



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Honorable Virginia Barry  
Commissioner of Education  
New Hampshire Department of Education  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301-3494

Dear Commissioner Barry:

During the week of September 24, 2012, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround (OST) reviewed the New Hampshire Department of Education's (NHDOE) 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). 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 determine 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 NHDOE 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 NHDOE 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.

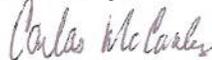
With regards to the *Technical Assistance Recommendations* provided, we encourage you to employ these strategies to further support the effective implementation of the SIG program. ED staff will follow up with your staff over the next few months to see how the NHDOE is working to address these issues 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 New Hampshire at the time and locations of ED's onsite review. The NHDOE 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 Deborah Connell and her 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.

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 New Hampshire.

Sincerely,



Carlos McCauley  
Group Director  
Office of School Turnaround

Enclosure

cc: State SIG Coordinator

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**Targeted Monitoring Review of**  
**School Improvement Grants (SIG) under section 1003(g) of the**  
**Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**  
**September 25-27, 2012**

**BACKGROUND**

<b>FY 2009 SIG Schools</b>		
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Number of SIG-eligible Schools</b>	<b>Number of SIG Schools Funded</b>
Tier I	13	5
Tier II	5	2
Tier III	140	0

<b>FY 2009 SIG Intervention Models</b>	
<b>Models</b>	<b>Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model</b>
Turnaround	0
Transformation	7
Restart	0
Closure	0

<b>FY 2010 SIG Schools</b>		
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Number of SIG-eligible Schools</b>	<b>Number of SIG Schools Funded</b>
Tier I		
Tier II	0	0
Tier III	0	0

<b>FY 2010 SIG Intervention Models</b>	
<b>Models</b>	<b>Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model</b>
Turnaround	0
Transformation	8
Restart	0
Closure	0

**MONITORING TRIP INFORMATION**

**Monitoring Visits and Award Amounts**

<b>LEA Visited</b>	Pittsfield School District
<b>School Visited</b>	Pittsfield Middle School
<b>Model Implemented</b>	Transformation
<b>FY 2009 Funding Awarded (over three years)</b>	LEA Award (for 2 SIG schools): \$ 2,066,148 <i>School-level funding: \$1,033,074</i>
<b>FY 2010 Funding Awarded (for one year)</b>	LEA Award (for 2 SIG school): \$688,716 <i>School-level funding: \$344,358</i>
<b>LEA Visited</b>	Manchester School District
<b>School Visited</b>	Parkside Middle School
<b>Model Implemented</b>	Transformation

<b>FY 2011 Funding Awarded (one year)</b>	LEA Award : \$535,552 <i>School-level funding: \$535,552</i>
<b>FY 2012 Funding Awarded (for one year)</b>	LEA Award (for 1 SIG school): \$155,000 <i>School-level funding: \$155,000</i>
<b>SEA Visited</b>	New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE)
<b>FY 2009 SEA SIG Award</b>	\$1,561,304 (plus \$8,588,214 in ARRA funding)
<b>FY 2009 LEA SIG Awards</b>	\$ 7,231,526 (for 7 SIG schools in 3 LEAs)
<b>FY 2010 SEA SIG Award</b>	1,470,409 (plus \$2,147,053.50 - 25% FY2009 carryover)
<b>FY 2010 LEA SIG Awards</b>	\$ 1,119,163.97 (for 8 SIG schools in 6 LEAs)
<b>Staff Interviewed</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) Staff</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Pittsfield School District Staff</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Pittsfield High School: Principal, School Leadership Team, Teachers</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Manchester School District Staff</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Parkside Middle School: Principal, School Leadership Team, Teachers, Parents</b></li> </ul>	
<b>U.S. Department of Education Staff</b>	
<b>Team Leader</b>	Carlas McCauley
<b>Staff Onsite</b>	Chuenée Boston and Kim Light

**OVERVIEW OF MONITORING REPORT**

The following report is based on the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) desk monitoring of New Hampshire Department of Education from September 25 – 27, 2012 and review of documentation provided by the State educational agency (SEA), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools. The report consists of three sections: *Summary and Observations*, *Technical Assistance Recommendations*, and *Monitoring Findings*. The *Summary and Observations* section describes the implementation of the SIG program by the SEA, LEAs, and school; initial indicators of success; and any outstanding challenges being faced in implementation. This section focuses on how the SEA, LEAs, and schools are implementing the SIG program with respect to the following five areas: school climate, staffing, teaching and learning, use of data, and technical assistance. The *Technical Assistance Recommendations* section identifies strategies and resources for addressing technical assistance needs. The *Monitoring Findings* 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.

Please note that the observations and descriptions included in this report reflect the specific context of the limited number of interviews conducted at a small number of schools and LEAs within the State. As such, they offer a snapshot of what was occurring at the LEA and school levels, and are not meant to represent a school’s, LEA’s, or State’s entire SIG program. Nor are we approving or endorsing any particular practices or approaches by citing them.

## SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

### School Climate

#### Manchester School District

According to the LEA's needs assessment, the students at Parkside Middle School (PMS) were disruptive and had difficulty focusing. Moreover, the needs assessments identified the population, as highly transient and stated that it is not uncommon for a student to transfer out of PMS, wait a month, transfer into another middle school, and then return.

The school leadership team concurred that the climate at the school had dramatically improved from previous years. PMS hired a social worker and implemented a new behavioral management system referred to as the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system. Along with the PBIS system, a series of recognitions for students who performed well academically, socially, and civically, such as honor rolls were created. The school stated it has data to document evidence of change in the environment.

In addition, the school stated that family and community engagement has improved. PMS started a Home School Compact using the input of multiple stakeholders to create a document allowing students, parents and staff to achieve an understanding of the important role each plays. The school also created a school wide and grade level specific homework policy to allow parents to become more involved and understand their role in supporting the learning process. As reported through interviews, more parents are now attending school sponsored events, such as the Academic and Fine Arts Fairs.

#### Pittsfield School District (PSD)

According to the LEA's needs assessment, discipline issues at Pittsfield High School (PHS) were prevalent. Data showed that the most common offenses were students out of assigned area, insubordination, inappropriate language, and unsafe behavior. Additionally, school climate survey data revealed that the majority of students and faculty did not believe that the school dealt effectively with threats, bullying, harassment, violence, or behavior problems.

Teachers reported that they felt isolated prior to the implementation of the school improvement grant (SIG). Since the grant, teachers reported that the school is less chaotic and that there is a coherent plan. A change in culture is now reflected in a collective staff commitment and change in practices. PHS staff reported that they had used PBIS prior to SIG, but are now integrating the approach with the response to intervention approach or (RTI). According to interviews, the new approach has expanded the focus beyond social-emotional needs to academics at the universal level of instruction. The school also provides services to students in need of more targeted interventions through behavior and academic core teams, which includes an interagency team for those students in need of intensive services.

## **Teachers and Leaders**

### **Manchester School District**

According to interviews with the school leadership team, PMS has had 29 administrators in the past 10 years. Since the implementation of the SIG grant, PMS has had two principals. The first principal was replaced prior to the 2010-11 school year. The current principal was hired in middle of year two, March 2012. He is committed to being at the school for at least five years.

The Manchester School District did not make any structural changes to support the implementation of SIG. The LEA hired a SIG coordinator, data specialist, and federal grant coordinator.

### **Pittsfield School District**

According to the LEA application, there was a complete administrative change in the district. A new middle school principal started in July 2008 and a new high school principal started in July 2010. Pittsfield Middle and High Schools, which are co-located in the same building, now share a principal. The Superintendent reported that the co-location has helped them with vertical integration of learning in the transition from middle to high school.

In addition, changes in governance structure were implemented, including the creation of a local site council, advisory council, and modification of school board policies in the areas of governance, instruction, and school community relations. Staff reported that the site council, which is composed of students, faculty, and community members (including parents), is authorized by the school board to make decisions.

The principal at PHS reported a 50 percent turnover in staff after SIG was implemented. The principal contributed the turnover to resignations, retirements, non-renewals and terminations. He reported that a core group of staff have stayed because of the reform efforts and differentiated leadership opportunities. The principal also stated, due to low salaries, retention remains an issue for younger staff. According to the interviews, the district ranks 153 out of 158 districts in teacher pay.

PSD funded a social worker position through SIG. The leadership team is looking at ways to sustain these services after the SIG grant ends by tapping into community resources. District staff reported using a performance management process consultant to help analyze each of their staff positions as part of the sustainability planning.

### **New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE)**

The SIG grant is under the Division of Instruction and two staff members are assigned to SIG.

## **Instructional Strategies and Time**

### **Manchester School District**

Improving English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency and increasing math engagement were two of the priority goals set by PMS. According to the fall 2010 NECAP results, 44 percent of students scored proficient or higher in reading; while, 42 percent of students scored proficient or

higher in math. In order to address the need of improving ELA and math proficiency, PMS stated that it adopted new curricula and provided tools to teachers to facilitate differentiated instruction by emphasizing ongoing progress monitoring.

A new middle school math curriculum was implemented in the district in SY 2010-11. Additionally, PMS has begun to use regular assessment such as AIMS web to identify students with specific needs. PMS also uses and integrates technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program to help students master the content specified in the New Hampshire Grade Level Expectations (also aligned with NECAP). The new instructional program will also be used as an afterschool online learning program.

Staff stated that the school provided extensive professional development on how to implement the new curricula and use resources during the school year. As discussed during interviews, the professional development was focused on instruction, data analysis, and teacher collaboration and was embedded within the school day or year. Staff stated that the school's professional development was aligned to the districts overall professional development strategy, as well as new strategies such as RTI and PBIS. Furthermore, staff stated that the Plymouth State University (PSU) provided professional development, developed resources, generated research, and helped to improve the teaching of writing and learning in schools and communities. Moreover, many PMS teachers have taken college courses through PSU. At this time, PMS does not have any form of reward systems in place. As new teacher evaluation system is piloted, they need to develop and pilot a reward system that aligns to the evaluation.

Finally, the school day was modified as PMS. It went from an eight period day to a seven period day. Classroom minutes increased from 45 minutes to 53 minutes and the school day increased by five minutes. Teachers and faculty reported that the increased learning time has been very helpful and as a result they have seen tremendous growth in students' proficiency. Many teachers cited that the increased learning time has especially been useful to provide additional small group intervention support to the students experiencing difficult in math and reading classes.

#### Pittsfield School District (PSD)

As a part of its approved plan, the PSD focused its efforts on curriculum, instruction, and assessment; as well as, college and career readiness. The district's goals state that by October 2013, 85 percent or more of all students will be proficient in reading and math as demonstrated by NECAP assessment measures. Furthermore, the goals state that by June 2013, 100 percent of Pittsfield Middle High School graduates will develop and implement an informed, realistic, and ambitious plan for college or career. PHS staff reported that many instructional changes were implemented in the first year of SIG. This included development of core academic teams, including daily common planning time for core teams, and late-start Wednesdays for ongoing professional development based on teacher needs.

At PHS, increased learning time includes five minute increases in each of the six class periods. On late start Wednesdays, to accommodate teacher professional development, class periods are reduced by five minutes to 40 minutes per class. Instructional strategies are focused on student centered, inquiry-based learning, targeting students who are two years behind or more. The

district also has a federal grant, Investing in Innovation Fund (i3), that has helped set their overall instructional strategy.

According to district staff, the development of a new teacher and principal evaluation system was already high on their priority list prior to SIG implementation and SIG helped accelerate the process. Key components of the evaluation system include a focus on mini observations (5-15 minutes) instead of formal observations; student growth, conversations around what was observed, linking to proficiency rubrics; and a differentiated support and observation schedule (transitional, intervention, and self-directed).

### **Use of Data**

#### **Manchester School District**

PMS uses data to inform decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, student services, and to make determinations regarding student need for intervention. Using NECAP as baseline measurement of whole school, grade level and sub-group progress, data teams review additional data such as AIMS Web, student work products, teacher observation and parental input to develop programming that is tailored to meet the individual needs of students. This includes additional intervention or enrichment in a daily setting, as well as referral for consideration of additional educational services including tutoring, or individualized assessment for learning disabilities. The data teams use the various data to determine the need for additional instruction, remediation or enrichment of the curriculum.

Manchester data warehouse already collected much of the data outlined in the leading indicators. A data specialist was hired to help teachers disaggregate data and make informed instructional decisions for their students. The data analysis is shared as part of the approach to professional development with teachers. The data manager also meets with teachers individually.

#### **Pittsfield School District**

The district reported having a data team consisting of administrators, teachers, and instructional coaches that meets monthly. The data is reviewed almost daily to monitor progress; identify trends, needs and priorities. District staff also reported an upward trend of state assessment scores in schools implementing SIG, highlighting growth in both English and Math. They reported that their 11<sup>th</sup> grade test scores are the highest in the state.

PHS staff reported regularly using data to differentiate instruction as part of their core academic teams. Staff also reported an increase proficiency stating that the school went from the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest to 8<sup>th</sup> highest in Math, and from 59 percent to 79 percent proficiency in Reading.

#### **New Hampshire Department of Education**

The NHDOE collects SIG data and submits data to the Department through ED Facts. In addition, NHDOE collects data using IndiStar for all SIG schools.

### **Technical Assistance**

Manchester School District

Manchester provides principals with support on fiscal issues, including use of funds guidance. Additionally, the LEA provides professional development, to SIG schools and offer reading and math coaches. The LEA is working to develop list of pre-vetted external providers.

Pittsfield School District

The LEA reported receiving twelve days of professional development from the SEA on aligning teacher and principal evaluation system with SIG requirements, including how to incorporate student achievement.

The LEA provides technical assistance to their schools internally with assistance from an external provider.

New Hampshire Department of Education

NHDOE visits SIG schools throughout the school year, including conducting two formal monitoring visits in which the state observes classrooms; while also, conducting interviews and surveys with staff.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Issue 1: Development of a System of Rewards the is Linked to Student Achievement**

The SEA has not ensured that a system of rewards being used by the LEAs is based in part on student achievement (See Finding on Page 10).

**Technical Assistance Strategies:**

- Provide focused technical assistance to the LEA to support its development of a plan to clearly identify rewards and link to student achievement (Responsibility: NDE).
- Develop a plan for how to clearly define criteria for rewards and how to link to student achievement by the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year (Responsibility: WPS, LPS).

## 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. [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))]	Finding	11
<b>2. Implementation</b>	The SEA ensures that the SIG intervention models are being implemented consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. [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))]	Finding	12
<b>3. Fiscal</b>	The SEA ensures LEAs and schools are using funds consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. [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]	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. [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))]	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. [Section II of the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants authorized under	N/A	N/A

	section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]		
<b>6. Data Collection</b>	The SEA ensures that data are being collected consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program. [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))]	N/A	N/A

## **Monitoring Area: School Improvement Grant**

**Critical Element 1: The SEA ensures that its application process was carried out consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.**

**Finding:** The SEA did not ensure that its application process was carried out consistent with its approved SIG application. Although NHDOE conducted competitions through which it assessed the capacity and commitment of the LEA applicants, NHDOE made awards to all the LEAs that applied and, in some cases, provided awards to schools in amounts that were considerably smaller than the amounts requested by the applicants. The NHDOE funded all of the schools that applied for cohort 1 and divided the funds equally across the schools regardless of budget request. It is unclear how funding amounts were determined for cohort II.

**Citation:** Section II.B.5 of the final requirements for the SIG program 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. The LEA’s total grant may not be less than \$50,000 or more than \$2,000,000 per year for each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools that the LEA commits to serve.” (75 FR 66363, 66369 (October 28, 2010))

### **Further action required:**

As a result of the noncompliance, NHDOE must:

1. Provide each LEA that received a SIG grant through the FY 2010 competition an opportunity to submit an amended application that requests and justifies any amounts of additional funds the LEA may need to continue full and effective implementation of the school intervention models in the schools it is serving with FY 2010 SIG funds (or FY 2009 carryover SIG funds awarded through the FY 2010 competition) during the 2013–2014 school years;
2. Carefully review each LEA’s amended application and determine the amount that each LEA needs to continue full and effective implementation of the school intervention models in the schools it is serving with FY 2010 SIG funds (or FY 2009 carryover SIG funds awarded through the FY 2010 competition) during the 2013–2014 school years;
3. Submit its process to address these corrective actions to ED within 30 days of receipt of this letter. This submission must include: (a) the information that NHDOE plans to provide its LEAs regarding the renewal process; (b) a description of the process it will use to review each LEA’s amended application, including the process it will use to determine the amount of funds each LEA needs to continue full and effective implementation of the school intervention models during the 2013–2014 school years; and (c) an assurance that moving forward, the NHDOE will continue to make award decisions by reviewing the amount of funds each LEA needs to fully and effectively implement school intervention models.

ED will review the NHDOE’s written submissions and will not approve the NHDOE’s FY 2012 SIG application or award the SEA’s FY 2012 funds until its review of the submissions is complete and it has determined that the NHDOE has demonstrated that LEAs that received SIG funds through the FY 2010 competition will receive a sufficient amount of funds to fully and effectively implement the school intervention models in the 2013–2014 school years.

**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 SEA has not ensured that a system of rewards being used by the LEAs is based in part on student achievement.

**Citation:** Section 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.

**Further action required:** The NHDOE must submit to ED evidence that it has reviewed the progress of all schools that received SIG funds to implement the transformation model to ensure that these schools are identifying and rewarding school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing the transformation model, have increased student achievement. As a part of the evidence, the NHDOE also must submit to ED the results of that review and for any schools that are not implementing a rewards system the NHDOE must submit the steps it will take to ensure that all schools receiving SIG funds to implement the transformation model have done so by the start of the 2013-2014 school year. The evidence must be submitted to ED within 35 days of receipt of this report.