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To: Superintendents of Focus Districts

From: Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner *Ira Schwartz*

Date: September 17, 2014

Subject: Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness Professional Learning Community

The purpose of this memo is to inform you about the opportunity for your district to participate in the 2014-15 school year Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) Professional Learning Community Program (PLCP). The PLCP is designed to build capacity of staff within Focus Districts to create and implement a 3-year School Comprehensive Educational Strategic Plan. The DTSDE PLCP will consist of two cohorts: Focus Districts that participated in the PLCP in the 2013-14 school year are eligible to receive a supplemental allocation for their 2014-15 Basic Title I 1003(a) School Improvement Grant to participate in PLCP Cohort I (2013-2015); all other Focus Districts are eligible to participate in PLCP Cohort II.

DTSDE Professional Learning Community

The goal of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) Professional Learning Community Program (PLCP) is to build the capacity of Focus District staff to create and effectively implement a 3-year School Comprehensive Education Strategic Plan (SCESP) that the New York State Education Department (NYSED or “the Department”) envisions will ultimately replace the requirement that Priority and Focus Schools develop an annual SCEP. School team members will be introduced to the DTSDE conceptual frameworks and will broaden and deepen their common understandings of the core strategies and concepts undergirding the DTSDE rubric and school improvement efforts. The PLCP will provide participants an opportunity to support their school’s turnaround goals and initiatives by engaging in a rich learning experience and exchange with other districts, national and state experts, as well as organizations dedicated to education reform and innovation.

The PLCP will convene for both face-to-face sessions and web-based interactive sessions from October 2014 to May 2015. Each PLCP session will have a topic or theme of focus for each month that will be facilitated by national education reform experts, NYSED senior staff, and/or Regents Research Fund fellows. The PLCP will have five face-to-face sessions scheduled to occur in October, December, February, April, and May.

We anticipate being able to accommodate up to ten district and accompanying school teams. To participate in the PLCP, interested districts must complete the enclosed District Readiness Assessment and submit it by **Friday, September 26, 2014** to DTSDereviews@mail.nysed.gov.

Participating Title I eligible Focus Districts will receive a \$25,000 supplemental allocation for their 2014-15 Basic 1003(a) grant to use to pay for professional development activities aligned to their participation in this program.

Please note that schools receiving 1003(g) funds during the 2014-15 school year are not eligible for this initiative. Please also note that federal funds may not be used for registration fees that include meals; however, travel per diems are allowed according to state travel rates and regulations.

We look forward to supporting your improvement efforts in the new school year.

Enclosures

cc: Monica George-Fields
Wendy Perdomo
Stephen Earley
Roberto Reyes