

ESEA FLEXIBILITY PART B MONITORING REPORT FOR THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW OF ESEA FLEXIBILITY MONITORING

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is committed to supporting State education 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. This process is intended to make sure that SEAs are maximizing the impact of these principles and are making progress toward ultimately increasing student achievement and improving the quality of instruction for all students. Information from monitoring will then be used to inform the selection and delivery of technical assistance to SEAs.

ED has divided its ESEA flexibility monitoring process into three components:

- Part A, which occurred in fall 2012 through desk monitoring, provided ED with a more in-depth understanding of the SEA's goals and approach to implementing ESEA flexibility and ensured that the SEA had the critical elements of ESEA flexibility in place to begin implementation of its plan in the 2012–2013 school year.
- Part B is taking place between May and October 2013. ED will take a deeper look at the SEA's implementation of ESEA flexibility across Principles 1, 2, and 3, and any critical unwaived Title I requirements, as well as follow-up on any "next steps" from the SEA's *ESEA Flexibility Part A Monitoring Report*. The SEA will be monitored for Part B either through onsite monitoring or through desk monitoring. The format and depth of the review will be differentiated and customized for each SEA (see details below).
- Part C monitoring will occur beginning in the 2014–2015 school year.

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, Principle 3 and unwaived Title I requirements, 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. 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 sustaining implementation and improvements.

ED monitored the Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE's) implementation of its approved ESEA flexibility request on May 29-30, 2013, through an onsite visit. ED's review of MDE included Foundational Reviews of all elements. In addition, ED conducted Comprehensive Reviews of the following elements: Monitoring, Technical Assistance, Data Collection and Use, Family and

Community Engagement and Outreach, Transition to and Implement College- and Career-Ready (CCR) Standards, Focus Schools, and Principal Evaluation.

The *ESEA Flexibility Part B Monitoring Report* provides feedback to MDE on its progress in implementing the elements of ESEA flexibility identified in the *ESEA Flexibility Part B Monitoring Protocol* and identifies the status of the unwaived Title I requirements.

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 in the areas ED monitored.
- *Summary and Analysis of an SEA's Implementation of ESEA Flexibility.* For SEA systems and processes and for each principle of ESEA flexibility, this section describes the level of review (Foundational and/or Comprehensive Review) and provides a snapshot of the SEA's progress in implementing 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.
- *Status of Unwaived Title I Requirements.* This section identifies whether or not the SEA has met selected Title I requirements that have not been waived and, if necessary, indicates any "Next Steps" that the SEA must take to resolve any unmet requirements.

ED will continue to work to identify technical assistance needs to assist the SEA in increasing student achievement through ESEA flexibility.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MDE'S IMPLEMENTATION OF ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Based on information provided during the monitoring interviews and through written documentation, MDE's work implementing ESEA flexibility includes the following key accomplishments:

- The collection of immediate feedback on the trainings MDE conducts regarding the implementation of CCR standards, which is used to adjust both the content and method of delivery of state level training and professional development.
- Ongoing collaboration across offices within MDE to support implementation of CCR standards.
- The introduction of district level interviews as part of the Consolidated Federal Programs Application approval process for local education agencies (LEAs) with priority, focus, and F schools (the lowest performing schools under the State accountability system), to ensure that these LEAs target funds toward improving school performance.
- Alignment of goal setting within MDE's teacher and principal evaluation systems so that all educators within a school are striving for the same or complimentary goals.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF MDE'S IMPLEMENTATION OF ESEA FLEXIBILITY

SEA Systems and Processes	
Type of Review	<p>The following elements received a Foundational and Comprehensive Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring • Technical Assistance • Data Collection and Use • Family & Community Engagement & Outreach
Summary of Progress and Analysis of Implementation	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>MDE has a process in place and is monitoring implementation of LEA and school level ESEA flexibility activities with regard to its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (particularly LEA implementation of interventions in priority schools). However, there is limited monitoring of LEA and school level implementation of CCR expectations for all students and limited monitoring of implementation of interventions in focus schools.</p> <p>According to MDE's federal monitoring plan, MDE's federal programs monitoring operates on a three year cycle, including one year of self-assessment, one year of technical assistance, and one year of formal monitoring (including fiscal monitoring and Title I monitoring). With the help of a Federal Programs Advisory Board, MDE is currently revising this monitoring instrument to better align with the principles of ESEA flexibility. MDE anticipates that this new monitoring instrument will be ready for the 2013–2014 school year. The self-assessment and the technical assistance reviews as part of the federal programs monitoring cycle allow MDE to identify potential issues and address them preemptively. These reviews also require LEAs to engage in a process of continuous improvement.</p> <p><u>Principle 1:</u> The Office of Accreditation has recently started conducting curriculum and instruction audits. These audits are conducted on a five-year cycle.</p> <p><u>Principle 2:</u> MDE has a clear process and strategy for monitoring priority schools. MDE monitors priority schools receiving School Improvement Grants (SIG) through its Office of School Recovery, and relies on implementation specialists to inform MDE about implementation of the turnaround models in these schools. MDE monitors its non-SIG priority schools through the Federal Programs Office, but also relies upon implementation specialists to inform MDE about the implementation of turnaround principles. MDE monitors both priority and focus schools using MS SOARS, the SEA's online planning tool. MDE originally intended to use implementation specialists in focus schools, but</p>

SEA Systems and Processes	
	<p>found that it had insufficient funds for this purpose. MDE’s Office of Instructional Enhancement monitors approaching target schools through their Action Plans, which may be the schools’ revised schoolwide plans. MDE is working to increase LEA-level capacity so that district personnel can provide focus schools with oversight and technical assistance.</p> <p><u>Principle 3:</u> MDE is developing its methods for monitoring the teacher and principal evaluation system. MDE is developing an online system to monitor the principal evaluation system and to ensure that principals are completing their goals. MDE will fully implement the principal evaluation system in 2013-2014, so this will be the first year requiring comprehensive monitoring.</p> <p>Technical Assistance</p> <p>As noted previously, MDE offers formal technical assistance to its LEAs as part of its three-year federal programs monitoring cycle. During the first year of the cycle, LEAs complete a self-assessment of their implementation of federal programs. In the second year, LEAs may request technical assistance from the SEA to help address areas identified during the self-assessment. MDE explained that it sends staff and/or consultants onsite to provide support. According to MDE, approximately 75 percent of LEAs request technical assistance, often to address federal program compliance issues such as schoolwide plans or parent involvement requirements under Title I. MDE provided to ED sample feedback it collected on the technical assistance the SEA provided.</p> <p>MDE also provides technical assistance to LEAs specifically targeted to implementation of each of the ESEA flexibility principles. MDE is providing ongoing training to school and LEA staff to prepare them to implement CCR standards. To support its priority, focus, and approaching target schools in developing intervention plans, MDE provided MS SOARS training at the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year and intends to provide more intense training to support LEAs’ ongoing use of the system. MDE noted that it provided focus and priority schools with implementation specialists at the beginning of the school year to support these schools in conducting their needs assessments and developing implementation plans. According to MDE and as noted previously, implementation specialists continue to work with priority schools on a bi-monthly basis, performing a combination of monitoring and technical assistance, but MDE had insufficient funds to continue support for focus schools in this manner. MDE is providing intensive trainings for priority schools on the use of data and for approaching target schools on leadership and the creation of professional learning communities. MDE also noted that it conducted many training sessions for approaching target and focus schools together, to support both types of schools as these schools work to increase</p>

SEA Systems and Processes	
	<p>student achievement. Based on lessons learned from the pilot of the teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, MDE is providing additional resources to support implementation by developing a cadre of trainers who will be accessible to LEAs to provide further training, address questions or concerns regarding the new systems, and develop further guidance on the process for setting professional growth goals. More detail on the specific technical assistance provided by MDE is provided in the discussion of this principle.</p> <p>Data Collection and Use</p> <p>MDE has systems in place to collect data and information on LEA, school, and student performance and to report that data to ED and other stakeholders as required. However, MDE is modifying its data system to reflect new data elements as they are developed for its new accountability system. In some areas, the SEA is also beginning to collect and use data to inform State-level decisions regarding implementation of ESEA flexibility.</p> <p><u>Principle 1:</u> MDE collected annual survey data on implementation of CCR standards and used these data as feedback to adjust the content and delivery of training on CCR standards.</p> <p><u>Principle 2:</u> MDE calculates data that reflect its new accountability system, which includes the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) as developed in the ESEA Flexibility request and achievement data. MDE shares these data with LEAs and schools to identify needs of schools. Schools also receive QDI data for two combined subgroups, the QDI-Low, which is the lowest-performing 25 percent of students and the QDI-High, which includes the highest-performing 25 percent of students in a school. As explained during Part A monitoring, MDE conducted trainings for the priority schools on the analysis of the QDI high and QDI low, as well as AMOs. MDE also required each priority school to complete a performance framework-data collection matrix to analyze the needs of the school.</p> <p>During the federal monitoring cycle, in the self-assessment year, LEAs and schools examine the data and identify school needs. Each school's schoolwide plan reflects the school's analysis of its data and identified weaknesses and includes interventions aligned with the identified needs.</p> <p>Through their leadership teams and district coaches, priority and focus schools were to conduct a needs assessment using the current State assessment data, which included the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT) in grades 3-8 in math and reading, Mississippi Science Test in grades 5 and 8, and the high school Subject Area Testing Program and Mississippi Writing Assessment Program. The needs assessment results were to be reflected in the MS SOARS plan.</p>

SEA Systems and Processes	
	<p><u>Principle 3:</u> MDE plans to validate its teacher and principal evaluation system by examining the relationship between scores on MDE’s observation rubric, M-STAR, and student achievement data. MDE is also looking at plans to evaluate inter-rater reliability for the teacher and principal evaluation systems.</p> <p>Family & Community Engagement & Outreach</p> <p>MDE continues to engage and solicit input from teachers and their representatives and other diverse stakeholders as the SEA implements its ESEA Flexibility request. As MDE explained in the monitoring interview and supported with documentation, MDE has established a Federal Programs Advisory Council. This council includes representation from LEAs across the State and allows MDE to get information and collect feedback from LEAs regarding how MDE’s plans are working in the field, including the elements of ESEA Flexibility.</p> <p>MDE is ensuring that teachers and other diverse stakeholders understand the implications of the SEA’s ESEA flexibility plan for LEAs, schools, teachers, and students. As noted in the Part A monitoring report, MDE provided webinars and face-to-face meetings with LEA and school staff, as well as parent organizations, to communicate the implications of ESEA flexibility. At the time of the Part B monitoring visit, MDE had provided extensive training to educators across the State on the new CCR standards, reaching 3,990 educators directly. According to the draft training schedule that the SEA provided, MDE demonstrated its intention to continue to engage teachers in the transition to CCR. During the monitoring visit, MDE noted that the SEA spoke with more than 2,000 teachers before beginning the pilot of the teacher evaluation system in 2012–2013. MDE provided training for 2,400 principals on the teacher evaluation system, and noted that it would also offer direct training to teachers during summer 2013.</p> <p>MDE has made efforts to ensure that parents understand the implications of MDE’s ESEA flexibility plan for LEAs, schools, teachers, and students (e.g., school identification and/or rating criteria and resulting activities). MDE provided a document the SEA created titled “What Families Need to Know About Mississippi’s ESEA Flexibility Request,” offering a one-page overview of MDE’s differentiated accountability system and the effects of each designation within this system. In accordance with the approved ESEA Flexibility request and documentation provided, each priority and focus school is required to create a community-based council, to support collaboration among families, communities, and school districts. MDE also required all priority schools to alert parents of this status within 30 days of designation, and MDE provided evidence that this notification occurred during Part A monitoring. MDE</p>

SEA Systems and Processes	
	<p>indicated in the monitoring interview that it needed to strengthen its outreach to parents of English learners.</p> <p>Additionally, MDE is ensuring that LEAs and schools meet the parental involvement requirements outlined in Title I. During the monitoring visit, MDE noted that it reviews parent involvement as part of its monitoring cycle, and provides technical assistance to LEAs regarding these requirements. MDE noted that one percent, the parent involvement set-aside under Title I, is automatically calculated for each district's set-aside and is checked as part of the Consolidated Federal Programs Application.</p>

Principle 1	College- and Career-Ready Expectations for all Students
Type of Review	<p>The following elements received a Foundational Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to and Implement College- and Career- Ready Standards • Adopt English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards that Correspond to College- and Career-ready standards • Develop and Administer High-Quality Assessments Aligned With College- and Career-Ready Standards • Develop and Administer Alternate Assessments Consistent with 34 C.F.R § 200.6(a)(2) • Develop and Administer ELP Assessments Aligned with the State's ELP Standards, Consistent With the Requirements in ESEA §§ 111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii) • Annually Reports to the Public College-Going and College-Credit Accumulation Rates, as Defined Under State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Indicators (c)(11) and (c)(12) <p>The following element received a Comprehensive Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to and Implement College- and Career-Ready Standards
Summary of Progress and Analysis of Implementation	<p>MDE is carrying out its plan to transition to college- and career-ready (CCR) standards: grades K-2 began implementing CCR standards in 2011–2012, grades 3-8 began implementing CCR standards in 2012–2013, and grades 9-12 began implementing CCR standards in 2013–2014. To support teachers as they prepare to teach new standards, in the summer of 2011 MDE began conducting a series of trainings and professional development on CCR standards for each grade span (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) using a train the trainer approach. According to a training schedule provided by MDE, as of the Part B monitoring visit, MDE had conducted 29 of these training sessions in person and through webinars, directly reaching at least 3,990 educators. MDE explained that based on survey and other informal feedback teachers wanted information about the new standards more directly. To meet this need, MDE made trainings and other tools available online through MDE's website and through iTunesU, and will</p>

Principle 1	College- and Career-Ready Expectations for all Students
	<p>conduct regional bootcamps on the new standards for teachers in grades K-5 during summer 2013. MDE stated that within four months of making these resources available online, the SEA's iTunes website had nearly 7000 hits.</p> <p>As outlined in MDE's approved ESEA Flexibility request, to support the transition for all students, MDE intended to create a scaffolding document that provides a guide of skills that students need to access the CCR standards. MDE intended for this document to help all teachers support English learners, students with disabilities, and struggling learners; however, MDE has decided not to create this document. MDE will need to find an alternative approach for supporting all teachers in helping English learners, students with disabilities, and struggling learners access these more rigorous standards.</p> <p>MDE explained that it conducted a training session on the CCR standards for instructional personnel working with English learners in spring 2012 and a training session for special education directors in spring 2013. Moving into the 2013-2014 school year, MDE's training schedule shows that the SEA intends to provide training sessions for teachers of English learners and special education teachers, as well as trainings on interventions for struggling learners.</p> <p>While trainings for teachers and district staff have served as MDE's primary mechanism for transitioning to CCR standards, MDE has carried out other elements of its transition plan, as well. MDE made recommendations for CCR standards aligned textbooks in reading for grades K-12 and mathematics for grades K-8, and the SEA plans to make recommendations for math in grades 9-12 and English/language arts in grades K-12 during the 2013-2014 school year. MDE is training higher education staff on CCR standards and updating the State's Career and Technical Education curriculum to align with CCR standards. MDE launched a Twitter account in fall 2012 to provide updates and resources to LEAs, teachers, families, and the broader community. MDE is also moving forward with its plans to help students graduate that are college- and career-ready. In the 2012-2013 school year, five new LEAs participated in MDE's Excellence for All program, which allows students in the 9th and 10th grades to take rigorous courses based on the Cambridge International Secondary Curriculum or ACT Quality Core, pass the State Board Exam, and exit high school after 10th grade to move on to additional college or career pathways. MDE is working with three possible institutions of higher learning to establish its Early College High School program and expects to have this program in place for the 2014-2015 school year.</p> <p>MDE is engaged in an ongoing assessment of LEA, school, and teacher preparedness to implement CCR standards and also of the resources the SEA is providing. During the 2012-2013 school year, MDE conducted a statewide survey of teachers, school administrators, and LEA administrators on CCR standards. The survey focused on understanding resources available,</p>

Principle 1	College- and Career-Ready Expectations for all Students
	<p>communication and outreach, changes in practice, and social capital. MDE was in process of reviewing the results to determine areas that need to be addressed and explained that it planned to provide each LEA with district specific results. MDE indicated it intended to conduct a similar survey in spring 2014 once implementation has fully begun. MDE shared that as part of its trainings and webinars, it collects immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the presentations and the information provided and accordingly makes adjustments to future trainings.</p> <p>MDE provided documentation that it remains a governing member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment consortium and plans to implement these assessments in the 2014–2015 school year. As shown in the sample trainings provided by MDE and confirmed by the SEA, MDE includes updates on the PARCC assessments and incorporates sample questions into each of its trainings on the CCR standards. For the 2013–2014 school year, MDE described its plan to move its entire science assessment online to effectively operate as a logistical pilot for LEAs and schools as they adjust to the technological requirements and scheduling differences that will accompany the PARCC assessments.</p> <p>The SEA is also preparing to administer alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the 2014–2015 school year. MDE provided a copy of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System Consortium and also provided evidence of the State Board of Education’s adoption of the DLM’s essential elements in spring 2013. MDE conducted trainings for special education directors and assessment coordinators in March 2013 on CCR standards, essential elements, and DLM assessments.</p> <p>MDE explained that it is moving forward with plans to implement ELP standards that correspond to Mississippi’s CCR standards and ELP assessments that align with those standards through its participation in the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium. MDE indicated that it recently extended its participation in the WIDA consortium until 2015. MDE keeps LEAs informed about ELP standards and assessments by inviting them to WIDA’s monthly webinars and disseminating WIDA’s tools and training resources.</p> <p>To ensure that its CCR standards are truly aligned with postsecondary expectations, and to inform parents and students about the college-readiness rates of local schools, MDE indicated it is preparing to launch a dashboard site for its Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) in July 2013. A link to the prototype for the website showed that this dashboard will include State and school-level data on college-going and college-credit accumulation rates. The SEA explained that it is still working on linking data in the system to ensure that</p>

Principle 1	College- and Career-Ready Expectations for all Students
	this information will be able to be provided at the subgroup level.

Principle 2	State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support
Type of Review	<p>The following elements received a Foundational Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support • Reward Schools • Priority Schools • Focus Schools • Other Title I Schools • State and Local Report Cards <p>The following element received a Comprehensive Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Schools
Summary of Progress and Analysis of Implementation	<p>Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support MDE indicated during the Part A monitoring call that it successfully ran its system of accountability based on 2011–2012 data between July 1, 2012 and September 9, 2012 to identify its priority, focus, and other Title I schools.</p> <p>Reward Schools Consistent with MDE’s approved ESEA flexibility request, MDE is providing incentives and recognition for success annually by publicly recognizing as reward schools those Title I schools making the most progress or having the highest performance. MDE provided evidence that it recognized 38 high-performing and high-progress schools in a Champions of Change Recognition and Awards Ceremony on April 25, 2013. Two reward schools were designated as Distinguished Schools and were recognized at the National Title I Conference in January 2013.</p> <p>Priority Schools Based upon discussions during the monitoring visit and a review of the documentation MDE provided (<i>e.g.</i>, sample MS SOARS priority school plans, 1003(a) plans, Title I schoolwide plans, and priority school site visit reports), MDE has not sufficiently demonstrated that all non-SIG priority schools implemented all turnaround principles in the 2012–2013 school year, which MDE considered to be the first year of implementation in all priority schools.</p> <p>According to Mississippi’s approved ESEA flexibility request, all priority schools will design a three-year comprehensive transformation plan that explicitly addresses each of the turnaround principles. Each priority school had to complete the performance framework-data collection matrix to analyze the needs</p>

Principle 2	State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support
	<p>of their school. MDE confirmed during Part B monitoring interviews that all non-SIG priority schools submitted a plan in MS SOARS to address 22 indicators of effectiveness on November 2, 2012. In addition to providing MS SOARS plans, priority schools were required to submit applications for 1003(a) funds that addressed how these schools intended to use those funds to meet the turnaround principles. All priority schools were also required to create Title I schoolwide plans, which were approved by the schools' LEAs.</p> <p>In reviewing samples of all three of these plans, it is not evident how non-SIG priority schools are implementing interventions consistent with all of the turnaround principles. From MS SOARS priority school plans, it is not clear that in addressing the 22 indicators of effectiveness, non-SIG priority schools have developed plans that address all of the turnaround principles. From the plans submitted as evidence, ED staff found these plans to be incomplete, especially the MS SOARS plans. Most of the tasks in the plans indicated 0 percent complete. MDE noted that this was a result of the timing of review, and that these plans had been updated throughout the year to reflect ongoing actions; however, this was not apparent from the documentation. Additionally, in a review of the 1003(a) plans it was unclear whether all of the components of the turnaround principles were being addressed.</p> <p>With regard to schoolwide plans, MDE's submissions demonstrated an analysis of data and interventions tied to the needs indicated by the data. Also, goals are set for the areas identified in the needs assessments of the schoolwide plans. The plans described components to address the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other struggling learners. The schoolwide plans also addressed professional development tied to the needs of the schools. However, again, it was not clear how these plans aligned with all of the turnaround principles.</p> <p>During the monitoring interview, MDE acknowledged that all priority schools may not be fully implementing all of the turnaround principles this year. For example, MDE staff indicated that a number of the non-SIG schools were struggling to redesign the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration. MDE indicated that while it understood that identification lasted for three years, it believed implementation could occur over those three years.</p> <p>MDE has instituted a process to begin ensuring that all non-SIG priority schools address the leadership turnaround principle. MDE staff sent all superintendents of LEAs with non-SIG priority schools a letter asking whether they intended to retain the principal for next year and if so, to provide data demonstrating that this principal is effective and has the competencies of a turnaround leader. MDE noted that seven of the 24 schools are not retaining the principal. However, it was unclear whether MDE used formal criteria in reviewing the data provided by</p>

Principle 2	State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support
	<p>the LEA.</p> <p>MDE explained that new MS SOARS plans are due to MDE on May 31, 2013. MDE staff indicated that these plans should better address the eight turnaround principles, as a result of the monitoring and technical assistance by the implementation specialist, the additional time provided to complete the plans, and the work to align the MS SOARS indicators with the turnaround principles. To build ownership and commitment from LEAs in this process, LEAs also must sign off on the MS SOARS plans. After the priority, focus and approaching target plans are reviewed, MDE reported that it is planning an interview process related to the consolidated application. This interview process will include superintendents, federal program directors, and principals. The purpose will be to examine what interventions are being used, what is working, and how money is being used differently to support these interventions. MDE will not approve consolidated applications for federal funds until the interview has occurred. In addition to reviewing priority schools through online reports submitted in MS SOARS, MDE is continuously assessing implementation actions through on-site technical assistance visits by MDE implementation specialists and through annual monitoring visits. To facilitate communication, coordination, and planning, a key component of each priority school is the development of the Leadership Team, which is headed by the principal and includes key instructional leaders across grade levels. In the monitoring interviews, MDE staff indicated that one of the ten implementation specialists visited the priority schools about twice a month to provide technical assistance and to monitor the development of the plans by the school's Leadership Team. Each time an implementation specialist visits the school, the specialist submits a monitoring report to MDE.</p> <p>According to MDE staff, six high schools were identified as priority schools because of low graduation rates. These schools participated in a drop-out prevention program called Go Hard. However, it is not clear how the training changed the structure or provided interventions in the high schools with the low graduation rates.</p> <p>Focus Schools</p> <p>MDE identified 75 focus schools, based on the gap in performance between the top quartile and bottom quartile. However, MDE is not ensuring that each of these schools is implementing interventions based on the specific academic needs of the school and its students. MDE required focus schools to develop plans in MS SOARS to address a set of indicators of effectiveness, but it is unclear how these indicators or the overall plans targeted the subgroups in greatest need. MDE intended to use its implementation specialists who would visit the focus schools and their districts to review the implementation of interventions. However, as stated earlier, MDE had sufficient funds to have implementation</p>

Principle 2	State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support
	<p>specialists in focus schools only while the schools were developing their plans.</p> <p>According to the Mississippi Flexibility Request, consistent support for each Focus school and corresponding LEAs will come primarily through an MDE-placed support specialist who will visit the school and/or LEA on an on-going basis (at least twice monthly), evaluating the fidelity of implementation of the school's action/improvement plan and providing support on needed corrections. The district will establish a community-based pre-kindergarten through a higher education council to influence the action plan. Districts and their councils may use MS SOARS, an online tool for districts/schools to use in developing the action plan and tracking progress toward meeting goals. As stated previously, MDE had insufficient funds to support the implementation specialists' provision of technical assistance and oversight for the focus schools. MDE is working with the LEAs that have focus schools to build capacity to provide technical assistance and oversight. MDE requires LEA personnel to review focus school plans and provide coaching comments. Just as in the priority schools, MDE is monitoring focus school implementation through on-line reports submitted in MS SOARS. Focus schools submitted plans on November 2, 2012, through MS SOARS and were to submit new plans to MDE on May 31, 2013. The data for the lowest QDI and AMOs were available for the focus schools to analyze. In the interviews, MDE staff stated that the Leadership Teams in each of the focus schools would be targeting the needs of English learners and students with disabilities. According to discussions with MDE staff, focus schools were required to address indicators of effectiveness. Just as in the priority schools, this year each focus school had to complete three plans, MS SOARS, schoolwide and the 1003(a) plan. The plans submitted by MDE were incomplete, especially the MS SOARS plans. The 1003(a) plans did describe how funds would be used for certain interventions. Under one of the indicators, teachers' <i>individualized instruction</i> describes activities that included students with disabilities and English learners and also teachers of these students. Through MDE's Committee of Practitioners, and with the help of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), MDE is also developing guidelines to help support teachers of English learners.</p> <p>Other Title I Schools</p> <p>Consistent with MDE's approved ESEA Flexibility request, MDE is ensuring that other Title I schools receive incentives and supports. MDE labels Title I Schools that do not meet AMOs for math, reading language arts, attendance rates, or graduation rate targets for two consecutive years as "approaching target schools." MDE identified 187 approaching target schools on September 7, 2012. All of these schools were identified based on their failure to meet AMOs for traditional ESEA subgroups.</p> <p>According to interviews with MDE, many training sessions available for focus</p>

Principle 2	State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support
	<p>schools were also available to approaching target schools. In accordance with MDE’s approved ESEA Flexibility request, approaching target schools were required to write an action plan addressing three of the MS SOARS Rapid Improvement indicators. However, as MDE staff explained during the monitoring interview, the approaching target schools were allowed to update their schoolwide plans, rather than using MS SOARS to create a separate plan.</p> <p>During the monitoring interview, MDE explained that the SEA found roughly ten of these schools needed more intensive supports. In those instances when these schools qualified for “at risk” status within MDE’s state accountability system, MDE required the schools to complete the “at-risk” school plan rather than the approaching target school plan.</p> <p>In addition to these supports for other Title I schools, MDE noted during the monitoring visit that according to new State legislation, any school with a graduation rate below 80 percent must develop an improvement plan to increase the graduation rate.</p> <p>State and Local Report Cards</p> <p>MDE developed and publicly reported its State, LEA and school report cards using 2011–2012 data, including reporting performance against new AMOs established under ESEA flexibility. As of the monitoring visit, the 2012–2013 State and local report cards were not available. MDE indicated during the monitoring interview that it was working on a new template to report 2012–2013 data to reflect ED’s February 2013 report card guidance. During the MDE interviews, staff indicated that these report cards will be distributed to the public, to teachers, and to parents. The report cards will be posted online, sent home to parents and made available in public libraries.</p>

Principle 3	Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership
Type of Review	<p>The following elements received a Foundational Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems • Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems • Ensure LEAs Implement Principal Evaluation and Support Systems <p>The following element(s) received a Comprehensive Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure LEAs Implement Principal Evaluation and Support Systems
Summary of Progress and Analysis of Implementation	<p>MDE is ensuring that the development and piloting of its teacher evaluation and support system is carried out consistent with MDE’s approved guidelines and approved ESEA flexibility request.</p>

All of MDE's LEAs are required to use the Statewide system for teacher evaluation and support. In the first year of implementation, MDE's teacher evaluation and support system will include two elements: MSTAR, the state's observation rubric, and student growth on statewide assessments. During the 2012–2013 school year, MDE piloted MSTAR in ten Teacher Incentive Fund schools. MDE also trained 2,400 administrators on this rubric, which MDE will field test during the 2013–2014 school year. As part of the monitoring interview, MDE noted that originally it expected principals to train teachers on MSTAR, but as a result of feedback MDE received, MDE is offering MSTAR trainings directly to teachers in summer 2013.

In the first year of implementation, MDE plans to use student growth percentiles at the school level as a growth measure for all teachers, as well as student growth percentiles at the teacher level for teachers of tested grades and subjects. MDE noted during the monitoring visit that it is currently working with ED to demonstrate that it can accurately connect student assessment results to individual teachers, thereby permitting the State to establish student growth metrics for individual teachers in tested grades and subjects.

In 2015–2016, MDE will add two additional components to its teacher evaluation and support system, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and Professional Growth Goals (PGGs). MDE noted during the monitoring visit that it has started working with its Statewide Teacher Evaluation Committee (STEC), as well as regional research partners such as The RIA Group, to begin researching and developing SLOs. MDE noted that it will hold focus groups for particular teacher groups (*e.g.*, teachers of students with disabilities, physical education teachers, audiologists, librarians) to get feedback on SLO development.

MDE is working on the development of PGGs. Beginning in 2015–2016, 20 percent of each teacher's evaluation will be based on the attainment of two PGGs. MDE explained that teachers indicated in focus groups that they wanted a part in establishing these PGGs. Based on this feedback, MDE determined that each teacher will select one PGG, and the principal will select the second PGG.

As MDE explained during the monitoring visit, for each element of the system, teachers will receive a rating between 1 and 4. The scores for each element will be combined in accordance with the weighting in the system, and this combined score will determine each teacher's rating. MDE is still in the process of converting each element of the system to a numerical rating.

MDE is ensuring that the development, piloting, and implementation of its teacher evaluation and support system occurs with the involvement of teachers. MDE noted that before the pilot, it spoke with more than 2,000 teachers about the teacher evaluation and support system. As described during the monitoring

visit, MDE is establishing Points of Contact (POCs) in each LEA, to serve as liaisons between MDE and teachers. MDE stated during the monitoring visit that it intends to train POCs in June and July of 2013, so that these individuals are prepared to provide support for the LEAs. MDE expects these POCs to establish focus groups to collect feedback on the evaluation system during the field test.

MDE is also ensuring that the development, piloting, and implementation of its principal evaluation and support system is carried out consistent with MDE's approved guidelines and approved ESEA flexibility request. MDE is on track to fully implement its principal evaluation system in the 2013-14 school year. All of MDE's LEAs are required to use the statewide system for principal evaluation and support.

MDE submitted a presentation from a principal evaluation system workshop, which provides an overview of the system. MDE has developed a system that supports continuous improvement and provides constructive feedback, with required actions throughout the year, including goal setting, a formative conference, a 360-degree leadership evaluation, a self-assessment, a summative assessment, and the development of a professional growth plan. Every principal is evaluated and supported annually.

In MDE's evaluation system, each principal's overall evaluation is based on five elements. As explained in the "Mississippi Principal Evaluation System 2013 Process Manual," which MDE provided, each principal will establish annual goals relating to English/language arts and mathematic assessments as well as two organizational goals, comprising 70 percent of the principal's overall evaluation. The remaining 30 percent will be based on a 360-degree leadership evaluation. As the process manual explains, each principal will receive a score between 1 and 4 for each element. These scores will be weighted and aggregated, resulting in the final score and rating. MDE's system includes four ratings: Unsatisfactory, Emerging, Effective, and Distinguished.

MDE is using an online system called Canvas to administer the Mississippi principal evaluation system. Through this system, MDE will be able to provide all principals with the necessary forms to complete the evaluation cycle, to monitor schools, and to ensure that all schools are on track in setting goals. MDE also indicated the SEA's intent to add a review of the principal evaluation system to Federal Programs monitoring.

MDE conducted a pilot of the system in 2012-2013, and made several changes to the system based on feedback it received. MDE noted that it surveyed pilot districts to obtain feedback on the system, and interviewed some participants to determine what worked well and what did not work. Based on feedback received and the results of the pilot, MDE provided more detail on the steps involved in and expectations for the goal-setting process. MDE worked with

	<p>SEDL to create goal-setting documents to ensure that everyone can set goals by following the instructions, and that these goals are appropriately quantifiable. During the monitoring interview, MDE also noted that it intends to establish a process to compare the leader’s evaluation results and the school’s achievement results, thereby evaluating the validity of the system.</p> <p>MDE identified a number of challenges in the implementation of its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. First, MDE’s system requires that all teachers receive five formative observations and two summative observations each year. MDE noted that this observation cycle will create a time management challenge, but expected that the pilot year would help to establish procedures to ensure that all of the observations are manageable. MDE further stated that, despite this potential challenge, MDE believes the principals will ultimately find these observations to be invaluable, and well-worth the time commitment.</p> <p>MDE also noted that it received feedback from educators who were concerned about some aspects of the timeline of implementation. Specifically, educators were concerned that, in 2013–2014, they are expected to teach to standards that are not aligned with the assessments, but they are evaluated based upon the assessment results.</p> <p>Finally, MDE noted that its teacher and principal evaluation systems cannot be used to inform personnel decisions without a change to State laws. Current State laws require that teachers and principals be notified of termination by February and April of each year, respectively, but MDE does not administer Statewide assessments until May, and cannot have data pertaining to student growth from statewide assessments until later in the year.</p>
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ELEMENTS REQUIRING NEXT STEPS

Element	Transition to and Implement College and Career Ready Standards (1.B)
Summary and Status of Implementation	<p>MDE indicated in its request that it would develop a scaffolding document to support struggling learners, English learners, and students with disabilities. MDE indicated it has not developed this scaffolding document, but intends to use resources provided by the DLM Alternate Assessment System Consortium. MDE provided a schedule of future trainings on CCR standards, which shows that it is planning to conduct trainings for teachers of English learners and special education teachers in the fall of 2013. MDE did not provide evidence or an indication that it plans to provide other training or other resources to all teachers to support English learners or students with disabilities in accessing CCR standards, beyond students with the severest cognitive disabilities (students who take the 1 percent assessments). MDE has not provided resources sufficient to support teachers of struggling learners, English learners, and all students with disabilities in the transition to college- and career-ready standards as it committed to do in its request.</p>

Next Steps	Within 30 days of the receipt of this report, MDE will submit a high-quality plan that describes the steps MDE will take to support all teachers in supporting struggling learners, English learners, and all students with disabilities in the transition to CCR standards, and MDE will submit an amended request, as appropriate.
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Element	Priority Schools (2.D)
Summary and Status of Implementation	In MDE's approved request, the SEA indicated that that all priority schools would be implementing all of the turnaround principles in what the SEA considered the first year of implementation in school year 2012–2013. While priority schools are required to address 22 indicators of effectiveness in the MS SOARS plan this year, it is not evident that all the turnaround principles are addressed in these transformation plans and thus may not be implemented in all priority schools. Additionally, MDE required priority schools to submit 1003(a) applications that directly address the turnaround principles. It is not clear that the activities identified in this application fully address the turnaround principles. According to interviews, MDE acknowledged that all priority schools may not be fully implementing all of the turnaround principles this year. To count as the first year of the three years of full implementation, priority schools must implement all of the turnaround principles in school year 2012–2013.
Next Steps	Within 30 days of the receipt of this report, MDE must provide to ED a demonstration that all priority schools implemented interventions aligned with the all of the turnaround principles beginning in 2012–2013. If MDE is unable to provide such a demonstration, MDE must submit a high quality plan for ensuring that all priority schools are implementing interventions aligned with all turnaround principles in the first year of implementation and that the first year of implementation for all priority schools occurs no later than the 2014–2015 school year. MDE must also submit an amendment to its approved ESEA flexibility request with an updated timeline for three years of full implementation in all priority schools.

Element	Focus Schools (2.E)
Summary and Status of Implementation	In MDE's approved request, the SEA indicated that it would use implementation specialists to review and support implementation of interventions in focus schools. However, based on discussions during the monitoring visit the SEA indicated that it did not have sufficient funds to continue providing implementation specialists to focus schools and has not substituted an alternative method to monitor implementation in focus schools. As a result, the SEA is not adequately monitoring to ensure implementation of interventions in focus schools based on reviews of the specific academic needs of the school and its students. MDE needs to address how it will provide targeted support to focus schools to address the needs of particular student groups.
Next Steps	Within 30 days of the receipt of this report, MDE will submit a high-quality plan indicating the steps MDE will take to ensure that each focus school identifies and understands the subgroup(s) that led to its identification and that each focus

	schools selects and implements interventions to meet the needs of those groups, and MDE will submit an amended request, as appropriate.
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STATUS OF UNWAIVED TITLE I REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Fiscal Integrity (§9304 of the ESEA; 2.G of ESEA Flexibility)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the fiscal integrity requirements.
Next Steps	None.

Requirement	Within State Allocations, Reallocations, and Carryover (§§200.70 – 200.75 of the ESEA’s regulations; §§1126(c) and 1127 of the ESEA)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the within State allocations, reallocations, and carryover requirements.
Next Steps	None.

Requirement	Within District Allocation Procedures (§§ 1113, 1116, 1118 of the ESEA and §200.77 and 200.78 of the ESEA’s regulations)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met requirements for within-district allocation procedures.
Next Steps	None.

Requirement	Fiscal Requirements: Maintenance of Effort, Comparability, Supplement Not Supplant, and Internal Controls (§§1114, 1120A, 1115, and 9521 of the ESEA)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the fiscal requirements related to maintenance of effort, comparability, and internal controls. However, during the monitoring visit MDE indicated that it had identified a supplement, not supplant issue in one LEA. Although MDE indicated that it was working with the LEA to correct the issue, MDE did not have evidence that the issue had been resolved at the time of the onsite visit.
Next Steps	Within 30 days of the receipt of this report, MDE must provide to ED evidence that the supplement, not supplant issue in the relevant district has been resolved or provide to ED a plan for the resolution of this issue.

Requirement	Services to Eligible Private School Children (§1120 and 9306 of the ESEA; §443 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA); and §§200.62-200.67, §200.77 and §200.78 of the ESEA’s Regulations)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the requirements to provide services to eligible private school children.
Next Steps	None.

Requirement	Test Security
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Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the test security requirements.
Next Steps	None.

Requirement	Schoolwide planning (priority, focus, and other Title I schools) (§1114 of the ESEA)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the schoolwide planning requirements.
Next Steps	None.

Requirement	Targeted Assistance Schools (§1115 of the ESEA)
Status	The SEA has demonstrated that it has met the requirements for targeted assistance schools.
Next Steps	None.