UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT AND TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAMS

November 10, 2009

Lanette Johnston
South Dakota Department of Education
Office of Accreditation and Teacher Quality
700 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Ms. Johnston:

On August 6, 2009, the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) 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 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 subsequently, satisfactorily addresses the findings identified in the monitoring report. The SD DOE put in place plans to ensure that all core content teachers, including special education teachers, demonstrate subject competence appropriately, and that HQT data are reported correctly. The SD DOE also put in place plans to carry out the provisions in Sections 2141(a) and 2141(c) of the ESEA and to ensure that nonpublic schools receive equitable service using Titel II, Part A State-level activity funds. The Department will follow up with SD DOE 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 SAHE could not provide evidence that grants served only paraprofessionals who were highly qualified. The SAHE has put plans in place to ensure that only highly qualified paraprofessionals are served. This satisfies the further action requirements for the SAHE portion of the monitoring report.

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 South Dakota.

Sincerely,

Jessica Clark
Program Officer

cc: Gary E. Johnson
Melody Schopp