



Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner
Office of Accountability
55 Hanson Place, Room 400
Brooklyn, New York 11217
Tel: (718) 722-2796 / Fax: (718) 722-4559

To: Superintendents of Focus Districts
From: Ira Schwartz *Ira Schwartz*
Date: September 17, 2014
Subject: Reward School Mentor Program

The purpose of this memo is to inform you about the Reward School Mentor Program for Focus and Priority Schools. The New York State Education State Department (NYSED or “the Department”) designed this new initiative to create a mentoring relationship between a Reward school mentor principal and (3) Focus or Priority school mentee principals. This opportunity will enable the (3) Focus or Priority school principals to learn and understand the Reward school’s strategic practices that have led to high student achievement and academic success.

The Reward School Dissemination Grant Mentor Program

The Reward School Mentor Program is an opportunity for interested districts with Priority and Focus School to select principals to participate in an atmosphere that fosters comprehensive learning aligned to specific Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness tenet(s). This mentorship program will help participating mentee principals focus their own school improvement implementation efforts outlined in the school’s SCEP by encouraging the mentee principal to create and implement one to two of the successful systems and structures implemented in the Reward school.

Additionally, this program will help each mentee principal develop strategies for how to successfully adopt, modify, or develop organizational practices that will foster a culture of success at his or her school. This process will also provide the mentee school leader the opportunity to engage in a rich learning experience and exchange with other Reward School principals and school improvement experts.

Interested Focus Districts and Focus or Priority school principals must apply by identifying a specific DTSDE tenet(s) or a statement(s) of practice for which the school is seeking to build greater capacity or expertise to help fulfill the goals and expectations of their school’s existing SCEP. NYSED expects superintendents applying to this program to endorse the mentee principal’s full participation and ensure that the mentee principal attends all scheduled events.

The program participants will convene for both face-to-face sessions and web-based interactive sessions from November 2014 thru May 2015. Each convening will focus on a topic or theme specifically designed to meet the needs of that mentee site principal. An educational consultant will facilitate the larger convening sessions for all program participants. We anticipate being able to accommodate up to 18 Focus or Priority school

mentee principals. Additional information about this opportunity is enclosed. Interested Focus Districts must complete the enclosed Principal Readiness Assessment and submit it by **Friday, September 26, 2014** via e-mail to DTSDereviews@mail.nysed.gov.

Participating Title I eligible districts will receive a supplemental allocation for their 2014-15 Basic 1003(a) School Improvement Grant in the amount of \$5,000 per participant to support implementation of lessons learned during the Mentoring Program, including implementation of the District Capacity Plan. Districts will be able to submit an FS-10-A amendment for their approved 2014-15 Basic 1003(a) School Improvement Grant after they have been accepted for the Reward School Mentoring Program.

Should you have any questions about the Reward School Dissemination Grant Mentor Program, please contact the Office of School and District Review through our electronic mailbox at DTSDereviews@mail.nysed.gov and designated staff will respond to the query as expeditiously as possible.

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