



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT AND TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAMS

November 13, 2008

Ms. Melina Wright
Federal Grants & Programs N-242
Illinois State Board of Education
100 N. First Street
Springfield, IL 62777

Dear Ms. Wright:

On August 21, 2008 the Illinois Board of Education (ISBE) submitted a response to the monitoring report that resulted from a program review conducted by the Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs office of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program office team reviewed your State's progress in meeting the highly qualified teacher provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, and your State's administration of the ESEA Title II, Part A Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program. Thank you for sending this response to the monitoring report.

This response, in combination with additional information submitted on October 16 and 30, 2008 satisfactorily addresses the findings identified in the monitoring report. ISBE submitted a plan and a timeline to ensure that all teachers paid with Title I funds are highly qualified and that all districts with schools that receive Title I funds notify parents when their children are taught by teachers who are not highly qualified. The State provided documentation that it is correctly identifying which LEAs have not met annual measurable objectives for two consecutive years and provided a plan and a timeline for ensuring that these LEAs have the required improvement plans in place. Furthermore, the State provided a written plan and a timeline for correctly identifying LEAs that currently have not met their HQT annual measurable objectives for three consecutive years and have also failed to make AYP for three years. Finally, the State will continue to work with districts to make sure they are collecting accurate classroom-level HQT data. The Department will follow up with ISBE to ensure that progress is being made on these issues and that all agreed upon deadlines are met.

During the State agency for higher education (SAHE) portion of the monitoring review, the program team determined that SAHE projects were providing services to pre-service teachers. On June 24, 2008, subsequent to the monitoring visit, the SAHE director sent assurances that no further services to pre-service teachers would be provided with program funds. The SAHE has also provided assurances that grants awarded in the future will not serve pre-service teachers. This satisfies the further actions requirements for the SAHE portion of the monitoring report.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

We commend your excellent work in responding to the concerns raised by the monitoring report. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to ensure that all teachers meet the highly qualified requirements and to help improve the delivery of ESEA Title II, Part A services in Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Manitaras". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Manitaras
Program Officer

cc: Gina Hopper
Cheryl Ivy
Rich Jachino

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