



Community School E- Newsletter

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Center for School Options and Finance

Toll Free number: (877) 644-6338

TTY: (888) 886-0181

Office of Community Schools
community.schools@ode.state.oh.us

Joni Hoffman

Associate Director

Office of Community Schools

joni.hoffman@ode.state.oh.us

William Nelson

Associate Director

Office of Community Schools

william.nelson@ode.state.oh.us

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Eligible community schools may compete for School Improvement Grant (SIG)

ODE announced Feb. 3 that 163 community schools are eligible to compete for a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) for state fiscal year 2011. Authorized under section 1003(g) or Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, SIGs are awarded through state educational agencies to local educational agencies (LEAs) for certain Title 1 buildings.

According to federal guidance, the SIGs are to be awarded to persistently lowest achieving, Title I-eligible schools in three tiers. These schools have a ranking of School Improvement, Corrective Action or Restructuring. ODE evaluated student achievement in reading and mathematics – both current scores and that of a multi-year period – to determine which schools are defined as persistently lowest achieving.

Tier I schools currently receive Title I, Part A funds. In Tier II are secondary schools that are eligible for these funds, but are not currently receiving them. In Tier III are buildings that meet all criteria of Tier I, except that they are not considered to be among the persistently lowest achieving schools based on ODE's combined proficiency measurement for the SIG.

Although Tier I and Tier II schools will receive funding priority, remaining funds may be allocated to the Tier III schools. Dropout recovery schools (community school that serve over-

age, under-credited students who have dropped out of high school) are eligible for SIG Tier III funding. Title I-served or Title I-eligible secondary schools that have a five-year graduation rates of less than 60 percent also are to be given funding priority.

For more information, including the list of Ohio schools that may apply for the SIG, visit the [ODE Web page](#) on the ARRA page under the heading *Guidance and Uses of Funds – State*. (The SIG program is being expanded by funds made possible through the ARRA.) Note that if an LEA chooses to apply, and receives funds for, a Tier I or Tier II school, the agency must implement one of four school intervention models described in the application guidance.

Eligible community schools may submit competitive grant applications as they complete their comprehensive school improvement plans through the CCIP. Each grant application will be scored and rank ordered by trained external reviewers before funding is awarded.

Five meetings scheduled to complete the Competitive Application Process for SIG.

Community schools that are eligible to apply for the School Improvement Grant may attend one of five technical assistance meetings to receive guidance for completing the competitive application process.

Each of the five locations will offer a choice of either a morning (8:30 to 11:30 a.m.) session or an afternoon (12:30 to 3:30 p.m. session). The content will be the same in both sessions.

Participants must register through STARS for the regional meetings. Access STARS through your [SAFE](#) account.

Date	Region	Location	Address
March 5	NW	University of Findlay Alumni Memorial Union Multipurpose Room	1000 North Main Street Findlay, OH 45840
March 8	SE	Logan-Hocking School District High School Auditorium	14470 St. Rt. 328 Logan, OH 43138
March 9	SW	Scarlet Oaks Instructional Resource Center	3254 East Kemper Road Cincinnati, OH 45241
March 29	NE	R.G. Drage Career Technical Center Auditorium	6805 Richville Drive SW Massillon, OH 44646
April 9	Central	Ohio Department of Transportation Lower Level Auditorium	1980 W. Broad St. (US 40) Columbus, OH 43223

ARRA 21st Century Program competitive grant announced

A request for proposal (RFP) was recently released for the second round of competitive grants through the American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Title II-D Twenty-First Century program. Ohio will provide this education technology funding to selected local public school districts and community schools. The deadline for submitting an online letter of intent is 5 p.m. EST on March 12. The deadline for the proposal and other requirements is 5 p.m. EST April 1. To access the RFP and learn more details about the grant, visit [Etech's](#) Web site.

School Finance Updates

Third Quarter ARRA Reporting Begins

Thanks to everyone for completing the second-quarter corrections to the required American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) reporting. We finished just in time to start the third quarter reporting!

As with previous reporting, third-quarter information will once again be collected through a survey accessed through your SAFE account. The survey will open March 1 and close at 4 p.m. on March 19. Data collected this quarter includes the number of jobs created or retained, vendor information for selected vendors paid with ARRA funds and infrastructure information for selected grants.

There have been a number of questions raised and a great deal of confusion expressed regarding the number of jobs created and retained. A job is considered created or retained if it is funded with an ARRA grant. If the position is purchased through a personal service agreement, those positions also are considered to be created or retained. A full-time equivalent (FTE) staff position is calculated by: first dividing the numbers of hours worked by the number of hours in a full-time schedule; and then multiplying this product by the percent of the position's full cost that is funded with the ARRA grant. Thus, if an employee works a full-time schedule and the full cost of the employee's pay (salary plus benefits) is paid with the ARRA grant, the employee is one FTE. The following are examples of calculating the FTE.

Position	# Hours Worked	# Hours – Full Time	% of Position Funded	FTE
Teacher	210	420	100%	$(210 \div 420) \times 100\% = 0.50$
Administrator	480	480	25%	$(480 \div 480) \times 25\% = 0.25$
Lunchroom	300	300	50%	$(300 \div 300) \times 50\% = 0.50$

Another area that has created some confusion is the reporting of vendor information. The vendor name and zip-plus-4 code are required for each vendor that received **a single payment, from a single ARRA grant, in excess of \$25,000**. If the vendor received multiple payments that are each less than \$25,000, even when the total of the payments exceeds \$25,000, the vendor information should **not** be reported.

ARRA Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are there any limitations on the types of positions that can be paid for with State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) 532?

A. There are a few positions that cannot be coded to fund 532: the treasurer and staff members that primarily perform maintenance functions. According to Section 3313.24 of the Ohio Revised Code, the treasurer “shall be paid from the general fund of the district.” Thus, per Ohio law, the treasurer cannot be paid from fund 532. In addition to this limitation, ARRA legislation prohibits the cost of maintenance to be charged to fund 532. As a general rule, any expense charge to a function in the 2700 series would be a questionable use of the funds.

Q. My superintendent was told we do not need to complete time and effort reports or semi-annual certifications for staff funded with SFSF. I am sure I heard differently – so who is right?

A. In this case, you are both right. The initial guidance from the federal government did not specifically address this issue and ODE provided guidance recommending districts maintain time and effort or semi-annual certification for any staff funded with SFSF. However, last month, new guidance for record-keeping was published that addresses this point:

“Because of the nature of the SFSF program, there are no specific federal time and effort requirements that apply to individuals whose salaries may be supported with SFSF funds. Thus, the entities must maintain documentation to support the time and effort of these individuals in the same manner that it supports the time and effort of individuals performing similar duties who are paid with state or local funds. For purposes of the SFSF program only, entities may demonstrate, at a minimum, that an aggregate amount of funds was used to support a group of salary expenses. For example, an IHE (institution of higher education) may use Education Stabilization funds to support an entire pool of salaries as long as those salaries are considered to be general and education expenses.

At a minimum, to show that these costs are “reasonable and necessary,” as with other similarly situated employees, the entities must maintain contemporaneous documentation to show that:

- **Individuals for whom salary is paid worked sufficient hours to justify the salary;**
- **The level of salaries was similar to that of other employees who performed similar work and were paid from other sources; and**
- **The individuals were not paid more than once for the same work.**

Thus, the documentation should be able to demonstrate that the costs were reasonable for the service provided, that the service was actually provided, and that no other funds were paid for the same service.

Because the SFSF program does not support specific cost objectives or activities, an individual whose salary is paid in whole or part with SFSF funds is not required to maintain separate time distribution records. An individual whose salary is supported with both SFSF and state funds is not required to maintain records documenting the amount of time spent on SFSF activities because there are no specific ‘SFSF activities.’”

Monitoring Plan for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) Program, U.S. Department of Education, February 2010.

Q. Are we required to create specific appropriations for SFSF since this is really just replacing the general fund dollars that were already appropriated?

A. Yes. Quoting again from the latest federal guidance:

“An entity that receives SFSF funds must maintain records that separately track and account for those funds. In accordance with the requirements of Section 443(a) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232f (a)), **each recipient of SFSF funds must maintain records that fully disclose how those funds were used, the total cost of the activity for which the funds were used, the share of that cost provided by other sources, and such other records as will facilitate an effective audit.** It would be impermissible, for example, for an IHE to maintain documentation that the SFSF funds were transferred into a general account without further documenting how the SFSF funds were specifically used.”

Without the creation of a separate appropriation budget and expenditure plan, a district could not provide the level of detail to facilitate an effective audit.

Career-Technical Module

Community schools can now enter their career-technical student information into the School Options Enrollment System (SOES). Note: If course information is not reflected in SOES, it may be that the community school has not yet submitted the information in the Educational Management Information System (EMIS). This must be done first. If you have questions regarding either of these issues, please contact Karla Manter at karla.manter@ode.state.oh.us.

Foundation payment dates scheduled for the year

Payments to community schools are made no later than the 10th business day of each month. The 10th business day for each of the remaining months of the fiscal year are as follows: March 12, April 14, May 14 and June 14.

IDEA Updates

Call for presenters for the 2010 Special Education Leadership Conference

The Office for Exceptional Children is issuing a Call for Presenters for the 2010 Special Education Leadership Conference that will be held at the Columbus Convention Center on Sept. 20-21. The conference will focus on assisting Ohio educators in meeting the individual needs of all children, including children with disabilities, while providing them with good instruction.

The Call for Presenters is directed to those who are willing to share good practices for designing instruction that ensure every child's success. Preference will be given to topics focusing on inclusive practices, early childhood education in the least restrictive environment (LRE), both early childhood and postsecondary transition and positive behavioral supports. To access the Call for Presenters application, click [here](#). *Proposals are due on **March 2**.*

Career-Technical Education Updates

50 Community Schools are eligible to receive an onsite civil rights review

Community Schools that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education and those schools that operate career-technical education programs are required to follow federal civil rights statutes. This is true regardless of whether the funding received is used for career-technical programs or not. Career-technical programs include all workforce development and career-based intervention and/or GRADS programs. When applying to offer these programs, community schools signed an agreement that they would follow civil rights laws.

On a rotational basis, approximately 50 community schools are selected as eligible during a five-year period for receiving an onsite civil rights review. During this school year, and in the school years beginning in 2011 and 2013, about 17 of the 50 schools are eligible for onsite reviews. One of the 17 schools is chosen at random during each period. During onsite reviews, schools that lack policies and procedures for protecting civil rights will be required to prepare and implement a compliance plan.

For more information contact Elizabeth Badurina, ODE civil rights consultant at (614) 466-4835 or elizabeth.badurina@ode.state.oh.us.

Community School Highlights

HAS Cleveland Students Assist in Massive Medical Relief for Haiti Earthquake Victims

Cleveland's FOX 8 TV News and MedWish International sought assistance in gathering, loading and sorting donations for Haitian earthquake victims last month – and students at Horizon Science Academy, a community school next door to the station, responded to the call. Despite the timing of the station's relief efforts during their exam week, more than 100 Horizon students and staff took turns during free periods and after school to help with the 12-hour effort. As part of the station's volunteer corps, they retrieved donations from cars that lined up for a mile. They also repacked the items and filled 28 trucks with more than 160,000 pounds of water, diapers, flashlights and medical supplies. MedWish coordinated the delivery of goods to Haiti.

For more information about Horizon Academy, contact Sharon McGraw at (216) 432-3660 or mcgraw@horizoncleveland.org

Founder of ISUS is honored with 2009 Purpose Prize

Ann Higdon, the founder of Improved Solutions for Urban Systems (ISUS) in Dayton, will be honored with a 2009 Purpose Prize at a Summit on Innovation at Stanford University. The Purpose Prize acknowledges and honors the contributions of social entrepreneurs, age 60 and older, who use their experience and passion to successfully address society's formidable challenges.

ISUS operates three charter schools: the ISUS Institute of Construction Technology, the ISUS institute of Health Care and the ISUS Institute of Manufacturing. The schools focus on assisting dropouts to return to school, train for jobs and earn their diplomas. ISUS students give back to their community by building homes, volunteering in hospitals and refurbishing computers. To learn more about ISUS, call (937) 223-2323.

Steady growth for charter schools – and a boost from President Obama

The fifth annual edition of *Hopes, Fears & Reality*, issued by the National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP) last month, contains several positive indicators about charter schools' ability to improve public education. The report's author is Robin J. Lake, NCSRP executive director and associate director of the University of Washington's Bothell Center on Reinventing Public Education.

According to the report, federal funding programs such as Race to the Top are encouraging the growth of charter schools as a means of improving U.S. public schools. The report states, "It is not a question any longer of whether the number of charter schools will grow, but a question of by how much, in which cities, and serving what types of students." The report also summarizes possible shortcomings that charter school advocates and state policymakers need to address so that charter schools can become an option for more American families.

Lake writes, "By featuring charters so prominently in their education improvement plans, President Obama and Secretary Duncan have presented the charter sector with an unprecedented opportunity for growth and impact. The question is: can charter schools meet that challenge?" *Hopes, Fears, & Reality: A Balanced Look at American Charter Schools in 2009* can be downloaded at the [NCSRP](#) Web site. Contact the Center at (206) 221-3331.

Professional Development and Training Opportunities

Make-up training for OIP facilitator training scheduled

Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) facilitators who missed the September OIP training may participate in another program on March 10-12. The program is titled *Stage 3 of the Ohio Improvement Process: Implementation and Monitoring*. Register for the event through STARS, which is accessible through your [SAFE account](#). Questions regarding the training can be directed to Kris Lamphere, Office of Field Relations, at kris.lamphere@ode.state.oh.us or (614) 387-7723.

OCS Updates

Important FY2010 dates posted in annual timeline

The Community School Operations FY2010 Annual Timeline is available at education.ohio.gov by searching for: *Community School Timeline*. The timeline offers reminders of dates and events such as:

March

- **Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA): Jan. 18 through March 12** (*results available in May*). For more information, click [here](#) or view education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *test dates*, or call the ODE Office of Assessment at (614) 466-0223.
- **Ohio Graduation Tests: March 15-28**. For more information on test dates, click [here](#) or contact the Office of Assessment at (614) 466-0223.

April

- **PCSP and Dissemination Grants Application is Open**. The Public Charter School Program (PCSP) and PCSP Dissemination Competitive Grant Application period opened on Feb. 1 and ends on April 30.
- **Ohio Achievement Tests: April 19-May 7**. For more information, click [here](#) or view education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *test dates*, or call the ODE Office of Assessment at (614) 466-0223.

Contact Mary Cotton in the Office of Community Schools at (614) 466-7058 or mary.cotton@ode.state.oh.us with questions regarding the timeline.

Note: An archive of previous Community School Newsletters is available by clicking [here](#).