



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Innovation and Improvement

August 1, 2018

Karl Koenig
Ohio Department of Education
25 S. Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Mr. Koenig,

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Charter Schools Program (CSP) Monitoring Project this year. The purpose of the CSP Monitoring Project is to assess the extent to which grantees are implementing their approved grant projects in compliance with Title V, Part B Public Charter Schools Program statutes, regulations and guidance. Monitoring serves not only as a means for helping grantees achieve high-quality implementation of their CSP grant project, it also helps the Department to be a better advisor and partner in that effort. This letter serves to close out the on-site monitoring portion and begin the next phase, which includes targeted technical assistance to remedy the report's finding.

A copy of Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) final CSP Monitoring Report is attached. This report reflects the monitoring team's analysis and assessment of all of the evidence collected during the monitoring process through review of documents, site visit interviews, and other sources. This final report also takes into consideration ODE's response to the draft monitoring report, and includes the comments you provided as an appendix. The next few sections will outline the significant findings, process and timeline for next steps.

Ohio Department of Education's Monitoring Report Summary

ODE was visited by the WestEd monitoring team December 5 through 8, 2017. Based on the information collected during the monitoring process, it was determined that ODE Fully Met 14 indicators, Largely Met 1 indicators, Partially Met 6 indicators, and Did Not Meet 0 indicators. The findings section below lists indicators that shall be discussed during a post monitoring conference call and will need to be addressed in an implementation plan.

Findings

Listed below are the findings that are rated as largely meets the indicator, partially meets the indicator or does not meet the indicator.

Indicator	Rating	Recommendation	Progress from March 2017	Notes (implementation issues, promising practices, noteworthy highlights)
Indicator 1.1: SUBGRANT APPLICATION DESCRIPTIONS AND ASSURANCES.	Partially meets the indicator	Requires Technical Assistance	+	RFA contains nearly all of the required descriptions and assurances; however, the request and justification of waivers is missing and a focused description of how CSP funds will be used in conjunction with other federal funds is lacking.
Indicator 2.1: QUALITY AUTHORIZING PRACTICES.	Partially meets the indicator	Requires Technical Assistance	+	The sponsor evaluation process has improved authorizer quality. However, there are still issues that need to be addressed regarding charter contracts and authorizer accountability.
Indicator 2.4: PLAN TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.	Partially meets the indicator	Requires Technical Assistance	+	The RFA now includes Competitive Preference Points with an emphasis on serving disadvantaged students in challenging communities. More sophisticated subgrantee plans and monitoring plans are needed to increase the likelihood of increased academic performance with these student populations.
Indicator 2.5: SUBGRANTEE MONITORING.	Largely meets the indicator	Recommended Technical Assistance	+	The grantee has a detailed monitoring process and tool. However, no training plan is in place for monitors. Desk visits were in process at the time of the site visit; no on site monitoring had been conducted as of yet.
Indicator 3.4: ADMINISTRATION OF CSP FUNDS.	Partially meets the indicator	Requires Technical Assistance	=	Although adequate systems to administer CSP funds at the SEA level are largely in place, issues were identified at the subgrantee level related to guidance for reimbursement source documentation, tagging of assets, and budget modification documentation.
Indicator 3.7: TRANSFER OF STUDENT RECORDS.	Partially meets the indicator	Requires Technical Assistance	=	SEA relies on authorizers to ensure that records are appropriately and effectively transferred. In the past, when issues have developed, the SEA has intervened when necessary.
Indicator 3.9: COMPLIANCE WITH GRANT CONDITIONS.	Partially meets the indicator	Requires Technical Assistance	+	ODE is complying with all high-risk specific grant conditions, though some corrective actions remain to be resolved. Development of a Comprehensive Plan and use of a grant advisory committee may be considered best practices.
Indicator 4.1: MITIGATING RISK OF CHARTER SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS	No Rating	Recommended Technical Assistance	N/A (new)	ODE has developed a monitoring protocol which does address some of the risks relationships with management organizations pose to CSP objectives. No monitoring has been performed to date, and it is not clear the process can mitigate risk for subgrantees in the short-term given the lack of authority ODE has over sponsors or operators.

Process and Timeline

As a next step, within the next three weeks the Department would like to hold an hour long conference call with ODE to discuss the findings outlined above. Prior to this call, ODE should review the monitoring report in its entirety and be prepared to discuss the findings and next steps. Please provide three proposed dates and times within the next three weeks so we can schedule this conference call.

Within 30 days of the post monitoring conference call, ODE must provide the Department an implementation plan on how it will address the findings listed, find a solution for those indicators listed, execute that solution, and finally provide evidence to the Department the findings have been corrected. In Appendix A (enclosed), a sample tracking document has been provided to assist with recording progress and documenting resolution of the indicators. ODE will also report out and update their progress on findings during their regularly scheduled weekly calls and within their required quarterly reports until all the findings have been resolved successfully per the Program Officer's approval.

We look forward to continuing to work together toward our mutual goal of creating and supporting high-quality charter schools and expanding parental choice in public education.

Sincerely,
/s/

Kathryn Meeley
Charter Schools Program
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosures:
Appendix A - Sample Tracking Document
ODE CSP Final Monitoring Report