



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

July 26, 2012

R. Todd Webster
Chief Deputy Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency
William B. Travis Building
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Dear Mr. Webster:

During the week of January 30 – February 3, 2012, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround reviewed the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) 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 the final monitoring report based upon this review.

In February 2011, ED began its first year of monitoring of the SIG program. 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. 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 TEA 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,

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will work with the TEA 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 on 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 TEA is working to address these issues and make use of this technical assistance.

Please be aware that the observations, issues identified, and findings in the enclosed report are based on written documentation or information provided to ED by the SAE, LEA, or school staff during interviews. They also reflect the status of compliance in Texas at the time and locations of ED's onsite review. The TEA 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 Sally Partridge and her staff for 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 with your staff to resolve the issues contained in this report and to improve the quality of the SIG program in Texas.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jason Snyder
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of School Turnaround

Enclosure

Cc: Sally Partridge