

## ATTACHMENT #1

### SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINES FOR *SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT*

1. **PARENT NOTICE** : The school district must notify parents of students in all *Schools Identified for Improvement* explaining the school's status, how the school was designated, and how its performance compares with other schools of the same grade level in the district and the state. In addition, the notice must explain: the actions the school will be taking to address its low achievement, the assistance that the school will be receiving from the school district or state to accomplish the actions, and the options parents have to be involved in the school improvement efforts. Finally, the notice must explain how parents of students in Title I schools may exercise their options to transfer their children out of the low performing school and/or how parents of low income children may request supplemental services for their children. (See sections 2 and 3 below for more information on these activities.) The notice should be in a format and, to the extent practicable, a language that parents can understand.

For schools identified in Cycles I and II, the notice should be sent to parents by January 10, 2003. For schools identified in Cycle II only, the notice to parents may be included in the school's Report Card that the district will release in March 2003. (See **Attachment 3** for sample notice.)

2. **OPTION TO TRANSFER**: School districts must establish an equitable process for transferring students, at their parents' request, from a Title I *School Identified for Improvement* into another public school in the district that is not identified for improvement. All students in a *School Identified for Improvement* must be offered this option, however priority for the school choice option must be given to the lowest performing students from low income families in the school. (See section #6 below on funding for this activity.)

The regulations under No Child Left Behind stipulate that school districts must find options for students whose parents request a transfer, to the extent practicable. School districts may make arrangements for students to enroll in local charter schools. If all of the schools within a district are disqualified from receiving students because they are identified for improvement, school districts are encouraged to establish cooperative agreements with neighboring districts to accept students whose parents wish them to transfer to another school. If several schools within a district are available to receive transfer students, the district must take parent preferences into account. Students who exercise their option to transfer may continue to attend their new schools until they have completed the highest grade in the school. The school district's obligation to provide transportation for transfer students ends at the end of the school year in which the school is no longer a *School Identified for Improvement* or other corrective actions.

For schools identified in Cycles I and II, parents should be informed of this option in the January 10, 2003 notice to parents for implementation *no later* than February 1, 2003. For Title I schools identified only in Cycle II, the parents should be informed of the opportunity to transfer out of the school during the district's regular school assignment process, but *no later* than March 15, 2003, for enrollment at the start of the 2003-2004 school year.

- 3. SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES:** Please see **Implementation Memorandum #4** for a complete description of school district responsibilities under this part. School districts are reminded that according to Massachusetts law, students who receive warning/failing scores on the English language arts or mathematics MCAS must have an Individualized Student Success Plan in place that describes the specific supplemental education and supports the student needs and will receive in order to meet state standards.

For schools identified in Cycles I and II, parents must be informed about their options by January 10, 2003 and services should start by February 1, 2003. Title I schools identified *only in Cycle II* will be responsible for providing supplemental educational services in the Fall 2003. By November 1 2003, the Department will notify schools identified for improvement of their 2003 mid-cycle AYP determinations. Schools that **did not** make AYP in 2003 will be required to extend the term of supplemental service agreements through the end of the 2003-2004 school year. Schools that **did** make AYP in 2003 will not be required to make supplemental services available from January through June 2004.

- 4. PLANNING TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE:** In each of the *Schools Identified for Improvement*, the school district must ensure the development school plans to improve student achievement in the subject(s) and grade level(s) in which their performance did not meet state standards. School plans must be developed or revised in consultation with parents, school staff, the school district and outside experts.

NCLBA calls for school plans to be developed or revised within three (3) months of designation as a *School Identified for Improvement*. The plans must cover a two-year period. The school district must review the plans within 45 days of receipt, with the assistance of a peer review process. Given these timelines, school plans should be completed by the schools no later than March 31, 2003 and reviewed by the school districts no later than May 15, 2003. Schools must be prepared to implement the plan's summer program and professional development activities as soon as possible, but no later than July 1, 2003. School districts must ensure that *Schools Identified for Improvement* have plans in place that include the following elements:

- Establish annual, measurable goals and improvement objectives for student performance that will ensure that the school meets its Performance Targets under the School Performance Rating System for all students and student subgroups.

- Explain its analysis of the reasons why the prior school plan and school improvement activities failed to bring about improved student achievement.
  - Incorporate improvement strategies that will make the necessary changes in instructional practice and school programs to correct the reasons for the school's poor performance and are based, to the extent possible, on scientifically based research.
  - Directly address the academic issues that caused the school to be identified for improvement and have the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all students, including the school's subgroups, become proficient or advanced in the low performing content area(s).
  - Identify the high quality professional development that is needed to address the school plan's improvement objectives and raise the school's low performance in the identified grade(s) and content area(s) including the provision of teacher mentoring programs, as appropriate.
  - Include strategies for parental involvement that are tied to the school plan's improvement objectives.
  - Identify, as appropriate, before-school, after-school and other extended time programs to address the school plan's academic objectives for identified students.
  - Identify the Title I funding (if a Title I School) and other resources the school will use to implement the plan.
  - Specify the responsibilities of the school, the school district, and the state Department of Education, including the technical assistance to be provided by the school district.
5. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** As part of the school planning process, schools must identify the areas in which its faculty must participate in professional development activities that will lead to improved student performance. The professional development must meet the NCLBA standards for high quality and on-going professional development.
6. **FUNDING:** The school district must identify certain funding for each of the activities listed above that it must implement.
- In general, for each full school year, unless less funding is needed, school districts must make an amount equal to 20% of its Title I Part A funding available for the transportation of students exercising school choice options and to provide supplemental services to eligible students. The maximum amount of funding that districts must set aside for these services is as follows: 5% of its allocation must be used for transportation for school choice; 5% of its allocation must be used for

supplemental services; and 10% of its allocation must be used for a combination of costs for supplemental services and transportation in amounts as determined by the school district. School districts must make these funds available for the two full years in which its schools are identified for improvement.

For school districts implementing choice and supplemental services in January 2003, up to 20% of its Title I Part A funding must be spent to meet parent requests for these services this year. For school districts required to begin services next school year, 20% of the district's Title I Part A funds must be allocated in the 2003-2004 school year. When Massachusetts' State Plan is approved and further guidance is received, we will provide additional information on reserving funds for subsequent years.

- Title I schools must set aside 10% of its school's Title I allocation to use for the professional development activities it identifies in its school plan.
- In addition, school districts with *Schools Identified for Improvement* will receive an RFP for School Support Grants in January that will provide small grants for planning and school improvement activities.

7. **CORRECTIVE ACTION:** Because of the start-up of the NCLB, schools that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 4 years will not be considered to be in corrective action in this school year (2002-2003). If these schools do not make AYP in 2003, they will be considered to be in corrective action in the 2003-2004 school year. School districts should keep in mind that, for schools in corrective action, they will continue to offer technical assistance, and to offer the schools' students the options to request to transfer to another school and to request supplemental educational services. In addition, the school district will be required to take one or more actions which include: replacing certain school staff, implementing a new curriculum, significantly decreasing the school's management authority, appointing an outside expert to advise the school on its school improvement, extending the school's day or year, or restructuring the internal organization of the school. Most if not all districts providing assistance to lowest performing schools are currently using some of these methods already.

If you are interested in reading the relevant federal No Child Left Behind regulations associated with these requirements, see sections 200.32 through 200.28 at: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2002-4/120202a.pdf>.