

Options For Families: Supplemental Educational Services Pilot Programs

September 2008

"No Child Left Behind has truly empowered parents with better information and more options, including free tutoring under the supplemental educational services provision of the law."

— Secretary Margaret Spellings

Giving Parents Real Options By Implementing Quality Supplemental Educational Service Programs.

- **Supplemental educational services (SES)**, which include free tutoring and other academic assistance, are an important component of *NCLB*, providing low-income parents with real options to improve their children's academic performance. This extra help is offered to the neediest students in schools deemed "in need of improvement" for at least two consecutive years (a designation received after missing adequate yearly progress goals for three years). It is a vital element of school reform.
- SES is a new provision under *NCLB*, and we have learned valuable lessons in its first years of implementation. Setting up a successful SES program requires **close coordination and cooperation** between a state, its school districts, SES providers, and parents. A recent study of nine urban districts found that students receiving SES experienced **significant gains in achievement**. And there is evidence that effects may be cumulative: students participating for multiple years experienced gains twice as large as those of students participating for one year.
- Unfortunately, despite progress in offering SES to eligible students and families, evidence remains that this provision is **not being implemented to its full potential**. Too few eligible students are receiving SES. According to reports from states, only about 14.5 percent of eligible students across the country participated during the 2006-07 school year.

Under the Leadership of Secretary Spellings, the U.S. Department of Education Continues to Implement SES Pilot Programs During the 2008-09 School Year.

- To improve the delivery and quality of SES to students, the Department initiated two **SES pilot programs** in the 2005-06 school year in a select number of states and school districts across the country and has continued these programs through the 2008-09 school year.
- The Department is gaining valuable knowledge about SES from these pilot programs—information that can be shared with states and districts to improve the quality and delivery of these services.

SES Pilot Programs in Select Urban School Districts.

- In the first pilot, the Department is working with select urban school districts that are committed to providing SES to greater numbers of eligible children. Pilot districts are eligible to serve as SES providers and, in exchange, must implement a set of good practices to increase student participation in SES.
- These districts have agreed to provide:
 - Early notification to parents of their children's eligibility to participate in SES, and notification that is clear and concise, as well as clearly distinguishable from other school improvement information;
 - A Web site that provides information on SES and public school choice, including eligibility and participation data, and lists of available SES providers in the district and available schools to which students eligible for public school choice may transfer for the 2008-09 school year;
 - Extended enrollment periods so that parents can make the best choice for their child;
 - Sign-up forms that are widely available and accessible;
 - A level playing field for all providers; and

- Academic data analyzed by an independent third party to evaluate the effectiveness of SES services.
- Additionally, these districts have agreed that, prior to spending any unused funds set aside to meet the 20 percent expenditure requirement for other activities, they will provide evidence to their state that they have demonstrated success in meeting the conditions of this pilot.

In the 2008-09 school year, **five districts** are participating in this pilot: **Anchorage School District, Boston Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Hillsborough County (FL) Public Schools, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Schools.** Boston and Chicago have participated in this pilot since the 2005-06 school year, while Anchorage and Hillsborough have participated since 2006-07.

SES Pilot Programs to Offer SES to Students in Schools in Year One of Improvement.

- In the 2005-06 school year, the Department also initiated a pilot program with the state of **Virginia** that allowed four districts in the state to offer SES to schools in year one of improvement—one year earlier than the law requires. In subsequent years, this flexibility was offered to additional states. In the 2008-09 school year, there are eleven States participating in this pilot program; seven of these States were given flexibility through the SES Pilot, and four of these States were given flexibility through the Differentiated Accountability Pilot. The chart below details the years in which different states agreed to participate in this flexibility.

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Alabama				X
Alaska		X	X	X
Arkansas				X
Delaware		X		
Florida				X*
Georgia				X*
Illinois				X*
Indiana		X	X	X*
North Carolina		X	X	X
Tennessee				X
Utah				X
Virginia	X	X	X	X

* indicates these States have received approval to participate in this pilot through their Differentiated Accountability proposal.

- As part of their flexibility agreements, these eleven states have committed to increasing the number of eligible students participating in SES; maintaining a comprehensive list of SES providers; and ensuring that their participating districts provide timely, clear, and accurate notice to parents, offer extended enrollment periods, and provide a level playing field for all providers.