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## **News Release**

### ***Colorado Department Of Education Identifies Schools Eligible For School Improvement Grants And Intensive Support; Proposals Due April 21***

The Colorado Department of Education today identified the 11 Tier I schools that are eligible to receive intense turnaround support using federal Title I School Improvement Grant funding.

School improvement is required for chronically low-performing schools in Colorado under both federal guidance and state law. Federal guidance for Title I School Improvement Grants requires schools to implement one of four intervention models in order to boost student achievement.

“We appreciate schools and districts embracing this work and taking on this urgent challenge,” said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “This is hard work and will require teamwork and strong community support to be successful. But we know the students, communities and taxpayers have every right to better results and that is just what we expect to deliver.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today formally approved Colorado’s plan for School Improvement Grant work. In all, \$39.7 million will be made available to Colorado. These funds are part of the \$3.5 billion set aside in the 2009 budget and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The 11 schools on Colorado’s “Tier I” list (definition below) are:

- Clifton Elementary School (Mesa County Valley School District 51)
- Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind

- Fort Logan Elementary School (Sheridan School District)
- Freed Middle School, Youth and Family Academy Charter School (Pueblo City Schools)
- Hanson Elementary School (Adams County 14)
- Haskin Elementary School (Center Consolidated School District 26JT)
- Gilpin K-8 School, Greenlee K-8 Schools, Montbello High School and Philips Elementary School (Denver Public Schools)

Commissioner Jones noted that earlier this year the department identified 19 educational service providers who will be available to assist with school transformation and turnaround efforts. (More detail is available here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/20100122approvedproviders.pdf>)

The 19 providers will focus primarily on school turnaround and transformation efforts, but may assist with more intensive interventions. The providers will assist schools and school districts in five areas including organizational management and leadership, academic performance, learning environment, financial management and operations and comprehensive planning.

On March 24, the CDE Office of Federal Programs posted the list of all eligible Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools. (These tiers follow federal guidelines; definitions below.) The office also posted the new Tiered Intervention Grant Request for Proposal (RFP) to begin the process of developing school turnaround plans and forming partnerships between schools and educational service providers. Grant requests are due April 21.

The intent of the grant is to provide funding for districts to:

- Partner with CDE in the implementation of one of the four intervention models provided in the draft guidance for the use of Federal Title I 1003(g) funds;
- Increase the academic achievement of all students attending chronically low performing schools as measured by the state's assessment system; and
- Utilize the support and services from state-approved turnaround providers in their efforts to accomplish the above.

Note: CDE does not expect to have sufficient funding to fund all Tier II schools that are eligible and also does not expect to fund any Tier III schools. In all, CDE anticipates awarding grants to 15 to 20 individual schools.

Priority will be given first to Tier I sites and then Tier II sites within a district that has both Tier I and Tier II sites. If funds are still available, the next priorities would be Tier II sites on improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

#### **Four Intervention Models**

The four intervention models are turnaround model, restart model, school closure and transformation model. Colorado's Education Accountability Act of 2009 includes similar expectations for those schools identified as chronically low-performing.

Under the turnaround model, the local school district replaces the school principal and rehires no more than 50 percent of the staff, gives the principal greater autonomy and implements other prescribed and recommended strategies.

Following the restart model means the school district converts or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization or education management organization.

Under the closure model, the school district would close the school and enroll the students in other schools that are higher achieving.

The transformation model means the school district replaces the principal (except in specified situations), implements a rigorous staff evaluation and development system, institutes comprehensive instructional reform, increases learning time and provides greater operational flexibility and support for the school.

Only schools currently eligible or receiving Title I funds are eligible for grants under the school improvement grant program (from 1003(g) federal funds). In all, the grant program anticipates spending \$37.7 million over the next three years.

The dollars available for school improvement grants are being significantly increased this year through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The U.S. Department of Education announced an opportunity for states and school districts to access unprecedented resources for reforms that increase graduation rates, reduce dropout rates, improve instructional quality and create a challenging learning environment where students excel academically.

## **Tier I Schools**

Consistent with federal guidance, the department has identified schools for intensive intervention based on school-level Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) growth and achievement data in Reading and Math for the years 2007-2009. Schools identified by the department for Tier I are the lowest performing 5 percent of all schools receiving Title I funds who are currently on school improvement, corrective action or restructuring status for failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Additionally, high schools on school improvement, corrective action or restructuring with graduation rates below 60 percent for each of the past three years are also identified for Tier I.

## **Tier II and Tier III Schools**

The department also has identified 61 Tier II schools and 179 Tier III schools in the state.

Tier II schools are the lowest performing 5 percent of middle and high schools eligible for, but not receiving, Title I funds. Equally low-performing middle and high schools receiving Title I funding are also included in Tier II. High schools eligible for but not receiving Title I funds with persistently low graduation rates round out Tier II.

Tier III schools are Title I schools with somewhat higher performance than the lowest 5 percent statewide but which are also on school improvement, corrective action or restructuring status due to low performance. Additionally, schools with fewer than 20 student growth records between 2007 and 2009 and alternative education campuses meeting federal exemption criteria have been removed from Tier I and Tier II eligibility, but are included in Tier III.

An improvement plan and budget must be approved for the 11 schools in Tier I before a district may access federal funds and begin work on improvement efforts for the Tier II and Tier III schools under the 1003(g) guidance.

For a complete list of Tier II and Tier III schools, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/NCLB/sitig.asp>

For information about the state's list of eligible providers (originally announced in January 2010), visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/download/PDF/20100122approvedproviders.pdf>

**For more information, contact** Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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