

March 9, 2012

Dr. Michael Yudin
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue
Washington DC 20202

Dear Dr. Yudin,

The Oklahoma State Department of Education is requesting a waiver of the definition of the Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) Schools as defined in the final requirements for School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Specifically, the OSDE is requesting to use the definition of Priority Schools as defined in Oklahoma's ESEA Flexibility Waiver granted February 8, 2012.

A Priority School is:

- (1) a Title I school among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, combined, and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group;
- (2) a school among the lowest five percent of all schools in the State based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, combined, and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group;
- (3) a Title I-participating, Title I-eligible, and non-Title I high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over for three consecutive years a number of years; or
- (4) All Tier I schools receiving SIG funds to implement a school intervention model will be named as Priority Schools a Priority School under the SIG program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention model.

This waiver will allow the OSDE to award additional SIG funds to serve a Cohort 3. The period of availability of School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds is for FY 2009 until September 30, 2015. The grant award number is S388A090037A. The award amount was \$33,027,611.00.

Prior to submitting this waiver request, Oklahoma will provide the public and all LEAs in the State with notice and an opportunity to comment on this request. Methods of notification will include, but may not be limited to, posting on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site; a message to the Oklahoma Title I Directors Listserv, and District Superintendents; and a phone conference with the Oklahoma Title I Committee of Practitioners. Copies of comments that Oklahoma may receive from the public and LEAs will be attached to the waiver request.

Oklahoma hereby assures that, if it is granted the requested waiver, it will submit to the U.S. Department of Education, by April 30, 2012, a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing the waiver.

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If you have any questions regarding this request please feel free to contact me by phone at (405) 522-3253 or via email at <Mary.Colvin@sde.ok.gov>. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Colvin, Executive Director
School Support/School Improvement

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c: Janet C. Barresi, State Superintendent