UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

November 24, 2009

Bette Morff
Coordinator, Federal Grants and Financial Management
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
PO Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Ms. Morff:

On September 15, 2009, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO DESE) 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 on October 26, and November 20, 2009 satisfactorily addresses the findings identified in the monitoring report. In particular, the MO DESE has implemented measures to correctly determine the highly qualified status of elementary special education teachers, it has implemented measures to ensure that Title I teachers are highly qualified at the time of hire, and it has made plans to correct deficiencies in State and local report cards. Furthermore, the State will insure that improvement plans or agreements on the use of funds are in place for LEAs that have not met the requirements outlined in 2141(a) and 2141(c) (respectively). Also, a list of LEAs in need of improvement plans or agreements will be submitted to the Department. Lastly, MO DESE will measure and publicly report on its progress in carrying out its plan to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers. The Department will follow up with MO DESE 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 program team found that the SAHE was awarding grants that did not meet the definition of the statutory definition of high-need school district. The SAHE has provided the Department with a written plan to ensure that the SAHE will award future grants only to eligible partnerships that include all of the required partners.

We commend your 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 North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Carol Manitaras

Carol Manitaras
Program Officer

cc: B.J. White