



Commissioner's Back-to-School Meeting

Connecticut State Department of Education | August 22, 2016

Important Opportunities from the CSDE Turnaround Office

School and District Grant Opportunities

Schools of Excellence Best Practice Grant: Disseminating and Replicating Best Practices in Connecticut's Schools and Districts

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recognizes and celebrates schools' efforts to attain excellence with the release of the "Schools of Excellence Best Practice Grant: Disseminating and Replicating Best Practices in Connecticut's Schools and Districts. Formerly known as the Schools of Distinction Grant, the purpose of this competitive grant opportunity is to recognize schools that perform well overall as well as schools that are making substantial headway in closing the achievement gap between student groups. Grant recipients will receive up to \$25,000 each, serve as Connecticut "Spotlight Schools," and join a professional learning community of grantee schools which will foster new opportunities for collaboration and wisdom-sharing.

Eligible schools are those currently identified by the CSDE Performance Office as either:

- 1) 2015 Schools of Distinction, or
- 2) 2015 Schools with High Needs Student Groups Outperforming the State Average

Eligible schools are required to submit a school application. Districts with multiple eligible schools must complete an application for each school. Approximately 14 schools will be awarded two year grants.

Grant requirements include:

- Ninety percent of funds must be directed toward expanding and building sustainability of identified best practices which led to positive outcomes.
- Ten percent of the award must be directed toward sharing those best practices with other schools in the state. Sharing can occur in a variety of possible formats outlined in the application.
- Completion of an end-of-grant report at the end of two years.

The CSDE anticipates release of the grant application in September 2016. Superintendents with eligible schools will receive a direct notification from the CSDE and the grant application will be posted on the CSDE website.

Federal 1003(a) Grants: Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools

Under Section 1003(a) of Title I of ESEA, now reauthorized as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is seeking to assist local education agencies (LEAs) in dramatically improving student achievement in their lowest performing schools by making targeted investments in schools pursuing comprehensive and transformative improvement plans. This two-year grant will be awarded through a competitive grant process.

Grant Eligibility: Any Title I school in Connecticut which is classified as either a **Turnaround or Focus School**, identified in March 2016. Under ESSA, this grant competition is open to **any eligible Title I school in Connecticut**, regardless of whether that school is within an Alliance District. Districts with multiple eligible schools must complete a grant application for each school for which it intends to apply.

Grant Awardees: The number of schools receiving awards is determined by federal allocation of Title I funds. Awardees will automatically be considered for a second year of funding, contingent upon available funds, implementation effectiveness, and 2016-17 performance results and/or steady improvements in other outcome measures.

Grant Timeline: The anticipated two-year grant period is October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2018.

The CSDE anticipates release of the grant application in September 2016. Superintendents with eligible schools will receive a direct notification from the CSDE and the grant application will be posted on the CSDE website.

Professional Learning – School Climate and Restorative Practices

In the 2016–17 school year, the Turnaround Office will offer an array of professional learning in school climate to schools and districts in Connecticut. In addition to School Climate “basic training,” professional learning in Restorative Practices will also be offered. Restorative Practices focus not on the rules broken and punitive consequences but rather on the harms done and appropriate restorative consequences necessary to repair and support strong relationships.

Priority is given to Alliance Districts, but all schools are eligible if space is available. Offerings include, but are not limited to:

- School Climate Basic Training – Two day session
- School Climate Advanced Training – Three day session
- School Climate Training for High School Students – One day session
- Restorative Practices Basic Training – Two day session
- Restorative Practices Training for High School Students – One day session

A memorandum with more information will be sent to all Superintendents on or before September 1, 2016. For more information, please contact Jo Ann Freiberg, Education Consultant, Turnaround Office at joann.freiberg@ct.gov or by phone at (860) 713-6805