ESEA FLEXIBILITY PART B MONITORING REPORT

MONITORING VISIT INFORMATION	
State Educational Agency (SEA)	Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
Request Approved	May 29, 2012
Request Amended	N/A
ESEA Flex Monitoring Activity	Part B Desk Monitoring (Pilot)
Monitoring Review Date(s)	July 16-17, 2013
Exit Conference	July 25, 2013
Interviews Conducted	Charlene Russell-Tucker, Sarah Barzee, Elizabeth Buttner, Emily Byrne, Judy Carson, Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Debra Kurshan, Shannon Marimón, Marlene Padernacht, Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Michelle Rosado, Renée Savoie, Charlene Tate Nichols, Joanne White
U.S. Department of Education (ED) Monitors	Elizabeth Ross, Melissa Turner, Christopher Tate

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 processes 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 related 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:

- Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and its partners are making significant investments to create a pipeline of turnaround school leaders through the LEAD Connecticut initiative. LEAD Connecticut is comprised of the following partner organizations: the CT Center for School Change; Connecticut Association of Boards of Education; Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents; Connecticut Association of Schools; District Management Council, the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, and New Leaders.
- CSDE created a NetStat/SchoolStat forum, modeled after best practices of real-time data-based decision-making in other sectors, to provide its turnaround schools with the necessary tools and dedicated time to examine data and share best practices.

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

Element	Status
Annually Reports College-going and College-credit Accumulation Rates (Assurance 5)	Meeting Expectations

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)	Meeting Expectations

Principle 3

Element	Status
Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B)	Meeting Expectations
Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B)	Meeting Expectations

ELEMENTS REQUIRING NEXT STEPS

Priority Schools (2.D)

Element	Priority Schools (2.D of ESEA Flexibility)
Summary and Status of Implementation	The SEA provided the ESEA flexibility team with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that this element is being carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request. However, through the onsite monitoring visit conducted by the ED's Office of School Turnaround on April 22-25, 2013, and memorialized in the monitoring report issued on July 17, 2013, ED is in receipt of evidence demonstrating that CSDE is not fully complying with all School Improvement Grants (SIG) requirements. As such, we determined that CSDE has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*. Therefore, we require CSDE to engage in the below next steps.
Next Steps	To ensure that CSDE 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: CSDE will work with ED's Office of School Turnaround to satisfactorily resolve any outstanding monitoring findings, including those in the monitoring report issued July 17, 2013.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION

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

- CSDE indicated that it intends to provide professional development during the 2013–2014 school year to support and guide its educators as they implement college- and career-ready standards that correspond with its English Language Proficiency standards. CSDE should monitor these professional development opportunities to ensure that the quality and quantity of these opportunities is sufficient to provide the necessary support and guidance to educators of English Language Learners and to ensure that all educators of English Language Learners are able to avail themselves of these opportunities.

- CSDE indicated that it intends to conduct alignment studies during the 2013–2014 school year to determine whether the assessment form it has selected is aligned to its English Language Proficiency college- and career-ready standards. CSDE should consider what actions it might take if its alignment studies indicate that the form it has selected is not aligned with its English Language Proficiency college- and career-ready standards.

- CSDE's approved ESEA flexibility request includes a plan to implement all of the turnaround principles in non-SIG priority schools in the 2013–2014 school year. To strengthen implementation in these schools, CSDE should consider successes and challenges of implementing the turnaround principles in the priority schools that fully implemented all of the turnaround principles in the 2012–2013 school year to determine ways to ease transition for non-SIG priority schools.

- CSDE will transition from its teacher and leader evaluation pilot in SY 2013–2014 to full implementation in SY 2014–2015. CSDE is not planning to pilot all components of its evaluation system; specifically, CSDE reported that it will not require its LEAs to pilot the use of student growth for all grades and subjects. CSDE should create a coordinated process to review and study the piloting of its teacher and leader evaluation pilot to ensure that the piloted components are effective and useful for full implementation. CSDE should study teacher and leader evaluation programs in other states to ensure that CSDE's models incorporate student growth in a way that is relevant and useful to improve teacher and leader practices.