



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

September 4, 2008

Linda J. Benedetto
Chief, Division of Teacher Quality
Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality
PA Department of Education
333 Market Street - 3rd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear Ms. Benedetto:

On July 31, 2008 the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) 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 satisfactorily addresses the findings identified in the monitoring report. PDE submitted a plan with procedures to ensure that all teachers paid with Title II, Part A funds for class size reduction are highly qualified. Plans, procedures, and timelines were provided that will ensure that LEAs' annual report cards will include the correct information and that the SEA has made adequate preparation for carrying out the requirements of section 2141(c). With regards to 2141(c), the State has developed a written policy that implements the provisions of this requirement. The policy ensures that the SEA will enter into written funding agreements with the LEAs that require them. The policy also includes the steps the SEA will take to prepare the LEAs for the funding agreements. Finally, the PDE will implement a multi-faceted plan for publicly reporting on Pennsylvania's progress on the equitable distribution of teachers. The Department will follow up with PDE 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 made two recommendations. One is to increase its outreach in order to solicit more applicants and the other is to revise its RFP in order to clarify that the focus of the eligible partnership grant activities is limited to professional development in the core content areas. PDE has agreed to implement these recommendations, which the 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 Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Manitaras". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'C'.

Carol Manitaras
Program Officer

cc: Jamal Wakeem
Don McCrone

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