

For immediate release

Date: August 5, 2004

Contact: Janet Canning

California Department of Education

Special Education Division

916/327-4217

Improving California's Special Education System

After a competitive bidding process, the California Department of Education has been awarded a second State Improvement Grant (SIG) from the federal government in the amount of \$2.079 million dollars a year for three years. This grant allows the department to continue some of the work it began with the first SIG, which was received in 1998 and responsible for launching a series of broad-scale, collaborative partnerships that will be maintained, improved, and nourished by this flush of new money. The strength of the second successful SIG bid rode on the priority it gave to quantifiable systemic change and to research and effective practice, as well as on the capacity of its plans and goals to grow and expand to meet the needs of California's large and diverse population.

The work of the new SIG supports improving special education services in California in numerous areas: the quality and the number of teachers and other personnel who work with students with disabilities; the coordination of services for students with disabilities; the behavioral supports available for students with disabilities; academic outcomes, especially in the area of literacy; the participation of parents and family members; and the collection and dissemination of data. The grant has a significant site-based component that will make use of an entire network of educators who have been trained through the first SIG to assist schools in implementing research-proven behavioral approaches.

The grant will continue to fund statewide and regional institutes begun through the first SIG to support collaborative partnerships for the betterment of special education services. And it will continue to make available an extensive network of training and technical assistance opportunities for schools and educators throughout the state. Finally, the grant will provide financial support for parents who have limited resources so that they are able to participate in systems-change efforts at the local, regional, and state levels.

The CalSTAT Project (California Services for Technical Assistance and Training), part of the California Institute on Human Services at Sonoma State University, will continue to assist the department in implementing the SIG for the state. To learn more about the new State Improvement Grant, please visit the CalSTAT website: <http://www.calstat.org/pcsesig.html#SIG>.