



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Martell Menlove
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Utah State Department Office of Education
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

APR 16 2014

Dear Superintendent Menlove:

During the week of September 9, 2013, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround (OST) reviewed the Utah State Office of Education's (USOE) 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 interviews with principals and staff whose schools are implementing the SIG intervention models. 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 USOE 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 USOE 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 or desk 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 USOE 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 the SEA or LEA during interviews. The USOE may receive further communication from ED that will require it to address noncompliance issues occurring prior or subsequent to the onsite visit.

The ED team would like to thank Ann White and her team for their hard work and the assistance they provided prior to and during the review in gathering materials and providing access to information.

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 Utah.

Sincerely,



Scott Sargrad
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Policy and Strategic Initiatives

Enclosure

cc: Ann White, Title 1 Coordinator

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Targeted Monitoring Review of School Improvement Grants (SIG) under
Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
September 9-11, 2013

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (SIG) MONITORING REPORT FOR UTAH STATE OFFICE OF
EDUCATION (USOE)

BACKGROUND						
Models	Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model - Cohort I	Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model - Cohort II		Number of SIG Schools Implementing the Model - Cohort III		
Turnaround	0	0		N/A		
Transformation	7	8		N/A		
Restart	0	0		N/A		
Closure	0	0		N/A		
Tier	SIG-eligible Schools	SIG-funded Schools	SIG-eligible Schools	SIG-funded Schools	SIG-eligible Schools	SIG-funded Schools
Tier I	18	5	7	3	N/A	N/A
Tier II	18	2	14	4	N/A	N/A
Tier III	24	0	13	1	N/A	N/A

MONITORING TRIP INFORMATION	
Monitoring Visits and Award Amounts	
SEA Visited	Utah State Office of Education
Total FY 2009 SIG Allocation	\$2,685,530
Total FY 2010 SIG Allocation	\$2,638,311
Total FY 2011 SIG Allocation	\$3,044,904
Total FY 2012 SIG Allocation	\$3,557,558
LEA Visited	Ogden School District
LEA Information	Cohort 1: 3 schools awarded \$4,950,000 Cohort 2: 2 schools awarded \$2,000,000 Cohort 3: N/A schools awarded N/A
School Visited	Odyssey Elementary School
School Information	Model: Transformation Cohort: 1 School-Level Award: \$1,650,000
LEA Visited	Salt Lake City District
LEA Information	Cohort 1: 2 schools awarded \$5,350,000 Cohort 2: 2 schools awarded \$3,700,000 Cohort 3: N/A schools awarded N/A
School Visited	Horizonte Instruction and Training Center
School Information	Model: Transformation Cohort: 2 School-Level Award: \$2,200,000

Staff Interviewed	
➤	Utah State Office of Education Staff
➤	Ogden District Staff
➤	Odyssey Staff: Principal, School Leadership Team, Teachers
➤	Horizonte Teaching and Instruction Staff: Principal, School Leadership Team, Teachers
U.S. Department of Education Staff	
Team Leader	Carlas McCauley
Staff Onsite	Chuennee Boston, Phavy Cunningham, Kim Light, David Yi

OVERVIEW OF MONITORING PROCESS

The following report is based on U.S. Department of Education’s (Department) desk monitoring visit to UTAH from September 9-11, 2013 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 Utah State Office of Education (USOE) 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 USOE’s implementation of the SIG grant. This section also includes a brief overview of the USOE’s structure and vision for SIG implementation.
- **Summary of USOE’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 September 9-11, 2013 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 Utah State Office of Education Implementation of SIG

Utah State Office of Education Highlights

- The Utah State Office of Education hired a Curriculum Specialist that helped implement the state-wide Common Core Standards and create assessments for districts. The USOE also hired external providers and utilized the West Comprehensive Center to ensure effective implementation of SIG.
- Overall the USOE SIG schools reported increases from 44 percent to 50 percent proficiency in state-wide language arts test scores and a 49 percent to 54 percent proficiency in math test scores. The USOE attributed the use of differentiated instruction based on student achievement data as helping to improve SIG schools.

Ogden District/Odyssey Elementary School Highlights (Odyssey)

- Odyssey utilizes weekly common assessments and common interim assessments throughout the year to gauge student knowledge and learning. The staff collaborated to develop lesson plans that support differentiated instruction to ensure student achievement. In the third year of implementation Odyssey adopted a new reading program. According to interviews, the new program helped increase Odyssey's scores in language arts. Additionally, the school adopted a new math program in K-3 classrooms. Staff reported that the new program helped to increase math proficiency.
- Odyssey hired a community coordinator who provides a number of resources and interventions for parents and the community. A variety of classes are being offered to parents including ESL, Spanish, GED, Zumba, Kindergarten Reading Readiness, and Odyssey Dogs (Dads of Great Students).

Salt Lake City District/Horizonte Instruction and Training Center Highlights

- Students at Horizonte participate in a sixty-five-minute advisory periods with teachers where they receive assistance and guidance regarding academic progress, graduation requirements, behavior, attendance, tardiness, and parent contact. An advisory curriculum was implemented with a focus on life skills, interpersonal skills, career interests, and educational planning. Every teacher at Horizonte has a group of students they see every day. The teachers review the students' progress toward academic success, complete a mathematics problem that is common throughout the school, and read the same passages with discussions. This has been identified as one of the most effective pieces in Horizonte's reform efforts.
- Horizonte administrators implemented a new system of rewards and created incentives for teachers. Teachers responded positively to the monetary rewards system linked to student achievement. In addition, a staff survey revealed that the majority of staff believed the monetary incentive is a good motivator for them.

Utah State Office of Education Structure and Vision

The Utah State Office of Education has two full-time staff dedicated to working on SIG implementation in the Title I School and District Improvement Office. The staff is responsible

for SIG implementation, monitoring, and oversight. The Title I and District Improvement offices also utilizes WestEd, the West Comprehensive Center, the University of Virginia, and a number of external providers who provide technical assistance to support schools. The Utah State Office of Education has not changed its structure as a result of SIG implementation.

According to the USOE, its goal is to identify the schools that are in the most need of improvement and provide them with the necessary support and resources to implement school turnaround efforts. The USOE's is also dedicated to placing the appropriate and most qualified principals in their lowest performing schools, providing meaningful staff development, and encouraging staff collaboration within a safe school environment in order to increase student achievement. The USOE encourages the use of data to drive effective and differentiated instruction in the classroom to increase student achievement in their lowest performing schools. The Utah State Office of Education determined its persistently lowest achieving schools by calculating the student proficiency rate and the change in the student proficiency rate over the past three years (progress/growth measure) to create a single proficiency score as determined by the Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT).

SUMMARY OF UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION'S IMPLEMENTATION OF SIG CRITICAL ELEMENTS

Application Process

During the 2010-2011 school year, the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) made awards to LEAs in accordance with the May 21, 2010 timeline in its approved SIG application. During the 2011-2012 school year, the USOE made awards to LEAs in accordance with the March 22, 2011 timeline in its approved SIG application.

The Utah State Office of Education conducted its SIG competition in accordance with what was outlined in its approved application. The Utah State Office of Education notified LEAs with SIG-eligible schools by sending letters, making phone calls, and through meetings. In interviews, LEA staff stated that the Utah State Office of Education supported LEAs through the application process by conducting bidders conferences to disseminate pertinent information regarding the LEA application process, assisted LEA's with amending their budgets based on needs and an analysis of per-pupil funding, and selecting the appropriate intervention model for each school.

The Utah State Office of Education has received requests from LEAs to amend their SIG application. These amendments were reviewed and recorded via the USOE's online system of tracking.

Implementation

Ogden District/Odyssey Elementary School

Ogden District identified student achievement in language arts and math, parent and community involvement, and the need for counseling and related interventions for special populations as the major areas of concern in the Odyssey Elementary School's needs assessment.

In its application, Odyssey indicated that it would address student achievement in the areas of language arts and math by providing professional development and coaching to focus on academic language, culturally responsive teaching, and improved instructional practice to close the achievement gap. In interviews, the school administration stated that it has provided teachers with opportunities for collaboration and curriculum mapping and has adopted data-driven instruction to target students who are in need of differentiated instruction. The school administration states that the teaching staff has been successful in collaborating and utilizing culturally competent strategies to ensure student improvement in language arts and math.

To increase parent and community involvement, Ogden District/Odyssey Elementary planned to provide information groups, support, and classes for parents. The school administration expressed that parents have been responsive to the support provided by the school counselor and community coordinator. Parents have taken advantage of ESL, GED, and Zumba classes to increase the frequency of parent visits and interactions at the school and to increase community

involvement. Students and parents enjoy the school and are appreciative of the teacher, administrators, and the staff as they report that the school is welcoming and inviting.

Finally, to address the need for counseling and intervention services for the school population the school proposed hiring additional staff such as the community coordinator to provide and connect parents with resources and community services. The school administration is aware that Odyssey serves an economically-disadvantage population and is confident that the students and their parents have received resources and access to special services.

In addition to addressing the major areas of concern in the needs assessment, Ogden hired a new principal for the first year of SIG implementation and retained the principal that was hired as part of a turnaround effort prior to the implementation of SIG. Ogden also instituted a system of rewards for staff that have increased student achievement and staff responded well to the system of rewards as 100% of the staff earned a reward for increasing student achievement.

Salt Lake City/Horizonte Training and Instruction Center

Horizonte identified parent and community engagement, student achievement in language arts and math, and teacher quality as the major areas of concern in Horizonte's needs assessment.

In its application, Horizonte indicated that it would improve parent and family engagement by holding community meetings to review school performance, discuss the school intervention model, and survey the students and parents to determine the needs of students, families, and the community. Horizonte's goal is to involve key stakeholders in students' education to improve student achievement. During interviews, school administration and teachers stated that they have been able to connect and collaborate with parents and key stakeholders in the community. Horizonte has built partnerships with Salt Lake Community College (SLCC), United Way, Job Corps and Salt Lake County Youth Employment Services. Horizonte has also been able to offer more scholarships for students to attend SLCC and anticipate that the scholarship funds will increase if students' Criterion-Referenced Test scores continue to improve.

To improve student achievement in language arts and math, Salt Lake City District (SLCD)/Horizonte Training and Instruction Center planned to provide differentiated and data-driven instruction to their students. School administration and teachers expressed that in order to meet the needs of Horizonte's English Language Learner (ELL) and special education student population, the school hired additional coaches and instructors to co-teach with classroom teachers. This strategy is aimed at providing differentiated instruction for these students while working to increase proficiency levels in language arts and math. Horizonte holds monthly professional development and Professional Learning Community (PLC) opportunities for staff that is designed to give staff time to create daily lesson plans that align with the Common Core. This time is also used to target interventions for students who are struggling with the content by using data to drive instruction.

Finally, to address teacher quality at Horizonte the school proposed to ensure that highly qualified teachers are recruited and retained at the school. The SLCD requires that all teachers earn an ESL endorsement within three years of their employment with SLDC. School administration and teachers stated that they have maintained this requirement and teachers are

enthusiastic about receiving an ESL endorsement so that may better serve their students with the ability to differentiate instruction in language arts and math. The language arts coaches are in the English and content courses daily to provide mentoring and instructional strategies to teachers. Teachers at Horizonte begin the school year two weeks earlier in order to attend professional development the first week and to provide an additional week of instruction for students at the beginning of the year.

In addition to addressing the major areas of concern in the needs assessment, Horizonte instituted a system of rewards for staff that have increased student achievement. Horizonte has also increased learning time by adding a whole week of instruction at the beginning of the school year, adding 30 minutes to the school day, and by offering additional evening classes to its students.

Fiscal

The Salt Lake City District staff reported that it reserves 5 percent of the State's SIG allocation and uses its reservation for staff salaries, administration, evaluation, and technical assistance.

The Salt Lake City District ensures that SIG funds are spent on allowable activities by tracking all funds via an online tracker and through procurement checks managed by the Title I and District Improvement Coordinator. The Title I and District Improvement Coordinator reviews all expenditures and conducts an annual review to ensure that LEA and school budgets are used for allowable activities and aligned with the schools' approved plans.

To ensure that its LEAs adhere to proper accounting of time and attendance for SIG paid staff by requiring time and effort reports in order to determine the type of payment, partial or full payment and maintains equipment and materials purchased with SIG funds through the use of a tracking system and by conducting spot checks of inventory.

Technical Assistance

During interviews, the USOE stated that it is providing technical assistance to support LEAs with implementing SIG by ensuring that a common language exist and the guidelines regarding SIG are clear and uniform. The USOE stated that it provides training for all of its support team members. The USOE states that it provides a multi-system level of support that provides targeted technical assistance to LEAs.

Both LEAs stated that the USOE support for SIG implementation has been very helpful and ongoing. In general, school leadership stated that the USOE support for SIG implementation is constantly provided with respect to the goals that were stated in their approved SIG application. The USOE has provided its districts with technical assistance in the form of bidders' conferences, webinars, and professional development. The USOE provided technical assistance to LEAs in the following areas 1) developing an application for funds; 2) implementing the grant as approved; 3) evaluating the effectiveness of the grant.

Ogden School District/Odyssey Elementary School

According to the LEA application, the Ogden District proposed to support schools in implementing SIG by supporting all aspects of SIG implementation including the application, amendments, choosing the appropriate school model, budget, instructional programs, and evaluation.

In interviews, Odyssey's staff described the technical assistance it receives from the Ogden District as consistent and very helpful. Odyssey administration stated that the Ogden School District provided assistance with professional development focused on closing the achievement gaps and culturally responsive instruction which has enabled staff to differentiate instruction to positively affect student achievement.

Salt Lake City School District/Horizonte Instruction and Training Center

The Salt Lake City School District (SLCSD) proposed to support schools in implementing SIG by providing professional development, instructional coaching, on-site observations and feedback, and technical assistance regarding the key components of effective school turnaround efforts.

During interviews Horizonte's staff described the technical assistance it receives from the Salt Lake City School District as helpful in assisting them meet their SIG goals as stated in their approved SIG application. Horizonte administration stated that the Salt Lake City School District has been very supportive in grant administration. The SLCSD communicates regularly with Horizonte staff via email and cell phone when there are issues and questions. The SLCSD's support has helped to improve school and test scores and academic achievement have increased.

Monitoring

In its approved application, the Utah State Office of Education stated that the Title I Instructional Improvement Team will conduct site visits using a monitoring tool designed after the Department of Education monitoring protocol to measure the effectiveness of implementation of the selected intervention model of its schools. The coordinator reviewed the documentation of the districts' technical assistance which was provided to the SIG schools and reviewed budget reimbursement requests to make sure the funds are being used in a fiscally appropriate manner that is aligned to the school improvement plan. The Utah State Office of Education provides monitoring and oversight to all of its SIG schools as indicated in its approved application. The SIG staff monitor the schools twice a year and have increased their transparency in the schools by collection data and utilizing an online tracking system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of SIG. The coordinator also conducts focus groups including teachers, parents, and staff regarding SIG implementation.

During interviews, LEA staff reported that the state performs progress monitoring, a monthly call or meeting, and on-site visits at the LEA and school level. The state assesses the LEA's progress towards meeting the established and approved student achievement goals and works with an external provider if applicable. During the monitoring visits, the SEA receives feedback from students, teachers, parents, and school leadership to determine if the school and staff are invested in the success of every student.

Data Collection

The Utah State Office of Education uses Illuminate, a data management system to collect data on SIG achievement and leading indicators from LEAs and schools. LEAs submit data to the SEA on a monthly basis.

According to ED Facts records, the Utah State Office of Education has submitted all required achievement and leading indicator data to the Department.

The Utah State Department of Education uses the data it collects to drive decision-making in order to better support LEAs/schools, to inform differentiated instructional needs, and to identify leading indicators for student success in school turnaround efforts. The USOE also collects interim assessment data every 90 days.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION

1. Issue: Implementation

While Ogden and Salt Lake City Districts had systems in place for recruiting and retaining qualified principals, the SEA indicated that it is a challenge recruiting and retaining qualified principals for San Juan District where there are remote schools. The USOE expressed a need for technical assistance related to principal recruitment, particularly in more rural parts of the state.

Technical Assistance Strategies:

- Connect the USOE to other SEAs with promising practices or strategies related to recruitment and retention of qualified principals. (Responsibility: ED)
- Connect the USOE with resources from other SEAs, comprehensive centers, or organizations on principal recruitment and retention. (Responsibility: ED)

MONITORING FINDINGS

Summary of Monitoring Indicators

Critical Element	Requirement	Status	Page
1. Application Process	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>	N/A	#
2. Implementation	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>	N/A	#
3. Fiscal	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>	N/A	#
4. Technical Assistance	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>	N/A	#
5. Monitoring	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>	N/A	#

<p>6. Data Collection</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>N/A</p>	<p>#</p>
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Monitoring Area: School Improvement Grant

No Findings to report.