



NJDOE News

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### **\$45.3 million in School Improvement Grants Targeted to Improve Schools and Opportunities for Thousands of Urban Children**

The New Jersey Department of Education today announced the award of \$45.3 million in federal School Improvement Grants to help fundamentally change and improve 12 of the lowest-performing schools in New Jersey.

"Today we are providing new hope and a fresh start for thousands of children who have been trapped in underperforming schools," said Education Commissioner Bret Schundler. "But the School Improvement Grants represent more than hope for the children – they represent a new era of accountability that political leaders across the country, from President Obama to Governor Christie, are demanding when public money is spent." The grant funds have been made available from the U.S. Department of Education under its School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. The program is designed to target funds to persistently lowest-achieving schools based on measurements such as poor scores on standardized tests and graduation rates below 60 percent. Thirty-two schools in New Jersey met the eligibility requirements. Twenty-seven submitted applications.

For a school to be considered for a grant, the district had to submit plans that required replacing ineffective principals and developing a redesigned curriculum. Schools were required to choose one of four models of reform provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

The grants being awarded today will be used over a three-year period. The New Jersey Department of Education plans to announce a second competition for about \$28 million in federal School Improvement Grant funds during the next school year.

#### **Transformation Model Replaces Principals**

Seven of the 12 schools awarded funds selected the "Transformation Model" of reform which, under federal guidelines, requires the school to replace ineffective principals who led the school prior to the transformation. "This model represents a rejection of business as usual," Commissioner Schundler said. "To qualify for the funds, schools had to prove that they would make substantial changes. Districts must bring in new leaders to implement proven reforms that will break the cycle of failure in schools which have had poor student achievement scores for too many years."

Two elementary schools in Camden, the Essex County Vocational School, three schools in Newark, and Central High School in Trenton all won grants by proposing the "Transformation Model" for reform.

#### **Turnaround Model Requires Replacement of Principal and 50 Percent of Staff**

Four schools selected the "Turnaround Model," which, in addition to replacing the principal, requires them to rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff. The new principal must be granted sufficient control of staffing, the academic calendar and budgeting to implement a comprehensive approach to improve student outcomes, according to federal guidelines which control use of the funds.

Two schools in Jersey City, one in Newark, and one in Roselle Borough won grants by proposing the Turnaround Model.

#### **A Renaissance in Newark**

The most comprehensive reform was proposed by Renaissance Academy High School in Newark, which was awarded up to \$4.6 million. Under the federal "Restart Model" proposed by the school, it will be converted from one alternative education school with 14 separate programs to two independent schools.

"Some painful steps will be required to implement these bold reforms," said Commissioner Schundler. "But these schools are ready to break from the status quo. They know that a child's destiny should not be determined by his

or her street address. The districts say they are ready to make good on their promise to make changes and improve education for students. Governor Christie and I will be watching their progress closely and eagerly look forward to seeing positive results from this investment of public funds.”

### 2010 New Jersey Significant Improvement Grant Awards

<b>District</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Tentative Award *</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>U S Wiggins Elementary School</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$2,632,000.00</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>Cramer Elementary School</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$2,801,000.00</b>
<b>Essex County Vocational</b>	<b>W Caldwell Vocational</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$1,035,000.00</b>
<b>Jersey City</b>	<b>Fred Martin No 41 Elementary School</b>	<b>Turnaround</b>	<b>\$4,521,000.00</b>
<b>Jersey City</b>	<b>Henry Snyder</b>	<b>Turnaround</b>	<b>\$4,256,000.00</b>
<b>Newark</b>	<b>Shabazz High School</b>	<b>Turnaround</b>	<b>\$5,190,000.00</b>
<b>Newark</b>	<b>Central High School</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$5,068,000.00</b>
<b>Newark</b>	<b>Renaissance</b>	<b>Restart</b>	<b>\$4,584,000.00</b>
<b>Newark</b>	<b>West Kinney Alternative</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$3,974,000.00</b>
<b>Newark</b>	<b>Dayton St Elementary School</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$3,459,000.00</b>
<b>Roselle Borough</b>	<b>Abraham Clark High School</b>	<b>Turnaround</b>	<b>\$3,804,000.00</b>
<b>Trenton</b>	<b>Central High School</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	<b>\$3,933,000.00</b>
	<b>Total Awards</b>	<b>\$45,257,000.00</b>	