



The Title I Messenger!

"Keeping YOU on Target!"



September 2011

Volume 2, Number 4

In This Issue

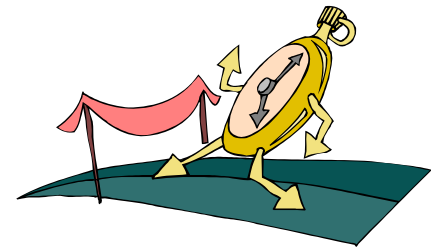
- Month in Review
- Federal Update
- Successful School Improvement Teams
- Just Ask John
- Title I Toolkit

Important Reminders

- Submit signed affirmations of consultation documents for desk audit (if applicable)
- Ensure website is updated with Choice and SES participation data (if applicable)
- Finalize contracts with SES vendors parents have selected and finalize individual learning plans for participating students so services can begin no later than the end of October.

Month in Review

- On Tuesday, September 13 we held a session for all schools and districts Under Improvement. The session was well attended by District staff, Charter School staff, school principals, Distinguished Educators, and DOE staff. Thank you to all that attended. The session provided an overview of school improvement sanctions under Title I, Part A and under State Regulation 103. A variety of resources were also presented for schools and districts to use as they work on their success plans and school improvement grants. The materials from the session are all posted our [Title I Coordinators Meeting Materials](#) website. The next school improvement technical assistance session is scheduled for January 10, 2012 from 8:30-11:30 at the Collette Center in Dover in Conference Room A. This session will focus on the tools and resources LEAs can use to support their schools under improvement.
- Consolidated application revisions and reviews are well underway. So far we have more than 30 of the 43 applications fully approved! This year has been exceptionally challenging for all system users. We truly appreciate your hard work and patience as we deal with the system issues associated with the upgrade to the new Identity Management System (IMS). We are committed to our promise of a three-day turnaround for all submitted revisions and hope to have most, if not all, applications fully approved in the near future!



Federal Update

- DDOE received guidance from USDOE in mid September regarding ESEA Flexibility the state may apply for to waive specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Flexibility will be granted in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. The application includes a list of ESEA provisions we may choose to waive in exchange for the adoption of a variety of initiatives, most of which are already underway as a result of Race to the Top. We are carefully reviewing the guidance and application to determine which requirements we will ask to waive. We are also participating in a

Title I Calendar Updates

The Title I Annual Calendar has been updated with the following changes. A revised copy is available [here](#). Please print a new version.

- Requirement for schools Under Improvement to submit formative and summative progress updates removed
- DDOE deadlines for submitting data to USDOE added
- Clarified Corrective Action and Restructuring plans due only for LEAs with schools that are new to Corrective Action or Planning for Restructuring
- Due date for annual reports corrected. Reports are due Aug 15 annually.

Contact Information

Kim Wells

kwells@doe.k12.de.us

(302) 857-3320

variety of webinars to seek clarity on a few areas in the guidance and application. As we draft the application, we will seek input and feedback from LEAs, schools, and the community. For more information on ESEA Flexibility, visit USDOE's [ESEA Flexibility](#) website.

- Senate Republicans released a series of bills last week aimed at “fixing No Child Left Behind.” The legislation focuses on significantly reducing the federal government’s involvement in education and expands the role of states and LEAs. A few of the major changes include the elimination of HQT requirements; allowing states to determine their own accountability systems; focusing on support for replicating successful Charter Schools; and narrowing the focus of school improvement sanctions to Choice for parents of students in the state’s lowest performing schools. We will continue to follow the developments of this and any other legislation aimed at reauthorizing No Child Left Behind. If you haven’t done so already, we suggest subscribing to Education Week’s “EdWeek Update: Daily News and Insights” a free e-newsletter that provides daily updates on this and many other important education stories. Visit www.Edweek.org for more information. In addition, the National Title I Association continually updates a [Legislative & Policy Update](#) blog that you can visit or subscribe to for regular updates as the story unfolds.
- The State received approval for two waivers from USDOE regarding SES this year: 1) Allowing schools and LEAs Under Improvement to operate as SES vendors, and 2) Allowing LEAs to offer SES in addition to ESEA Choice in the first year of improvement. LEAs were notified of the approval in early August.

Keys to Successful School Improvement Teams

The role of the School Success Planning Team is not only to develop a school improvement plan that addresses the needs of the school community, but also to monitor the implementation of the plan, to revise it when appropriate, and to lead in the communication of both the process of creating and implementing the school improvement activities to all stakeholders.



An effective team has defined roles, operates with agendas, keeps minutes, stays focused, and follows through with the plans they make. The team leader has good people skills, and is committed to developing a team approach. Team management is seen as a shared function, and team members are given an opportunity to exercise leadership when their experiences and skills are appropriate to the needs of the team. Each team member is capable and willing to contribute information, skills, and experiences that provide an

appropriate mix for achieving the team's purpose.

Successful teams strive to develop a climate in which people feel relaxed and are able to be direct and open in their communications. A well-functioning team is characterized by team members who verbally and publicly support each other. They recognize that negative comments tear the team down and as a result may have a negative impact on the outcomes of the school improvement activities. Teams who make focused and sustained efforts to integrate these characteristics into their approach to school success will find that both creativity in planning and the accomplishment of desired results will be a great deal higher than they would be otherwise. Thus, Together Everyone Achieves More!!!



Just Ask John

Q: Dear John,

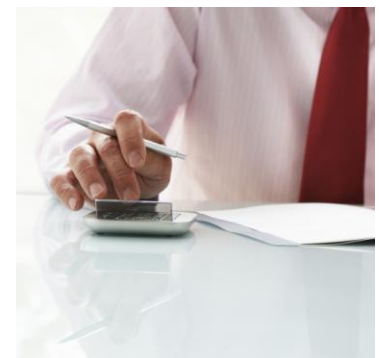
I noticed my district's school improvement grant allocations are different from last year. Any explanation as to why some changed significantly and others stayed about the same?

- Weary in the West

A: Dear Weary,

I hope you will find comfort in the fact that you are not alone! Many LEAs have asked the same question this year. There are several reasons why your grant allocations changed. As you may know, there are two different sources of funds this year for School Improvement Grants. We had state funds and federal 1003(a) funds to distribute. Title I schools received funds from both sources and non-Title I schools received only state funds. Here is a summary of the main reasons allocations may have changed this year:

- This year we had slightly more Title I, Part A funds to distribute to Title I schools and slightly less state funds to distribute due to less carryover available.
- Last year Title I schools received supplemental funds from ARRA in addition to the state and



federal funds. Those funds dried up last year, and as a result, Title I school allocations were reduced by approximately \$15,000 each.

- We weighted the state and federal funds differently last year, giving schools that were deeper in improvement a greater share of the funds. This year we removed that weighting criterion so now the allocations are based only on enrollment and poverty.
- When an LEA moves schools from Title I to non-Title I status and vice versa, both sources of funds are impacted. This year we had four Title I schools move to non-Title I status which stretched the state funds and increased the amount of Title I funds available to Title I schools. We had one non-Title I school move to Title I status.
- When schools enter and exit improvement, this also impacts the amount of funds available to schools already in improvement. We had seven schools enter improvement this year and three exit. This resulted in us having to stretch the available funds across more schools.

Unfortunately, with so many moving parts, schools Under Improvement should expect to experience changes in their allocations each year. This is why we strongly encourage schools **not** to depend on School Improvement funds to pay for staff, as there is no guarantee from year to year that funding will be sufficient.

- Just Ask John

Title I Toolkit – School Improvement

[Federal Non-regulatory Guidance on LEA and School Improvement](#)

[DDOE Website Resources for LEAs and Schools Under Improvement](#)

[Center on Innovation and Improvement](#)

[School Turnaround Learning Community](#)

[Doing What Works](#)

[National Center on Time and Learning](#)