



# The Buzz

A consolidated federal programs newsletter

Issue 8

April 2004

## School Improvement Grants for the 2004-2005 School Year

Each year in accordance with Section 1003(g) of No Child Left Behind, CDE awards school improvement dollars to eligible schools. In previous years, the dollars have been distributed competitively. However, we have spent a great deal of time rethinking how best to distribute these dollars for the 2004-2005 school year. The law requires that School Improvement grants be distributed to the lowest achieving schools that demonstrate the greatest need for such funds and have the strongest commitment to ensuring that such funds are used to provide adequate resources to enable these schools to meet the goals under school improvement. In order to identify the schools with the greatest need we have developed three tiers.

Tier I - Title I schools that participated in an external review by a CDE School Support Team during the 2003-2004 school year.

Tier II - Title I schools in 2<sup>nd</sup> year school improvement, corrective action or restructuring that did not receive a School Improvement Grant for the 2003-2004 school year.

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## Evaluating the Effectiveness of District Parental Involvement Policies

*“What is up with evaluating policies?”* This was a recent question from a district administrator regarding the need for districts receiving Title I funds to annually evaluate the content and effectiveness of Title I parental involvement policies. Essentially, this evaluation is done annually to determine whether barriers have been reduced to greater participation by parents who are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background. Effectiveness also needs to be gauged in terms of improvements in student academic achievement and school performance.

Recently, a group of interested Colorado educators met to discuss how districts might conduct an evaluation and identify issues that need to be clarified, so that this annual evaluation can occur. Based on the discussion, the group recommended the following:

1. Districts need to define the term ‘parent involvement’ for their district. Until it is clear what constitutes involvement, it will be difficult to determine if it has increased or supported greater student achievement. If parent involvement is defined broadly, as found in the Parent Involvement Toolkit ([www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/download/pi\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/download/pi_toolkit.pdf)), more sources of data could be available. In addition, if districts use Joyce Epstein’s six types of parent involvement as their framework, they could use the evaluation tool that accompanies this framework.
2. Districts must have identified any barriers that exist to parent involvement, possibly through focused needs assessments. Unless barriers were identified at the outset, it will be impossible to know if barriers have been

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Tier III - Title I schools in 2<sup>nd</sup> year school improvement, corrective action or restructuring that did receive a School Improvement Grant for the 2003-2004 school year.

Due to limited funds we will only be able to grant funds to Tier I and II schools. Depending on the response from interested districts, we may be able to fund some Tier III schools. Eligible districts will be notified by mid-April to determine interest.

In order to receive funds eligible schools and districts must commit to an external review by one of CDE's School Support Teams and must develop a school improvement plan that incorporates the major areas of need as determined by the external review.

The funding for this grant will be disseminated in two parts. An initial amount will be granted to each school in June. The funding is to be used to fund a School Support Team to conduct an evaluation of the school program. Any remaining funds can be spent on costs associated with the external review or early intervention strategies. An additional amount will be granted to each school in April 2005. Prior to the release of funding a school improvement plan that incorporates research-based strategies for improving the major areas of needs as identified by the external review must be submitted and approved by CDE. Please contact Laura Hensinger at [Hensinger\\_l@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Hensinger_l@cde.state.co.us) with any questions.

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## **MORE Public School Choice Guidance!**

Last month, the U.S.D.O.E. released updated nonregulatory guidance on Public School Choice, and the BUZZ reported on several new interpretations. To ensure that districts have as much information about this school improvement intervention, the following provides additional guidance regarding Public School Choice and charter schools, virtual schools, and out-of-district schools:

### **What can an LEA do to plan for public school choice even before assessment results and identifications of schools in need of improvement are available?**

An LEA has several options that may facilitate planning for public school choice before assessment results are available. For example, transportation and communication plans can be developed before implementation is required.

An LEA will know in advance many of the schools that must offer choice, since a school in improvement status must make AYP for two consecutive years before it no longer has to offer choice. For schools that will continue to be in improvement status for at least an additional year, plans can be made and parents can be notified well before the end of the school year.

In other instances, an LEA may choose to introduce or expand programs that allow open enrollment, which can then be modified to accommodate students who will be eligible to transfer if their school is identified for improvement.

### **May a "virtual school" (a school that offers instruction through distance learning technology) be among the schools to which eligible students are offered the opportunity to transfer?**

Yes, so long as that school is a public elementary or secondary school (as defined in State law) and has not been identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. If the "virtual school" is not operated by the LEA, the LEA could enter into a cooperative agreement with the school so that its students can enroll.

### **May a charter school that admits students using a lottery give priority to eligible students who wish to transfer to the school under the Title I choice provisions?**

In order to be eligible for funding under the Department's Charter Schools Program (CSP), a charter school must admit students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated [Section 5210(1)(H)]. Federal guidance for charter schools allows only limited exceptions to the general rule that lotteries must give all students an equal chance to gain admission to a charter school. However, for the limited purpose of providing greater choice to students covered by the Title I choice provisions, a charter school may weight its lottery in favor of those students and still remain in compliance with CSP requirements. For example, a school could provide each student seeking a transfer under the Title I provisions with two or more chances to win the lottery, while all other students would have one chance to win.

### **May an LEA provide eligible students with an option to transfer to schools outside of the district?**

Yes. In fact, the law states that if all public schools within an LEA to which a child may transfer are identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the LEA must, to the extent practicable, establish a cooperative agreement with other LEAs in the area that are willing to accept its students as transfers. In addition, LEAs that are not in this situation may want to include inter-district transfers in their plans, in order to broaden the range of student choices, mitigate capacity concerns in the district, or both. Further, a State that has an open enrollment policy should use that authority to make choices available to students in LEAs that do not have any schools to which students can transfer under the Title I choice provisions.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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## **April 1<sup>st</sup>**

Schoolwide Training  
Adams 12 Training Center  
9:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m.  
For more information contact Tina Tamayo at  
[tamayo\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:tamayo_t@cde.state.co.us)

## **April 6<sup>th</sup> - April 9<sup>th</sup>**

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics  
Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California  
Visit [www.nctm.org/meetings](http://www.nctm.org/meetings) for more information.

## **April 13<sup>th</sup> – May 4<sup>th</sup>**

Regional Workshops for Consolidated Federal  
Programs Application  
For more information see the next page or visit  
[www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/regionalwrkshps.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/regionalwrkshps.asp)

## **April 18<sup>th</sup> - April 24<sup>th</sup>**

National Library Week

## **April 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>**

West Slope Superintendent's Spring Conference  
Grand Junction  
For more information contact Ed Vandertook at  
[vandertook@earthlink.net](mailto:vandertook@earthlink.net) or (719) 486-2603

## **May 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>**

49<sup>th</sup> Annual International Reading Association Conf.  
Reno-Tahoe, Nevada  
Visit [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org) for more information.

## **May 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>**

24<sup>th</sup> Annual Parent Involvement Conference and  
the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Institute  
Keystone  
For more information contact Richard Garcia at  
(720) 890-0123 or [spccolo@aol.com](mailto:spccolo@aol.com)

## **June**

AYP Trainings  
Dates to be finalized soon

## **July 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>**

National Forum on Education Policy  
Sponsored by the Education Commission of States  
Orlando, FL  
Register online at [www.ecs.org/NationalForum2004](http://www.ecs.org/NationalForum2004)



reduced. Several needs assessments have been identified as good beginnings, including a tool used by San Diego City Schools ([http://henry.sandi.net/ws\\_announcements/surveys/parents\\_teachers.pdf](http://henry.sandi.net/ws_announcements/surveys/parents_teachers.pdf)).

3. Districts must have baseline data to which they can refer when gauging change. One possible tool for this is the PTA Checklist, which considers a broad range of ways in which parents are involved ([www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/standards/pdf/stndeng.pdf](http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/standards/pdf/stndeng.pdf)).
4. Begin the development of a district-level plan that incorporates parent involvement components from across programs (ex. Title III, Title IV, CRS). This will help to ensure that the district operates from a single plan.
5. Help staff understand the need to respect cultural differences related to parent involvement. Parents' perceptions of their roles in educating their children vary across cultures.

Clearly the work involved in evaluating district Title I parent involvement policies requires some upfront thinking. But the more people share what they're doing, the greater the likelihood that some strong models will emerge.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers**

The purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program is to provide academic enrichment activities to students (and their families) after regular school hours. These students attend schools that are low performing and are considered high poverty. These five year grants range from \$50,000-\$150,000 per year/per site.

The next 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant competition will award approximately \$6.9 million to eligible applicants. Local Educational Agencies, Community Based Organizations and Faith Based Organizations may be the lead applicant for the grant. However, they must be working in partnership with an eligible high poverty and low performing school. The RFP will be due on June 7, 2004. Grant training workshops will be offered in Aurora on April 13<sup>th</sup> and Grand Junction on April 15<sup>th</sup>. For more information visit <http://preview.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/21stGrant.htm> or contact Valerie Bass at (303) 866-6791 or by email [bass\\_v@cde.state.co.us](mailto:bass_v@cde.state.co.us)

## Regional Workshops

As mentioned in last month's issue of The Buzz, CDE will be hosting Regional Workshops to instruct district personnel on the completion of the Consolidated Federal Programs Application. A representative from each Title program will be on hand to guide individuals in the completion of the application as well as answer questions. CDE strongly believes that the day long workshop will provide enough information to save district personnel time in the completion of the application and the approval process.

Below are the dates and locations for the workshops. The workshops are free however we do need individuals to register by the dates listed. For a schedule of the day, directions to each location and to register online visit [www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/regionalwrkshps.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/regionalwrkshps.asp)

- April 13<sup>th</sup> Durango  
Glacier Club at Tamarron  
40292 US Hwy 550 N.  
*Register by April 9<sup>th</sup>*
- April 15<sup>th</sup> Pueblo  
Pueblo Convention Center  
320 Central Main Street  
*Register by April 9<sup>th</sup>*
- April 20<sup>th</sup> Lamar  
Best Western Cow Palace  
1301 N. Main Street  
*Register by April 16<sup>th</sup>*
- April 22<sup>nd</sup> Glenwood Springs  
Colorado Mountain College  
*Register by April 16<sup>th</sup>*
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> Montrose  
Best Western-Red Arrow Motor Inn  
1702 E. Main Street (US Hwy 50)  
*Register by April 16<sup>th</sup>*
- April 27<sup>th</sup> Greeley  
University of Northern Colorado  
501 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
*Register by April 23<sup>rd</sup>*
- April 29<sup>th</sup> Sterling  
Northeastern Junior College (NJC)  
100 College Avenue  
*Register by April 23<sup>rd</sup>*
- May 4<sup>th</sup> Denver  
Park Hill Golf Course  
4141 E. 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
*Register by April 30<sup>th</sup>*



### **Can we expect an increase in Title I funding for FY05?**

The percentage increase for the State of Colorado is not a valid figure for individual districts to rely on for their specific increase or decrease in funding for the FY05 allocations. The Title I funding is comprised of four different programs; Basic Grants, Concentration Grants, Targeted Grants, and Educational Finance Incentive Grants. The formula calculation differs for each of these programs. The individual district's funding is determined based on that district meeting the formula calculation for each of these programs. This year, the Federal Government did not fund the programs equally. The Basic and Concentration Grant programs were level funded to a slight decrease in funding. Whereas, the Targeted and Educational Finance Incentive Grants received large increases. Hence, Colorado did receive an overall percentage increase; however individual districts may see an increase or decrease in funding based on their individual populations in relation to the funding formulas.

The Grants Fiscal Management Services Unit is in the process of calculating the individual district FY05 preliminary allocations, including the required set asides, administration, and hold harmless provisions that are applicable. It is the Grants Fiscal Management Services Unit's plan to have the preliminary allocations available prior to the Regional Workshops which begin on April 13th. Preliminary allocations are subject to change as final numbers become available from the Feds.

### **What are the requirements of the "Principal Attestation" provision?**

Section 1119 of NCLB requires that each year principals in Title I schools attest in writing that their schools are complying with the "highly qualified" provisions of the law. Copies of the "Principal Attestation" must be kept at the offices of the school and district.

Please forward your question to Laura Hensinger at [Hensinger\\_L@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Hensinger_L@cde.state.co.us)



## UPDATES

The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition will hold its 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Parent Involvement Conference and the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Institute at Keystone Conference Center in Keystone, Colorado, May 28-30, 2004. This year the conference theme is *Parents and Educators Reinforcing Knowledge*. The conference will provide information about the responsibilities of parents and schools as described in the No Child Left Behind Act, Section 1118. This is the only family-oriented conference in the State of Colorado. It has built into its structure a Youth Institute for children ages 10 and above. Child care will be available for children ages 2-9. The conference registration fee will cover two nights lodging, meals and conference activities. Title I Parent Involvement set aside and certain other NCLB funds can be used to cover the cost of attending the conference. For additional information please contact Richard Garcia at (720) 890-0123 or by email at [spccolo@aol.com](mailto:spccolo@aol.com)

Did you know? --- Students with the most schoolwide access to licensed databases achieve 18-25% higher CSAP reading scores than students with the least access to such databases. Scores may be even higher if your school librarian collaborates with your teachers and technology specialist on using these library-based resources with students. Schools can help their students and save money by taking advantage of the reduced statewide price agreements negotiated by the Colorado State Library and the Colorado Library Advisory Board. The cost ranges from \$225 to \$585 per year, per building based on grade level and population served. Without this cost saving agreement, schools would pay between \$599 to \$3,199 per year. Subscribing to the print versions of these database resources would cost a library over \$58,000 a year! This eight database package from the EBSCO company includes:

- 550 full-text periodicals for students and 600 professional journals for educators,
- selected full text articles from 23 national and 200 regional US newspapers,
- 280 reference books,
- 86,000 primary source documents,
- 84,000 biographies,
- 300 full text health journals plus 20 health reference books, and much more.

Schools can sign up now for subscriptions running from July 2004 to June 2005. Pricing details, an FAQ, and descriptions of the databases are available at [www.aclin.org/committees/airs/ebscodb.htm](http://www.aclin.org/committees/airs/ebscodb.htm) or contact Brenda Bailey-Hainer at (303) 866-6907 or by email at [bailey\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:bailey_b@cde.state.co.us)

## Distinguished Schools

The first Title I Distinguished School to be highlighted in our series is South Elementary.

South Elementary located in Brighton has a staff committed to being a professional learning community where the data guides and directs our building level staff development and the need for instructional improvement. We are committed to learning and growing together through ongoing book studies that focus on the most effective instructional practices and methods that will enable our students to learn in an environment that recognizes each student's individual learning style and need for differentiated instruction.

Teachers use data and running records to clearly understand each child's achievement level. In an effort to make effective academic improvements, the schedule was reformed to provide:

- Grade-level blocks of time for reading, math and specials.
- Grade level blocks of time for all resources, instructional support, Title I services, special education and other building resources to reduce instructional group size and better meet the needs of all students.
- Unified grade-level teachers planning time

Literacy forms the core of our instruction. Students receive one hour and forty-five minutes of reading instruction daily. Students are placed into a flexible group according to their reading level, as determined by individual and whole group assessments, which allows us to meet the needs of the very low reader to the very high.

The Math curriculum is aligned with NCTM and State of Colorado standards. Guided and independent practice, specific and ongoing student feedback, and various ways of problem solving both orally and in written form are used to develop and reinforce concepts.

Non-English speaking students receive all core subjects in their native language of Spanish until they show proficiency in their native language. It is also our goal to have our second language learners maintain their native language and exit fifth graders as bi-literate.

For a more detailed description of South Elementary School's best practices please visit [www.cde.state.co.us/pdssp/index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/pdssp/index.htm) under *Spotlight*.



Colorado Department of Education  
Office of Special Services  
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**Did you miss the last Buzz? Visit [www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_funding.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_funding.htm) for a copy.**

**Concerns!!**

**Questions??**

**Comments**

*Do you want to be on the mailing list?*

**Contact Laura Hensinger at (303) 866-6675 or [hensinger\\_l@cde.state.co.us](mailto:hensinger_l@cde.state.co.us)**