



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

June 4, 2008

Ms. Paulajo Gaines  
Director  
Office of Educator Quality and Certification  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
225 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Ms. Gaines:

On January 9, 2008 the Rhode Island Department Education (RIDE) 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 18, 2008, satisfactorily addresses some, but not all, of the findings identified in the monitoring report. RIDE has made enhancements to its Personnel Assignment Process (PAP) that will allow the State to accurately count and report the highly qualified status of special education teachers. RIDE has also put in place rules in PAP to notify district-designated verifiers and educators when teachers' highly qualified status cannot be verified by the electronic certification file. This notification also requests that the district provide supplemental evidence, which it will subsequently verify, to the State. The Department will follow up with RIDE to ensure that the data reported in the CSPR and published in the annual report card reflect these changes.

Additionally, RIDE has developed a plan by which it will enter into agreements on the use of funds with districts that have not met their HQT annual measurable objectives and have not made AYP for three consecutive years. RIDE will also discuss these agreements with districts as part of their regularly scheduled support and intervention meetings. The Department will follow up with RIDE to ensure that funding agreements have been put in place with districts that need them.

Some of the findings from the monitoring report, however, have not yet been satisfied. RIDE received findings indicating that the State is not adequately monitoring districts to ensure that they are in compliance with Federal statutes and regulations in regards to either highly qualified teacher requirements or the administration of the Title II, Part A program. As a corrective

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action, RIDE was to have submitted to the Department a plan and a timeline for developing a systematic process and schedule for monitoring its subgrantees. RIDE has not adequately completed this corrective action. Because RIDE has not fully addressed these findings during the monitoring resolution process, the Department will address them by imposing grant conditions on the State's Title II, Part A grant for fiscal year 2008.

The grant condition requires RIDE to complete a monitoring protocol for on-site and/or desk monitoring that covers all relevant Title II, Part A and teacher quality requirements by September 1, 2008. RIDE submitted a protocol that addresses most HQT issues, with the exception of parent notification requirements, but the protocol does not address Title II, Part A requirements. By September 1, 2008 RIDE must also provide the Department with information on the method it will use to select which LEAs will be monitored and in what order. It has submitted a schedule for LEAs to be monitored in the 2008-09 school year, but it must also submit a tentative schedule indicating when all LEAs will be monitored, either by on-site or desk methods. Finally, RIDE must provide evidence that monitoring is being done, as per the submitted schedule, along with a timeline for issuing reports, securing LEA responses, and directing corrective action and follow-up by March 31, 2009. If this condition is not resolved, the Department reserves the right to take further administrative action.

The Department will follow up with RIDE to ensure that progress is being made in all of the areas outlined above and that all agreed-upon deadlines are met.

During the State agency for higher education (SAHE) portion of the monitoring visit, the program team found the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education to be in full compliance in its administration of the SAHE program. The Department considers monitoring of the SAHE program in Rhode Island complete.

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 Rhode Island.

Sincerely,



Alexis O'Neill

cc: Nancy Carriuolo