



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

May 13, 2008

Dr. Marilyn Peterson
Federal Programs Administrator
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Dr. Peterson:

On February 13, 2008, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) 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 (HQT) 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 April 23, 2008, satisfactorily addresses the findings identified in the monitoring report. As a result of the monitoring report, NDE reviewed its data system to identify special education teachers who were incorrectly identified as highly qualified because they were teaching core content courses and had demonstrated content knowledge at the instructional level of the students they were teaching rather than at the students' grade level and level of assessment. NDE reviewed and revised its 2006-2007 Consolidated Performance Report (CSPR) submission to reflect the data corrected as a result of this review. NDE also made changes to its 2006-2007 annual report card to reflect this revised data and will ensure that future report cards are accurate and include all required information.

Additionally, NDE completed an analysis of Title I schools that identified courses that were not being taught by highly qualified teachers. NDE will require that each district with courses being taught in Title I schools by non-HQ teachers submit professional development plans to insure that these courses are taught by highly qualified teachers prior to the start of the 2008-09 school year. NDE also developed guidance on the requirement that schools that receive Title I funds notify parents when their children are taught by a teacher who is not highly qualified. This guidance was shared with the NCLB Committee of Practitioners on March 11, 2008 and attendees at the statewide conference on May 1 and 2, 2008.

Finally, NDE developed a plan and timeline by which it will enter into agreements on the use of funds with districts that have not made progress toward meeting their HQT annual measurable objectives for three consecutive years and have also failed to make AYP for three years. It also revised

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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.

its plan to insure that poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

The Department will follow up with NDE to ensure that progress is being made in the areas outlined above 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 the SAHE had awarded at least one grant that may have been providing services to paraprofessionals who are not highly qualified. The SAHE will take steps ensure that in the future program funds are used to provide services only to paraprofessionals who are highly qualified.

We commend your efforts to address 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 Nebraska.

Sincerely,



Jessica Clark
Program Officer

cc: Kathleen Fimple