

August 7, 2007

Ms. MaryEllen Elia
Superintendent
Hillsborough County Public Schools
901 E. Kennedy Blvd.
P.O. Box 3408
Tampa, FL 33601

Dear MaryEllen:

I am writing to notify Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) that it may continue its participation in the supplemental educational services (SES) pilot for the 2007-08 school year. As you know, HCPS began its participation in this pilot in 2006-07, allowing it to provide SES to eligible students although it was a district identified for improvement. HCPS reported to the Department twice during the past school year, as required, and met the conditions for participation. HCPS reported that it increased the SES participation rate from 14 percent in 2005-06 to 19 percent in 2006-07; notified parents about SES options at multiple times and through different venues; offered an extended enrollment period; and offered private providers the use of school facilities at 77 schools.

Additionally, as part of this offer of flexibility, I am allowing HCPS to count toward meeting the 20 percent expenditure requirement for SES and choice-related transportation, up to 1 percent of that amount (0.2 percent of HCPS's total Title I allocation) on parent outreach activities for SES. The purpose of this flexibility is to support high-quality outreach efforts for SES.

By extending HCPS's flexibility agreement, I am using my authority under section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, to grant HCPS eligibility to be a provider of SES to eligible students in Title I schools even though your district has been identified for improvement and thus is precluded from providing SES under 34 C.F.R. §200.47(b)(1)(iv)(B). My approval of this flexibility agreement for 2007-08 is conditioned on HCPS's fulfilling the conditions detailed in the enclosure to this letter, which include submitting an interim and a final report to this Department on January 1, 2008, and on June 30, 2008, respectively.

In addition, as part of the terms of this flexibility agreement, HCPS must submit a report under section 9401(e)(1) of the ESEA to the Florida Department of Education at the end of the 2007-08 school year that describes the district's provision of SES to eligible students in Title I schools; describes how those schools continued to provide Title I services to eligible students; and evaluates the progress of the district and schools in improving the quality of instruction and the

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academic achievement of students. The Florida Department of Education must then submit a report to the U.S. Department of Education based on HCPS's report.

As part of your participation in the SES pilot, we also ask for your continued assistance with the third-party evaluation that we are conducting of HCPS and the other districts participating in the pilot. We will need HCPS to supply our evaluator with student achievement data files and other information necessary to conduct an evaluation of the effects of SES on student achievement.

This flexibility agreement continues to serve several important goals: increasing the numbers of students receiving SES; ensuring early notice about SES through multiple venues and extended enrollment windows; allowing external organizations reasonable access to school facilities; and providing information on the academic achievement of students receiving SES. We hope that HCPS will be a model of high-quality implementation of SES. We ask HCPS to share with the Department examples of those practices and strategies that are effective and information on why, so that we can disseminate that information to other districts around the country.

This extension of your flexibility agreement applies to the provision of SES in Title I schools in HCPS during the 2007-08 school year and is subject to a review at the end of that school year to determine if the flexibility will be continued.

SES is an important component of NCLB, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that students are accessing services and succeeding in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Margaret Spellings

Enclosure

cc: Jeanine Blomberg
Commissioner of Education