

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**National Awards Program for Model Professional Development Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000**

*Purpose of the Program:* The National Awards Program recognizes a variety of schools and school districts with model professional development activities in the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels that have led to increases in student achievement. The FY 2000 competition focuses on schools and school districts that meet the eligibility and selection criteria for this program, as published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

*Eligible Applicants:* Schools and school districts in the States (including schools located on Indian reservations, and in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas) that provide educational programs in the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels.

*Applications Available:* October 18, 1999.

*Deadline for the Transmittal of Applications:* January 18, 2000.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* March 20, 2000.

*Funds Available:* None, but the Department intends to pay the costs of having successful applicants make presentation on their professional development activities at regional and national conferences.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* Up to 10.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Eligibility and Selection Criteria:* The eligibility and selection criteria and selection procedures in the notice of final eligibility and selection criteria for this program, as published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**, apply to this competition.

*For Applications or Further Information Contact:* Sharon Horn, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW—Room 506E, Washington, DC 20208. Telephone: 202-219-2203. Inquiries also may be sent by e-mail to sharon\_horn@ed.gov or by FAX at 202-219-2198. The application package also is available electronically on the Department's Teacher Web Page at: <http://www.ed.gov/inits/TeachersWeb/> If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative

format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed under **FOR APPLICATIONS OR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

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**Program Authority:** 20 U.S.C. 8001.

Dated: October 13, 1999.

**C. Kent McGuire,**

*Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**National Awards Program for Model Professional Development**

**AGENCY:** Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of eligibility and selection criteria.

**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement (Assistant Secretary) announces eligibility and selection criteria to govern competitions under the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development for fiscal year (FY) 2000 and future years. Using these criteria, the National Awards Program will recognize a variety of schools and school districts with model professional development activities at the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels that have led to increases in student achievement.

**DATES:** These eligibility and selection criteria are effective November 17, 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sharon Horn, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW., room 506E, Washington, DC 20208-5644.

Telephone: (202) 219-2203 or FAX to (202) 219-2198. Inquiries also may be sent by e-mail to: [sharon\\_horn@ed.gov](mailto:sharon_horn@ed.gov) If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

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**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice announces definitions and criteria to govern applications for recognition submitted under the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. This Program began in 1996, in coordination with a wide range of national education organizations, to highlight and recognize schools and school districts whose professional development activities are well aligned with the statement of the Mission and Principles of Professional Development that the Department developed in 1995.

The public has expressed great interest in this program. In the first three years of the program, the Department received nearly 300 applications for national recognition. The Secretary has recognized 20 schools and school districts in 12 states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas and Washington—for the high quality of their professional development activities and the link between those activities and improved student learning. Moreover, the National Awards Program has helped educators at all levels to learn both how teachers and others in these sites have succeeded in implementing high-quality professional development activities, and what educators in other locations can do to better evaluate the effectiveness of their own professional development efforts.

The importance of encouraging even more schools and school districts to implement high-quality professional development that is tied to increased student achievement, and having even greater numbers of exemplary sites as models for others, demands that this awards program be continued.

On July 28, 1999, the Assistant Secretary published a Notice of

Proposed Eligibility and Selection Criteria for this program in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 40856–58). This notice proposed to continue the eligibility and selection criteria that the Department announced in the **Federal Register** on October 30, 1997 (62 FR 58870–73) with the following exceptions:

- To meet criterion D, which requires applicants to demonstrate the link between their professional development activities and increased student achievement, applicants would need to present data on student achievement using multiple measures that cover a period of three years or more.

- If a school and a school district that served that school both submitted applications under the National Awards program, the Department only would consider the school district's application.

- All applicants would need to certify that they have no outstanding violations of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in a Department monitoring report or, if findings do exist, that the findings either have been corrected or are part of an agreement for corrective action.

There are no differences between the final eligibility and selection criteria for this program, and those proposed in the July 28, 1999 notice.

**Note:** This notice does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published elsewhere in this edition of the **Federal Register**.

### Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Assistant Secretary's invitation in the notice of proposed eligibility and selection criteria, two parties submitted comments. An analysis of the comments follows.

**Comment:** One commenter noted that applicants may have difficulty meeting the proposed criterion that they use data from multiple measures and over three or more years to demonstrate the link between their professional development activities and increased student achievement. The commenter observed that school districts are still in the process of aligning their assessment systems with State content and performance standards in core subjects. Therefore, it will be difficult for school districts to provide the kind of longitudinal assessment data over a period of three years or more that the commenter believes the selection criteria require.

**Discussion:** We recognize that few schools and school districts are able now to generate three or more years of data on student achievement through

new assessment measures that are aligned with State content and student performance standards. Most States only very recently have developed their State content and student performance standards, and curriculum and teaching methods that complement them need to be in place before these new assessment methods can be properly used.

Where school districts do use these newly aligned assessments as measures of student achievement, the data they generate are available to the districts for presentation in their National Awards Program applications. However, because these student assessment measures are so new, we agree that most school districts cannot be expected to use them as the source of their multiyear data on student achievement. The proposed selection criteria simply require applicants to describe both their professional development activities and how the measures they have used and relied upon during a period of three years or more demonstrate that the achievement level of their students has increased.

We do not believe that any change in the selection criteria is needed. However the program application packet has been revised to clarify that in establishing the link between their professional development activities and increased student achievement, applicants are expected to describe whatever data sources they have relied upon during this multi-year period to measure student achievement.

**Changes:** None.

**Comment:** One commenter stressed (1) the special circumstances of schools with small, rural underserved populations including those that serve Indian students, and (2) these schools' resource limitations and relative inexperience in grant writing. The commenter recommended that the criteria for the National Awards Program permit applications from Native American schools, charter schools, and rural schools to be separated from those from other schools.

**Discussion:** We are aware of the significant challenges faced by many schools in rural areas, including those that serve Indian students. However, for all students in the nation to achieve to their potential, the Principles of Professional Development that the Department developed in collaboration with the education and research communities must be the same for all schools and school districts regardless of their circumstances or geographic location. Similarly, the criteria under which any school or school district would be recognized for how well it has aligned its professional development

activities with those principles—the basis for recognition under the National Awards Program—must be the same for all applicants.

We have worked to implement procedures that can ensure that those selected for national recognition earn this recognition because of the quality of their professional development activities rather than the quality of their grant writing. The key to a successful application is specific information that demonstrates that a school's or school district's professional development activities are aligned with each of the research-based Principles of Professional Development. The Department developed this statement of principles in 1995 in collaboration with the education community, and they are included in the application packet. The program selection criteria and application instructions have been crafted so that those classroom teachers and others most familiar with a school or district's professional development activities can prepare the application. Moreover, teams of experts conduct on-site examinations of many applicants to ensure that those whom the Secretary would recognize under the National Awards Program earn this recognition because of the work of their teachers, school leaders, and other staff, and not because of the quality of their written applications.

Since the program's inception, the Secretary has recognized urban and rural schools and school districts throughout the nation—including an Indian school in Arizona. (Profiles of this and other past recipients of recognition under the National Awards Program are available through the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/its/teachers/research.html>.) We are confident that this fact validates our insistence that all schools and school districts that seek recognition under the National Awards Program meet the same high standards for the quality of their professional development activities.

**Changes:** None.

*Eligibility and Selection Criteria*

### Eligible Applicants

As with previous years' programs, eligible applicants are schools and school districts in the States (including schools located on Indian reservations, and in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas) that provide educational programs at the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade levels.

### Selection Criteria

For reasons stated in the July 28, 1999 Notice of Proposed Eligibility and Selection Criteria, the eligibility and application selection criteria and selection procedures for the FY 2000 and future year competitions are the same as those published in the **Federal Register** on October 30, 1997 (59 FR 63773), subject to the following three changes:

1. Criterion D ("Objective Evidence of Success") includes additional language requiring applicants to provide and discuss data that indicate the connection between needs assessments, improvement plans, professional development activities, and teacher and student outcomes. In addition, in order to confirm that student achievement has increased, the data that applicants provide on student achievement must reflect multiple measures and cover a period of three years or more.

2. A school that applies for national recognition must apply on its own or as part of its LEA's application. A school may not apply through both applications. Should the Department receive an application from a school and the LEA in which the school is located, it will review only the LEA's application.

3. Those applying for National Awards Program recognition must certify that there are no outstanding findings of violations of IDEA in a Department monitoring report or, if findings do exist, the findings either have been corrected or are subject to an agreement for corrective action.

### Goals 2000: Educate America Act

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Goals 2000) focuses the Nation's education reform efforts on the eight

National Education Goals and provides a framework for meeting them. Goals 2000 promotes new partnerships to strengthen schools and expands the Department's capacities for helping communities to exchange ideas and obtain information needed to achieve the goals.

These eligibility and selection criteria address the National Education Goal that the Nation's teaching force will have the content knowledge and teaching skills needed to instruct all American students for the next century.

### Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 does not require you to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The procedures and requirements contained in this notice relate to the content of an application packet that the Department has developed under the three National Awards program for Model Professional Development. The public may obtain copies of these packets by calling or writing the individuals identified at the beginning of this notice as the Department's contact, or through the Department's website: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/heatqp/index.html>.

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Office of Management and Budget has approved the use of these application packets, and the selection criteria announced in this notice, under the following OMB control number 1880-0534, which expires September 30, 2002.

### Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the

Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document is intended to provide early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

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Dated: October 13, 1999.

**C. Kent McGuire,**

*Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.*

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