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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 16, 2010  
**TO:** TechMIS Subscribers  
**FROM:** Charles Blaschke and Blair Curry  
**SUBJ:** School Improvement Grant Implementation: State Updates and legislative attempt to redirect Title I and IDEA stimulus funds

In response to questions from subscribers about the delays in USED approval of SIG applications for about 20 states, we interviewed some of these states' SIG officials, as well as others whose SIG applications have been approved. Attached is a Stimulus Funding Alert on SIG implementation in the states as of mid-June. While some of the SEAs awaiting final approval stated that the holdup was related to "crossing t's and dotting i's" – issues which have for the most part been resolved – several indicated tougher negotiations on issues such as serving Tier III schools and use of the four prescribed intervention models. Most also indicated that they were largely on schedule as far as implementation was concerned with all expecting some Tier I and Tier II schools to become operational in September. Most, if not all, plan to carry over some funds to next year to be added to the FY 2010 SIG appropriation level of approximately \$550 million nationwide for another competitive round, likely serving more Tier III schools. Most also indicated that the SEA 4% set-aside for school improvement was being used this year, to serve Tier III schools or eligible Tier I and Tier II schools in districts which did not want to apply for SIG funds. The information in these state descriptions should be used internally within your group and treated as being "corporate confidential."

Within the last five days, information has been leaked and reported in several media outlets about a new initiative, headed by House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey, which would redirect about \$10-12 billion of "non-outlaid" Title I and IDEA ARRA funds to the State Fiscal Stabilization funding stream which would be dedicated to retaining teaching jobs next school year and would be included in the proposed \$23 billion for the Teacher Jobs proposal. If enough support were generated, this redirection would take the form of an amendment to be included in the supplemental war appropriations act which will have to be passed by July 30<sup>th</sup>. For a description of the "creative solution" by Chairman Obey, go to an article in *Ed Money Watch* on June 10 (<http://edmoney.newamerica.net/blogmain>), by Jennifer Cohen, entitled "Redirecting ARRA Funds to Save Teacher Jobs."

Several education groups are negotiating with House Committee Appropriations staff to ensure that the redirected Title I and IDEA ARRA funds be used by school districts for retaining teacher and other jobs rather than providing discretionary funds to governors' offices. One bottom line implication, should this redirection amendment pass, is that districts in which obligations and/or outlays of such funds have not occurred may have these funds redirected from them; hence, firms which have been negotiating purchasing and other agreements with district Title I and IDEA offices should make them aware of this possibility and reach final agreement on purchases or otherwise ensure that such funds are formally obligated as outlays through contracts before July 30.

Please contact Charles Blaschke for any questions or updates.

# **Stimulus Funding Alert: School Improvement Grant Implementation: State Updates**

*A Technology Monitoring and Information Service (TechMIS)*  
**SPECIAL STIMULUS FUNDING ALERT**

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*June 16, 2010*

In Table 1, we provide an updated schedule of timelines for state School Improvement Grant implementation which was included in each state's revised and approved School Improvement Grant application to USED. Since our last presentation of this table, Pennsylvania has been approved. During the second and third week of June we contacted a number of state Title I offices or other SEA offices responsible for implementing School Improvement Grants, Part G funds; some states' SIG applications had not been "formally" approved at that time. The situations in the states are summarized below.

## **Arkansas**

The SEA has not received final approval of its SIG grant, but has finished negotiating several small points and issues with USED. As reflected in its initial Race to the Top proposal, Arkansas' School Improvement Initiative continues what was started two and a half years ago, along with new components related to student support and parent/community engagement, relying on several partners including the University of Arkansas, and community groups involved in after-school activities. The person who directs the School Improvement Grant initiative, Ms. Smith, indicated that the application process and related activities are on hold until the SIG application is formally approved by USED; it then has to be approved by the State Board of Education which is anticipated in July.

## **Florida**

As of June 8<sup>th</sup> the SIG application was still being negotiated with USED. Evidently, several of the initiatives under the Differentiated Accountability Model, which was approved more than two years ago for Florida, had to be modified to fit into the SIG guidance and requirements which necessitated time-consuming negotiations between the Florida SEA and USED. In mid-May Lisa Bacen, who held the position of State Title I Director, took another job and was replaced by Ann Moore (850/245-0828).

## **Georgia**

Applications for SIG grants from Georgia's LEAs were received in April with all of the eligible schools and districts to be served now determined. They have yet to be approved by the board, but will be shortly. Approximately 20 districts serving 29 eligible Tier I and Tier II schools will

be using the transformation or turnaround models. Only a limited number of districts have more than one eligible Tier I or Tier II school. No Tier III schools will be served. The 4% set-aside will be used to serve some Tier I schools that districts believe they do not have the capacity to serve using one of the four models (as well as other schools in restructuring). Over the last few years, the number of schools in restructuring in Georgia has decreased from about 100 to fewer than 50, largely because of a major LEA-directed initiative which included teams to conduct “gap analyses” and to direct different interventions that have been successful. Most of these efforts, initiated under the initial SIG funding as well as the 4% set-aside along with State funding, will likely continue over the next three years. The individual responsible for School Improvement Grants is Bill Hooker (404/463-3456) who is in the Improvement and Accountability Office headed by Associate SEA Superintendent Linda Martin.

### **Illinois**

Even though the Illinois School Improvement Grant application had not been formally approved by June 8<sup>th</sup>, Marci Johnson indicated that the SEA still expects districts will have submitted their applications on June 14<sup>th</sup>. It appears that the School Improvement Grant component of the state’s Race to the Top application during Round I remains similar to the SIG application which awaits final approval. Some of the State’s Differentiated Accountability Model initiatives, approved more than two years ago, remain intact, but others required modification. The State expects many of the Tier I and Tier II high schools to meet their implementation schedule this Fall. While several SEA officials are involved in School Improvement Grants, Marci Johnson is the primary contact (217/524-4832).

### **Kansas**

As of June 9<sup>th</sup>, the Kansas SIG application has not been officially approved; small issues now appear to be finally resolved with USED. District applications for serving Tier I and Tier II schools have been received and already approved, but await formal approval at the July board meeting. All districts are allowed to carry over more than 15 percent this year to next year in Title I ARRA funds. Funding for summer school/extended learning programs using ARRA funds have expanded greatly over the last year. While no “identified” district had requested a waiver to provide their own SES last year, several have requested such a waiver this year – most likely Wichita and Kansas City. The contact is Judi Miller (785/296-5081).

### **Louisiana**

Louisiana has not received final approval of its School Improvement Grant, but expects it around the middle of June. Districts have been identified and have submitted at least preliminary applications. It is expected that some of the parishes/districts will be requesting SIG funds to be used for Tier III schools which must use one of the four prescribed models. This year, the State has not selected any so-called lead partners but may do so next year, as it anticipates carrying over a large portion of this year’s funds and adding them to next year’s appropriation for another competitive grant round. The SIG director, Bernell Cook, who is a native of Louisiana and worked for several years for the New Teachers Project, indicated that the districts are ready to move quickly and that everything is pretty much on schedule.

## **Michigan**

As of June 9<sup>th</sup>, Michigan was awaiting official formal approval of their SIG grant. The last remaining issue has been refinement of the list of newly eligible schools based on the January SIG guidance. Michigan had also attempted to rely heavily on some of the district-level procedures and approaches that appeared to be working, based on the studies conducted by CEP over the last five years, to help schools exit from restructuring. However, negotiations resulted in the use of the four USED-prescribed models, particularly the transformation model. The “continuous support system” implemented at the SEA level with initial SIG funding, 4% set-aside, and State funding continues and Michigan’s intermediate school districts (ISDs) have taken a very heavy lead support role. For districts that do not have eligible Tier I and Tier II schools, the 4% set-aside funds are provided to ISDs, allowing them to continue providing support to districts with these non-eligible SIG schools. The SEA is currently calling for applications (due June 24) by external partners who wish to provide assistance to districts; however, external partners can still apply on a “running basis” thereafter in order to get on the list. The individual responsible for School Improvement Grant (who previously was responsible for SES activities at the State level), Bill Witt (517/241-9041) brings a range of relevant experience to this effort.

## **Missouri**

The Missouri SEA contact for School Improvement Grants is Larry Flakne (573/751-4104). The SIG implementation schedule is being followed with preliminary applications due on June 14<sup>th</sup> and final applications due on July 14<sup>th</sup>. While some of the districts will be using the turnaround model, the vast majority will be using the transformation model. The State does not anticipate funding any Tier III schools, even though initially they hoped to fund some. However, as USED guidance focused more narrowly on a smaller number of schools with more money, support for Tier III’s dwindled. While the State received a waiver on the 15 percent carryover limitation, a large amount of Title I ARRA funds are being used to continue summer school programs this summer; in the past, State funds were used to support such summer school initiatives in most of the districts. In the past, Missouri has also provided State funds for professional development which is now being supported in many districts using Title I ARRA funding.

## **Nevada**

The SIG implementation process is pretty much on schedule as originally approved with final notifications to districts (three districts will likely be approved) by June 25<sup>th</sup>. After the initial applications came in, the SEA had each of the districts present their approach and then suggested revisions which will be submitted shortly. Not all eligible districts applied, largely because of the inappropriateness of the four models regarding having to replace principals and half of the teaching staff. The SEA may fund one district to serve one or more Tier III schools; for the most part, however, all schools will be Tier Is and Tier IIs. The SEA will be carrying over 25 percent to next year in order for some districts to apply or reapply to serve eligible Tier I and Tier II schools for which they did not feel they had a capacity to serve this year. While the SEA encouraged districts to “think out of the box” and come up with innovative approaches, such as involving community groups, to a much greater extent, most of the applications relied on the transformation model and were pretty traditional. While some of the districts proposed to use consultants, neither the districts nor the SEA have proposed to use any lead partner to provide

contracted services. The contact remains Kathy St. Clair (775/687-9185).

### **New Jersey**

Applications from eligible New Jersey districts have been received and about 30 Tier I and Tier II schools will be served during the first year. The State is not planning to serve any Tier III schools with SIG funds unless there is a significant increase in funding for the SIG (g) program. Individual districts are allowed to select partners or providers to work with their eligible Tier I and Tier II schools. The list of the allowed providers which is being updated is in the New Jersey SIG application. The contact person in the SEA is Pat Mitchell (973/727-6063).

### **North Carolina**

North Carolina received SIG(a) approval in April and has already received funds which will be made available to eligible districts after State Board approval, expected sometime in July. In general, the implementation process is on schedule with most Tier I and Tier II schools beginning this Fall. The 4% set-aside funds were allocated to eligible districts in February and the SIG Part G funds, which are being distributed in July, could be impacted by the final State funding districts will receive after July 1. The contact person for SIG(g) is Charlotte Hughes (919/807-3959), although another SEA office has been responsible for State “school improvement” over the last several years.

### **North Dakota**

District applications have been submitted, with some already approved, even though North Dakota’s State application has not officially been approved by USED. Laurie Matzke (701/328-2284), who is responsible for Title I and School Improvement Grant implementation within the SEA, estimated that one Tier I school would be served, along with a large number of Tier III schools. Several eligible Tier I schools located in a few districts that decided not to apply for the SIG funds will likely receive funding under the 4% set-aside. Only the transformation model is legal in North Dakota because the other models require that some teacher salary/bonuses be based on student performance, which is illegal in the State. Title I has also supported summer schools in the past and has expanded them under ARRA. All of the districts receiving SIG funds expect to become operational in their eligible schools this Fall. Training and other support activities have already been conducted.

### **Ohio**

Of the 300+ districts that had eligible schools, applications have been received from 210 districts according to the person responsible for SIG implementation, Kathy Harper (614/752-1473). The list of districts that have been approved will be announced by June 30<sup>th</sup>. It is unclear whether any Tier III schools will be served during the first round.

### **Virginia**

Proposals from eligible districts are due on June 14<sup>th</sup> with final selections around July 25<sup>th</sup>. All eligible districts have to attend a conference beginning on July 19<sup>th</sup> when the state will “flesh out” the State’s “transformation model” which is much more stringent than the USED-prescribed transformation model. For example, it requires a district-wide improvement plan with numerous activities conducted on a district-wide basis, such as hiring a district coach who in turn is

responsible for all of the coaches used in the Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools. Initially Virginia had identified 12 high schools following the eligibility criteria prescribed by the USED, but subsequently was able to reduce the number to eight, because some of the schools have no graduates because they were special education institutional schools. Approximately 40 Tier III schools are eligible and are likely to participate during Round 1. The State has selected four lead partners including Edison, Cambridge, Pearson, and Talent Development from Johns Hopkins. Mass Insight provided assistance to the SEA; however, rather than following the performance contract model recommended by Mass Insight, the SEA is developing its own performance contract instrument which will be used to hold the vendors as well as the partners accountable. One of the vendors which will be used, especially in high schools, is iStation. Essentially, an IEP or equivalent will be developed for each participating student, and RTI approaches will be used extensively by the districts in the Tier I and Tier II schools. The contact is Kathleen Smith (804/786-5819).

Table 1

**Planned State Timelines for School Improvement Grant Implementation**

	Actual USED	Approval of SEA Application	SEA Assistance to LEAs	LEA Tier I/II Application Available	LEA Tier I/II Applications Due	Tier III Grantees Notified	LEA Tier III Application Available	Tier III Applications Due	Tier III Grantees Notified	Award Amount (millions)
Alabama	4/21	2/11-3/15	2/22	4/15	5/3			6/3	\$58m	
Alaska	4/12								\$11m	
Arizona	4/7	2/3-3/23	3/29	5/14	7/1				\$70m	
Arkansas										
California										
Colorado	4/12	2/9	3/10	4/14	4/30				\$40m	
Connecticut	4/15	2/22	3/1-31	5/31	7/1				\$26m	
Delaware										
District of Columbia	4/2								\$12m	
Florida										
Georgia	4/6	2/12-3/1		4/15	6/11				\$122m	
Hawaii										
Idaho										
Illinois										
Indiana	3/26	2/1-2/28	4/1	4/30	5/31	4/30	5/31	6/30	\$61m	
Iowa				5/10	5/21					
Kansas										
Kentucky	4/21	3/30	3/30	4/30	5/30				\$56m	
Louisiana										
Maine										
Maryland	3/26	3/25	3/26	4/20	6/30				\$47m	
Massachusetts										
Michigan										
Minnesota	3/17	3/1-5/31	3/31	5/31	6/30				\$34m	
Mississippi										
Missouri	4/12	4/27	4/5	6/14	7/23				\$54m	
Montana										
Nebraska										
Nevada	4/15	3/1-4/30		4/30	6/25				\$23m	
New Hampshire										
New Jersey	4/7		3/30		5/15		6/15	6/30	\$66m	
New Mexico	4/7	2/1	2/28	3/24	4/30				\$38m	
New York	4/30	4/19	4/16	5/14	6/11				\$308m	
North Carolina	4/7			4/30	5/15		6/15	6/30	\$91m	
North Dakota									\$11m	
Ohio	3/26	3/1-4/30	3/1	4/30	6/30				\$132m	
Oklahoma	4/20	4/20	4/16	5/14	5/27				\$39m	
Oregon										
Pennsylvania		4/1-4/30	6/1-6/30	9/1-9/15	7/31	8/1-8/31	8/31	9/1-9/30	\$141m	
Rhode Island										
South Carolina	4/15	3/4-4/23		5/14					\$51m	
South Dakota	4/15		2/19	4/9	5/7	3/19		5/7	\$11m	
Tennessee										
Texas	4/2	3/1-4/30	4/10	5/15	5/31			10/1	\$338m	
Utah	4/14	3/19	3/19	5/7	5/21				\$17m	
Vermont	4/30			6/15	6/30				\$9m	
Virginia	4/15	2/1-2/28	4/29	6/14	7/25				\$60m	
Washington	3/26	1/28	1/29	3/5	3/26				\$50m	
West Virginia	3/12	3/9	4/21	5/25	7/6				\$22m	
Wisconsin										
Wyoming										