From:	Sands, Laura (Harkin)
To:	Olesen, Susie
Subject:	RE: Thanks
Date:	Tuesday, September 28, 2010 10:45:01 AM

Hi Susie, I placed a call to the Ft. Dodge Supt. this morning so you can go ahead and start working on the plans for my visit on 10/25. Laura

From: Olesen, Susie [mailto:susie@skillsiowa.org]
Sent: Monday, September 27, 2010 9:51 PM
To: Sands, Laura (Harkin)
Subject: Thanks

Hi Laura:

It was great to see you today. Thanks for your time.

I just wanted to affirm for you and for Senator Harkin that the federal funds appropriated for Skills Iowa are being well and carefully spent. We (and by we I mean the Skills Iowa staff and I) are doing everything we can to help the schools implement at an effective level and improve achievement. Despite some problems in the 2009 appropriation received by IASB (the double draw down), things are running smoothly now with the very capable direction of Jen Albers and the IASB accounting office. We are communicating regularly with Stephanie Teller, our program officer at the USDE, and have found her to be very helpful. We just received notice from Stephanie that the application for this current school year (which was appropriated last December) has been approved and we can begin drawing down funds for current expenses, which will primarily include

- purchasing the web access for the two programs, Assessment Center published by Core K12 and Skills Tutor published by Houghton-Mifflin,
- training for the teachers and principals involved in the program,
- travel expenses as we work within the state to provide training and support to the participating schools,
- program support for things like our website (www.skillsiowa.org) and other communications,
- overhead expenses for IASB and salary and benefits for those employees working directly with the program (primarily me and a half time administrative assistant, CJ Bloyer), and
- leadership development.

I am confident this smooth operation will continue as we transition to TABS for the 2011-12 school year, should the budget bill pass that includes the TABS appropriation for Skills Iowa. I know the 309 schools participating hope for the continuation of the funding and appreciate all that Senator Harkin has done thus far to support them in their school improvement work. He has been always a steady and resolute voice in support of public education.

I look forward to our visit to Fort Dodge on October 26. Once you have contacted the superintendent, I would appreciate a heads up, so I can work with the Skills Iowa staff person assigned to Fort Dodge, Jan Petheram, and Fort Dodge curriculum director Sue Wood to prepare for the visit.

Again, thanks for your time, Laura.

Best regards,

Susie

Susan Olesen
Project Director

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