



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TOM HORNE
SUPERINTENDENT
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June 22, 2009

The Honorable Dr. Joseph C. Conaty,
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
United States Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

RE: Request for Waiver of the Tydings Period for FFY07

Dear Assistant Secretary Conaty:

On behalf of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and at the suggestion of Carolyn Lampila our liaison to the federal Reading First Office, I am writing to request a Waiver of the Tydings period (e.g., no cost extension) for the Arizona Reading First (RF) Program for FFY07. These are funds that are due to expire on September 30, 2009. Our budget office has informed me that we will have approximately \$2.3 million of unexpended funds that we must use by September 30, 2009 if we do not receive the waiver.

In large measure, we anticipate having these unexpended funds due to the following: 1) full implementation of Arizona's RF program began in Year 2 of the federal grant award; 2) receipt of the supplemental award on September 25, 2008; 3) approved funds to LEAs will not be fully expended as of the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2009; 4) approved funds to LEAs that will be returned during the Completion Report close-out process from districts that are not continuing in the RF Program; 5) approved funds to LEAs that are returned to the ADE as a consequence of Compliance Monitoring findings of unallowable or unauthorized use of RF funds; and 6) annual contract payments to our External Evaluator (ASU/APRC), professional development and technical assistance provider (WestEd), and intergovernmental agreements for State Reading Specialists to provide ongoing regional professional development and technical assistance that are less than the total allocated contractual amounts.

Consequently, most of our FFY08 (July 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009) Reading First funds for Subgrant assistance awards to LEAs, professional development, and technical assistance are still available and will be carried forward into FFY09 effective July 1, 2009.

Continued

Formatted Table

These carryover funds, when combined with the unexpended/returned funds from FFY07, will enable us to continue to provide a meaningful level of sustainability funding through September 30, 2010 for direct Subgrant assistance awards to current Reading First schools and LEAs that meet established performance criteria as evidenced by the data. Additionally, these combined funds will enable us to continue to strategically allocate resources for high quality regional professional development and targeted technical assistance delivered by veteran certified reading experts.

It is for these reasons and the aforementioned purposes that we would like to use the estimated \$2.3 million remaining of our FFY07 grant. More specifically:

- We are planning to continue to fully fund the Intergovernmental Agreements with nine LEAs to support 12 State Reading Specialists – Master Teachers of Reading On Loan to the Reading First Program totaling approximately \$1.3 million. State Reading Specialists will continue to provide expert technical assistance, training and support services to both the schools that were awarded dollars under the competitive subgrant process and the remainder of schools in all fifteen (15) of Arizona’s counties where they are assigned. State Reading Specialists will continue to provide teacher education in research-based instructional practices so as to build a statewide training cadre while greatly enhancing local capacity for service delivery.
- The remaining funds will be expended on the following: We have developed extensive professional development opportunities through our RF program for K-3 educators that address the essential components of reading instruction. The scope and depth of our trainings have increased significantly and this extensive course work has been articulated by level of difficulty ranging from beginner courses to advanced study. We are planning on providing substantial training to K-3 educators across the state, coordinating our efforts with our state RTI initiative, school improvement efforts and ELL instruction. This professional development will be provided regionally to ensure access to all educators especially those in our rural areas. Along with classroom teachers, the audience will include special education teachers, ELL teachers, reading coaches and school improvement coaches. Expert, highly trained staff developers will provide face-to-face training, and follow up with web based support. In our most needy schools, staff will provide site based technical assistance. We will be working closely with district leadership, building capacity at the local level and coordinating efforts from the state department.
- Additionally, we intend to use the balance of the funds to support the development of online resources and coursework. We are developing a series of web based resource guides that are centered on the key components of effective reading instruction and based on our RF project. These resources are an essential tool for our Arizona RTI initiative and coordinate with the implementation of our English Language Arts standards. The Arizona Reading First project is a success story in many of our schools and we are committed to continuing to support the implementation of this comprehensive system of reading instruction.

The combination of the estimated \$2.3 million from FFY07 and the carry-over of FFY08 funds will enable us to continue our Reading First project for one more year for up to 40 LEAs and 100 schools, subject to their meeting established performance criteria as evidenced by the data. Additionally, while these funds are sufficient to provide reduced-level Subgrants to the qualifying Reading First schools in FFY09 for support of a Reading Coach, we are asking the current Reading First districts and schools to use Title I funds and other sources to sustain implementation with fidelity of the key elements of Reading First. Those districts and schools that agree to do so will be part of our professional development activities for 2009-2010.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request for Waiver of the Tidings Period for FFY2007 for Reading First.

Please contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Respectfully,



Kathryn Hrabluk, Associate Superintendent
Arizona Reading First Program Director
School Effectiveness Division