



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

JUN 15 2007

Honorable Kate Jesberg  
Interim Director  
Department of Human Services  
64 New York Avenue, N.E., Sixth Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Director Jesberg:

Thank you for the submission of the District of Columbia's Annual Performance Report (APR) and revised State Performance Plan (SPP) under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended in 2004. The State's submission of its FFY 2005 APR and SPP were not timely. Although States' submissions of their APRs and SPPs were due on February 1, 2007, the District of Columbia (the District) did not submit those documents to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) until March 30, 2007. The State's late submission of its APR and SPP was one of the factors in OSEP's determination (described below) for the State under sections 616(d) and 642 of the IDEA. It will be important that the State submit its FFY 2006 by the due date of February 1, 2008.

As you know, under IDEA sections 616 and 642, each State has an SPP that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part C of the IDEA and describes how the State will improve its implementation of Part C. In the revised SPP due by February 1, 2007, States were required to provide information on: (1) specific new indicators; and (2) correction of any deficiencies identified in the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) SPP response letter sent to your State last year. States were also required to submit by February 1, 2007, an APR for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2005 that describes the State's: (1) progress or slippage in meeting the measurable and rigorous targets established in the SPP; and (2) any revisions to the State's targets, improvement activities, timelines or resources in the SPP and justifications for the revisions. We appreciate the State's efforts in preparing the FFY 2005 APR and revised SPP.

The Department has reviewed the information provided in the District's FFY 2005 APR and revised SPP, other State-reported data, information obtained through monitoring visits, and other public information and has determined that, under IDEA section 616(d) and 642, the District of Columbia needs intervention in meeting the requirements of Part C of the IDEA. The District should review IDEA section 616(e) regarding the potential future impact of the Department's determination.

The Department's determination is based on the totality of the District's data in its SPP/APR and other publicly available information, including any compliance issues. The factors in States' FFY 2005 APR and February 1, 2007 SPP submissions that affected the Department's determinations were whether the State: (1) provided valid and reliable FFY 2005 data that reflect the measurement for each indicator, and if not,

whether the State provided a plan to collect the missing or deficient data; and (2) for each compliance indicator that was not new (a) demonstrated compliance or timely corrected noncompliance, and (b) in instances where it did not demonstrate compliance, had nonetheless made progress in ensuring compliance over prior performance in that area. We also considered whether the State had other IDEA compliance issues that were identified previously through the Department's monitoring, audit or other activities, and the State's progress in resolving those problems. See the enclosure entitled "How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616(d) of the IDEA in 2007" for further details.

Specific factors affecting OSEP's determination for the District include: (1) for Indicator 9, the District of Columbia did not submit any FFY 2004 or FFY 2005 data that would enable us (and the public) to assess the effectiveness of the State's general supervision system to correct identified noncompliance, as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification; (2) for Indicator 1, the District's FFY 2005 data reflect a very low level of performance (37%) with Part C's timely service provision requirements and these data reflect regression from the State's FFY 2004 data of 88%; and (3) for Indicator 3, the District provided neither entry data nor a plan to ensure the reporting of early childhood outcome data for this indicator in its FFY 2006 APR.

The table enclosed with this letter provides OSEP's analysis of the District's FFY 2005 APR and revised SPP and identifies, by indicator, OSEP's review and acceptance of any revisions made by the District to its targets, improvement activities (timelines and resources) and baseline data in the State's SPP. It also identifies, by indicator, the District's status in meeting its targets, and whether its data reflect progress or slippage, and whether the District corrected noncompliance and provided valid and reliable data. The table also lists, by indicator, any additional information the District must include in the FFY 2006 APR or, as needed, the SPP due February 1, 2008, to address the problems OSEP identified in the revised SPP or FFY 2005 APR. The District must provide this required information. We plan to factor into our determinations next year whether or not States provided the additional information requested in this table in their FFY 2006 APR, due February 1, 2008, and may take other actions as well, if the State's data, or lack of data, regarding these issues indicates continuing noncompliance.

As you know, the District must report annually to the public on the performance of each early intervention services (EIS) program located in the State on the targets in the SPP under IDEA section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(1) and 642. The requirement for public reporting on EIS programs' performance is a critical provision in ensuring accountability and focusing on improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Please have your staff notify your OSEP State Contact when and where the District makes available its public report on EIS program performance. In addition, the District must review EIS program performance against targets in its SPP, especially the compliance indicators, determine if each EIS program meets the requirements of the IDEA and inform each EIS program of its determination. For further information regarding these requirements, see the SPP/APR Guidance Materials at <http://www.rrfcnetwork.org/>.

We hope that the District found helpful, and was able to benefit from, the monthly technical assistance conference calls conducted by this Office, ongoing consultation with OSEP State Contacts and OSEP-funded Technical Assistance Center staff, materials

found on the IDEA 2004 website, and attendance at OSEP-sponsored conferences. OSEP will continue to provide technical assistance opportunities to assist the District as it works to improve performance under Part C of the IDEA. If you have any feedback on our past technical assistance efforts or the needs of States for guidance, we would be happy to hear from you as we work to develop further mechanisms to support State improvement activities.

As noted above, the District has been determined to Need Intervention. Pursuant to section 616(d)(2)(B) and 642 of the IDEA, a State that is determined to Need Intervention or Need Substantial Intervention, and does not agree with this determination, may request an opportunity to meet with the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to demonstrate why the Department should change its determination. To file an appeal, submit a letter to John H. Hager, Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 5107, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2600 within 30 days of the date of this letter and provide in the letter the basis for your request.

OSEP is committed to supporting the District's efforts to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and looks forward to working with your agency over the next year. If you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to call Gregg Corr, your OSEP State Contact, at 202-245-7372.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Guard  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

cc: Part C Coordinator