

ESEA FLEXIBILITY PART B MONITORING REPORT

MONITORING VISIT	INFORMATION
State Educational Agency (SEA)	<i>Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE)</i>
Request Approved	<i>August 12, 2013</i>
Request Amended	<i>N/A</i>
ESEA Flex Monitoring Activity	<i>Part B Desk Monitoring</i>
Monitoring Review Date(s)	<i>February 2 & 5, 2015</i>
Exit Conference	<i>February 13, 2015</i>
Interviews Conducted	<i>Rachelle Tome</i>
U.S. Department of Education (ED) Monitors	<i>Emily Bank, Office of State Support (OSS) Elizabeth Ross, OSS Jennifer Wolfsheimer, Office of Special Education Programs</i>

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, and Principle 2. The State's Principle 3 guidelines underwent peer review in fall 2014 and as a result additional information was not collected regarding the State's implementation of Principle 3 during this monitoring event. 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:

- *Based on monitoring documentation and conversations with Maine DOE staff members, it is apparent that Maine DOE has made great efforts to maximize internal resources by collaborating across programs. ED applauds Maine DOE’s efforts to break down long-standing silos and its focus on collaboration within the department.*
- *Maine DOE has developed and is implementing a process to ensure that all SEA-provided technical assistance is available to all local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools. This process has enabled Maine DOE to increase participation in its technical assistance activities.*

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)	Not 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)	Not 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)	Changed Strategy
Focus Schools (2.E)	Changed Strategy
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
Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B)	Maine’s guidelines are under review
Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B)	Maine’s guidelines are under review

ELEMENTS REQUIRING NEXT STEPS

Element	Family & Community Engagement and Outreach (Implementation Letter)
Summary and Status of Implementation	The SEA has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request and the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> . Specifically, Maine DOE has not demonstrated that it is satisfactorily engaging its stakeholders in the work it is conducting under ESEA flexibility. Maine DOE has a mechanism for informing a limited group of stakeholders of the work it is conducting under ESEA flexibility; however, it is not currently ensuring that a broad variety of stakeholders, including civil rights organizations, business organizations, and groups that represent students with disabilities and English Learners, have an opportunity to review and provide feedback on Maine DOE’s work to implement ESEA flexibility.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the process for renewing the SEA’s ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE will submit a plan that demonstrates how it will meaningfully engage a broad variety of stakeholders on the reforms it is implementing under ESEA flexibility. • The SEA will also provide a description of how it meaningfully solicited input, across LEAs throughout the State, from LEAs, teachers, their representatives, administrators, students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, institutions of higher education, and Indian tribes about the implementation of ESEA flexibility and the proposed changes that the SEA made to its currently approved ESEA flexibility request in order to seek renewal.

Element	Annually Reports College-going and College-credit Accumulation Rates (Assurance 5)
Summary and Status of Implementation	The SEA has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with the assurance it provided in its approved ESEA flexibility request. Specifically, Maine DOE stated that it is currently trying to explore the extent to which it can collect and report college-credit accumulation rates as defined under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) indicator (c)(12); however, to date, it is not collecting these data.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the process for renewing the SEA’s ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE will describe its plan for ensuring that it will collect and report college-credit accumulation rates as defined under SFSF indicator (c)(12).

Element	Priority Schools (2.D)
Summary and Status of Implementation	The SEA has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request and the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> . Although Maine DOE is ensuring that its LEAs are implementing interventions aligned to all of the turnaround principles for the five percent of priority schools it indicated it would identify in its approved ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE stated that it identified nine new priority schools to begin implementation in the 2014–2015 school year. However, these nine schools began implementation in January 2015, rather than in August 2014.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the process for renewing the SEA’s ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE will provide a plan for ensuring that all priority schools implement all seven of the turnaround principles at the beginning of year one of priority school implementation. • In addition, because these nine priority schools did not implement interventions aligned to all of the turnaround principles at the beginning of the 2014–2015 school year, Maine DOE cannot consider 2014–2015 to be the first year of implementation in these schools.

Element	Focus Schools (2.E)
Summary and Status of Implementation	The SEA has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request and the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> . Although Maine DOE is ensuring that its LEAs are implementing interventions aligned to the reason for a focus school’s identification in the ten percent of focus schools it indicated it would identify in its approved ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE stated that it identified 14 new focus schools to begin implementation in the 2014–2015 school year. However, these 14 schools began implementation in January 2015, rather than in August 2014.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the process for renewal the SEA’s ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE will ensure that it updates its plan and timeline for implementing interventions aligned with the school’s reason for identification to reflect any changes from its most recently approved

Element	Focus Schools (2.E)
	request.

Element	State and Local Report Cards (§1111 of the ESEA; 2.B and Assurance 14)
Summary and Status of Implementation	The SEA has not demonstrated that this element is carried out consistent with its approved ESEA flexibility request and the principles and timelines outlined in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility or §1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)</i> . Specifically, the Maine State-level report card does not include its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools that the SEA has identified as needing intervention under its State differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility, Maine DOE must provide a plan for including all required components on its State and local report cards, as specified in the <i>State and Local Report Cards Non-Regulatory Guidance</i>, updated February 8, 2013 (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/state_local_report_card_guidance_2-08-2013.pdf) beginning 2014–2015.

Element	Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (3.B)
Summary and Status of Implementation	In fall 2014, two expert peers reviewed Maine DOE’s Principle 3 guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, as well as corresponding changes to the Principle 3 of Maine DOE’s request. In a December 2014 letter from ED to Maine DOE, Assistant Secretary Deb Delisle indicated that Maine DOE had not yet adopted guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet all requirements of ESEA flexibility, nor does it have a process for ensuring that each LEA in Maine develops, adopts, pilots, and implements teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with those guidelines as required under ESEA flexibility. This letter also provided Maine DOE feedback from that peer review identifying strengths, revisions that may be needed to meet Principle 3, and technical assistance suggestions.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the process for renewing the SEA’s ESEA flexibility request, Maine DOE must submit to ED an amended request incorporating final guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with all requirements for these systems under Principle 3 of ESEA flexibility and consistent with the renewal requirements pertaining to Principle 3 described in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility Guidance for Renewal Process</i> (November 13, 2014).

RECOMMENDATION 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.

- *While Maine DOE has made significant progress toward increasing collaboration across the SEA, Maine DOE should put in place processes to ensure that SEA, LEA, and school staff representing all student subgroups are actively engaged in the decision-making, implementation, and continuous improvement processes supporting college- and career-ready standards, differentiated recognition, accountability and support, and teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.*
- *Maine DOE should work toward integrating the work of the different teams supporting the implementation of ESEA flexibility, with focus on helping SEA, LEA, and school staff understand the connections between new initiatives in order to streamline their work.*