



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Select Superintendents of Title I Districts
Select Directors of Title I Districts
Select Charter School Directors

FROM: Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education 

DATE: November 29, 2010

SUBJECT: Title I, School Improvement Grant (SIG) Waivers

The Federal Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG) provides states and districts the money they need to leverage change and turn around schools. Authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2002, the program did not receive funding until fiscal year 2007.

For FY 2010, there is approximately 4 million dollars available for SIG grants under Section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for Connecticut in the form of competitive grants. Connecticut's application is due to the U.S. Department of Education (U.S.D.E.) by December 3, 2010. The final requirements for the Title I, SIG can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.

According to federal requirements for the SIG, Connecticut must give priority in awarding SIG funds to districts with persistently lowest-achieving schools (which States will identify in their applications for State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Phase II funding). For the purposes of the SIG program, these schools are:

Tier I schools: Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that:

- is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in Connecticut; or
- is a high school that has had a graduation rate that is less than 60 percent over a number of years.

Tier II schools: Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that:

- is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools in Connecticut that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds; or
- is a high school that has had a graduation rate that is less than 60 percent over a number of years.

In addition, Connecticut may award SIG funds to districts with **Tier III** schools, which are defined as any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is not a Tier I school.

To support effective implementation of the SIG program, Connecticut will apply for the following waivers through the SIG:

- 1) Extend the period of availability of SIG funds until September 30, 2013. 
- 2) "Start over" in the school improvement timeline for Tier I schools implementing a turnaround or restart model.
- 3) Implement a schoolwide program in a Tier I school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.
- 4) Serve a Tier II school.
- 5) Exclude schools with less than 75 students.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) must apply to the U.S.D.E. to request waivers and districts must apply to the Department for waivers. Prior to applying for waivers, the Department must have a notice and comment period for all interested parties of at least 10 days and must submit all comments it receives to the U.S.D.E. in its application for waivers. A required notice and comment period for all interested parties regarding the Title I, Part A waivers will take place November 29-December 8, 2010. Districts are invited to submit comments to title1waivers@ct.gov.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Michelle Rosado, Education Consultant, at michelle.rosado@ct.gov or 860-713-6748.

MKM:mr

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