



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 4, 2012

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

Dear Governor Abercrombie:

On December 21, 2011, the United States Department of Education (the Department) placed Hawaii's Race to the Top grant on high-risk status because the State had not demonstrated adequate progress implementing its approved plans in the first year of the grant as evidenced by the Department's on-site program review in June 2011, monthly reports, and the amendments requested by the State between July and December, 2011. In that letter, the Department indicated its concern regarding the State's ability to fulfill its commitments within the grant period. As a condition of high-risk status, the State was placed on cost reimbursement basis. Additionally, the Department indicated that it would conduct an on-site program review within a few months of placing the State on high-risk status. At that time, Hawaii was to provide clear and compelling evidence demonstrating that it had made substantial progress across its Race to the Top plan.

In March 2012, a team from the Department conducted an extensive four day on-site program review of Hawaii's Race to the Top grant. Based on that review, as well as monthly reports, there is evidence that Hawaii has taken recent actions in the right direction to address a number of the concerns that placed its Race to the Top grant on high-risk and reimbursement status. However, due to the preliminary nature of most of these activities and the lack of necessary sustaining conditions for reform, the Department has determined that Hawaii has not yet demonstrated that it has made the substantial progress across its Race to the Top plan necessary to remove high-risk status. In five to six months, the Department will conduct another review to determine and verify ongoing Race to the Top progress and impact and reevaluate Hawaii's high-risk status.

The Department will remove Hawaii from cost reimbursement status, effective June 1, 2012 due to the fact that Hawaii has met the Scope of Work and budget conditions in the Department's December 21, 2011 letter.

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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 dedication to pursuing comprehensive reform. We will continue to provide assistance to Hawaii as you work to meet the commitments in your Race to the Top grant. We appreciate the commitment of the HIDOE leadership team. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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

Cc: Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi
Tammi Chun
Stephen Schatz