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From: "ED, Secretary of Ed Res Acct" <ra-educationsecretary@pa.gov>

Sent: Thu Mar 21 08:51:24 EDT 2013

To: Undisclosed recipients;

Subject: New Master Agreement and e-Signature Pilot

Office of the Secretary

Pennsylvania Department of Education

March 21, 2013

To: Chief School Administrators

From: Ron Tomalis, Secretary

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Re: New Master Agreement and e-Signature Pilot

RECEIVED
MAR 21 2013

BY:

Typically, every five years, at this time of year, the Department of Education would be working with your office to enter into new five-year Master Agreements governing the use of state and federal grant money by your LEA. The Master Agreement typically extends over 45 pages and must be mailed out by the department, manually signed by you, and then mailed back to the department. Individual grant programs in the past have been implemented by individual Riders to the Master Agreement applicable to each program. In all, about 75,000 sheets of paper, and thousands of dollars in postage and labor costs are expended to approve the Master Agreements.

As part of the department's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of its operations and reduce costs, I am pleased to announce that the department will replace the former Master Agreement and Rider grant process with a set of Standard Grant Terms and Conditions that will be posted on the department's website and will be incorporated by reference in a new form of grant agreement for each individual program agreement signed by an LEA. The incorporation of these terms via the Internet will eliminate copying and postage costs for LEAs and the department formerly associated with the five-year master agreement and will improve the accessibility of the legal terms governing grants.

I am also pleased to announce that the department is piloting electronic signatures (e-signatures) for LEA grant-making as part of planned upgrades to the department's e-grant's system. For the 2013-14 fiscal year the department will be allowing e-signatures for Consolidated Application Agreements of the Division of Federal Programs. In subsequent years, the use of e-signatures will be extended to other grant programs. Those LEA's electing to use e-signatures will no longer be required to manually sign and mail to the department all application and grant documents. Instead, authorized officers will be able to conveniently affix e-signatures and submit e-signed grant agreements to the department for qualifying grant programs via the e-grants system

available via the Internet. As stated, these upgrades to the e-grants system and the adoption of e-signatures will greatly improve the timeliness and efficiency of grant-making as well as reduce copying and postage costs for LEAs and the department. Please note that the use of e-signatures is completely voluntary under law and if your LEA elects not to participate, you will still be able to print and manually sign the agreement.

LEAs wishing to use e-signatures must have their governing body (school board, board of directors or board of trustees) adopt resolutions identifying and authorizing an individual to sign electronic agreements with the department. The form of resolution that must be adopted by your governing body is available at this link:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/http://www.portal.state.pa.us;80/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_148494_1325483_0_0_18/E-signature%20Resolution.docx

Once the resolution is adopted by the governing body, the form of resolution must be signed by the appropriate officers, attested by the governing body's secretary and signed by the authorized officer(s) before being returned to the department.

Completed resolutions should be returned to:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Division of Federal Programs
333 Market Street, 7th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

I encourage all LEAs to participate in this exciting new program by promptly returning these forms to the department. The deadline for return is Friday, May 31, 2013.

If you have any questions about the replacement of the five-year master agreement or e-signatures, please feel free to contact ra-fintrans@pa.gov.