



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Christopher A. Koch
State Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

Dear Superintendent Koch:

During the week of December 12-16, 2011, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of School Turnaround (OST) reviewed the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) 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.

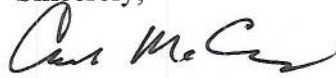
The ISBE has 30 business days from receipt of this report to respond to all of the compliance issues contained herein. ED staff will review your response for sufficiency and will determine which areas are acceptable and which require further documentation of implementation. ED will allow 30 business 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 ISBE 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 ISBE is working to address these issues and make use of this technical assistance.

The ED team would like to thank Dr. Monique Chism 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 the enclosed report and to improve the quality of the SIG program in Illinois. 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: Dr. Monique Chism, Assistant Superintendent, Innovation and Improvement