

ESEA FLEXIBILITY PART B MONITORING REPORT

MONITORING VISIT INFORMATION	
State Educational Agency (SEA)	Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
Request Approved	May 29, 2012
Request Amended	November 5, 2012
ESEA Flex Monitoring Activity	Part B Desk Monitoring
Monitoring Review Date(s)	December 17, 2013
Exit Conference	January 13, 2014
Interviews Conducted	Janet Bagsby, Linda Burgee, Nola Cromer, Val Emrich, Ben Feldman, Joe Freed, Marcella Franczkowski, Mary Gable, Robert Glascock, Harry Holt, Judy Jenkins, Henry Johnson, Janice Johnson, Donnell Josiah, Heather Lageman Maria Lamb, Zac Mangold, Tina McKnight, Maureen Moran, Laura Motel, Cecilia Roe, Walter Sallee, Barbara Scherr, Jack Smith, Susan Spinnato, Frank Stetson, Danielle Susskind, Ilene Swirnow, Penelope Thornton Talley, Dave Volrath, Ilhye Yoon
U.S. Department of Education (ED) Monitors	Victoria Hammer Shevine Holeman Erin Shackel

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 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:

- MSDE implements a thorough and comprehensive iterative process of reviewing and approving intervention plans for its priority schools, provides extensive support to help ensure full implementation of these plans, and monitors its priority schools frequently to identify areas of strength and ongoing challenges. To facilitate this work, MSDE staff from the Division of Student, Family, and School Support and MSDE's Breakthrough Center collaborate and coordinate to maximize and focus support to the State's priority schools.
- MSDE engages in a variety of activities to support full and effective implementation of college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments, including development and implementation of a "Maryland Common Core Trained Certificate" to signify the importance of being prepared to teach the standards to all students, developing modules for educators to deepen understanding of how to teach to the standards, and surveying schools twice per semester to gauge technological readiness for the standards and aligned assessments.
- As with its priority schools, Maryland conducts a thorough review of focus school plans and engages in an iterative process prior to final approval of them to help ensure rigorous and focused interventions intended to address the needs of students for which MSDE identified the schools as focus schools. One way MSDE supports implementation in its focus schools is through the Focus School Network, convened and facilitated by MSDE's Breakthrough Center and intended as a mechanism whereby focus schools can share strengths and challenges and work together to address common issues (*e.g.*, schools identified due to gaps between English Learners and other students).

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
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)	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)	Under Review
Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B)	Under Review

ELEMENTS REQUIRING NEXT STEPS

Principle 3

Element	Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems
Summary and Status of Implementation	Currently, MSDE has pending amendments to its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems under its approved Race to the Top (RTT) scope of work that impact both its RTT and ESEA flexibility programs. MSDE staff indicated that it intends to propose the same amendments to its approved request for ESEA flexibility in the process of seeking an extension of that approval through the 2014–2015 school year.
Next Steps	To ensure that MSDE implements teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the requirements of RTT and ESEA flexibility, MSDE staff will work with ED’s RTT and ESEA flexibility staff to develop a plan on which MSDE can implement these systems consistent with the requirements of these programs.

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.

- MSDE staff engage in a variety of family and community engagement and outreach activities. While these activities are useful individually, they may be more impactful as part of a larger strategy to engage families around the major reforms that MSDE is pursuing. Therefore, ED recommends that MSDE develop and implement a comprehensive approach to family and community engagement and outreach that cuts across programs and reform areas.
- MSDE has implemented a robust online portal for issuing its State and local report card information. ED recommends that MSDE continue to explore the extent that all stakeholders have access to this information and the capacity to efficiently locate the information.