



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

Honorable Tammy Sandoval
Acting Deputy Commissioner
P.O. Box 110601
350 Main Street, Suite 229
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0601

MAR 30 2006

Dear Commissioner Sandoval:

Thank you for your timely submission of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Service's (ADOHSS's) State Performance Plan (SPP) for review under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Section 616(b) of the Act requires States to submit, within one year after the date of enactment of the reauthorized IDEA, an SPP that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and describes how the State will improve implementation. We appreciate the State's efforts in preparing the SPP under a short timeline and in the face of many other competing priorities. In the SPPs, due by December 2, 2005, States were to include: (1) baseline data that reflect the State's efforts to implement Part C of the IDEA; (2) measurable and rigorous targets for the next six years for each of the indicators established by the Secretary in the priority areas under section 616(a) of the IDEA; and (3) activities the State will undertake to improve implementation of Part C.

The SPP included a description of the broad stakeholder input that went into its development and clearly delineated both how the State solicited that involvement and how the State used the responses received through the process. ADOHSS established an Infant and Toddler Task Force early in 2005 to assist the State in developing documents and procedures, relative to the development and implementation of activities to achieve compliance and targets set forth in the SPP. The work of the Infant and Toddler Task Force was identified as an invaluable tool. These collaborative efforts resulted in the State presenting baseline data in the SPP, for all indicators, that was thorough and complete, the results of the analysis were displayed in an easy-to-use format and the descriptions were useful in understanding the presentation of the data.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is pleased to inform you that your State's SPP under Part C meets the requirements of section 616(b) to include measurable and rigorous targets and improvement activities. The State must make its SPP available through public means, including posting on the State lead agency's website, distribution to the media, and distribution through public agencies. (Section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I))

Under section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(II) of the Act, the State must annually report to OSEP on its performance under the SPP. The State's first Annual Performance Report (APR) on its progress in meeting its targets is due to OSEP by February 1, 2007. Attached to this letter you will find Table A that addresses issues identified during our review of the SPP that – while not requiring disapproval of your plan – will affect our annual determination of State performance and

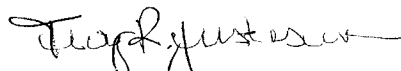
compliance based on data presented in the State's APR. As a result, your State needs to provide additional information as part of its FFY 2005 APR submission due February 1, 2007. Table B includes OSEP's analysis of your submission related to previously-identified noncompliance or other issues included in our October 4, 2005 letter that responded to your State's FFY 2003 APR, that also may require additional reporting.

In addition to reporting to OSEP, the State must report annually to the public on the performance of each early intervention service (EIS) program located in the State on the targets in the State's performance plan. (Section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I)) The requirement for public reporting on EIS program performance is a critical provision related to ensuring accountability and focusing on improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. OSEP will be providing technical assistance regarding the reporting on EIS program performance at the National Accountability Conference, September 18 and 19, 2006 in Denver and through periodic technical assistance conference calls.

We hope that your State found the August 5, 2005 guidance on submission of the SPPs and the technical assistance that we provided through the August 11-12, 2005 Summer Institute, periodic conference calls, and the SPP Resources website helpful in this endeavor. 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.

Thank you for your continued work to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. We encourage you to work closely with your State Contact as you proceed in implementing improvement activities and developing your APR. If you have any questions regarding the SPP or the APR, please contact Alma McPherson at 202-245-7443.

Sincerely,



Troy R. Justesen
Acting Director
Office of Special Education
Programs

Enclosures

Table A

Table B

cc: Erin Kinavey
Part C Coordinator