

Memo to the Field from Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner for Accountability

New York State Education Department
Field Guidance Memorandum
Restructuring Plans for Identified Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools and Schools Under
Registration Review

To: Superintendents of Schools in Districts with Persistently
Lowest-Achieving School or Schools Under Registration
Review

From: Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner for Accountability

Date: September 2010

Subject: 2010-11 School Year Restructuring Plans for Identified
Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools and Schools Under
Registration Review

In June 2010, the Board of Regents voted to amend Commissioner's Regulations 100.2(p) to merge the processes for identifying Persistently Lowest-Achieving (PLA) schools and Schools Under Registration Review (SURR). This amendment consolidates the processes of identifying schools as SURR under Commissioner's regulations with the United States Department of Education's (USDE) framework for identifying schools as PLA. The consolidation of the two processes was needed in order for New York to be eligible to access State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (Phase II), School Improvement Grants and other federal funding opportunities. As a result of these changes, newly identified SURR and schools that were identified as PLAs during the 2009-2010 school year will be required to implement intervention strategies based upon School Improvement Grant guidelines issued by USDE in January 2010. The purpose of this memo is to provide additional guidance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with schools that have been identified as SURR and/or PLA regarding the requirements of the regulations and the resources available to support plan implementation.

Under Commissioner's Regulations 100.2(p), schools that have been identified as SURR or PLA during the 2009-10 school year are required to submit for approval, in a format and according to a timeline approved by the Commissioner, a Restructuring Plan to implement one

of the following school intervention models as defined by the USDE School Improvement Grant Under 1003(g) guidelines:

- **Turnaround**
- **Restart**
- **Transformation**
- **School Closure**

Each model delineates a series of required actions for full implementation (see attached regulations). An LEA may choose to submit to the Commissioner a plan for a school that does not address all of the required actions within the chosen model. The Commissioner will then review the plan and determine whether or not it should be approved. The LEA should be aware that while the Commissioner may approve a Restructuring Plan that does not address all of the required actions of the chosen model, certain federal programs may require that all actions within the chosen model are implemented. Specifically, School Improvement Funds under Section 1003(g) will not be granted to an LEA for the PLA school if all of the required actions of the model are not implemented according to the timeline set forth by the USDE. Core elements of the turnaround and transformation models (those involving school leadership and staff) must be implemented in the first year of the grant.

In order to meet the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations, LEAs that have submitted an application for 1003(g) funds that has been approved by the State Education Department (SED) are required to take the following actions:

- ◆ Submit previously approved Model Implementation Plans (as submitted with the LEA's School Improvement Grant application) for each identified school. These plans must be revised to identify a person responsible for each action within the plan.
- ◆ Submit evidence of school board approval of the approved Model Implementation Plans.

These plans are due by October 15th. In addition, LEA Superintendents will be required to enter into a performance contract with the Commissioner, which delineates specific achievement targets on student achievement indicators. In the Fall, SED will provide LEAs with a template and a completion timeline for these performance contracts.

In order to meet the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations, LEAs that have submitted an application for 1003(g) that has not been approved by SED or that choose not to submit an application for

funding for some or all of the LEA's PLA schools are required to take the following actions:

- ◆ Submit Restructuring Plans for each identified school that outline the specific actions that will occur during the 2010-2011 school year, and that can be supported with the available 1003(a) funding. These plans must identify a person responsible for each action within the plan. Please use the Restructuring Plan template attached.
- ◆ Submit evidence of school board approval of the Restructuring Plans.

These plans are due by October 15th. In addition, LEA Superintendents will be required to enter into a performance contract with the Commissioner, which delineates specific achievement targets on student achievement indicators. In the Fall, SED will provide LEAs with a template and completion timeline for these performance contracts.

As in the past, in order to meet the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations, LEAs with schools that have been previously identified (prior to the 2009-2010 school year) as SURR and have not been identified as PLA are required to submit a Restructuring Plan by September 1, 2010 for approval by the Commissioner. The plan must address all of the findings of the school's Registration Review report and must describe the school and LEA's plan to increase student achievement. LEAs are not required within this plan to choose one of the four intervention models or implement the required actions of those models. However, if a school previously identified as a SURR is in the future identified as a PLA school, the LEA and the school will have to submit a Restructuring Plan, based on selection of one of the four intervention models. The template and guidance document for SURRs to use to complete a Comprehensive Educational Plan/Restructuring Plan (2010-11) can be found at: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/School_Improvement/cep.html.

All Restructuring Plans described in this memo should be submitted to:

Sandra Norfleet
Regional Education Coordinator
Office of Accountability
School Improvement Team
55 Hanson Place, Room 594
Brooklyn, New York 11217

Failure to successfully implement a Restructuring Plan, including the selected intervention model, could subject schools to revocation of registration. Schools that successfully implement a turnaround or the restart model or that improve results sufficiently to no longer meet the criteria for identification as PLA will be removed from Registration Review.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dr. Lisa Long at (718) 722-2796 or llong@mail.nysed.gov.

Attachment

(iv) Interventions.

(1) A school that is identified pursuant to subparagraph (9)(ii) of this subdivision as persistently lowest-achieving in the 2010-2011 school year or thereafter and placed under registration review, and a school that is identified pursuant to subparagraph (9)(ii) as persistently lowest-achieving in the 2009-2010 school year, shall implement one of the following interventions, in a format and timeline as approved by the commissioner:

(i) Turnaround model. Implementation of the turnaround model may include, but not be limited to, the following actions as approved by the commissioner:

(a) Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates;

(b) Using locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff that shall work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students:

(1) screen all existing staff and rehire no more than fifty percent; and

(2) select new staff;

(c) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that shall be designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of students in the turnaround school;

(d) Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies;

(e) Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA or SEA, hire a "turnaround leader" who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability;

(f) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards;

(g) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) that shall inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students;

(h) Establish schedules and implement strategies that shall provide increased learning time, as defined by the commissioner; and

(i) Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.

(ii) Restart model. Implementation of the restart model may include, but is not limited to, converting a school or closing and reopening a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected pursuant to a format approved by the commissioner.

(iii) School closure model. Implementation of the school closure model may include, but is not limited to, closing a school and enrolling its students in other schools within the district that are in good standing.

(iv) Transformation model. Implementation of the transformation model may include, but is not limited to, the following actions as approved by the commissioner; in

addition, the school shall be encouraged to partner with an external intermediary or "lead partner" that may assist the school with planning and implementation:

(a) develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness;

(b) replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;

(c) use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that:

(1) take into account data on student growth as a significant factor as well as other factors, such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates; and

(2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement;

(d) identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, through implementation of the transformation model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates, per rates defined by the commissioner; and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;

(e) provide staff ongoing, high-quality job-embedded professional development (e.g. regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies;

(f) implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that shall be designed to recruit, place and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school;

(g) use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards; and

(h) promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students

(i) establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time;

(j) provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement;

(k) give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates; and

(l) ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support for the LEA, the SEA or a designated external lead partner organization.

(2) A school as described in subparagraph (9)(iii) of this subdivision that is placed under registration review in the 2010-2011 school year or thereafter, shall implement a plan, in a format and timeline as approved by the commissioner, that shall, at a minimum, meet the requirements of a restructuring plan pursuant to subclause (6)(iv)(c)(2) of this subdivision and include at least one of the actions of a transformation or turnaround model.

**New York State Education Department
Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

Directions: Please complete the following form for **each** identified SURR/PLA school that will **NOT** be receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds Under Section 1003(g) for the 2010-2011 school year. **LEAs that have approved SIG 1003(g) applications do not have to complete this template for their SURR/PLA schools. Instead, those LEAs should resubmit the Model Implementation Plans for each identified school that were part of the approved SIG application, revised to identify a person responsible for each action within the plan.**

LEA: _____

NCES#: _____

School: _____

NCES#: _____

Grades Served: _____

Number of students: _____

In the chart below, describe the needs assessment process used, and the conclusions drawn for the school listed above. Include data gathered during any Joint Intervention Team or School Under Registration Review visit, with any additional information from local assessment tools.

Needs Assessment Process	List Data Analyzed	Major Findings

Describe how the Restructuring Plan addresses the major findings of the needs assessment.

**New York State Education Department
Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

In the chart below, provide a description of the school restructuring plan that details which of the intervention model actions will be implemented at the school during the 2010-2011 school year. Specifically describe how each chosen action meets a need identified in the needs assessment.

Intervention Model Actions	Description of how the action will be accomplished by LEA	Describe when the action will occur	Identify the person responsible for the implementation of the action	Describe the funding (Title I, 1003(a), local) that will be used to support the action
Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates				
Use locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students, (A) Screen all existing				

**New York State Education Department
Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

Intervention Model Actions	Description of how the action will be accomplished by LEA	Describe when the action will occur	Identify the person responsible for the implementation of the action	Describe the funding (Title I, 1003(a), local) that will be used to support the action
staff and rehire no more than 50 percent; and (B) Select new staff				
Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that-- (1) Take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduations rates; and (2) Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement;				

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Intervention Model Actions	Description of how the action will be accomplished by LEA	Describe when the action will occur	Identify the person responsible for the implementation of the action	Describe the funding (Title I, 1003(a), local) that will be used to support the action
<p><u>Note:</u> LEAs can demonstrate commitment through developing teacher evaluations that are based on a significant percentage of student growth in achievement.. “Significant” will be defined pursuant to NY’s Round 1 and, if submitted, Round 2 Race to the Top applications.</p>				
<p>Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice,</p>				

**New York State Education Department
Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

Intervention Model Actions	Description of how the action will be accomplished by LEA	Describe when the action will occur	Identify the person responsible for the implementation of the action	Describe the funding (Title I, 1003(a), local) that will be used to support the action
have not done so.				
Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the school				
Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to				

**New York State Education Department
Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

Intervention Model Actions	Description of how the action will be accomplished by LEA	Describe when the action will occur	Identify the person responsible for the implementation of the action	Describe the funding (Title I, 1003(a), local) that will be used to support the action
successfully implement school reform strategies				
Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new “turnaround office” in the LEA or SEA, hire a “turnaround leader” who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability				
Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic				

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Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

Intervention Model Actions	Description of how the action will be accomplished by LEA	Describe when the action will occur	Identify the person responsible for the implementation of the action	Describe the funding (Title I, 1003(a), local) that will be used to support the action
standards				
Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students				
Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time				
Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement				
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.				
Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time,				

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Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

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and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates				
Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO)				
If external partners will be used to accomplish all or any of the actions described- Recruit, screen, and select external providers to ensure their quality				

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Restructuring Plan for SURR/PLA Schools
2010-2011**

Describe any obstacles to implementing this plan (ex: collective bargaining agreements, lack of professional staff, etc.) that the LEA faces with this particular school, and how the LEA plans to address these challenges.

Describe how the LEA will modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively at this school.

