



**ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AWARDED ANOTHER \$1 MILLION IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT  
GRANT FUNDING—FOR SOUTH MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**



(August 18, 2011 Allentown, PA) — The Allentown School District has been notified by the Division of Federal Programs of the Pennsylvania Department of Education that South Mountain Middle School’s School Improvement Grant (SIG) request has been awarded. South Mountain Middle School will receive \$1 million in funding for the 2011-2012 academic school year and \$1 million for each of the subsequent two years (conditional funding based on school compliance and federal availability of funds). The grant will be applied to improving curriculum and student services; South Mountain Middle School has met AYP targets to be classified as making progress based on 2010-2011 results.

“This is very exciting news for South Mountain Middle School and I want to thank the collaborative team of ASD’s central administrators and SMMS staff for this funding achievement,” said Gerald L. Zahorchak, D.Ed., ASD Superintendent. “This is intensive work that includes a review of the school’s administrative structure, community and support services needs, current assessment of data systems, professional development needs, how to provide increased learning time for students, and academic remediation needs of students. With the financial difficulties that may lie ahead, this builds value for our secondary reforms.”

In fall 2010, six ASD SIG grant submissions were awarded grants totaling \$2,600,000 each of the next three years for these schools: Louis E. Dieruff High School, William Allen High School, Trexler Middle School, Raub Middle School, Harrison Morton Middle School and Central Elementary School. These secondary schools have been in corrective action; Central Elementary has just been classified as making progress in 2010-2011.

The purpose of a School Improvement Grant is for schools to devise and implement one of four intensive school reform models aimed at improving the low achieving schools in the commonwealth. A SIG grantee may adopt one of following models: Restart, Close/Consolidate, Turnaround and Transformation. This Round 2 SIG funding was awarded to South Mountain Middle School under the Transformation Model as all the others in the district.

The funding for Round 1 SIG schools Louis E. Dieruff High School, William Allen High School, Trexler Middle School, Raub Middle School, Harrison Morton Middle School, and Central Elementary School, and the Round 2 SIG grant for South Mountain Middle School totals \$3,600,000. Total funding if all awards are made in the upcoming years could amount to \$10.8 million.

### **About South Mountain Middle School**

South Mountain Middle School, with more than 1,000 students, has made steady academic progress each year and is the only middle school to make AYP for the 2010-2011. From 2002-2011, student PSSA proficiency scores in mathematics almost doubled from 33 to 63 percent. Student progress in reading is continuing at a slower rate, increasing from 41 percent in 2002 to 49.4 percent in 2011, despite the outstanding teaching and community support generated through the school's transformation into a "Community School." Twelve percent of SMMS students require ESL classes; 86.4 percent are classified as low income (Source: PDE).

A community school is a collaborative effort among the school administrators and teachers, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and Communities in Schools of the Lehigh Valley (CISLV). South Mountain Middle School, as community school, is transforming as a vibrant and welcoming community center where parents, students, and the residents of South Allentown work together to maximize achievement and celebrate success. CISLV shares in leadership and decision making, monitors student and family needs and assists in the delivery of extended day programs and services that specifically target literacy, parental engagement and safety.

South Mountain Middle School will follow suit with ASD's six other schools receiving SIG grants by closely aligning the Transformation Model and focused on implementing the *Pathways for Success* model for students to seize career and college relevance early in their learning. The following initiatives will be implemented: expand administrative/supervisory teams to refocus on classroom instruction, required professional development on the Standards Aligned System and Resiliency, comprehensive revision of the teacher evaluation system, comprehensive data management system to track students as they move through the system and beyond, embedded professional development, continue certified trainers for core curriculum and improving ESL student services.

### **About Allentown School District**

Serving approximately 17,750 students in a network of 23 early childhood, elementary, alternative, newcomer, middle and high schools located throughout the City of Allentown, PA, Allentown School District is the third largest urban school district out of 500 districts in the commonwealth. By 2014, the district's academic goals include reaching 83 percent proficiency on PA standard tests (PSSA's) in reading and 78 percent in mathematics. There are many programs being implemented to create a competency-based system that provides incentives for students to perform and treats every student as an individual, meeting each of their very distinct needs in order to achieve. A shared vision to improve systems and practices so that more ASD students can reach proficiency and plan for meaningful careers and college is the goal.

Allentown School District employs approximately 1,239 teachers and 2,234 employees overall. The District, founded in 1866, today represents students from over 40 countries speaking over 25 languages. With 80 percent of ASD households qualifying as low income, the District is involved in many education reform initiatives to rid its designated Correction Action II, Year 4, status. It had been "making progress" as of 2006, having recovered from an Empowerment designation bestowed upon it by the Commonwealth in 2001.

[www.allentownsd.org](http://www.allentownsd.org)

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