



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

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ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
OFFICE OF SCHOOL INNOVATION  
ROOM 475 EBA  
Tel. 518/474-4817  
Fax 518/474-7558

September 5, 2012

Ralph Pizzo, Superintendent  
Newburgh Enlarged City School District  
124 Grand St.  
Newburgh, NY 12550

RE: Notice of Award: Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround Grant  
Award Amount: \$289,250  
Time Period: September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014

Dear Superintendent Pizzo:

The New York State Education Department, School Turnaround Office (NYSED STO) is pleased to inform you that the Newburgh Enlarged City School District has been approved for the above referenced grant. As stated in the initial grant application, this award is contingent upon the submission and approval of the final Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the LEA and the partners no later than November 30, 2012.

The NYSED STO will serve as your lead program office for project oversight, assistance, monitoring, and reporting. Within the next several weeks you will be contacted by a representative from NYSED STO to set up an initial welcome and introduction telephone call.

We look forward to working with you and your leadership team on this innovative opportunity to improve student achievement in underperforming schools.

Sincerely,

Sally Bachofer

c: Owen Donovan

## **SYSTEMIC SUPPORTS FOR DISTRICT AND SCHOOL TURNAROUND**

### **Executive Summary**

The Newburgh Enlarged City School District is comprised of twelve schools. One comprehensive high school, on two campuses, four pre-kindergarten through grade five schools, three kindergarten-through grade five schools, two kindergarten through grade eight schools, and two middle schools, grades six through eight. Two of the pre-kindergarten through grade five schools and one of the kindergarten through grade five schools are in good standing. The remaining schools have not met annual measurable achievement objectives and have been preliminarily identified as focus schools, with one school potentially being a priority school. The district has also been preliminarily identified as a Focus District.

The secondary schools have been identified for a number of years. Each has received a Joint Intervention Team visit within the past two years. The elementary schools each received School Quality Review visits during the 2011-2012 school year. Several district level configurations have been developed to increase support for schools, yet none have had a sustained impact on achievement. School based interventions and district level initiatives have been identified and implemented with slight increases in student achievement.

The current Superintendent requested senior staff of the district to research other district level organizational structures in districts similar to Newburgh with evidence of growth in student achievement. As a result of the study, the implementation of the Race to the Top Initiative and an overwhelming need to address opportunities for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged students, black and Hispanic students, the district will be implementing a Turnaround Initiative with the support of funding from the New York State Education Department.

### **Evidence of District Capacity to implement the Turnaround Initiative**

The Newburgh Enlarged City School District has embraced the Race to the Top initiatives as an opportunity to re-build our educational foundation. As a result of participating in the New York State Education Department Network Team Equivalent training the following district-wide initiatives will occur:

District curriculum and aligned assessments will be written reflective of the Common Core State Standards. Modules and units from the New York State Education Department will be reviewed, enhanced and adopted.

District wide, course specific, interim assessments will be developed and/or adopted.

Student Learning Objectives will guide teachers to reflect on the most essential learning for their course. Specific attention will be paid to our high need populations. Baselines

will be determined, growth targets set, and teachers will be evaluated based on the actual growth of the students.

State growth measures and local assessment scores will be used to inform teacher and principal evaluations.

Data driven instruction will be defined, supported and monitored in the district and in the schools.

The district has long standing relationships with other New York State Systems of Support for school districts. Through the support of the Special Education Improvement Specialists, The Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Center and the New York University Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality:

Administrators and staff will be trained on cultural competency and the impact culture has on instruction and discipline.

Special Education teachers, in schools identified for achievement of students with disabilities, will receive embedded instructional support.

Positive Behavior and Instructional Supports will be implemented

Bilingual Special Education staff will receive training and professional development

Through the support of the New York State Regional Bilingual Technical Assistance Center:

Professional development and technical assistance will be provided to support Bilingual, ESL and Dual Language classes.

### **The District Approach to supporting school turnaround**

Upon analysis of school district turnaround initiatives, presented by Mass Insights, assessment of the internal capacity of central office and the support from our New York State partners, the district has agreed to adopt a combination of the Lead Partnership Model and the Internal District Partnership Model. This model was chosen as a preventive measure that will build the internal capacity of the district to address the needs of Focus schools through piloting the interventions with the Lead Partner in the Priority School. It is our intention that Focus schools “Turnaround” at a similar rate as the Priority school.

### **Reorganization of the Central Office**

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction will be known as the Division of Teaching and Learning. An Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement and an Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction will lead the Division of Teaching and Learning.

The Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction will oversee the design, development and implementation of the district curriculum and assessments. This position will be an integral part of the Turnaround Initiative in the District. Integrity of policies and procedures will be a major focus of this position over the course of the next few years. This position also includes oversight for district wide professional development, aligned with district non-negotiable expectations. Special attention will be paid to curriculum support for the development and implementation of modules and units, baseline assessments, summative assessments and interim assessments.

The Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement will be responsible for the development of a turnaround initiative and compliance with the new ESEA Flexibility waiver. Emphasis will be placed on supporting all school leaders, with a concerted effort in Priority and Focus schools to implement the curriculum, instruction, assessment and data driven inquiry model. This newly created position will have responsibility for the oversight of the Division of Teaching and Learning and will specifically oversee the development of systems, structures and protocols that will support a cohesive system of support between the school and the district. Evaluation of all school principals will provide the level of authority required to insure accountability.

The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and the Executive Director of Human Resources will continue to lead the division. The division will have added responsibilities for:

- Alternative Education Opportunities for our students in need of alternative learning environments.
- Implementation of the district diversity initiatives will include the coordination of the district culturally responsive education project with New York University.
- Researching and developing data systems to organize the teacher and leader evaluation data. This will assist in the placement of highly qualified teachers in leaders in the high need schools.
- The creation of growth plans for ineffective and developing teachers and leaders will be a priority.

### **The School Turnaround Plan**

The Newburgh Enlarged City School District seeks to utilize the funds provided from this grant to build the capacity of district and school leadership to increase opportunities for all students to be college ready and career prepared upon graduation.

The school district will design and implement a School Improvement Department that will:

Coordinate and co-facilitate the development of a multi-year strategic plan for the district that sets rigorous targets, defines the district vision and core values and beliefs

Be responsive to the ESEA waiver and implement the required compliance tasks defined in the July 2012 letter from Mr. Ira Schwartz

Increase the communication and explicit expectations between the district and the school

Develop administrative teams in each school that will require increased instructional rigor in every classroom by ensuring successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Monitor the student achievement growth by embedding a cycle of data driven inquiry in the school, at the grade level and in each classroom.

Coordinate the work of Curriculum and Instruction to insure that expectations for curriculum implementation, instructional delivery and assessment administration, including analysis and informed teaching and learning, are implemented in all schools.

Assist the Curriculum and Instruction Department to review policies that impact course credit, grading, promotion and retention, reporting pupil progress, academic achievement, graduation requirements, Response to Intervention and other applicable board policies.

Assist the Curriculum and Instruction Department to develop an Academic Intervention Services/Response to Intervention Plan that is responsive to the needs of the students.

Support the Division of Human Resources to:

Design and implement Alternative Education options in the district.

Assess barriers and obstacles as a result of hiring practices and contractual obligations that prevent the most effective teachers and leaders being assigned to the highest need schools.

Build the capacity of all leaders in the district with regards to cultural competency and diversity.

**The district has agreed to partner with the Capital Area School Development Associates to:**

Guide the development of a school improvement department grounded in turnaround research.

Evaluate the proposed design of the school improvement department, system and structure, based on the required activities set forth in the ESEA waiver.

Design and develop a monitoring system that will provide interim evidence as to the effectiveness of the work informed by the Department of School Improvement.

Develop a district comprehensive education plan

Develop and train a district data inquiry team

Develop and train a school based data inquiry team in the Priority School

Develop a district operating protocol for the systems and structures embedded in the school improvement department.

Implement school based, leadership interventions in the Priority School with the Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement. The Assistant Superintendent will then replicate the interventions in all other Focus schools. These interventions must address the high need populations in the school. Specific support for comprehensive planning, data based inquiry and professional learning communities must be included.

Assist Human Resources to review staffing concerns, coordinate cultural competency professional development, and design an alternative education program in the district.

(The district has submitted a grant to increase Teacher and Leader Effectiveness. This proposal was written to align with initiatives described in that grant application.)