



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Gerard Robinson
Commissioner of Education
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

FEB 08 2012

Dear Commissioner Robinson:

During the week of October 3-7, 2011, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround (OST) reviewed the Florida Department of Education's (FLDOE) 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 a SIG intervention model, 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 enclosed monitoring report is organized in three sections: (1) Summary and Observations, (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 six indicator areas include: (1) Application Process, (2) Implementation, (3) Fiscal, (4) Technical Assistance, (5) Monitoring, and (6) Data Collection.

After conducting its review, ED determined that the FLDOE did not administer its fiscal year (FY) 2010 SIG application process in compliance with the final requirements for the SIG program. Section II.B.5 of the final requirements states that "[a]n SEA must award a School Improvement Grant to an LEA in an amount that is of sufficient size and scope to support the activities required under section 1116 of the ESEA and these requirements" (75 FR 66363, 66369 (October 28, 2010)). FLDOE did not meet this requirement.

ED considers this finding especially concerning because ED reiterated to the FLDOE during the FY 2010 SIG application approval process that the SEA was required to use a competitive application process to award FY 2010 SIG funds to enable LEAs to fully and effectively implement intervention models. This was due to the FLDOE awarding SIG funds to LEAs during the FY 2009 SIG application process on a noncompetitive, formula basis. The FLDOE awarded \$46.2 million in SIG funds to all of its LEAs with Tier I and Tier II schools without

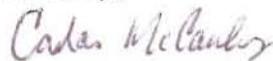
making any assessment of district commitment and capacity. Due to the FLDOE's repeated noncompliance regarding this issue, the FLDOE is required to complete the corrective actions outlined in the monitoring report regarding this finding.

Additionally, the FLDOE has 30 business days from receipt of the enclosed report to respond to all of the other compliance issues contained therein. 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 FLDOE 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.

With regard 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 FLDOE is working to address these issues and make use of this technical assistance.

The ED team would like to thank LaTrell Edwards, Frederick Heid, and their staff 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. I know you are anxious to be in full compliance with the School Improvement Grants requirements and we are committed to helping you get there. We look forward to working further with your staff to resolve the issues contained in the enclosed report and to improve the quality of the SIG program in Florida. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Carlas McCauley (Carlas.McCauley@ed.gov) or David Yi (David.Yi@ed.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,



Carlas McCauley
Group Leader
Office of School Turnaround

Enclosure

cc: LaTrell Edwards, Chief, Bureau of Federal Educational Programs
Frederick Heid, Bureau Chief, School Improvement