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December 22, 2011

The Honorable Rick Murphy, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Carl Seel, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Senator Murphy and Representative Seel:

Our Office has recently completed a 6-month followup of the Arizona Department of Education's implementation status for the 4 recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the *Arizona English Language Learner Program* special study released in June 2011. As the enclosed grid indicates, all 4 recommendations are in the process of being implemented.

Our Office will continue to follow up at 6-month intervals with the Department on the status of those recommendations that have not yet been fully implemented.

Sincerely,

Ross Ehrick, CPA
Director, Division of School Audits

RE:bl
Enclosure

cc: The Honorable John Huppenthal, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education

**Arizona English Language Learner Program, Fiscal Year 2010
Auditor General Special Study Issued June 2011
6-Month Follow-Up Report**

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

FINDING 1: Most districts reviewed have not fully implemented State's SEI program models; improved oversight needed

1. As ADE continues its monitoring of district ELL program implementation, it should report noncompliant districts in continuing corrective action status to the State Board of Education for possible withholding of SEI funds.

Implementation in process

According to ADE officials, ADE is developing criteria based on the required components of the SEI program to identify which noncompliant districts should be reported to the State Board of Education (Board) for possible withholding of SEI funds. However, ADE already identifies noncompliance with the SEI program in the corrective action letters that it sends to monitored districts, so it does not need to develop additional criteria. Arizona Revised Statutes §15-756.08 requires ADE to report district programs found in continued noncompliance to the Board. According to corrective action letters sent by ADE, 13 districts were noncompliant in fiscal year 2011. Seven of the 13 have been noncompliant since fiscal year 2009. However, as of December 2011, ADE has not reported any districts to the Board.

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

FINDING 2: More students achieve proficiency since State adopted SEI models, but models' impact on results is unknown

1. To improve ADE's assessment of districts' implementation of the SEI models, ADE should continue to work with districts to:

- a. Improve the reliability of the program participation data, including ELL students' eligibility and participation dates, and the type of program provided to each student,

- b. Collect additional information related to program participation, including the number of English language development hours provided to each student by program type; and

- c. Consider collecting additional information that links student outcomes to instructional quality, such as information on teachers.

Implementation in process

ADE has devoted resources to improve the reliability of SAIS data related to ELL program participation. However, auditors again identified unreliable data, such as students who were already English proficient prior to participating in the ELL program. ADE agreed that these errors continue to occur in fiscal year 2012 and is in the process of improving controls to identify unreliable data.

Implementation in process

ADE is considering collecting additional information, such as the number of English language development hours by program type. This additional information could assist ADE in measuring district compliance with the model and the effectiveness of the model in different instructional settings. Further, ADE is in the process of developing a method to collect course data by student. This information could also assist ADE in assessing SEI model compliance and effectiveness.

Implementation in process

As noted above, ADE is in the process of developing a method to collect course data by student that could be used to link student outcomes to instructional quality.
