

**Progress Report on the Implementation of ACT 807 – Monitoring ACSIP
And
Recommendations made by the Adequacy Study Oversight Subcommittee;
House Interim Committee on Education; and Senate Interim Committee on
Education as adopted on January 22, 2007**

Presented By:

**School Improvement – ACSIP
Division of Learning Services
April 9, 2008**

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Preamble

"The department shall monitor each public school's and school district's compliance regarding its comprehensive school improvement plan,..." Act 807 of 2007

Background and Overview:

The Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) should be comprehensive, instructionally based and focused on improving student achievement using research-based strategies and measurable goals and objectives. The plan must include activities based on the school's greatest needs and should directly address the academic achievement problems of student subgroups, if the subgroup did not meet the achievement level necessary for Adequate Yearly Progress.

Pursuant to ACT 57, the adequacy study committee (Final Report and Recommendations of the Adequacy Study Oversight Committees) determined that monitoring of ACSIP is essential to meeting the state's educational achievement objectives and made the following recommendations:

- (a) Funding be provided to the Department of Education for the 2007-2008 school year to monitor or to assure that the school districts (LEAs) have done what their school improvement plans call for as described in the Department of Education report presented to the committees on December 19, 2006.
- (b) The Department of Education utilize ACSIP to expand monitoring of the accounting system and of school LEA fund balances as outlined by the department to assist the committees in determining whether to mandate the use of parts of categorical funding.
- (c) Legislation be drafted by February 1, 2007, requiring that ACSIP will include monitoring of the use of instructional facilitators (as defined in the Department of Education report) in school improvement plans.
- (d) Report its findings to the committees by May 1, 2008.

Introduction:

This report is presented in response to the adequacy study recommendations. It provides a general overview of the project, a review of activities and scope, along with details of the progress made to date. This report is divided into four categories.

- A. A brief description of goals and objectives
- B. An overview of activities that support the goals and objectives
- C. A review of findings:
 - The adequacy of current ADE staffing to effectively monitor the ACSIP plan.
 - The use of the ACSIP plans related to categorical funding (National School Lunch Act [NSLA], English language learners [ELL], alternative learning environment [ALE], and professional development). How effective and accurate has this been?
 - Plans for, or results of, monitoring the use of instructional facilitators in the ACSIP plans.
 - Plans for providing guidance on LEA evaluation of programs at year end.
 - The methodology that ADE staff will use to make a determination of whether the evaluation has been adequately completed.
- D. Conclusions/Recommendations- Plans for completing on-site monitoring process.

A. A brief description of goals and objectives

One of the primary goals was to ensure the development of a monitoring instrument that establishes a focus for (1) raising the academic performance of all student groups to achieve state academic standards; (2) achieving the intended outcomes of the categorical programs; (3) the integration of other program requirements; and compliance with requirements for the expenditure of funds.

The specific objectives are:

- To develop and establish monitoring protocols;
- Research and provide opportunities for ACSIP Supervisors to receive training designed to build fidelity and a comprehensive understanding of effective monitoring techniques, such as;

1. Interviewing/classroom walkthrough/evaluating the quality of the instructional strategy
 2. Evaluating the fidelity of program implementation. (For example, did the intervention work? Was it scientifically based? Was it implemented as planned?)
 3. Monitoring expenditures/resources
 4. Writing the preliminary and final monitoring report (i.e. commendations and compliance issues, corrective action/technical assistance plans)
- Provide regional training for LEAs and schools on the monitoring process; and
 - Implement on-site monitoring.

B. An overview of activities that support the goals and objectives

What follows is a list of the various project undertakings and activities that support the overall goals and objectives of this project.

- **Summer 2007**
 - Developed Rules for ACT 807 (04/07)
- **Fall and Winter 2007**
 - Researched and developed draft monitoring instrument (10/07 – 12/07)
 - Rules received final approval (12/07)
 - Drafted Logistics for on-site monitoring (12/07)
- **Winter 2008**
 - Second review and editing of monitoring instrument (01/08)
 - Drafted sample interview questions for LEA and school staff (01/08)
 - Researched and drafted a list of indicators for high-risk districts (02/08)

C. A review of findings:

The adequacy of current ADE staffing to effectively monitor the ACSIP plan.

The ACSIP unit currently employs twenty ACSIP Supervisors. All supervisors provide services to a minimum of fifteen LEAs and between forty-seven to fifty-two schools. Supervisors are responsible for assisting their LEAs and schools with the submission of its school improvement plan through the ACSIP model (e.g., individual program requirements, how appropriate state/federal funds may be used in public schools). In addition, supervisors provide information and assistance to schools implementing school-wide programs and/or LEAs and schools identified for improvement; broker

services into school programs; provide guidance on how educational theories may be implemented; and complete a desk review of ACSIP submissions prior to final approval.

After a careful review of staff responsibilities and the current division of duties, it was determined that the size of the ACSIP staff is significantly lower than the number required to adequately serve all LEAs/schools identified as in need of improvement, provide technical assistance to schools not identified for improvement, as well as fulfill the responsibility of effectively monitoring the ACSIP (on-site) as indicated in Act 807.

Each ACSIP monitoring team will be determined by the size of the LEA, but will consist of no less than three supervisors per LEA. To the extent practicable, each team will be comprised of supervisors with appropriate curriculum/grade-level (elementary, secondary) backgrounds; program specific training (NSLA, ALE) and language expertise (ELL).

Finally, to meet legislative mandates (i.e., on-site visit, preliminary report, LEA submission of evidence, final report) with the monitoring process and because of the growing needs of schools and LEAs identified for improvement, it is anticipated that the unit would need a minimum of six additional certified staff (specifically a point person for NSLA, ELL & ALE) and one additional support staff.

** To eliminate any possibility of conflict of interest, the monitoring section of ACSIP should be in addition to the group who are providing the technical assistance.*

The use of the ACSIP plans related to categorical funding. How effective and accurate has this been?

The approval process for each ACSIP included a desk review and evaluation of the required element for all categorical actions and expenditures. This was a two prong approval process and required a review and approval by the assigned supervisor as well as a review and approval by regional team leaders prior to submission to finance for final approval. While this process is effective for verifying how LEAs and schools allocated funds within its plan, it does not provide data necessary to address any possible implications that programs and/or activities were fully implemented; regularly reviewed; and modified as needed.

The on-site monitoring of the ACSIP will verify that funds are allocated to align with school goals and data needs. In addition, the on-site monitoring will include a review of the school's process to evaluate programs and activities as well as the degree to which the school achieves the goals and objectives for student learning set by the plan. (See Plans for providing guidance on LEA evaluation of programs at year end).

Plans for, or results of, monitoring the use of instructional facilitators in the ACSIP plans.

A desk review (evaluation) of the schools actions and interventions indicates that the ACSIP includes a description of the school's plan for using instructional facilitators. In addition, a second analysis of each districts budget page was completed. Two LEA wide budgets included salaries and benefits for instructional facilitators. funds supported salaries and benefits for ninety (90) Math Instructional Facilitators; fifteen (15) Science Instructional Facilitators; three (3) Social Studies Instructional Facilitators; and one-hundred thirteen (113) Literacy Instructional Facilitators. Professional development funds supported salaries and benefits for three (3) Math Instructional Facilitators; one (1) Science Instructional Facilitator; and four (4) Literacy Instructional Facilitators.

As noted above, the on-site monitoring of the ACSIP will include a review of the LEA's and school's utilization of instructional facilitator (i.e., Does the instructional facilitator analyze data, plan and provide professional development learning opportunities, model best practices, assist in the implementation of ACSIP, establish peer coaching and mentor programs etc.?)

Plans for providing guidance on LEA evaluation of programs at year end.

Each ACSIP intervention or action should have a carefully thought out set of sequenced action steps with observable, measurable outcome(s) for each step as well as a description of data that will be collected and analyzed throughout the implementation phase (i.e., program data, demographic data, perceptual data, achievement data – annual, large-scale assessment data, periodic assessment data; and on going classroom data etc.). The results of the data analyses are used to determine whether the intervention has been achieved.

ACSIP supervisors are available to assist LEAs who may need assistance with reviewing and evaluating the implementation and impact of program interventions and actions; completing impact checks; and making appropriate modifications.

Supervisors will contact each of their assigned LEAs via Outlook (list-serve) indicating their availability to provide technical assistance and/or serve as a resource broker for this end of the year process. The amount and degree of technical assistance provided is contingent upon the district's needs or request. Supervisors will complete a technical assistance report indicating the degree of services provided.

The methodology that monitors will use to make a determination of whether the evaluation has been adequately completed.

In keeping with best practice, LEAs and schools should maintain evidence of a systematic and continuous process to regularly review both the LEA and school's ACSIP and the provision of services as indicated in each plan. In addition, the monitoring team will look for the following documentation:

- Evidence of research for selected programs, interventions or strategies;
- Evidence of a team process for ensuring that others are included in all stages of the evaluation effort;
- Evidence of a timeline for conducting the evaluations;
- Evidence that the LEA/school has maintain a continuous flow of evaluative information;
- Process for compiling all evaluation data - copies of reports or other documents indicating the steps in the decision-making process relative to the program or intervention and how the LEA/schools data correlates with research findings;
- Evidence of corrections and adjustments made to any programs, interventions, or teaching strategies as a result of the evaluation; and
- Procedure for revising next year's school improvement plan based on objectives not met and new needs assessments derived from analysis of the program evaluation, student performance and other data.

D. Conclusions/Recommendations- Plans for completing on-site monitoring process.

- **Spring 2008**
 - Review of draft monitoring instrument by the following units
Finance - completed
Curriculum and Instruction – in progress
Legal services
 - Develop a proposed monitoring cycle – in progress
 - Pilot monitoring instrument in selected LEA's
- **Summer 2008**
 - Train School Improvement Supervisor on monitoring/best practice (June 2008)
 - Develop a training module for LEAs and schools
 - Schedule regional monitoring training sessions for LEA's and schools
- **School year 2008-2009**
 - Pilot Year
 - Continue to improve and revise monitoring document and procedures, if needed