



south dakota
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Patricia A. McKee
Acting Director
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., suite 3W226
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Director McKee,

The South Dakota Department of Education is responding to the request to address findings of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) monitoring visit to South Dakota. During the week of May 16-20, 2011 a team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) office reviewed the South Dakota Department of Education's (SDDOE) administration of Title I, Section 1003(g) (School Improvement Grants (SIG)) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended. A report containing the findings and required further actions that the ED team cited as a result of the review was issued and received by the SDDOE on August 2, 2011.

The SDDOE is submitting its response to the compliance issue identified in the report. A summary document provides the state's narrative response to the findings. Supporting evidence is cited and included as appropriate. We anticipate that ED will find the state's response sufficient and acceptable.

Sincerely,

Dr. Melody Schopp
Secretary of Education
South Dakota Department of Education

Summary:

Monitoring Area: School Improvement Grant

Finding 1: The SDDOE has not ensured that NUSD has established schedules and implemented strategies that increase learning time for all students. Although New Underwood has implemented increased learning time this year by adding an after school tutoring program on Monday through Thursday for half an hour, and also adding remedial instruction in reading, math, and science on two Friday mornings every month for three hours, the increased learning is only mandatory for a subset of the student population. The after school tutoring and Friday classes are only mandatory for students who are failing a class or who have outstanding assignments. The increased learning time is optional for all other students in the high school.

Citation: Section I.A.2(d)(3)(A) of the final requirements stipulates, as part of the transformation model, that an LEA must “establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time.” Section I.A.3 of the final requirements defines *increased learning time* as “using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for (a) instruction in core academic subjects including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; (b) instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, including, for example, physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities that are provided by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations; and (c) teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.”(75 FR 66363 (October 28, 2010))

Further action required: The SDDOE must work with NUSD and other grantees as appropriate to ensure that all schools implementing the turnaround or transformation models have significantly increased the number of school hours and that the additional time is being consistently used for instructional purposes for all students. For each school implementing the turnaround or transformation model, the SDDOE must submit to ED documentation demonstrating the increase in learning time under the school intervention model and evidence that the time is being consistently used in accordance with the definition of “increased learning time” in the final requirements.

Response to Finding:

For the 2011-2012 year New Underwood School District has 155 student teacher contact days (which is an increase of 11 days) and has increased the school day from 7:45am - 3:30pm to 8:00am-4:00pm or an increase of 15 minutes per day. The Friday school has increased from two Fridays a month to every Friday from 8:00am -12:00pm and is open to all students, however, is mandatory for those students who are failing. (Attached is the school calendar and school day schedule for 2011-2012).