the 2012, 2013, or 2014 cohorts (be specific).

☐ Letter includes a description of what the **school and district** are doing to improve student achievement. The following provides *a partial list of required and/or optional activities and interventions* that may be described in the letter:

- A new principal was hired to lead the school in a different direction with increased emphasis upon academics and college and career preparation.
- The school and district are collaborating with the MDE and its MI Excel partner organizations to better understand the school's strengths and weaknesses by looking at the achievement data more closely and to make changes in how instruction is delivered in the classroom toward closing the achievement gap.
- The school is working with the ISD and a School Support Team to develop and implement new strategies for classroom instruction to improve teaching methods and enhance student achievement.
- The school is implementing the Superintendent's Dropout Challenge to assist students at-risk of dropping out of school.
- The school has extended the learning day and school year by adding <X> number of hours per day of instruction in Math and English, and <Y> number of hours of instruction in those subjects over the 2014-2015 school year.
- The school has made an additional <X> hours per year available to teachers to collaborate with their teacher peers on improving instructional strategies in the classroom.