



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

February 8, 2013

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
Office of the Governor
State Capitol, Executive Chambers
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Governor Abercrombie:

I am writing in response to Hawaii's request to review its high-risk status on its Race to the Top grant. On December 21, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) placed Hawaii's Race to the Top grant on high-risk status under 34 CFR 80.12 and, as a condition of high-risk status, placed the grant on a cost reimbursement basis. At that time, the State had not demonstrated adequate progress implementing its approved plans in the first year of the grant. To remove high-risk status the State must provide clear and compelling evidence of substantial progress across its Race to the Top plan. After a March 2012 on-site review, the Department determined that the State had taken steps in the right direction and removed it from cost reimbursement status, but kept the State on high-risk status because of, as stated in the Department's May 4, 2012 letter, the "...preliminary nature of most of [the] activities and the lack of necessary sustaining conditions for reform..."

After preliminary conversations, it was mutually determined that the State did not have sufficient evidence to demonstrate substantial progress to remove high-risk status across its entire grant at this time; instead, on January 11, 2013, the State submitted evidence demonstrating progress in projects in Assurance Area B, "Standards and Assessments," and Assurance Area C, "Data Systems." On January 16, 2013, the State and Department held a conference call to further discuss the evidence. To determine whether partial removal of status could be granted, the Department reviewed and compared the evidence against the commitments, deliverables and targets in the State's Race to the Top scope of work and plan in these assurance areas. The Department has determined that the evidence provided is sufficient to meet the expectation of clear and compelling evidence of substantial progress in Assurance Area B and Assurance Area C and will remove high-risk status for Hawaii's Race to the Top grant in these two assurance areas, effective with this letter.

Assurance Areas A, D, E and STEM of Hawaii's Race to the Top grant remain on high-risk status. The Department will conduct an on-site review in April 2013 and looks forward to additional implementation and progress updates.

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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.

The Department recognizes Hawaii's efforts to accelerate the progress of its Race to the Top plan. We will continue to provide assistance to Hawaii as it works to meet the commitments in its grant. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Hawaii's Race to the Top Program Officer, Monika Bandyopadhyay, at 202-260-2531 or monika.bandyopadhyay@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen
Director, Policy and Program Implementation
Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi
Tammi Chun
Stephen Schatz