



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

JUL 18 2008

Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak
Acting Secretary of Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
10th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

Dear Secretary Zahorchak:

During the week of March 3, 2008, a team from the U. S. Department of Education's (ED) Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) office reviewed the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) administration of the following programs and activities authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB):

- Title I, Part A (Grants to Local Educational Agencies);
- Title I, Part B, Subpart 3 (Even Start);
- Title I, Part D (Neglected and Delinquent); and
- Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (Education for Homeless Children and Youth) as amended by NCLB.

Enclosed is a report based upon this review.

School year 2007-08 begins the third full cycle of monitoring for these requirements under NCLB. Based on four years of monitoring, we have learned significantly more about the status of States, districts, and schools in implementing the requirements of Title I. For the first time, ED has collected data on critical compliance issues under NCLB in all States. This knowledge has informed the current cycle of monitoring, and is reflected in the procedures and monitoring protocols utilized in the onsite review process.

The ESEA, as reauthorized by NCLB, has increased the emphasis on accountability for all students, and focuses on States' responsibilities to work with districts and schools to improve instruction and student achievement. ED will continue to work closely with States to define their responsibilities in implementing the requirements of NCLB.

Monitoring for the Title I, Part A, Even Start, Neglected or Delinquent, and Homeless Education programs will continue to be conducted in three broad areas – accountability; program improvement, parental involvement, and options; and fiduciary responsibilities. Prior to, during, and following the onsite monitoring review, the ED team conducted a number of activities (described in the enclosed report) to verify compliance with the critical monitoring indicators in each of the three broad areas for all four programs.

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(described in the enclosed report) to verify compliance with the critical monitoring indicators in each of the three broad areas for all four programs.

The enclosed report contains a listing of the critical monitoring elements in each of the three areas for the four programs monitored, a description of the scope of the monitoring review, and the findings, required corrective actions, and recommendations that the ED team cited as a result of the review. The PDE has 30 business days from receipt of this report to respond to all of the compliance issues outlined. ED staff will review the response for sufficiency and will determine which areas are acceptable and which will require further documentation of implementation. ED will allow 30 business days for receipt of this further documentation, if required. ED recognizes that some corrective actions may require longer than the prescribed 30 days, and in these instances ED will work with PDE to determine a reasonable timeline. In those instances where additional time is required to implement specific corrective actions, you must submit a request for such an extension in writing to ED, including a timeline for completion of all related actions.

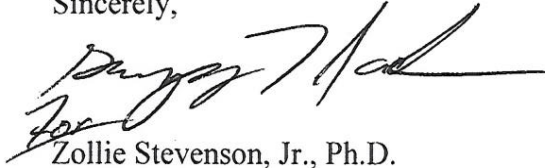
Each State that participates in an onsite monitoring review and that has significant compliance findings in one or more of the programs monitored will have a condition placed on that program's grant award specifying that the State must submit (and receive approval of) documentation that all compliance issues identified in the monitoring report have been corrected. When documentation sufficient to address all compliance areas has been submitted and approved, ED will then remove the condition from PDE's grant award.

Please be aware that the issues presented in the enclosed report reflect the status of compliance in Pennsylvania at the time of SASA's onsite review. PDE may receive further communication from ED that will require PDE to address noncompliance occurring prior or subsequent to the onsite visit.

The ED team would like to thank Ms. Renee Palakovic, Director, Office of Federal Programs in the PDE, and her staff for their hard work and the assistance they provided prior to and during the review in gathering materials and providing access to information in a timely manner. The ED team was impressed with the efforts of PDE's staff to implement the many requirements of the four programs monitored.

We look forward to working further with your staff to resolve the issues contained in this report and to improve the quality of Title I programs in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zollie Stevenson, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Zollie Stevenson, Jr., Ph.D.

Director

Student Achievement and School
Accountability Programs

Enclosure

cc: Renee Palokovic, State Title I Director Part A
Mike Sobkowski, State Even Start Coordinator
John Emminger, State Neglected and Delinquent Director
Sheldon Winnick, State Homeless Education Director