
Supplemental Educational Services Provider Monitoring Report

Step Ahead Tutors, Inc.

March 2009



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent
Madison, Wisconsin

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SES Program Overview

Background:

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), originally signed into law in 1964, is the major method of distributing federal aid for public schools. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is the name given to the current ESEA law, reauthorized in 2001. Title I is the largest aid program under NCLB. When NCLB was enacted, new provisions regarding accountability for student achievement were created as part of the Title I law. Under these new provisions states have to develop academic goals, described as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), for all schools to meet. Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students in Title I schools that have not met state targets for increasing student achievement (AYP) for three or more years. These services may include tutoring and after-school services. They may be offered through public- or private-sector providers that are approved by the state, such as public schools, public charter schools, local education agencies, educational service agencies, and faith-based organizations. Private-sector providers may be either nonprofit or for-profit entities. Students eligible for Supplemental Educational Services are those students from low-income families in the eligible schools. The cost of tutoring is paid by the school district.

Monitoring Authority:

The NCLB law (Title I, Section 1116(e)(4)(B)) requires states to develop and apply objective criteria for evaluating providers and to monitor the quality of services offered. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is the state agency charged with the responsibility to administer the SES program and monitor provider compliance with the federal requirements.

DPI SES Project Team:

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SES Monitoring Process Overview

SES compliance monitoring is an annual process that began in the 2005-06 school year.

- Each fall the DPI identifies between three and five SES providers to be monitored during the school year.
- Providers are selected for monitoring based on:
 - Number of students served
 - Provider type (chosen from a cross-section of non-profit, for-profit, local, national, and online services companies)
 - Results of parent and school staff surveys
 - Feedback from the school district
- Teams consisting of two to four DPI staff members will conduct the monitoring visits.
- Representatives from the school and district are invited to attend.
- Providers will receive notification, logistical information, and preparation materials at least four weeks in advance of the monitoring visit.
- All monitoring visits will include both a document review and on-site observations of the instruction being provided to enrolled students.

The monitoring visits will cover the federal requirements for SES providers and verify compliance with items included within the state application narratives and assurances (see Appendix D and Appendix E). The monitoring visits will focus on requirements related to:

- Communicating student progress to parents and the school district.
- Ensuring curriculum consistent with the curriculum of the school and district, and with state standards, as well as consistent with the curriculum described by the provider in the program application.
- Curriculum that is secular and based on proven methods and practices.
- Compliance with health, safety, and civil rights laws and regulations.
- Implementation of tutoring in accordance with the district agreements.
- Appropriate policies and procedures related to computer and internet use by online providers.

In addition to the document review and on-site visit, principals and the business entity of providers who are being monitored are required to pass a complete review of websites with publicly available financial information. Additionally, the principals and business will be reviewed for good standing with the DPI.

Monitoring Reports

Debriefing: As time allows, the DPI monitoring team will provide some preliminary feedback to the provider's representatives at the end of the visit. Preliminary findings and information about exemplary practices or problems observed will be shared verbally. The provider will have an opportunity to comment on the monitoring process and make recommendations for improvements, both during the discussion and via a follow-up form.

Monitoring Report: A formal written report will be sent to the provider's designated contact person approximately four weeks after the visit. The report will include information on the degree to which compliance with the requirements was demonstrated, program strengths, possible recommendations for improvement, and, if necessary, descriptions of problems or issues and requests for required corrective action(s).

Exemplary Practices: The report may include descriptions of exemplary organizational management or instructional practices or information about high quality programs and services that might be useful for other providers looking for improvement strategies or demonstrated positive student outcomes.

Corrective Action: If the organization being monitored is unable to produce any of the required documents or information listed under each of the compliance indicators, the monitoring report will include a request for corrective action. The report will specifically describe missing or incomplete documents or information and request that the items or evidence be sent to the DPI monitoring team within 30 working days of receipt of the written report. An SES provider unable to produce required documents or document compliance with all requirements may be removed from the list of organizations approved to provide SES in the state.

Report Summary: An abridged report with the final results of the monitoring visit will be posted on the DPI website - http://www.dpi.wi.gov/esea/ses_provider_monitoring.html - at the end of the annual monitoring cycle, in compliance with federal regulations. Summaries of monitoring reports done since the 2005-06 school year may currently be found at this location.

Monitoring Visit Details

Provider Name: Step Ahead Tutors
Date of Review: March 23, 2009
Department Reviewers: Molly Garner , Naomi Gray , Shirley Moutry
District Representative(s): Sandra Schroeder
Provider Representative(s): Justin Lubin

SES Program Compliance Indicators — Monitoring Checklist

The SES monitoring visit includes both a review of program records and documents and on-site observation of the tutoring process. The purpose of SES monitoring is to ensure that each provider is complying with the requirements in the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, the Wisconsin DPI Assurances, and with the provider's approved application.

This checklist will be used by the DPI team during the monitoring visit. Each monitoring indicator below is related to a requirement in the law. Listed under each monitoring indicator are documents and information that the DPI team will require the organization being monitored to provide, or that the team will look for during the on-site observation. Also listed are other items that are not required, but may be helpful in explaining the tutoring process and overall organizational strengths demonstrated by the provider. Providers may also bring materials or documents not listed to demonstrate compliance with the requirements.

I. PROGRESS REPORTS AND PARENT COMMUNICATION

SES providers must give parents of children receiving supplemental educational services, and the child's school district, information on the progress of the student in increasing achievement, in a format that is understandable and uniform in a language that parents can understand. [34CFR200.47(b)(2)(i)]

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Required evidence:

- Copies of progress reports provided to parents, which include benchmark data that is consistent with students' individualized academic plans
- Copies of written policies and/or procedures that describe the frequency and content of communication with parents
- Copies of written policies and/or procedures for communication with non-English speaking and/or illiterate parents
- Copies of written policies and/or procedures that describe the frequency and content of communication with students' teachers
- Copies of progress reports provided to teachers, which include benchmark data that is consistent with students' individualized academic plans

Possible evidence:

- Copies of correspondence sent to parents regarding student progress
- Achievement records shared with parents (student's progress, how progress was measured, a plan for improvement, and others)

Logs of phone calls and/or other communication made with parents

Status of Requirement I:

Acceptable

Incomplete

II. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION ALIGNED WITH DISTRICT PRACTICE AND STATE STANDARDS

SES providers must ensure that instruction provided and content used by the provider are consistent with the instruction provided and content used by the school district and state, and are aligned with the State student academic achievement standards.

[34CFR200.47(b)(2)(ii)(A) and (B)] (see Appendix A and Appendix B for state standards for reading and math)

Required evidence:

- Sample copies of curriculum materials used for reading
 - Documentation of how the materials align with district curriculum
 - Documentation of how the materials align with Wisconsin Model Academic Standards (WMAS for English/Language Arts)
- Sample copies of curriculum materials used for math
 - Documentation of how the materials align with district curriculum
 - Documentation of how the materials align with WMAS for Mathematics
- Sample copies of instructional materials used for reading
 - Documentation of how the materials align with district instructional strategies
 - Documentation of how the materials align with WMAS for English/Language Arts
- Sample copies of instructional materials used for math
 - Documentation of how the materials align with district instructional strategies
 - Documentation of how the materials align with WMAS for Mathematics

Possible evidence:

- Logs of phone calls and/or other communication made with the district to learn about the district curriculum
- Logs of phone calls and/or other communication made with teachers addressing specific achievement goals for the student, a description of how the student's progress was measured, and a timetable for improving achievement
- Site directors' and/or tutors' familiarity with district curriculum and state standards (on-site observation)
- Samples of the students' work (on-site observation)

Status of Requirement II: Acceptable Incomplete

III. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

SES providers must ensure that instruction and content provided are secular, neutral, non-ideological [34CFR200.47(b)(2)(ii)(C)], and research-based [34CFR200.45(a)(3)].

Required evidence:

- Copies of written policies and/or procedures that prohibit the use of non-secular or ideological materials
- Documentation that curriculum is research-based
- Documentation that instructional strategies are research-based
- Consistency with information provided on the application regarding:
 - tutors' use of proposed curriculum (on-site observation)
 - student: tutor ratio (on-site observation)
 - grade levels of students receiving tutoring (on-site observation)

Possible evidence:

- Class time includes combinations of (on-site observation):
 - direct instruction such as lecture and explanation of concepts
 - guided instruction such as tutor-directed practice of concepts
 - independent practice for students
- Sample copies of lesson plans to ensure secular and research-based instruction is taking place (on-site observation)
- Tutors' knowledge of the learning goals for each student (on-site observation)
- Opportunities for students to ask questions (on-site observation)
- Tutors' appropriate verbal and written feedback to students to reinforce learning (on-site observation)
- Students' engagement in the presented learning opportunities (on-site observation)

Status of Requirement III: Acceptable Incomplete

Corrective Actions:

1. Step Ahead must provide the DPI with documentation of research supporting that the curriculum is of high quality and is research-based.
2. Step Ahead must provide the DPI with documentation of research supporting instructional strategies.

Corrective Action Requirements Completed

IV. COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH, SAFETY, AND CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS AND REGULATIONS

SES providers must meet all applicable federal, state and local health, safety, and civil rights laws. [34CFR200.47(b)(2)(iii)] (See Appendix C for specific State and Federal laws)

Required evidence:

- Copies of Wisconsin Department of Justice and FBI/federal criminal background checks completed on all employees working with students
- (not applicable)** Copies of written policies and/or procedures on administration of students' medications
- Copies of written policies and/or procedures on student conduct and discipline
- Copies of written policies and/or procedures on emergency evacuation procedures
- Students' emergency contact information that is readily available
- (not applicable)** Site directors' and tutors' knowledge of emergency evacuation procedures (on-site observation)

Possible evidence:

- Employee handbooks that include written policies and/or procedures on:
 - protecting student privacy
 - hiring practices
 - pupil discrimination
- Postings promoting good safety practices
- Documented safety drills
- Posted evacuation instructions in response to fire or other emergency situations (on-site observation)
- Students' knowledge of emergency evacuation procedures (on-site observation)
- Tutors' understanding of provider's current discipline policies and/or procedures (on-site observation)
- Students display appropriate classroom behaviors (on-site observation)
- Tutors provide appropriate feedback to students (for example, verbal praise for good behaviors and consistency in correcting behaviors that adversely affect the learning environment) (on-site observation)
- A first-aid kit is available

Status of Requirement IV:



Acceptable



Incomplete

V. DISTRICT AGREEMENTS

The SES provider shall enter into an agreement with the school district to provide supplemental educational services to students [34CFR200.46(b)].

Required evidence:

- Copies of current district/provider agreements

Possible evidence:

- Examples of achievement goals for students, services to be provided, and a timetable for improving achievement
- Notes resulting from consultation with parents and teachers of students to be served
- Copies of written policies and/or procedures for staff on assessing student academic needs and the development of individualized achievement plans
- Records of services provided (number of students served, attendance records, student-tutor ratios, and others)

Status of Requirement V:



Acceptable



Incomplete

VI. ONLINE PROVIDERS REQUIREMENTS

Additional requirements for providers who have indicated on their SES application that they provide services online.

Required evidence:

- If using the Internet, copies of written policies and/or procedures prohibiting the transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation or school board policy, including—but not limited to—copyrighted, threatening, or obscene material
- If students use a school computer to access information from the provider, evidence that the provider complies with all school and/or district policies and procedures regarding computer and/or Internet use.
- Documentation of parental consent for e-mail and/or Internet communication with students under age 13 (in compliance with Title XIII—Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998)

Status of Requirement VI: **Acceptable** **Incomplete**

Comments:

Not applicable. Step Ahead does not provide online tutoring.

**Those who wish to read the entire report, complete with comments and recommendations,
may contact the Department of Public Instruction.**