Date: October 31, 2019
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: Title I Directors and Principals of Title I Schools
From: Peggy McDonald, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services
Deadline: November 15, 2019

2020-2021 Schoolwide Poverty Percentage Waiver

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), provides an exception for participating Title I schools with less than 40-percent poverty rates to request waivers to operate Title I Schoolwide programs. Transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program increases a school's flexibility to address the needs of all students (particularly those who are low performing), as well as families and staff.

Given the above, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is providing an opportunity for interested schools to apply for waivers to implement Title I schoolwide programs in the 2020-2021 school year. Schools with less than 40-percent poverty rates that are interested in the transition process must submit a Title I schoolwide waiver request application using the template on the NJDOE’s Title I webpage. The waiver request must be submitted no later than Friday, November 15, 2019 via email to schoolwide@doe.nj.gov.

The NJDOE will issue official notifications to schools upon approval of the waiver requests, with specific instructions on the next steps in the transition process to schoolwide programs.

For further information on Title I schoolwide programs, please review the following guidance documents from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE):

- USDOE Schoolwide Letter to Chief State School Officials – This July 2015 letter focuses on various aspects of schoolwide programs and serves as a schoolwide resource tool.
- Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program – This guidance highlights advantages and flexibilities inherent in schoolwide programs.

For questions about transitioning to a Title I schoolwide program under this waiver process, contact the Title I team at schoolwide@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group