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June 15, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: David Harrell

RE: STAFF BRIEF: USE OF FEDERAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDS

As part of this month's review of New Mexico's participation in national school reform initiatives presented to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), this staff brief includes:

- an overview of the School Improvement Grant Program;
- a summary of models for school improvement; and
- background information about the LESL's long-standing interest in school improvement.

Overview of the School Improvement Grant Program

As explained by the US Department of Education, Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (also known as *No Child Left Behind*, or NCLB) authorizes School Improvement Grants through state educational agencies to local educational agencies for use in Title I schools. More specifically, the grants are for Title I schools that are "identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring [and] that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of their students so as to enable the school to

make adequate yearly progress and exit improvement status.” (See Attachment 1, *Schedule of Events for Schools that Do Not Make Adequate Yearly Progress Through Consecutive School Years*, for an explanation of the terms *school improvement*, *corrective action*, and *restructuring* as used in NCLB and in state law.)

In early April 2010, the US Secretary of Education announced that New Mexico will receive more than \$28.5 million in federal School Improvement Grants. Available over a three-year period, these funds can be used for school expenditures intended to enhance student success, including such measures as extending the learning time; providing incentive pay for teachers for longer school days or years; purchasing curricula tailored to differentiated instruction; hiring counselors or social workers to address problems in the home that affect student learning; and professional development.

As part of its application for these funds, the Public Education Department (PED) applied the federal definition of persistently lowest achieving schools to identify 20 Title I schools in New Mexico as the first ones eligible to apply for funds through PED. While federal regulations allow additional nuances, the fundamental definition of a persistently lowest achieving school is any Title I school in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is among the lowest-achieving 5.0 percent of Title I schools; or any Title I high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent.

In early May 2010, PED announced that, based on their applications, nine of these 20 schools, among seven districts, have been selected to receive awards ranging from \$500,000 to \$2.0 million (\$11.3 million altogether). This announcement (see Attachment 2, *News Release*) noted that the funds have been approved “conditionally” – that is, pending the department’s working with each school “in the final determination of budgets, programs, and staffing decisions referenced in each of the applications.”

In its review of applications from school districts, PED looked for evidence that the district:

- is capable of using data to support the improvement model that the district had selected;
- has the capacity and will for major reform;
- intends to implement specific strategies to support the model and to enhance student achievement;
- has requested sufficient funds and directed the expenditure of those funds appropriately; and
- has a plan or process for sustaining the reforms after the grant funding period ends.

Summary of Models for School Improvement

To participate in the school improvement program, schools must select one of four models for improvement:

- Turnaround Model: This model requires that the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff be replaced and that the school adopt a new governance structure and implement a new or revised instructional program. In addition, the model should incorporate interventions that take into account the recruitment, placement, and development of staff to ensure that they meet student needs; schedules that increase time for both students and staff; and appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services or supports.
- Close/Consolidate Model: Under this model, the low-performing school is closed and its students are enrolled in other, higher-performing schools in the district.
- Restart Model: This model requires either that the school be converted or that it be closed and then restarted under the management of a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an educational management organization. (In New Mexico, this model is limited by a prohibition in state law against “management contracts with private entities for the management of a public school or a school district subject to corrective action.”) A restarted school must admit, within the grades that it serves, any former student who wishes to attend.
- Transformation Model: A school adopting this model must implement all four of the following strategies:
 - develop teacher and leader effectiveness by basing evaluations on student growth, rewarding those who improve student outcomes and removing those who do not, replacing the principal, providing effective professional development, and implementing strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain high-quality staff;
 - implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies, using data to align programs between grades and with state standards and using student data to differentiate instruction to meet individual student needs;
 - extend learning time by expanding the school day, week, or year; and create community-oriented schools that provide mechanisms for family and community engagement; and
 - provide operating flexibility in terms of staffing, calendars, and budgets; and ensure that the school receives intensive technical assistance and other support from the district, state, or another entity.

Eight of the nine participating schools in New Mexico have selected the Transformation Model. One of those eight, Ernie Pyle Middle School, in Albuquerque Public Schools, will be featured in this presentation. Also featured will be Ramirez-Thomas Elementary School, in Santa Fe Public Schools, the only school that chose the Turnaround Model.

Background: The LESC and School Improvement

This presentation is the latest in a series of presentations that the LESC has heard on the topic of school improvement.

- Even before NCLB was enacted, the committee was monitoring the state-developed school accountability system.
 - During the early part of the 1990s, as committee presentations indicated, accountability measures focused more on school districts than individual schools, with the annual accountability reports reflecting numerous categories.
 - Legislation enacted in 1997 shifted the focus from districts to individual schools and narrowed the number of accountability categories to five broad indices: student achievement as measured by national norm-referenced tests approved by the State Department of Education (SDE) or through a performance-based instrument; school safety; the dropout rate; attendance; and parent and community involvement. Under this system, schools were rated as Exemplary, Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, or Probationary.
 - Also enacted in 1997 were amendments to the *Incentives for School Improvement Act* (Laws 1989, Chapter 137) to require SDE to measure and rank “each school in every school district,” using criteria prescribed by law to include measures of student academic performance and certain measurable socioeconomic variables: student mobility rates, the percentage of students with limited English proficiency, and the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-fee lunches, as well as other factors that SDE deemed relevant.
- With the enactment of NCLB and the corresponding enactment of new state legislation as part of overall school reforms in 2003, New Mexico adopted the school improvement system in effect today. This system implemented the concept of adequate yearly progress (AYP) as the measure of school success and the following school improvement rankings: School Improvement 1, School Improvement 2, Correction Action, Restructuring 1, and Restructuring 2 (see Attachment 1 for details). To guide and assist schools in their improvement efforts, PED developed a school improvement framework.
 - In 2004, the LESC heard a staff presentation on the transition period when New Mexico was moving from its own school improvement rating system to the one prescribed by NCLB and reflected in 2003 state legislation.
 - In 2005, the committee heard a presentation that featured an audit by staff of the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) of the school improvement framework developed by PED and the effectiveness of this framework in raising student performance and closing the achievement gap. LESC staff described the fully implemented school improvement cycle per state and federal law; and LFC staff reported findings of the audit, among them that New Mexico’s achievement gap is driven by poverty and other factors beyond the control of schools and that the

effectiveness of PED's school improvement strategy had been limited by frequent changes and staff turnover.

- The staff presentation in 2006 updated the school AYP rankings, identified issues with AYP as a measurement of school success, discussed PED's overall efforts to assist schools in the school improvement cycle, and reviewed the school improvement framework as modified for that year. Among the modifications were a number of more targeted interventions at the school and district level and a rewards and advocacy program to recognize schools that had made significant gains in student performance regardless of their NCLB designation.
- By the 2007 interim, as the staff report noted, the school improvement framework had been further refined to distinguish levels of assistance based on school need, to broaden the definition of a "priority school" to include all schools in the school improvement cycle, whereas earlier definitions had been more narrow; to place greater emphasis on each school's Educational Plan for Student Success; and to focus attention on districts in need of improvement.
- The presentations during the 2008 and 2009 interims addressed each year's AYP ratings, as presented primarily by PED or the Secretary of Public Education.

Presenters

For this presentation, the committee will hear from five people directly involved in the use of federal School Improvement Grant funds:

- Dr. Sheila Hyde, Deputy Secretary, Learning and Accountability, PED, will provide more information about the grant program and explain PED's plan to monitor and assist with the districts' improvement efforts and their use of the grant money;
- Ms. Linda Sink, Chief Academic Officer, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), and Mr. James Lujan, Principal, Ernie Pyle Middle School, APS, will explain why the school chose the Transformation Model, the progress toward implementing the model, the desired outcomes, and the prospects for success; and
- Ms. Bobbie Gutierrez, Superintendent, Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS), and Ms. Robin Noble, Principal, Ramirez-Thomas Elementary School, SFPS, will explain why the school chose the Turnaround Model, the progress toward implementing the model, the desired outcomes, and the prospects for success.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT MAKE ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS
THROUGH CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL YEARS**

Note: If a school in the school improvement cycle achieves adequate yearly progress (AYP) for one year, it retains its ranking for a “delay” year. If it achieves AYP for two years, it leaves the school improvement cycle, which is the goal of the School Improvement Grant Program.

School Year	AYP Designation	Action Required per NCLB	Action Required per State Law
SY 1	1 st Year of Not Making AYP	[none]	[none]
SY 2	2 nd Year of Not Making AYP	[none]	[none]
SY 3	School Improvement 1	School must develop an improvement plan; Local education agency (LEA, that is, the school district) must provide technical assistance; and All students must be offered public school choice, that is, the option of transferring to a higher performing school.	School and district must prepare an improvement plan, which the district submits to PED; School applies to PED for financial or other assistance per improvement plan; and Public school must provide or pay for transportation, within available funds, for students who transfer to a higher ranked school.
SY 4	School Improvement 2	In addition to the earlier measures: LEA must offer supplemental educational services to low-income students.	In addition to the earlier measures: Public school must provide supplemental educational services to its Title I-eligible students, within available funds.
SY 5	Corrective Action	In addition to the earlier measures, LEA must do one or more of following: Replace school staff responsible for school’s not meeting AYP; Implement new curriculum; Decrease management authority at the school level; Appoint outside expert to advise the school; Extend the school day or year; <u>or</u> Change the school’s internal organizational structure.	In addition to the earlier measures, the school district, together with PED, must: Replace staff as allowed by law; Implement a new curriculum; Decrease management authority of the school; Appoint an outside expert to manage the school; Extend the school day or year; <u>or</u> Change the school’s internal organizational structure.
SY 6	Restructuring 1	In addition to the earlier measures, LEA must prepare a plan and arrange to: Reopen the school as a charter school; Replace the principal and staff; Contract with a private management company of demonstrated effectiveness; Submit the school to state takeover; <u>or</u> Conduct any other major restructuring of the school’s governance.	In addition to the earlier measures, the school must begin planning for restructuring in the event that the school fails to make AYP the next year.
SY 7	Restructuring 2	Alternative governance plan (from the preceding year) must be implemented by the first day of school.	In addition to the earlier measures, the school district, together with PED, must: Recommend reopening the public school as a charter school, as provided in law; Replace all or most of the staff as allowed by law; Turn over management of the school to PED; <u>or</u> Make other governance changes.



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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: May 7, 2010

Education Secretary García Announces Names of Nine Public Schools to Receive a Portion of \$11.3 Million Dollars for School Improvement Grants

SANTA FE – Education Secretary Veronica C. García today announced that grants totaling \$11.3 million dollars in federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) will be distributed by the Public Education Department (PED) to nine Tier 1 public schools labeled as persistently lowest-achieving schools to improve their student achievement.

"I congratulate these nine schools for submitting applications for this funding and meeting the challenge to dramatically turnaround their schools," said Secretary García. "The schools should begin planning their programs and strategies for the 2010-2011 school year."

The \$11.3 million grant funding to the schools is part of the \$28,534,742 in School Improvement Grant funding New Mexico received last month from the U.S. Department of Education. The funds, allocated to schools over a three year period, can be used for school expenditures that will help students be successful. The funds are part of the \$3.5 billion that was made available to states this spring from money set aside in the 2009 federal budget and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Obama administration's strategy includes: identifying and serving the lowest-achieving Title I schools in each state; supporting only the most rigorous interventions that hold the promise of producing rapid improvements in student achievement and school culture; providing sufficient resources over several years to implement those interventions; and measuring progress in achieving results.

School districts, with a designated Tier 1 school, submitted applications for between \$50,000 and \$2 million a year that would be used for 2010-2011. Funding for the subsequent years of this three year grant is contingent on implementation of the plans and meeting performance measures. PED provided technical assistance to districts via a series of 11 webinars and individual feedback, and final applications were due on April 23, 2010.

PED reviewed the applications analyzing the plans based on the capacity and will of the school and district to implement the strategies, allocate and align funds for sustainability. In one case, the district chose not to apply for the funds for two of their schools because of their capacity to implement the models effectively. These funds were awarded to schools in school districts that demonstrated the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of their students.

The grants are authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA) for use in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The grant requires the school and districts to determine which model will be implemented based on data and a needs assessment.

Based on the review of the application and all documents for evidence of the identified criteria, the following schools have been selected to receive funding in the first year of the funding cycle:

-more-

Lybrook Elementary School	Jemez Mountain Public School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$500,000
El Camino Real Charter	Albuquerque Public School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$1,100,000
Ernie Pyle Middle School	Albuquerque Public School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$2,000,000
Ramirez Thomas Elementary School	Santa Fe Public School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$1,250,000
Newcomb High School	Central Consolidated School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$1,500,000
Naschitti Elementary School	Central Consolidated School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$ 500,000
Laguna-Acoma High School	Grants-Cibola County School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$1,500,000
R. Sarracino Middle School	Socorro Consolidated School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$ 975,000
Crownpoint High School	Gallup-McKinley County Public School District	Conditionally approved for funding	\$2,000,000
TOTAL ARRA & NON-ARRA FUNDS			\$11,325,000

Each school’s award is “conditionally approved for funding.” This means that PED will work directly with the district, school and the school staff in the final determination of budgets, programs, and staffing decisions referenced in each of the applications. The PED’s Priority Schools Bureau will review and approve each action step and budget decision as the schools move forward in implementing plans to assure that students receive the full benefit of these significant resources. Each district must establish annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics.

Following strict definitions from the U. S. Department of Education (USDOE), PED identified three tiers of schools that are the lowest achieving. Of the 418 schools in New Mexico that are Title I schools and have not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last five years, PED used the definition of persistently lowest achieving schools as defined by USDOE to designate the 20 Tier 1 schools as the first schools eligible to apply for the funds.

Schools not receiving School Improvement Grant funds may be eligible for Race to the Top funding.

All school applications and reviewer comments are posted on the PED website under the title School Improvement Grant Results on the front page of the website www.ped.state.nm.us or at: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/psb/dl10/sig/index.html>

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ATTACHMENT: Highlights of SIG Application Strategies

NMPED Attachment to accompany 5-7-10 news release:

Highlights of School Improvement Grant Application Strategies

Lybrook Elementary School – Jemez Mountain School District

25 additional days of instruction for all students.

90 minute core program with 30 minutes additional intervention in Reading and Math

Crownpoint High School – Gallup-McKinley

Implementation of an additional hour of instruction daily for all grades

Implementation of positive behavior support program

Turn around coach to improve instruction leading to great student achievement

El Camino Real Charter School – Albuquerque Public Schools

Expansion of the bilingual program for the school

Extension of the schools technical resources

Early start (two weeks) for all incoming Kindergarteners

3 day jump start for all incoming 9th graders

Ernie Pyle Middle School – Albuquerque Public Schools

Extended summer programs and extended day programs, aligned with the core curriculum

Extended instructional day

Plan for “looping” to strategically address continuum of programs for students

Ramirez Thomas Elementary School – Santa Fe Public Schools

Implementation of an additional one hour of instruction daily for all grades.

Using the New Mexico Leadership Institute teach effectiveness tool, screen existing teachers for commitment to the Turnaround Model and increasing student achievement.

Implementation of the Columbia Writing Project across all grades and all subjects.

Newcomb High School – Central Consolidated Schools

Extended learning opportunities through homework help, Distance Learning opportunities and Credit Recovery programs

Alternative Energy Smart Labs to be placed at selected Chapter Houses, powered by solar energy

Implementation of a community Health Clinic

Addressing cultural differences through staffing and Professional Development

Naschitti Elementary School – Central Consolidated Schools

Summer instructional program for students

Expand the extended academic year to include 4th – 6th graders (already have program for K – 3rd graders)

Addressing cultural differences through staffing and Professional Development

Laguna-Acoma High School – Grants Cibola Schools

Implementation of Read 180 for students below proficiency

Implementation of a zero period and 8th period to supplement instructional program, Saturday school and credit recovery programs

Transportation for students to attend extended learning opportunities (Saturday school, summer programs, etc.)

R. Sarracino Middle School – Socorro Public Schools

Three additional hours of instruction each week

Daily common planning time for each grade level team which will serve as an organization hub for school improvement efforts.

Programs to be implemented in nearly every grant application:

Job-embedded professional development

Math and / or Reading Coaches

Instructional coaches and turnaround coaches

Realignment of curriculum; development of pacing guides and formative assessment tools

Developed or renewed community partnerships

Increased substantive parent involvement