



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JUL 28 2014

The Honorable Tom Torlakson  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Superintendent Torlakson:

During the week of January 27-31, 2014 a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround (OST) reviewed the California Department of Education's (CDE) administration of Title I, section 1003(g) (School Improvement Grants (SIG)) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended. As part of its review, the ED team interviewed staff at the State educational agency (SEA) and two local educational agencies (LEAs). The ED team also conducted site visits to two schools implementing the SIG intervention models, where they visited classes and interviewed school leadership, teachers, parents, and students. Enclosed you will find ED's final monitoring report based upon this review.

The primary purpose of monitoring is to ensure that the SEA carries out the SIG program consistent with the final requirements. Additionally, ED is using its monitoring review to observe how LEAs and schools are implementing the selected intervention models and identify areas where technical assistance may be needed to support effective program implementation.

In line with these aims, the enclosed monitoring report is organized in three sections: (1) *Summary and Observation*, (2) *Technical Assistance Recommendations*, and (3) *Monitoring Findings*. The *Summary and Observations* section describes the SIG implementation occurring in the schools and districts visited, initial indicators of success, and any outstanding challenges relating to implementation. The *Technical Assistance Recommendations* section contains strategies and resources for addressing technical assistance needs identified during ED's visit. Finally, the *Monitoring Findings* section identifies any compliance issues within the six indicator areas reviewed and corrective actions that the SEA is required to take.

The CDE has 30 business days from receipt of this report to respond to all of the compliance issues contained herein. ED staff will review your response for sufficiency and will determine which areas are acceptable and which require further documentation of implementation. ED will allow 30 business days for receipt of this further documentation, if required. ED recognizes that some corrective actions may require longer than the prescribed 30 days, and in these instances, will work with the CDE to determine a reasonable timeline. In those instances where additional time is required to implement specific corrective actions, you must submit a request for such an extension in writing to ED, including a timeline for completion for all related actions.

Each State that participates in an onsite monitoring review and that has significant compliance findings in one or more of the programs monitored will have a condition placed on that

program's grant award specifying that the State must submit (and receive approval of) documentation that all compliance issues identified in the monitoring report have been corrected. When documentation sufficient to address all compliance areas has been submitted and approved, ED will then remove the condition from your grant award.

With regards to the *Technical Assistance Recommendations* provided, we encourage you to employ these strategies to further support the effective implementation of the SIG program. ED staff will follow up with your staff over the next few months to see how the CDE is working to address these issues and make use of this technical assistance.

Please be aware that the observations reported, issues identified, and findings made in the enclosed report are based on written documentation or information provided to ED by SEA, LEA, or school staff during interviews. They also reflect the status of compliance in California at the time and locations of ED's onsite review. The CDE may receive further communication from ED that will require it to address noncompliance occurring prior or subsequent to the onsite visit.

The ED team would like to thank Bob Storelli, Jen Taylor, Chad Portney, Lori Marshall and Monique McWayne for their hard work and the assistance they provided prior to and during the review in gathering materials and providing access to information in a timely manner.

We look forward to working further with your staff to resolve the issues contained in this report and to improve the quality of the SIG program in California.

Sincerely,



Scott Sargrad  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Strategic  
Initiatives  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Bob Storelli  
Jen Taylor  
Chad Portney  
Monique McWayne  
Lori Marshall

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**Targeted Monitoring Review of School Improvement Grants (SIG) under**  
**Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**  
**January 27-31, 2014**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (SIG) MONITORING REPORT FOR CALIFORNIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

<b>BACKGROUND</b>						
<b>Models</b>	<b>Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model - Cohort I</b>		<b>Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model - Cohort II</b>		<b>Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model - Cohort III</b>	
Turnaround	29		13		NA	
Transformation	56		26		NA	
Restart	5		5		NA	
Closure	2		0		NA	
<b>Tier</b>	<b>SIG-eligible Schools</b>	<b>SIG-funded Schools</b>	<b>SIG-eligible Schools</b>	<b>SIG-funded Schools</b>	<b>SIG-eligible Schools</b>	<b>SIG-funded Schools</b>
Tier I	140	67	72	39	NA	NA
Tier II	49	25	24	32	NA	NA
Tier III	2,531	0	2,788	0	NA	NA

<b>MONITORING TRIP INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Monitoring Visits and Award Amounts</b>	
<b>SEA Visited</b>	California Department of Education
<b>Total FY 2009 SIG Allocation</b>	\$64,081,739 ( REGULAR ) \$351,762,637 ( ARRA )
<b>Total FY 2010 SIG Allocation</b>	\$69,095,854
<b>Total FY 2011 SIG Allocation</b>	\$ 63,167,836
<b>Total FY 2012 SIG Allocation</b>	\$ 61,846,426
<b>Total FY 2013 SIG Allocation</b>	\$57,025,565
<b>LEA Visited</b>	San Francisco Unified School District
<b>LEA Information</b>	Cohort 1: 9 schools awarded \$44,985,332 Cohort 2: 0 schools awarded \$0 Cohort 3: NA schools awarded
<b>School Visited</b>	Buena Vista / Horace Mann
<b>School Information</b>	Model: Transformation Cohort: 1 School-Level Award: \$3,417,082.81
<b>LEA Visited</b>	Stockton Unified School District
<b>LEA Information</b>	Cohort 1: 0 schools awarded \$0 Cohort 2: 7 schools awarded \$11,381,357 Cohort 3: NA schools awarded
<b>School Visited</b>	Nightingale Elementary School
<b>School Information</b>	Model: Restart Cohort: 2

School-Level Award: \$5,209,561	
<b>Staff Interviewed</b>	
➤	<b>California Department of Education Staff</b>
➤	<b>San Francisco Unified School District Staff</b>
➤	<b>Buena Vista / Horace Mann Staff:</b> Principal, School Leadership Team, 4 Teachers, 7 Parents, 15 Students, and 4 Classroom Visits
➤	<b>Stockton Unified School District Staff</b>
➤	<b>Nightingale Elementary School Staff:</b> Principal, School Leadership Team, 6 Teachers, 5 Parents, 10 Students, and 4 Classroom Visits
<b>U.S. Department of Education Staff</b>	
<b>Team Leader</b>	Carlos McCauley
<b>Staff Onsite</b>	Janine Rudder, Christopher Tate, Molly Budman, Kimberly Light

## OVERVIEW OF MONITORING PROCESS

The following report is based on the U.S. Department of Education’s (Department) on-site monitoring visit to California from January 27-31, 2014 and review of documentation provided by the State educational agency (SEA), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools.

The *School Improvement Grant (SIG) Monitoring Report* provides feedback to the California Department of Education (CDE) on its progress in implementing the program effectively, and in a manner that is consistent with the SIG final requirements, authorized by Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, and as explained further in *Guidance on Fiscal Year 2010 School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (March 2012)*. The observations and descriptions illustrate the implementation of the SIG program by the SEA, LEAs, and schools visited; initial indicators of success; and any outstanding challenges being faced in implementation. The report consists of the following sections:

- **Background Information:** This section highlights significant achievements in the CDE’s implementation of the SIG grant. This section also includes a brief overview of the CDE’s structure and vision for SIG implementation.
- **Summary of the CDE’s Implementation of SIG Critical Elements:** This section provides a summary of the SEA’s progress in implementing SIG and is based on evidence gathered during the monitoring visit on January 27-31, 2014 or through written documentation provided to the Department.
- **Technical Assistance Recommendations:** This section addresses areas where additional technical assistance may be needed to improve the quality of SIG program implementation.
- **Monitoring Findings:** This section identifies areas where the SEA is not in compliance with the final requirements of the SIG program and indicates required actions that the SEA must take to resolve the findings.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Highlights of CDE's Implementation of SIG

#### CDE Highlights

- The CDE has refined its LEA SIG application process for its cohort II competition to enhance the technical assistance offered through the application by adding additional examples, more detailed implementation charts and budget narratives to get a better sense of LEA capacity.
- The CDE has restructured itself to accommodate SIG by expanding its office to include consultants with diverse experiences in the education field, which has strengthened the office's capacity to support the SIG work.

#### San Francisco Unified School District / Buena Vista/Horace Mann Highlights

- San Francisco Unified School District provides opportunities for staff in various positions, such as principals and coaches, to participate in job-alike professional development by developing networks, which entails conducting instructional rounds and monthly deep dives into problems of practice for school leadership teams.
- Buena Vista / Horace Mann K-8 School (BVHM) maintains strong partnerships with various community organizations to meet the needs of all of its students and their families. Through these partnerships, BVHM is able to provide mental health services, reading and writing support to English Learner (EL) students, equity training for teachers and a weekly food bank for students and their families.

#### Stockton Unified School District / Nightingale Elementary School Highlights

- Stockton Unified School District invites parents and community stakeholders to participate in the principal selection process and provides them with the opportunity to provide feedback on prospective external providers' presentations.
- Nightingale Elementary has provided meaningful opportunities for students to be creative, think critically, collaborate with their peers and delve more deeply into topics that interest them through the project-based learning initiative implemented as a central component of its transition to a charter school.

#### Los Angeles Unified School District / Manual Arts High School Highlights

- Los Angeles Unified School District provides mini grants to teachers within SIG schools using a portion of its administrative SIG funds to recognize innovative ideas. Teachers may apply for funding to support unique proposals that support their school's improvement goals.
- Manual Arts provides a range of wraparound services to students through a school-based health clinic (St. John's Wellness Center) as well as mental health services provided by the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic and psychiatric social workers on staff.

### **Inglewood Unified School District / Monroe Middle School Highlights**

- Inglewood has developed short videos of interviews with staff and students at the three SIG schools in the district to be used to inform the broader community about the improvements that have been made at these schools. The district has also created a committee that includes representatives from the local press and the mayor's office / city council to assist with public relations.
- Monroe's parent academy is an innovative way to inform parents about events specific to the school and current events in education in general. Parents discuss educational topics that are important to them, such as the Common Core State Standards, and are taught by knowledgeable teachers and professionals. In addition, Monroe offers daily English classes to parents.

### **California Department of Education Structure**

The CDE has six staff members dedicated to working on SIG implementation. These positions include education program consultants, a fiscal analyst and a data specialist. These staff members are part of the School Turnaround Office, which is housed in the Improvement and Accountability Division of the California Department of Education. The CDE has restructured itself to accommodate SIG by growing its office from a staff of two to six. New consultants have varying backgrounds in education to provide diverse perspectives. The office has also created a policy team to be more responsive to LEA needs.

## SUMMARY OF CDE'S IMPLEMENTATION OF SIG CRITICAL ELEMENTS

### Application Process

During the 2011-2012 SIG competition, the CDE did not make awards to LEAs in accordance with the timeline in its approved SIG application (July, 2011) because it requested to carry over 100 percent of its SIG funds due to not having deemed any submitted LEA applications as approvable. The CDE held another competition the following year in which the CDE supported LEAs through the application process by providing technical assistance via emails, phone calls and other written correspondence such as guidance from the Department (ED). As a result, awards to SIG cohort II schools were made in February, 2012.

The CDE conducted its SIG competition in accordance with what was outlined in its approved application. The CDE notified LEAs with SIG-eligible schools by posting a request for applications (RFA), which contained a list of eligible schools, on the CDE's website.

Since awarding the grants, the CDE has received requests from LEAs to amend their SIG application. The CDE accepts amendment requests from LEAs on a rolling basis throughout the year. LEAs must accompany requests with evidence supporting cost and how the amendment aligns with the school's / LEA's SIG plan. The typical duration of the amendment process is two weeks; however, this may vary based on the nature of the request.

### Implementation

When it initially applied for SIG funding, Horace Mann was an under-enrolled middle school according to school and district staff. After one year of SIG implementation, Horace Mann merged with Buena Vista elementary school and is now Buena Vista Horace Mann (BVHM). As a result, the school's population increased from approximately 200 students attending Horace Mann prior to the merger, to 600. Prior to joining Horace Mann, Buena Vista was a Spanish immersion elementary school with plans to transition into a K-8 school. The 2013-2014 school year is BVHM's third year as a combined school.

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) identified school climate (specifically student conflicts and truancy), overall quality and level of rigor in instruction, clarity of instructional goals, and expectations for student achievement as the major areas of concern in Horace Mann's original SIG needs assessment.

In its application, Horace Mann indicated that it would implement the Transformation model as a global strategy for addressing the school's instructional and climate challenges because staff members have strong connections to their students and were continuing to build upon these positive relationships. School leadership also stated its plans to heavily emphasize project-based learning and extended learning time through implementation of the Transformation model. Horace Mann also intended to increase the quality of the instructional leadership by targeting professional development toward building staff pedagogical capacity through the SIG reforms.

In an interview, the principal mentioned that the achievement gap between BVHM and the district has decreased and that the number of students proficient in algebra has tripled. The leadership team also mentioned that staff has received extensive professional development in readers and writers workshop as well as on strategies to support students in an immersion school. Both leadership staff and teachers expressed concern about losing resources, such as teacher support staff and the school nurse, after the school is no longer receiving SIG funds.

To address the climate concerns outlined in the needs assessments, BVHM has established student success teams to continue to engage students who might otherwise be dismissed from the classroom due to behavior. The focus is on not removing students from the classroom but identifying individual behavioral growth activities that can be rewarded. Teachers also mentioned the use of the restorative justice approach as well as peer mentors to involve students in resolving interpersonal issues.

In addition to addressing the major areas of concern in the needs assessment, BVHM hired a new principal for the first year of SIG implementation to lead the reform effort. That principal was replaced by a second principal who did not return after the school's second year of SIG implementation. The third principal selected is still currently leading the school. BVHM retained almost every teacher from both schools after the merger. There were a few cases of turnover, but overall the staff remained intact. Leadership staff discussed targeting specific demographics when hiring teachers in an effort to ensure that the staff reflects the make-up of the students, but did not communicate any other comprehensive recruitment strategy beyond that.

BVHM has not implemented a new teacher and principal evaluation system that incorporates data on student growth. The teachers are required to use student data during post observation conferences to demonstrate the effectiveness of the lesson taught. However, student growth data is not factored into the evaluation otherwise. In interviews, school leadership indicated that a system of rewards, based on recognition as opposed to a monetary award, has been instituted for staff that has increased student achievement. Interviews with teachers revealed that systems of rewards for staff were not institutionalized or teachers were not as informed as they could have been about the reward structure. Although staff mentioned that they collaboratively review student data from State and district tests, which informed their instruction, they were unable to articulate a clear and comprehensive strategy for using data to inform instruction that was institutionalized across the school.

Staff stated that they are being provided on-going, job-embedded professional development, primarily focused on enhancing the quality of the school's immersion program and supporting EL students who are struggling in both English and their first language. School leadership also mentioned in-depth training for staff in conducting readers and writers workshop as a tool to strengthen language skills in EL students.

It was apparent from interviews with the leadership team, teachers, and parents, that there are various opportunities available to families and the community to be engaged in BVHM. Some of which include more traditional parental forums, such as a school site council and PTA. The school also employs a parent liaison, community school coordinator, parent education workshops and wrap-around services, such as a food bank and support groups.

Prior to implementing the SIG reforms, Horace Mann increased the length of the school day. Additionally, as a result of the SIG reforms, a 30 minute block of instruction, which is open to all students, has been added to the start of the school day. The school has also instituted an after school program that is also open to all students based on space as well a fee-based enrichment program.

### **Stockton Unified School District / Nightingale Elementary School**

Stockton Unified School District identified low student achievement on State assessments for all groups, low expectations for student achievement as evidenced by a lack of rigor in instruction, disharmony between the priorities and strategic vision of school leadership and that of the teachers, and disengaged parents as the major areas of concern in Nightingale Elementary School's needs assessment.

The year prior to the implementation of SIG reforms, Nightingale elementary school fulfilled the California requirements for converting to a charter school. It was approved by the State Board of Education and assigned a charter number in May, 2011.

In its application, Nightingale outlined a partnership with WestEd to assist with managing the implementation of SIG reforms. The school indicated that it would tackle its student achievement issues by adopting a project-based learning approach to instruction to address gaps in the science and social studies curriculum and delve deeper into standards while connecting them to student interests. This approach would require intensive training and professional development for teachers. Trainings would be aimed at developing lessons aligned to the essential standards, using assessment data to evaluate grade level instructional programs, and effectively using technology in instruction. In interviews, school staff stated that Nightingale receives support specific to SIG from WestEd and Learning Solutions, as well as professional development targeted toward the instructional plan outlined in its charter from the local teachers college. Staff said that they are pleased with the project-based learning approach and believe that it has greatly improved instruction; however, they have received very little support and oversight from the district in this area.

To increase leadership efficacy and promote a cohesive cultural and professional environment between the staff and school leadership, Nightingale mentioned in its application that it planned to contract with Action Learning Systems (ALS) for professional development that included comprehensive administrative coaching. Additionally, Nightingale proposed to hire a full time program coordinator / administrative coach to support school leadership in managing the school while implementing the SIG reforms, promote staff collaboration and facilitate conversations amongst the staff. Staff explained that the principal receives almost all of her professional feedback from her teaching staff and the coaches from the local partner college. The district provides feedback on technical and administrative concerns such as student enrollment and provides annual opportunities for charter school leaders to network.

Finally, to strengthen parent partnerships, Nightingale described its plan to contract with WestEd's Comprehensive School Assistance Program (CSAP) for training in Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT). Utilizing the APTT approach is supposed to provide direction to school staff on developing a systematic structure for communicating with and engaging parents. School staff and parents described these initiatives as extremely successful and noted that they have changed the approach that parents take in supporting their children's academic experience.

In addition to addressing the major areas of concern in the needs assessment, Nightingale hired a new principal one year prior to the first year of SIG implementation. The current principal, who is in her third year in this position, was hired to lead the new reform initiatives when Nightingale transitioned into a charter school. Approximately 20 percent of Nightingale's staff did not return when it reopened as a charter. Those teachers self-selected out of the school as opposed to not being invited to return.

As a result of the SIG grant, teachers and school leadership stated that Nightingale staff receives ongoing, job-embedded professional development through a partnership with the local county Teachers College, as well as WestEd, which established relationships between Nightingale and other external partners such as Learning Solutions.

Nightingale's leadership and school staff mentioned analyzing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests to review growth targets and to assess whether students had achieved academic benchmarks. Teachers also discussed working to develop their own core assessments and setting growth targets for students, but did not expressly describe how they used data to differentiate or inform instruction. As a result of implementing the restart model, Nightingale opted to implement most of the other components of the Transformation model except a new teacher and principal evaluation system that incorporates student growth data and a structured system of rewards for teachers that have positively impacted student achievement.

Parents, teachers and school leadership all described the plethora of services Nightingale offers to engage parents and the community, some of which include nutrition classes and a farmer's market that visits the school's campus for parents to purchase fresh food. Additionally, Nightingale has brought on a parent liaison to facilitate communication with parents, and provide classes for them on how they can better support their students academically. Parents are also included as members of the School Site Council.

To increase instructional time for students, Nightingale has added an extra hour of instruction for students on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. A Saturday school component has also been added to the school calendar. Teachers and school leadership stated that weekly professional learning community meetings have also been incorporated into the schedule to increase staff collaboration. Nightingale leadership also explained that the school has struggled with high instances of teacher turnover and that recruiting teachers to the school has historically been a challenge because of its reputation. However, staff did not communicate a plan specifically targeted to recruit or retain teachers.

## **Inglewood Unified School District/Monroe Middle School Highlights**

Monroe Middle School is located in Inglewood Unified School District, a small urban district located in the greater Los Angeles area. They currently serve the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, having lost 6<sup>th</sup> grade this year through a district reconfiguration. In interviews, district staff reported that there are plans to bring back the 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the next school year.

In its needs assessment, Inglewood identified several areas of concern to be addressed through the SIG grant, including consistently low levels of proficiency in math and language arts; lack of sufficient rigor in instructional practices; weakness in use of data to differentiate instruction; and insufficiently well-defined systems for behavior management. In interviews, district leadership indicated that they viewed SIG as an opportunity to continue reforms that had been put in place to improve their three lowest-performing schools, use these schools as “laboratories” to determine how to sustain and build capacity around leadership and teaching pedagogy, and then “push out” reforms and models to other schools.

In its application, Inglewood indicated that it would address low proficiency levels through increased fidelity of instruction aligned with State standards. In interviews, the school leadership team reported that new research-based curricula in both math and reading have been implemented under SIG that include increased use of technology and computer-based learning. Additionally, a literacy coach was hired. Teachers reported that increased learning time within longer 65-minute subject matter blocks has helped accelerate progress in reading and writing across the curriculum. Students now have Individual Academic Plans (IAPs) where they can track benchmark assessments within a personal binder. Teachers reported that this seems to be motivating for students, increasing their ownership in their progress and growth. Teachers also reported that remediation was not available prior to SIG, and is now available for students that need it.

To address a lack of instructional rigor, Inglewood planned to provide training and support for teachers, including collaboration as a professional learning community, and job-embedded professional development. In interviews, teachers reported that they had a lot of input in developing SIG reforms, and that collaboration between teachers has increased under SIG, from 60 to 110 minutes per week for all teachers on Wednesday afternoons, and other meetings once or twice a week during prep time.

To address weaknesses in the use of data to differentiate instruction, the district planned to develop a system for data collection and analysis to inform practice and monitor student progress. In interviews, the leadership team reported the use of formative benchmark assessments every four to five weeks. Teachers reported that the use of data is more consistent under SIG, and that the new data system allows for immediate data access that is then used as part of collaborative discussions.

Finally, plans to address behavior management concerns included implementation of a school-wide positive behavior support system. In interviews, the school leadership team reported that classroom management, discipline and safety have improved under SIG. Both teachers and

school leadership indicated that some of this improvement may have been due to a reduced student population as well, since the student population decreased from 650 students pre-SIG to 450 post-SIG.

In addition to addressing the major areas of concern in the needs assessment, Monroe Middle School retained the principal that was hired as part of a turnaround effort prior to the implementation of SIG and provided increased opportunities for family and community engagement, including increased communication about student progress, parent access to grades through an internet-based portal, family-oriented activities, a parent outreach staff position, and parent training. However, the leadership team reported that there is not a currently active parent-teacher association (PTA).

In interviews, the school leadership team indicated that Monroe struggled with implementing a new teacher and principal evaluation system that incorporates data on student growth; instituting a system of rewards for staff that have increased student achievement; and implementing strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff. The leadership team reported that they will be beta-testing their teacher evaluation system in Spring 2014 with at least six or seven teachers, and that a system of rewards and recognition is still evolving and will involve whole school rewards this year based on overall school gains.

In interviews, the school leadership team indicated that the teacher hiring process for SIG schools is the same as for other schools in the district. According to district staff, all schools must currently hire from teachers on a reduction in force (RIF) list, except for math and science teachers. District staff reported that contract negotiations are continuing on this issue and that an action plan is being developed to help attract and retain high quality staff at SIG schools.

### **Los Angeles Unified School District/ Manual Arts High School**

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Manual Arts High School (Manual Arts) identified school culture, instructional effectiveness and wrap-around services as the major areas of concern in Manual Arts' needs assessment.

In the summer of 2013, prior to SIG implementation, LAUSD reduced the student body at Manual Arts by half with the creation of a new high school. It is important to note that this reduction in size aided in the improvement in culture, but was not a direct effect of SIG. In its application, Manual Arts indicated that it would improve school culture by hiring counselors and forming interdisciplinary committees (ITD) to meet with families of "at risk" students on a regular basis to create positive behavior supports, set up home-school communication schedules, and create individualized graduation plans with each student and his/her family. Manual Arts also indicated that with the help of its partner, Diplomas Now, a program that unites three national nonprofit organizations as part of the turnaround process, the school would train staff to implement an early warning indicator system (EWI). This system is used to identify students in need of interventions for attendance, behavior problems, or course performance on a bi-weekly basis via an interdisciplinary teaching team that shares a common planning period. In interviews, school leaders and teachers stated that the additional EWI training has allowed staff to focus on

behavior and attendance issues earlier, and therefore, has helped build positivity at the school. Additionally, school leaders applauded Diplomas Now for providing Manual Arts with an additional counselor and the human capital necessary to effectively support students and improve school culture. Teachers also spoke extensively about the positive cultural benefits of the Linked Learning program that offers students the option to follow career-themed pathways, choosing among fields such as engineering, arts and media, or biomedicine and health.

To strengthen instruction, Manual Arts, in partnership with LA's Promise, a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the education, health and social outcomes of youth in South Los Angeles, planned to provide instructional support for school administrators and teachers by hiring three instructional specialists (IS) and appointing a leadership coach. The three IS trained through a program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) were hired to model lessons, provide data-driven content-specific professional development, one-on-one teacher support and coaching in core academic subjects. The IS were also tasked with leading the development of a school-wide data analysis and problem solving protocol. This support and professional development was expanded through the addition of common learning time, which gave teachers the opportunity to conduct peer observations of teachers in the grade level above and below their own. Teachers and staff expressed that instruction has become more intentional and teachers are able to use data as well as the support from the IS to create lessons that effectively target their students' areas of need. School leadership explained that the leadership coach has allowed them to focus on supporting teachers in their instruction instead of relying on outside organizations to lead the staff.

Finally, to increase wrap-around services the school proposed adding several enrichment, health and college focused programs. Enrichment opportunities were increased through the LA's Promise 7 to 7 program. As part of this program, Manual Arts opens at 7 in the morning and remains open until 7 at night to provide enrichment classes such as Street Poets, a poetry writing and spoken word class, English classes for parents and community members, technology courses and gardening club. Through Diplomas Now, City Year AmeriCorps members are also present to provide the school with positive social and emotional supports before, during and after school through tutoring and events that focus on attendance, behavior and academic performance. For health services, Manual Arts utilizes the St John's Wellness Center, which is located on the Manual Arts campus and provides a range of health services including primary care, diagnosis and treatment of illness, vaccinations, laboratory services and mental health supports through LA Child Guidance Clinic. These services are provided to students at Manual Arts as well as to students attending the feeder elementary and middle schools. The wellness center, with support from the community and from Manual Arts, is planning to expand by offering limited dental services to students and families. Lastly, Manual Arts partners with several local organizations including LA's Promise and University of Southern California (USC) to provide students with college preparatory services at the Manual Arts College Center. USC's Trio Programs, including three Upward Bound programs, one Upward Bound Math-Science program and two Educational Talent Search Programs, help students prepare for life beyond high school. School staff and parents indicated that a major reason for the school's growth academically and culturally is based on its extensive wrap-around services. Teachers expressed their gratitude for the wrap-around services because it allows them to focus on their instruction.

In addition to addressing the major areas of concern in the needs assessment, Manual Arts retained the principal as part of SIG reforms, screened and replaced more than 50% of the staff, provided on-going, job-embedded professional development for staff, used data to inform and differentiate instruction, provided social-emotional and community-oriented services, implemented strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff; and increased learning time.

### Fiscal

The California Department of Education reserves no more than five percent of the State's SIG allocation and uses its reservation for providing technical assistance and monitoring to LEAs implementing SIG models, conducting the State's annual renewal process, which includes programmatic reviews of each SIG school, and implementing the State's application process plan.

The CDE ensures that SIG funds are spent on allowable activities through several measures. First, the consultants assigned to SIG work exclusively on this program. Additionally, school and LEA budgets are thoroughly reviewed during the annual renewal process and quarterly LEA budget reviews. Also, when an LEA requests an amendment to the budget during the year, it must show evidence of appropriate spending and alignment to its original SIG plan.

To ensure that its LEAs adhere to proper accounting of time and attendance for SIG-paid staff and maintain equipment and materials purchased with SIG funds, the CDE reviews LEA budgets for these elements during both the quarterly and annual budget assessments.

### Technical Assistance

#### **California Department of Education (CDE)**

In interviews, the CDE stated that it is providing technical assistance to support LEAs with implementing SIG primarily through its school turnaround consultants. Each consultant is assigned to a SIG-receiving LEA and charged with partnering with the LEA to support them through SIG implementation. This partnership approach provides the CDE consultant with an opportunity to identify technical assistance needs and collaboratively dialogue, plan, and tailor implementation support based on those specified needs. In addition, this partnership approach provides the LEA with an open opportunity to request technical assistance and/or support on an ongoing and as needed basis.

During the FY 2011 SIG competition, the CDE provided technical assistance to LEAs by offering a prescreening of LEA applications prior to the application deadline to alert them in advance of areas in need of refining. The CDE also held phone conferences ~~as needed~~ and webinars with LEA applicants in addition to referring them to resources, such as the National Center on Time and Learning, based on their particular areas of need.

During the interview, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) leadership described the process the State developed to support the LEA in implementing a fourth year of SIG reforms. Aside from when it requested assistance with specific processes, such as amendments to its original application, SFUSD did not indicate that it received other forms of technical assistance or support from the CDE. Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) leadership explained during an interview that it received useful technical assistance from the CDE during the SIG application process. The State provided support to the district via email, phone calls and other written correspondence.

Nightingale school leadership described the support it received from WestEd as helpful. However, neither Nightingale nor BVHM staff was able to recall any onsite technical support directly from the CDE. The CDE's procedure is to provide on-site technical assistance and support to the LEA only during the one time on-site monitoring review. In addition, CDE on-site monitoring procedure specifies that not all Tier I and Tier II schools served in the LEA will receive an on-site visit. CDE staff conducted an on-site monitoring visit of Stockton Unified between April 15, 2013 and April 17, 2013. Three of the seven SIG schools were visited and include Pittman, Taylor and Henry Elementary Schools.

#### **San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)**

In its SIG application, SFUSD proposed to support schools in implementing SIG by restructuring the district to include a "Superintendent Zone" comprised solely of SIG and other persistently low performing schools that would receive additional support and supervision as well as be protected from any "negative impact of district policies." SFUSD also stated that it would create common interim assessments in English language arts and math, employ an instructional reform facilitator and community school coordinator on each campus, and contract with Partners in School Innovation, which would support SIG schools with implementation of the reforms.

In interviews, BVHM staff described the technical assistance it receives from the SFUSD as supportive and characterized the district staff it works with as accessible and responsive. The school's leadership said that being a part of a smaller zone affords BVHM a closer relationship with its assistant superintendent. School staff stated that it received assistance from the LEA in refining its master schedule, providing tailored professional development to teachers, and were provided needed flexibility around developing the school's goals and vision and were offered adequate guidance during the merger of the two schools.

#### **Stockton Unified School District (SUSD)**

In its SIG application, SUSD proposed to support schools in implementing SIG by enlisting assistance from WestEd. The district contracted with WestEd to provide technical assistance to all of its SIG schools. The application also describes SUSD's plans to contract with an external partner to provide comprehensive professional development aligned with Nightingale's instructional program.

In interviews, Nightingale staff described the technical assistance it receives from SUSD as inconsistent. School leadership explained that the level of support the district provides depends

upon who is in the role that is charged with supporting charter schools. Nightingale staff stated that support, such as onsite visits, varied greatly throughout the duration of the SIG grant and the district's role in the school's reform efforts is unclear.

### **Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)**

LAUSD proposed to support schools in implementing SIG by establishing a SIG Turnaround Support Center (TSC) to oversee implementation of school plans. The TSC is also responsible for providing resources to teachers and leaders as well as overseeing the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of SIG. The TSC consists of a director, a principal leader, a teacher leader, an administrative assistant, a data analyst and a fiscal specialist. The TSC collaborates with local district directors and staff and external school partners and providers such as LA's Promise to provide extensive support in all areas of SIG. Additionally, LAUSD provides resources to grantees through the Doing What Works Clearinghouse, a repository of instructional resources and links.

During interviews school staff described the technical assistance it receives from the TSC at LAUSD as very useful. Manual Arts staff stated that the TSC is very responsive to their questions and concerns. School staff explained that LAUSD holds monthly meetings for SIG principals to share common implementation triumphs and difficulties. During the meetings, veteran SIG school principals also present on best practices for newly implementing SIG schools.

### **Inglewood Unified School District**

Inglewood proposed to support schools in implementing SIG by creating a District Turnaround Office to provide support for SIG principals and professional development for staff. According to district staff, a full-time SIG coordinator position has been filled, and an executive director of school transformation is partially funded by SIG. External partners are used to provide training in the key areas of leadership development and implementation of teaching strategies.

### **Monitoring**

In its approved application, the CDE stated that it would require SIG receiving LEAs to submit appropriate fiscal and programmatic information quarterly using the online tracking system to monitor the implementation process. The CDE said that it would then review the information reported online in addition to annual LEA and school academic performance data to determine whether schools are making appropriate progress in the implementation of the identified school intervention model(s) and in meeting student achievement goals.

Additionally, California stated in its SIG application that CDE staff and/or the regional consortia will conduct site visits to a selected representative sample of approximately one third of participating schools annually. LEAs will also be required to provide regular updates throughout

the year to the CDE on implementation progress for each funded school. CDE staff will review the quarterly and annual reports and make calls to LEAs and participating schools as necessary.

The CDE proposed in its application and confirmed in interviews that it would conduct one onsite monitoring visit for each SIG receiving LEA during the three year grant period. In interviews, Stockton Unified School District described its communication with the CDE as frequent and the CDE's feedback as helpful. The LEA also mentioned that the CDE had visited three of its seven SIG schools in 2013 and also met with the district. San Francisco Unified School District carried over approximately \$7 million to continue SIG implementation for a fourth year in nine out of ten of its SIG awarded schools (one school implemented the closure model). ED granted States the option of allowing SIG receiving LEAs to permit SIG schools an additional year to utilize unspent SIG funds during a fourth year of SIG implementation. A condition of that flexibility entailed a thorough review of the LEA's SIG implementation to date conducted by the SEA. If an LEA was found to not have implemented the SIG requirements with fidelity, the SEA should not allow it to continue to use SIG funds for a fourth year.

### Data Collection

The CDE had procured a data specialist to assist with streamlining its process for managing and effectively using SIG data. The State is moving toward having a SIG data system that would allow it to refine its practice and offer differentiated support. The CDE uses achievement data along with monitoring data to target State assistance. LEAs submit fiscal data to the SEA on a quarterly basis.

According to ED Facts records, the CDE has not submitted all required achievement and leading indicator data to the Department. The State has not submitted the following data: C160 High School Graduates Postsecondary Enrollment data for SY2012-13. The CDE responded that the 2008-09 C160 High School Graduates Postsecondary Enrollment data are the most recent data available due to lack of CA legislative approval to use state funding for continued collection of this indicator.

The CDE is using leading indicators to hone its support for LEAs during pre-implementation as well as the technical assistance it offers schools throughout the SIG implementation period.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Issue:** Although the principal of BVHM explained how data was being used to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student, based on interviews with other school staff, it was unclear whether there is a cohesive strategy for how the school is using data to strengthen teaching.

### Technical Assistance Strategies:

- Develop a clear comprehensive strategy encompassing all types of data used, how often it is reviewed and how it is used to inform teaching and learning. (Responsibility: BVHM leadership)
- Provide focused technical assistance to BVHM to support its development of its strategic plan for using data as well as providing professional development to teachers on the plan. (Responsibility: SFUSD)

**2. Issue:** San Francisco Unified School District described at least two ways it rewards teachers it has deemed to have had a positive impact on student achievement, the Impact and Innovation award given to groups of teachers for developing and effectively implementing innovative initiatives in their schools and a more formalized certificate recognizing their work. However, based on conversations with school staff, it was not apparent that there is widespread awareness about these opportunities among teachers.

### Technical Assistance Strategies

- Develop a plan to clearly communicate to all schools across the district, the LEA's system of rewards for teachers that have positively impacted student achievement. (Responsibility: SFUSD)

**3. Issue:** LEAs expressed a need for support in building their capacity to assist schools undergoing turnaround as well as sustaining the most beneficial practices and embedding the reforms deemed to be most impactful.

### Technical Assistance Strategies:

- Develop a plan to proactively support LEAs in implementing SIG by identifying needs as they arise and tailoring support to specific LEA challenges. (Responsibility: CDE)
- Provide examples of sustainability tools other SEAs have used and found useful in assisting LEAs sustain practices they deemed most beneficial. (Responsibility: ED)
- Assist LEAs in evaluating strategies and practices implemented to identify those that have been most beneficial both at the school and LEA level and ways to sustain them. (Responsibility: CDE)

**4. Issue:** LEAs requested additional opportunities to learn from other districts both within CA and nationwide that are implementing SIG reforms.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Create networks of SIG-implementing LEAs that are similar in size and student demographics to share challenges, useful strategies and promising practices as a means of support while undergoing the turnaround process. (*Responsibility: CDE*)
- Connect the SEA with other States containing districts with LEAs of similar sizes and challenges undergoing turnaround. (*Responsibility: ED*)

**5. Issue:** In interviews, Inglewood staff indicated an interest in sharing ideas and learning about strategies from same-role staff in other, demographically similar (smaller urban) LEAs that have similar challenges.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Connect Inglewood with other small urban LEAs in California that may have challenges similar to the Inglewood Unified School District and its SIG schools. (*Responsibility: CDE*)
- Connect Inglewood with other small urban districts across the nation that may have challenges similar to the Inglewood Unified School District and its SIG schools. (*Responsibility: ED*)

**6. Issue:** LAUSD staff is interested in expanding their use of health related data. They expressed an interest in speaking with other districts that are accomplishing this in innovative ways.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Connect LAUSD with other districts that are using health data in thoughtful ways to improve student achievement and the learning environment in schools. (*Responsibility: ED*)

**7. Issue:** Manual Arts staff explained that while additional technology is facilitating differentiating instruction, they could use more professional development in order to better utilize the technology. Specifically, staff explained that more professional development aimed at using SMART board technologies would benefit instruction.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Provide CDE with professional development resources that specifically target use of technology in instruction (*Responsibility: ED*)
- Connect LAUSD with other LEAs in California that offer extensive support with the use of technology in classrooms. (*Responsibility: CDE*)

**8. Issue:** In interviews, teachers expressed concern about students coming to Monroe from feeder schools, including the addition of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Monroe Middle School in the 2014-15 school year, given the lack of curriculum alignment with feeder schools and anticipation of significant student readiness issues.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Connect Inglewood with other small urban districts to discuss successful feeder pattern configurations and curriculum alignment amongst schools. (Responsibility: ED)
- During the renewal process, work with Inglewood to think through the implications for including or not including the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and next steps for ensuring that curriculum is aligned and transitions are smooth. (Responsibility: CDE)

**9. Issue:** In interviews, teachers expressed concern about lack of a specific training plan for new teachers that will be needed when a significant number of veteran teachers retire in the near future.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Connect Monroe with other CDE middle schools to network and discuss options for new teacher training and sustainability planning. (Responsibility: CDE)
- Provide CDE with examples of successful training strategies for onboarding new teachers. Also provide CDE with ideas for sustainability to ensure that essential knowledge is not lost when teachers retire or leave. (Responsibility: ED)

**10. Issue:** According to ED Facts records, the CDE has not submitted all required achievement and leading indicator data to the Department. The State has not submitted the High School Graduates Postsecondary Enrollment data for SY2012-13.

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- ED will work with the CDE to ensure that it can meet with the reporting requirement. (Responsibility: CDE and ED)

## MONITORING FINDINGS

### Summary of Monitoring Indicators

Critical Element	Requirement	Status	Page
<b>1. Application Process</b>	The SEA ensures that its application process was carried out consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. <i>[Sections I and II of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]</i>	Finding / N/A	N/A
<b>2. Implementation</b>	The SEA ensures that the SIG intervention models are being implemented consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. <i>[Sections I and II of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]</i>	Finding	21, 22
<b>3. Fiscal</b>	The SEA ensures LEAs and schools are using funds consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. <i>[Section II of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010)) ; §1114 of the ESEA; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87]</i>	Finding / N/A	N/A
<b>4. Technical Assistance</b>	The SEA ensures that technical assistance is provided to its LEAs consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. <i>[Section II of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]</i>	Finding / N/A	N/A
<b>5. Monitoring</b>	The SEA ensures that monitoring of LEAs and schools is being conducted consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. <i>[Section II of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]</i>	Finding	23

<p><b>6. Data Collection</b></p>	<p>The SEA ensures that data are being collected consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. <i>[Sections II and III of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]</i></p>	<p>Finding / N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
----------------------------------	---	--------------------------	------------

### Monitoring Area: School Improvement Grant

**Critical Element 2: The SEA ensures that the SIG intervention models are being implemented consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.**

**Finding:** The CDE has not ensured that schools implementing the transformation model are using teacher and principal evaluation systems that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor.

**Citation:** Section I.A.2(d)(1)(i)(B) of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010)), requires use of a rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that— (1) Take into account data on student growth as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduations rates; and (2) Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

**Further action required:** Within 35 days of receipt of this report, the CDE must review all schools implementing the transformation model to determine whether the principal and teacher evaluation system is in place in accordance with the SIG final requirements. The CDE must submit to ED the results of the review. For any school that the CDE determines is not implementing the principal and teacher evaluation system in accordance with the SIG final requirements, the CDE must submit a timeline for implementing the evaluation systems. For any school that cannot implement the principal and teacher evaluation system in accordance with the SIG requirements, the CDE must submit to ED the action it will take.

**Finding:** The SEA has not ensured that Monroe Middle School in Inglewood Unified School District (IUSD) has implemented a system of rewards, based in part on student growth, for teachers who have positively impacted student achievement.

**Citation:** 75 C.F.R. § I.A.2.(d)(1)(i)(C) requires that an LEA must identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so. In interviews, IUSD staff reported the intention to provide whole school rewards to SIG schools that have made gains in achievement, and to develop strategies for non-monetary rewards for individual teachers, but this had not yet been implemented.

**Further action required:** CDE must work with IUSD to develop and implement a tool or rubric to identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing the transformation model, have increased student achievement. The tool or rubric must be based in part on student performance and include other indicators such as observations of classroom instruction, attendance, etc. The CDE must also submit a list of rewards available to teachers that that have been identified as having increased student achievement. The CDE must submit this

tool and list of rewards to ED by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 for implementation in the 2014-2015 school year.

**Finding:** The SEA has not ensured that IUSD is implementing strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of students in a transformation school. In interviews, IUSD staff reported that they can select math and science teachers but otherwise need to hire from a reduction in force (RIF) list with consideration of teacher seniority. The district has had difficulty attracting and retaining highly qualified staff. District staff reported that the IUSD is currently building an action plan for recruitment and retention of high quality staff and negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the union around seniority, but this plan and MOU is not yet in place.

**Citation:** 75 C.F.R. § I.A.2.(d)(1)(i)(E) requires that an LEA must implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

**Further action required:** CDE must work with IUSD to develop and implement a plan designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of students in a transformation school. The CDE must submit this plan to ED by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 for implementation in the 2014-2015 school year.

**Critical Element 5: The SEA ensures that monitoring of LEAs and schools is being conducted consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.**

**Finding:** ED granted States the option of allowing SIG receiving LEAs to permit SIG schools an additional year to utilize unspent SIG funds during a fourth year of SIG implementation. A condition of that flexibility entailed a thorough review of the LEA's SIG implementation to date conducted by the SEA. Schools that had been found to have not implemented a SIG model according to the requirements should not have been permitted to continue implementation into a fourth year. The SEA also had to ensure that cohort I schools implemented a SIG model with fidelity in the fourth year. In interviews, the CDE stated that it has not conducted on-site monitoring visits during the fourth year of SIG implementation in cohort I schools.

**Citation:** Section 80.40 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) states that grantees must monitor grant and subgrant activities to ensure compliance with applicable Federal requirements. Section 9304(a) of the ESEA requires that the SEA must ensure that (1) programs authorized under the ESEA are administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications; and (2) the State will use fiscal control and funds accounting procedures that will ensure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds.

**Further action required:** Should the CDE submit a waiver to permit its cohort II SIG schools to use unspent funds to continue full SIG implementation for a fourth year, it must submit to ED evidence that it has thoroughly reviewed all eligible schools within 12 months of submitting the waiver to ensure that each has implemented the SIG reforms in accordance with the final requirements. This evidence must be submitted as a part of the waiver.

