

January 30, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

This is our first newsletter of 2012, and we hope you've had a good start to the New Year. Below we report on new, recent, and updated developments and events since our last OELA newsletter in December.

NPD 2012. OELA has begun the process to select a new cohort of National Professional Development (NPD) program grantees, utilizing the rank order list of unfunded applications submitted in 2011. Last spring's competition yielded a sizable pool of applications that included a good number of highly-ranked proposals, of which only the highest-scoring could be funded in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011. In order to take advantage of this quality pool of applications in a cost-efficient manner, OELA will fund approximately 70 new awards in FY12 as the current FY07 cohort of grantees complete their five-year cycles. The new NPD grantees will be announced in April, 2012 following review by OELA, thereby giving projects enough time to recruit project participants before the fall 2012 academic semester begins. The newly selected NPD projects will be posted on the NCELA website, where all other NPD grantees are listed.

FLAP Funding. As you may already know, funding for many Department of Education programs was decreased or eliminated in the final FY12 Budget passed by Congress toward the end of December. The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), funded under Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and administered through OELA, was one of those affected by these cuts. Due to the funding pattern for this program, current FLAP projects for academic year 2011-2012 are operating under FY11 funds. These programs will have the opportunity to request no-cost extensions for academic year 2012-2013 but will not receive further federal funding under FLAP.

During its existence, FLAP awarded more than \$200 million to K-12 language programs across the nation and created a variety of on-going language programs in elementary and secondary schools and collaborations of SEAs, IHEs, and community organizations. Under the Obama Administration's ESEA reauthorization plan, a larger competitive pool of funds would be available to the States to strengthen the teaching of foreign languages, arts, civics, government, and other subjects.

FLAP grant project directors with questions about program funding, no-cost extensions, or final reports should contact their OELA program specialist.

NCLB Flexibility. More states are expected to seek flexibility from key provisions of No Child Left Behind when the second submission of requests comes due in mid-February. As of January 23, 2012, 27 states, DC, and Puerto Rico had declared their intent to request ESEA Flexibility during the second window. Eleven states submitted the voluntary waiver requests by the first deadline in late November, and panels of peer reviewers evaluated these plans the first week in December. Three panels were convened, with 7 experts on each, including a specialist in EL education per panel. Review findings have been shared with these states, and needed revisions to plans must be made in order for approval of flexibility. To view the flexibility requests received or the names of peer reviewers, please visit: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>. For general information and other resources including a recent webinar visit: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/support-for-states>.

Below are several other items on recent OELA activities:

This month's news from *The Talking Stick* includes mention that the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is now offering resources for educators on its web site: www.nmai.si.edu/education. *The Talking Stick* is the online forum created for grantees in OELA's Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAANCS) program announced in last month's newsletter.

On Dec. 9, OELA hosted Laurie Olsen, researcher and author from California, and Julian Vasquez-Heilig, professor at the University of Texas at Austin, to the Department to discuss their ongoing research and work on English Learners. If you were unable to attend or view the event on your computer monitors, the event has been archived for your viewing pleasure at: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/>.

OELA Deputy Director Joanne Urrutia participated in the White House Hispanic Community Action Summit in Miami, Florida on Friday, December 2, 2011. Topics discussed covered a wide range of policy issues – from jobs and the economy to education and healthcare – affecting the Hispanic community.

I look forward to keeping you informed about OELA activities on a monthly basis. Until our next newsletter, here's wishing you the very best.

Sincerely,

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Director, Office of English Language Acquisition