



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Chris Nicastro
Commissioner of Education
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Missouri Department of Education
205 Jefferson Street
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Commissioner Nicastro:

During the week of April 16th, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround (OST) reviewed the Missouri Department of Education's (MODESE) 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. Note that an addendum containing the *Summary and Observations* will be released at a future date.

The MODESE 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 MODESE 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 MODESE 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 Missouri at the time and locations of ED's onsite review. The MODESE 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 Craig Rector, Jocelyn Strand 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.

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 Missouri.

Sincerely,



Carlos McCauley
Group Leader
Office of School Turnaround

Enclosure

cc: Craig Rector, Coordinator, Grants and Resources, Office of Quality Schools
Jocelyn Strand, Director, A+/Charter Schools

Missouri
 Targeted Monitoring Review of
 School Improvement Grants (SIG) under section 1003(g) of the
 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended
 April 16- April 20, 2012

BACKGROUND

FY 2009 Overview of SIG Schools in Missouri

Tier	Number of FY 2009 Eligible SIG Schools	Number of FY 2009 Served SIG Schools
Tier I	21	14
Tier II	32	18
Tier III	406	0

FY 2010 Overview of SIG Schools in Missouri

Tier	Number of FY 2010 Eligible SIG Schools	Number of FY 2010 Served SIG Schools
Tier I	25	6
Tier II	30	5
Tier III	443	0

FY 2009 Implementation of SIG School Intervention Models

Models	Number of Schools Implementing the Model
Turnaround	14
Transformation	17
Restart	0
Closure	1

FY 2010 Implementation of SIG School Intervention Models

Models	Number of Schools Implementing the Model
Turnaround	11
Transformation	0
Restart	0
Closure	0

MONITORING VISIT INFORMATION

Monitoring Visits

LEA Visited
School Visited
Model Implemented
FY 2009 Funding
Awarded
(over three years)

St. Louis Public Schools
 Vashon High School
 Turnaround
LEA Award (for 11 SIG schools): \$11,222,900
Vashon High School SIG funding: \$1,035,387

LEA Visited
School Visited
Model Implemented
FY 2009 Funding
Awarded

Hayti R-II School District
 Hayti High School
 Transformation
LEA Award (for 1 SIG school): \$2,587,162
Hayti High School SIG funding: \$2,587,162

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<p><i>(over three years)</i> SEA Visited FY 2009 SIG Award FY 2010 SIG Award FY 2011 SIG Award</p>	<p>Missouri Department of Education \$ 54,099,767 \$ 8,860,652 \$ 9,002,486</p>
Interviews Conducted	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Missouri Department of Education</i> ➤ <i>St. Louis Public Schools District Staff</i> ➤ <i>Vashon High School: Principal, School Leadership Team, 4 Teachers, 4 Parents, Students, and 4 Classroom Visits</i> ➤ <i>Hayti R-II School District Staff</i> ➤ <i>Hayti High School: Principal and Vice Principal, 5 Teachers, 4 Parents, Students, and 3 Classroom Visits</i> 	
U.S. Department of Education Staff	
Team Leader	Carlas McCauley
Staff Onsite	Kimberly Light and Christopher Tate

OVERVIEW OF MONITORING REPORT

The following report is based on the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) onsite monitoring visit to Missouri from April 16 to April 20, 2012 and review of documentation provided by the State educational agency (SEA), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools. The report consists of two sections: *Technical Assistance Recommendations* and *Monitoring Findings*. 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.

The Department will later issue a *Summary and Observations* addendum that describes 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. That addendum will focus on how the SEA, LEAs, and schools visited are implementing the SIG program with respect to the following five areas: school climate, teachers and leaders, instructional strategies and time, use of data, and technical assistance.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

This section addresses areas where additional technical assistance may be needed to improve the quality of SIG program implementation.

Issue 1: While visited districts have identified services and staff to increase family and community engagement, neither district has articulated a clear plan for effectively using those resources. Moreover, the LEAs and its schools have not fully informed parents about the schools' improvement efforts or the family-engagement resources available to them.

Technical Assistance Strategies:

- Provide MODESE resources on effective strategies for engaging families and the school community (Responsibility: ED).
- Provide focused technical assistance to LEAs on strategies and methods to improve family and community outreach regarding turnaround reform efforts occurring in each districts' schools, such as:
 - Preparing parent letters and informational packets for LEAs and schools to use to introduce parents to the SIG program;
 - Holding meetings for parents and community members about the ongoing turnaround reform efforts occurring in each school; and
 - Helping LEAs develop plans to engage families and the community and to help families use resources available from SIG implementation (Responsibility: MODESE).
- Develop a family and community engagement plan or a set of strategies that districts will use to involve parents in SIG implementation and use resources available for family and community engagement (Responsibility: LEA).

Issue 2: According to SLPS teachers, the district has not consistently recognized or rewarded strong work. Recognition and rewards are especially important given the district's challenges with recruitment and retention.

Technical Assistance Strategies:

- Identify resources and provide guidance to MODESE on rewards, financial and otherwise, used in other districts and states (Responsibility: ED).
- Provide focused technical assistance to LEAs to support the development of a plan to clearly identify and reward teachers for their work (Responsibility: MODESE).
- Develop criteria for granting rewards and identify resources to help school leadership grant rewards to teachers (Responsibility: LEA).

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. [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))]	NA	NA
2. Implementation	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	14
3. Fiscal	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]	NA	NA
4. Technical Assistance	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))]	NA	NA
5. Monitoring	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 section 1003(g) of Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended	NA	NA

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	(75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))]		
6. Data Collection	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))]	NA	NA

Monitoring Area: School Improvement Grant

Finding 1: The MODESE has not ensured that SLPS is establishing schedules and implementing strategies that increase learning time at Vashon that comply with the turnaround model requirements. Although Vashon provides after-school tutoring and a Saturday credit recovery program, the district reported that at this time it does not have the capacity to lengthen the school day, week, or year to provide additional time for activities such as additional instructional time, and additional time for teachers to collaborate, plan and engage in professional development as required for the implementation of the turnaround model.

Citation: Section I.A.2(a)(1)(viii) of the final requirements states that an LEA implementing the turnaround model must “establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time.” Section I.A.3 of the final requirements defines *increased learning time* as “using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for (a) instruction in core academic subjects including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; (b) instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, including, for example, physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities that are provided by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations; and (c) teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.” (75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010)).

Further action required: The MODESE must work with LEAs to ensure that all schools implementing the turnaround or transformation models have significantly increased the number of school hours and that the additional time is being consistently used for all three required purposes, including instructional in core academic subjects. For each school implementing the turnaround or transformation model, the MODESE must submit to ED documentation demonstrating an increase in learning time and evidence that the time is being consistently used in accordance with the SIG requirement’s definition of “increased learning time.”

Finding 2: The MODESE has not ensured that Hayti is providing incentives to teachers and principals that have increased student achievement. Hayti’s principal indicated that incentives had, at times, been offered but that incentives were applied inconsistently. Teachers in Hayti reported receiving few incentives for their work in raising student achievement and the district did not demonstrate that incentives were linked to student achievement in the documentation provided.

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.

Further action required: MODESE must work with LEAs to develop and implement a tool or rubric to identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing the

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turnaround and transformation models, 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, and attendance. MODESE must submit this tool to ED and it must be implemented in the second semester of the 2012-2013 school year.