



SIGnificant Points

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

NC School Improvement Grant Schools

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NCDPI Announces Newly Eligible SIG Schools

Forty-five schools (18 Tier I schools and 27 Tier II schools) are eligible to receive 2011-2014 SIG funding with an LEA application approved by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). The U.S. Department of Education approved NCDPI's revised application for the state's \$14.2 million share of fiscal year 2010 School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g) funds in February 2011. Newly eligible Tier I schools are listed below.

2011-2012 Timeline for New SIG Schools

Feb. 25, 2011	Intent to Apply
April 15, 2011	LEA Applications Due
April 29, 2011	Final Funding Recommendations
May 2, 2011	Budgets Posted
June 2-3, 2011	SBE Approval

LEA	Tier I School	Selection
Anson County Schools	Morven Elementary	Performance
Carter G Woodson School	Carter G Woodson School	Graduation
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Billingsville Elementary	Performance
Dillard Academy	Dillard Academy	Performance
Durham Public Schools	Y E Smith Elementary	Performance
Edgecombe County Public Schools	Coker-Wimberly Elementary	Performance
Forsyth County Schools	Forest Park Elementary	Performance
Gaston County Schools	Woodhill Elementary	Performance
Guilford County Schools	Wiley Elementary	Performance
Halifax County Schools	Dawson Elementary	Performance
Halifax County Schools	Inborden Elementary	Performance
Halifax County Schools	Northwest High	Performance
Halifax County Schools	William R Davie Middle	Performance
Kennedy Charter	Kennedy Charter	Performance
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	D S Johnson Elementary	Performance
Pitt County Schools	Northwest Elementary	Performance
Public Schools of Robeson Co.	Red Springs Middle	Performance
Public Schools of Robeson Co.	Townsend Middle	Performance

Tier I schools were identified based on proficiency scores that were the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools in School Improvement or Title I high schools with a graduation rate below 60 percent.

LEA	Tier II School	Selection
Anson County Schools	Anson High School	Performance
Asheville City Schools	Randolph Learning Center	Performance
Beaufort County Schools	B C Ed Tech Center	Graduation
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	West Charlotte High	Graduation
Cumberland County Schools	Westover High	Performance
Dare County Schools	Dare County Alternative School	Graduation
Durham Public Schools	Hillside High	Performance
Durham Public Schools	Southern High	Performance
Durham Public Schools	Southern School of Engineering	Performance
Edgecombe County Public School	North Edgecombe High	Performance
Edgecombe County Public School	Southwest Edgecombe High	Performance
Greene County Schools	Greene Central High	Performance
Guilford County Schools	T Wingate Andrews High	Performance
Haywood County Schools	Central Haywood High	Graduation
Henderson County Schools	Balfour Education Center	Performance
Hertford County Schools	Hertford County High	Performance
Jackson County Schools	Jackson Co School of Alternatives	Performance
Johnston County Schools	South Campus Community High	Graduation
Moore County Schools	Pinckney Academy	Graduation
Public Schools of Robeson County	South Robeson High	Performance
Rutherford County Schools	Rutherford Opportunity Center	Graduation
Tyrrell County Schools	Columbia High	Graduation
Union County Public Schools	South Providence	Performance
Wake County Schools	Longview	Performance
Warren County Schools	Warren County High	Performance
Wilson County Schools	Milton M Daniels Learning Center	Performance
Wilson County Schools	Beddingfield High	Graduation

Tier II schools were identified based on proficiency scores that were the lowest 5 percent of Title I eligible but not served secondary schools or Title I eligible but not served high schools with a graduation rate below 60 percent.

Requests for funding for the second cohort of SIG schools will be prioritized based on the total number of points received out of a possible 50 points on the application's scoring rubric, available online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/grants/>.

Round I SIG Schools Need to Make Renewal Plans

In 2010-11, 24 schools representing 18 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the state began receiving SIG funds. Over \$63 million in federal funds were allocated to the 24 SIG schools with a per school range of \$980,000 to \$6 million through September 30, 2013. These schools need to amend their SIG applications with renewed plans that address:

- summative data (relative to goals/objectives in the grant)
- SIG indicators
- feedback from SIG monitors regarding model requirements.

Amended SIG applications are due June 30, 2011.

SIG Models Demand Financial Incentives, Increased Learning Time

SIG schools must implement one of four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model and LEAs must outline a plan for implementing the chosen model in their applications and annual amendments to their applications to the SEA.

Two often-missed key elements applicable to the turnaround and transformation models that LEAs and SIG schools need to implement are:

- * increased learning time for **all** students in the school
- * use of financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions to recruit and retain staff

What is “increased learning time”?

Increased learning time means using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for (a) instruction in core academic subjects including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; (b) instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, including, for example, physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities that are provided by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations; and (c) teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects. Additional instructional time must be available to **all** students.

How much time is enough?

Federal guidance cites research indicating 300 hours as an effective amount of increased learning time, but leaves the determination of the exact amount of “increased” time to the LEA – as long as it is enough time to have a “meaningful impact.”

What about teacher collaboration and professional development as part of the increased learning time?

Dr. Sam Redding, director of the Center for Innovation and Improvement (CII), spoke extensively regarding teacher collaboration at the February 24 SIG forum in his presentation, “School Improvement Grants – Improvement on Steroids?” He emphasized that strong instructional teams use student-learning data to identify students in need of instructional support or enhancement and collaborate to meet those needs.



Sam Redding

Ever wonder what an instructional planning team meeting is supposed to look like? Several planning team meetings are posted by CII at <http://www.indistar.org/action/IPpart1Final/index.htm> under “Building Strong Instructional Teams.” Watch the “Instructional Team in Action” video (5 minutes, 36 seconds) of an elementary math team evaluating student outcomes in geometry. Another video, “Teams in Action,” (1 minute, 46 seconds) features junior high and high school subject area teachers at work.

Think you have a focused team that can do better? Let us know! We need examples to videotape and share as we break down the walls of isolation and stagnation and move toward the huge gains our students need to make. Teachers’ study of student data, dialogue, and collaboration is integral to improving student achievement. We’ll make a video of your meeting to share among SIG schools. On the other hand, if your team is really struggling, call us anyway. Maybe we can develop

a “How Not to Meet” segment where we feature your team’s work before *and* after you get the focus you need. Call Charlotte Duren (919.218.9239, cduren@dpi.state.nc.us) or George Hancock (910.783.5921, ghancock@dpi.state.nc.us).

Or start a discussion on our LinkedIn Group. What did the teams in the videos do right? Where do you think they could use some help? What did you think of the high school math team where each team member was seated at their desk looking at the data on their laptops to see what questions to ask for next week’s unit test?

Who calls the incentive shots – SIG school leadership or the LEA?

Federal guidance stops short of requiring SIG school leaders to be empowered with financial incentive-giving authority, but says the LEA must allow the school enough flexibility in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting so that a school’s operations allow it to substantially improve.

Dr. Redding emphasized that signaling the need for dramatic change with strong leadership and building a committed staff were two of the four most important best practices needed for a school to make a dramatic change from the status quo. Incentives play an important part in signaling the magnitude and urgency of the change needed and in building a staff.

Check out the recent “60 Minutes” segment featuring a New York charter school that pays its teachers \$125,000 as an example of staff building with a sense of urgency.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/03/10/60minutes/main20041733.shtml>.

Best Practices

Harrison Conyers, principal at Warlick Academy, an alternative school in Gastonia, negotiated a compromise with his central office that resulted in bonuses of \$7,500 for the principal; \$6,500 for the assistant principal; \$5,000 for certified teachers; and \$1,000 for other staff members paid in monthly installments each year for three years. Employees must fulfill the contract for all three grant years or pay the bonus amounts back.



“We’ve put a lot of professional development time into our staff and we want to see Warlick benefit from that training,” Conyers says. The school has engaged in a year-long process of becoming licensed to be a day mental health treatment program. Fifty percent of the instructional teaching staff is new to the school, which serves grades 6-12.

“If I had to do it over again, I would have everybody go through the job interview process, so expectations of old and new staffs would be clear from the beginning,” he says. Everyone on staff receives the financial bonus.

Four Recommended Best Practices

from Dr. Sam Redding’s “School Improvement Grants – Improvement on Steroids?”

“A low-performing school that fails to make adequate yearly progress must improve student achievement within a short timeframe – it does not have the luxury of years to implement incremental reforms.”

- Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership.
- Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction.
- Make visible improvements early in the school turnaround process. (quick wins)
- Build a committed staff.

Monitoring SIG Schools

SIG monitoring visits in April 2011 will include the following components:

- Status Report - Principal or Designee - Goals/objectives, SIG indicators
- Review of documentation
- Parent interviews (See questions below.) - 3-5 parents should be selected
- Closing summary/interview with Principal, SIG Coordinator, SIT Chair (and other select personnel)

Additionally, SIG monitors will identify areas for each LEA to address in renewing the grant for the 2011-12 school year.

Parent Interview Questions for Monitoring Visits

Below are a few of the questions parents will be asked during SIG school monitoring. For a complete list of questions, access the "Parent Interviews" document on the SIG LinkedIn Group.

- What programs for parents at your school make a positive difference (e.g., programs that assist with helping with homework or extended learning programs or math and reading nights, etc.)?
- What activities do you participate in at school that help you become more involved in your child's education (volunteering, PTA/PTO membership, school improvement team member, tutoring, mentoring, etc.)?
- What other activities would help your family to be more successful to reach their academic goals? (e.g., computer classes, language classes, financial literacy, parenting classes, etc.)?
- Have any of your children moved into the school recently? If so, what assistance did you receive to help make this move a positive experience?
- How are you encouraged to share your hopes and concerns for your student and for the school?
- Are the parent-teacher meetings and other school activities organized around your interests and the interests of other parents?
- How does school staff communicate with you regarding student progress in school?
- How can the school improve in its efforts to engage families (e.g., involving fathers and extended family members)?

SIG on LinkedIn

Thirty-seven participants have joined the School Improvement Grant (SIG) LinkedIn group, designed for SIG participants to collaborate across schools and school districts regarding the implementation of their grants and use of best practices. SIG school teachers, curriculum coordinators, instructional coaches, principals, coordinators or facilitators, professional development leaders, teacher assistants, tutors, guidance counselors, social workers, translators, and others are invited to participate. Members can post questions, make observations, share strategies and results in this forum. In addition, SIG photos, videos, and interviews available no where else on the Web are posted on the SIG LinkedIn site. If you have any trouble joining, please email or call Charlotte Duren (cduren@dpi.state.nc.us, 919.218.9239).



The Wall

In the last edition of *SIGNificant Points*, posters from Ian Smith's collection emphasized key points from his training with teacher leaders and principals in December 2010. Our Cambridge Education friend and colleague, Ian Smith, died suddenly on February 18, 2011, after a recent diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. His devotion to practical best teaching practices will live on as we implement his training and our teacher leaders' training in our classrooms. "The Wall" will be a reminder of Mr. Smith and that training, none of which seems more important than his identification of, "The Missing Ingredient." See the SIG LinkedIn site for the complete poster collection.



Ian Smith



Oh, the Places They'll Go!

National Education Association (NEA) leaders celebrated a "Read Across America" event with 2nd and 3rd graders from Oak Hill Elementary at the High Point Theater on March 2. The NEA and Greensboro's Central Library partnered to host a Dr. Seuss birthday party with books, hats, cake, punch, pizza, bookmarks, and lots of fun. More photos on the High Point Theater event are available on the SIG LinkedIn site or at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/neapr/sets/7215762606593551/>.

NEA leaders visited Extended Day School in Lexington and Henderson Independent High School in Salisbury on March 1. More information on the NEA initiative that has its leaders visiting SIG schools across the country is available at <http://www.nea.org/home/41834.htm>. Blog posts by NEA representatives visiting the schools are available at <http://www.talkpriorityschools.org/>.

Web Resources for SIG Schools

Program Monitoring at NCDPI:
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/grants>
U.S. Department of Education:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>
SIG LinkedIn group for North Carolina:
<http://www.linkedin.com>
PIRC: [http:// www.ecac-parentcenter.org](http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org)

For additional information regarding SIG implementation, please contact George Hancock at 910.783.5921 or Donna Brown at 919.807.3959.

Graduation Story Anyone?

This is the first year for SIG graduations, so we would like to hear from you if you have a student who has overcome great odds to graduate from your elementary, middle or high school. We need stories of inspiration and hope to communicate what is really happening in our schools. Please call or email Charlotte Duren (cduren@dpi.state.nc.us, 919.218.9239) with your ideas.

