UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Pedro A. Rivera
Secretary of Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

AUG 31 2015

Dear Secretary Rivera:

I am writing in response to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)'s extension request for the use of fiscal year (FY) 2012 School Improvement Grants (SIG) program funds authorized under section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and made available under Public Law 111-161, the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2010. PDE is requesting to use the FY 2012 SIG funds through September 30, 2016 to allow SIG schools to fund continued implementation of SIG intervention models in its Cohort 3 and 4 schools during the 2015–2016 school year.

After reviewing the information provided by PDE in support of its waiver request, I am granting a waiver of section 421(b) of GEPA to extend the period of availability of Pennsylvania's FY 2012 SIG allocation until September 30, 2016. I am approving this waiver because it will allow Pennsylvania to utilize those funds in its Cohort 3 and 4 schools to continue SIG interventions in the 2015–2016 school year.

The waiver is granted on the following conditions:

- An assurance that the State educational agency (SEA) will approve a local educational agency's (LEA) request to implement the extended waiver only if the LEA has effectively used FY 2012 funds to carry out the SIG final requirements and improve student achievement, in accordance with section 9401(d)(2)(A) of the ESEA.
- An assurance that the SEA will develop criteria that will enable it to determine whether an LEA can continue to fully and effectively implement one of the models in its Cohort 3 and 4 schools for an additional year.
- An assurance that, prior to approving an LEA's request to implement the extended waiver, the SEA will apply the criteria it develops to ensure that the LEA will use the funds to fully and effectively implement a SIG intervention model in one or more SIG schools for one additional school year, including by reviewing and approving revised LEA budgets and plans for continuing full and effective implementation of the model during the 2015–2016 school year.
- An assurance that the SEA will develop a technical assistance and support plan that outlines how it will continue to support LEAs' implementation of the intervention models for the selected Cohort 3 and 4 schools that are approved to implement the extended waiver.

- An assurance that the SEA will develop a monitoring plan for the 2015–2016 school year, specifically for the LEAs that are approved to implement the extended waiver.
- An assurance that, within 30 days of the SEA's approving LEA requests to implement the extended waiver, the SEA will post on its public Web site and submit to the U.S. Department of Education (via e-mail at: OSS.Pennsylvania@ed.gov) the names of the LEAs (including their NCES District Identification Number) it has approved to implement the extended waiver, the schools (including their NCES School Identification Number) within those LEAs that will benefit from the extension of the period of availability of the funds, and, for each LEA and school, the amount of funds that will be extended.

I appreciate the work you are doing to improve Pennsylvania's lowest-performing schools and provide a high-quality education for all of its students. If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Light or Julie Glasier of my staff at: OSS.Pennsylvania@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Monique H. Chism

Monique Chism, Ph.D.
Director
Office of State Support

cc: Susan McCrone
Erin Oberdorf