**ESSA Focused Monitoring**  **DESE’s Process for Differentiating ESSA Reviews**

The office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning (RASP) at DESE is responsible for monitoring various ESSA programs (Titles I, IIA, and IV-A). To fulfill our obligations effectively and efficiently, RASP uses a methodology to determine which districts in this year’s cycle (~60 each year) received more of DESE’s focus during our monitoring activities. The methodology is not intended to be high stakes or punitive in any way, nor act as a parallel accountability system; it’s simply meant to help our team target its limited time and resources in the best way possible, and to customize our levels of support to districts.

**The methodology relies on a number of indicators, including:**

1. Total enrollment in the district
2. Percent of students who are economically disadvantaged in the district
3. Accountability level of the district
4. Whether the district had new personnel running a major grant program who could use additional support
5. Audit and compliance site visits in the past three years
6. Single-audit findings in the district
7. Whether a district had unclaimed and soon-to-expire Year 3 funds for Titles I, IIA, and IV
8. Whether a district had significant unclaimed Year 2 funds for Titles I, IIA, and IV
9. Total allocations for Titles I, IIA, and IV in the district
10. The quality and on-time submission of the district’s consolidated application
11. The extent to which the district has been engaged with DESE (communicating with liaisons, attending trainings, webinars, calls, etc.)
12. Whether a district has any formal complaints against them with respect to equitable (private school) services

For each indicator where the data are continuous (indicators 2 and 9), we looked for outliers among the ~60 districts to be monitored this year[[1]](#footnote-1). For each indicator where the data are categorical, we looked for districts where the value was simply *true* or *false*.

We then took all of that information and, based on our own capacity to conduct reviews as well as what overall trends we saw among the various indicators, will differentiate our reviews. All districts, irrespective of the methodology described here, receive at minimum [a desk review](http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/monitoring/).

While RASP uses this methodology to target its resources, DESE maintains its discretion to add further requests to any of the district reviews. In all cases, we aim to customize our monitoring reviews based upon the level of need we see.

1. The list of districts originates from our [Public School Monitoring team](http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/), who conducts special education reviews of all districts in the Commonwealth on a 6-year cycle. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)