

ESEA FLEXIBILITY PART B MONITORING REPORT

| MONITORING VISIT INFORMATION | |
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| State Educational Agency (SEA) | Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) |
| Request Approved | June 29, 2012 |
| Request Amended | October 25, 2012 |
| ESEA Flex Monitoring Activity | Part B Desk Monitoring |
| Monitoring Review Date(s) | September 23-27, 2013 |
| Exit Conference | November 12, 2013 |
| Interviews Conducted | Tom Kimbrell, John Hoy, Karen Walters, Jim Boardman, Mike Hernandez, Deborah Coffman, Megan Witonski, Johnie Walters, Tracy Tucker, Melody Morgan, Jeremy Lasiter, Annette Barnes, Louis Ferren, Willie Morris, Martha Asti, Elbert Harvey, Bobby Lester, Andre Guerrero |
| U.S. Department of Education (ED) Monitors | Jessica Skrebes Mety Belachew |

OVERVIEW OF ESEA FLEXIBILITY MONITORING

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is committed to supporting State educational agencies (SEAs) as they implement ambitious reform agendas through their approved ESEA flexibility requests. Consistent with this commitment, ED has designed a monitoring process to assess an SEA's implementation of the principles of ESEA flexibility and the State-level systems and processes needed to support that implementation.

Part B Monitoring

In Part B monitoring, SEA implementation of ESEA flexibility was reviewed across several key areas: State-level Systems and Processes, Principle 1, Principle 2, and Principle 3, as outlined in the *ESEA Flexibility Part B Monitoring Protocol*. In each broad area, ED identified key elements that are required under ESEA flexibility and are likely to lead to increased achievement for students. Through examination of documentation submitted by the SEA and interviews with SEA staff, ED assessed the effectiveness of implementation of ESEA flexibility by identifying the extent to which an SEA:

1. Is ensuring that implementation is occurring consistent with the SEA's approved request and the principles and timelines of ESEA flexibility.
2. Is continuing to review and make adjustments to support implementation.
3. Is establishing systems and process to sustain implementation and improvements.

The report contains the following sections:

- *Highlights of the SEA's Implementation.* This section identifies key accomplishments in the SEA's implementation of ESEA flexibility.
- *Status of Implementation of ESEA Flexibility.* This section indicates whether or not the SEA has met expectations for each element of ESEA flexibility.
- *Elements Requiring Next Steps.* When appropriate, this section identifies any elements where the SEA is not meeting expectations and includes Next Steps that the SEA must take to meet expectations.

- *Recommendations to Strengthen Implementation.* This section provides recommendations to support the SEA in continuing to meet the principles and timelines of ESEA flexibility and strengthening implementation.
- *Additional Comments.* When appropriate, this section includes any additional information related to the SEA's implementation of ESEA flexibility not included elsewhere.

HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ESEA FLEXIBILITY

The SEA's work includes the following key accomplishments relating to the implementation of ESEA flexibility and/or efforts to engage in a process of continuous review and analysis, particularly for those elements receiving a comprehensive review:

- ADE conducts an on-campus standards review of its school districts on a four-year cycle, and found that all districts monitored over the past two years were adhering to ADE's timeline for the implementation of college and career ready standards. Based upon this intensive review, ADE could confidently report on the status of implementation of ADE Common Core Standards in these school districts.
- ADE has effectively used school improvement specialists in priority and focus schools to monitor progress toward these schools' interim measurable objectives and toward the completion of these schools' priority improvement plans and targeted improvement plans. In addition to the work these specialists are doing in the schools, ADE has established a system that supports regular communication among these specialists; through this system, ADE has a clear understanding of the work in each priority and focus school, and the specialists are able to support each other and learn from one another.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ESEA FLEXIBILITY

SEA Systems & Processes

| Element | Status |
|---|----------------------|
| Monitoring (EDGAR 80.40 and 2.G) | Meeting Expectations |
| Technical Assistance (2.G) | Meeting Expectations |
| Data Collection & Use (§9304(a)(6)) | Meeting Expectations |
| Family & Community Engagement and Outreach (Implementation Letter) | Meeting Expectations |

Principle 1

| Element | Status |
|--|----------------------|
| Transition to and Implement College- and Career-ready Standards (1.B) | Meeting Expectations |
| Adopt English Language Proficiency Standards (Assurance 2) | Meeting Expectations |
| Develop and Administer High-Quality Assessments (Assurance 3) | Meeting Expectations |
| Develop and Administer Alternate Assessments (Assurance 3) | Meeting Expectations |
| Develop and Administer English Language Proficiency Assessments (Assurance 4) | Meeting Expectations |

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| Annually Reports College-going and College-credit Accumulation Rates (Assurance 5) | Meeting Expectations |
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Principle 2

| Element | Status |
|---|--------------------------|
| Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support (2.A) | Meeting Expectations |
| Reward Schools (2.C) | Meeting Expectations |
| Priority Schools (2.D) | Not Meeting Expectations |
| Focus Schools (2.E) | Meeting Expectations |
| Other Title I Schools (2.F) | Meeting Expectations |
| State and Local Report Cards (§1111 of the ESEA; 2.B and Assurance 14) | Not Meeting Expectations |

Principle 3

| Element | Status |
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| Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B) | ADE's Principle 3 guidelines have not yet been approved. As such ED can not yet determine if this area requires next steps from the state. |
| Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B) | ADE's Principle 3 guidelines have not yet been approved. As such ED can not yet determine if this area requires next steps from the state. |

ELEMENTS REQUIRING NEXT STEPS

| Element | Priority Schools (2.D) |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Summary and Status of Implementation | ADE provided the ESEA flexibility team with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that implementation in non-SIG priority schools is being carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request. However, through the on-site monitoring visit conducted by the Department's Office of School Turnaround on January 28-31, 2013, and memorialized in the monitoring report issued on July 15, 2013, the Department is in receipt of evidence demonstrating that ADE is not fully complying with all School Improvement Grants (SIG) requirements. As such, ED staff determines that ADE has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> . |
| Next Steps | To ensure that ADE implements meaningful interventions in its SIG-awarded Tier I and/or Tier II schools consistent with SIG final requirements and, therefore, may continue to count such schools as priority schools, consistent with the principles and timelines in ESEA flexibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ED will continue the review of evidence submitted by ADE to determine whether ADE sufficiently addresses the findings. • Subsequently, ADE will work with the ED's Office of School Turnaround to resolve any remaining findings relating to the monitoring |

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| Element | Priority Schools (2.D) |
| | and/or implementation of the SIG models, including findings from the monitoring report issued July 15, 2013. |

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| Element | State and Local Report Cards (§1111 of the ESEA; 2.B and Assurance 14) |
| Summary and Status of Implementation | ADE is required to report annually on its State report card, and ensure that LEAs annually report on their local report cards, all required information. ADE has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request, the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> , and the requirements of §1111 of the ESEA. Specifically, ADE did not ensure that NAEP data was included on LEA report cards. Accordingly, we require ADE to take the next steps identified below. |
| Next Steps | Within 30 business days, ADE will submit its plan for revising its report cards to comply with ED's <i>State and Local Report Cards Under Title I, Part A</i> guidance, issued on February 8, 2013. |

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION

The following recommendations are provided to support the SEA in continuing to meet the principles and timelines of ESEA flexibility and strengthening implementation through continuous improvement and the establishment of systems and processes to sustain implementation and improvement.

- ADE has not yet finalized its growth measure for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects, and as a result ED has not fully approved Principle 3 of ADE's ESEA flexibility request. ADE must continue to work with ED to reach full approval of Principle 3. Additionally, ADE should develop a transition strategy and communication plan to ensure that teachers and principals are adequately prepared for the full implementation of these systems.
- ADE should develop a more robust plan for monitoring the implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation systems, to ensure that all LEAs in the State are implementing these systems with fidelity in accordance with ADE's flexibility request beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.