



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES  
JUL - 2 2007

Honorable Jeanine Blomberg  
Florida Department of Education  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1514  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Blomberg:

This is to inform you that we have conditionally approved Florida's application for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Our conditional approval is based on review of your application submitted by the Florida Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), on April 27, 2007 and revised on June 28, 2007, including assurances provided in Section II, and incorporated by reference to this letter as noted in Enclosure A. In addition, the State provided specific assurances that it will:

1. Operate consistent with the applicable Part B regulations; and
2. Make such changes to existing policies and procedures as are necessary to bring those policies and procedures into compliance with the requirements of Part B of the IDEA, as amended, as soon as possible, and not later than June 30, 2008. Section II of the State's application identifies the IDEA statutory sections for which the State needs to amend policies and procedures and the timelines by which the State will amend its policies and procedures in order to comply with Part B of the IDEA. Within Section II, the State has included the date by which it expects to complete necessary changes associated with any policies and procedures that are not yet in compliance with the requirements of Part B of the IDEA, as amended.

The conditional approval for the State's FFY 2006 Part B grant is also based on the assurance dated June 26, 2007 from the Florida Department of Education, in which it assures that the State will, as soon as possible, but no later than June 30, 2008, make all of the changes to its statutes, regulations, policies and procedures to make them consistent with the following requirements of the IDEA and its implementing regulations in 34 CFR Part 300, and will provide the Secretary with a copy of the revised documents showing those changes: (1) 34 CFR §300.516(c)(2) (relating to the right of an aggrieved party to submit additional evidence in a subsequent civil action appealing the decision of a hearing officer);<sup>1</sup> and (2) 34 CFR §300.530(i)(4) (relating to the State's definition of "weapon" for the purposes of the authority of school personnel to remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting pursuant to 34 CFR §300.530(g)(1)).

After the State submitted its FFY 2007 Part B application, OSEP determined that the issue identified in OSEP's July 3, 2006 FFY 2006 Part B grant award letter relating to the impartiality

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<sup>1</sup> OSEP's July 3, 2006 FFY 2006 grant award letter identified both 34 CFR §§300.510 and 34 CFR §300.512 (now 34 CFR §§300.514 and 300.516) as outstanding issues. OSEP has consolidated these issues into 34 CFR §300.516(c)(2).

of hearing officers, as required by 34 CFR §300.508(a)(2) (now 34 CFR §300.511(c)), is resolved and no further action by the State is necessary.

Enclosed are grant awards for funds currently available under the Department of Education FFY 2007 Appropriations Act for the Part B Section 611 (Grants to States) and Section 619 (Preschool Grants) programs. These funds are for use primarily in school year 2007-2008 and are available for obligation by States from July 1, 2007 through September 30, 2009. Florida's FFY 2006 grant was issued with special conditions related to the timeliness of due process hearing decisions. By letter dated June 15, 2007, OSEP notified the State, based on the State's final progress report dated June 1, 2007, that the State had satisfied those special conditions.

Therefore, the FFY 2007 grant to Florida is not subject to special conditions. Please note that as part of your application for FFY 2007, your State has made an assurance, pursuant to 34 CFR §80.11(c), that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations in effect with respect to the periods for which it receives grant funding. Any changes made by the State, after OSEP approval, to information that is a part of a State's application, must meet the public participation requirements in 34 CFR §300.165.

The amount in your award for Section 619 represents the full amount of funds to which you are entitled. However, the amount shown in your award for the Section 611 program is only part of the total funds that will be awarded to you for FFY 2007. Of the \$10,782,961,000 appropriated for Section 611 in FFY 2007, \$5,358,761,000 is available for awards on July 1, 2007, and \$5,424,200,000 will be available on October 1, 2007.

Under the Section 611 formula, subject to certain maximum and minimum funding requirements, State allocations are based on the amount that each State received from FFY 1999 funds, the general population in the age range for which each State ensures a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities, and the number of children living in poverty in the age range for which each State ensures FAPE to all children with disabilities. At the level of the decrease in the appropriation for the Preschool Grant program compared to that for prior years, each State is first allocated the amount it received for FFY 1997. The remaining funds are allocated based on the relative amount of the increase in funding that the State received between FFYs 1997 and 2006, as compared to the total of such increases for all States.

Enclosure B provides a short description of how Section 611 funds were allocated and how those funds can be used. In addition, Table I in Enclosure B shows funding levels for distribution of Section 611 funds and the parameters for within-State allocations. Table II in Enclosure B shows your State-specific information for within-State distribution of 611 funds based on your State's application. If you disagree with the information in Enclosure B Table II, notify your State contact immediately.

Enclosure C provides a short description of how Section 619 funds were allocated and how those funds can be used. In addition, Table III in Enclosure C shows State-by-State funding levels for distribution of Section 619 funds.

Section 611(e)(1)(C) of the IDEA provides that "[p]rior to expenditure of funds under this paragraph [section 611(e)(1) concerning funds for State administration], the State shall certify to

the Secretary that the arrangements to establish responsibility for services pursuant to section 612(a)(12)(A) are current." We read this provision to mean that if a State does not have interagency agreements or other arrangements in place to establish responsibility for the provision of services, the State may not expend funds available to the State under section 611(e)(1) [State administration funds] until the State has these agreements or arrangements in place.

Under section 608(a)(2) of the IDEA, each State that receives funds under Part B is required to inform in writing local educational agencies located in the State of any State-imposed rule, regulation, or policy that is not required by IDEA or Federal regulations. A State may use the same list of State-imposed rules, regulations and policies that it was required to submit to the Department in Section IV of its Part B application for this purpose.

The enclosed grant award for FFY 2007 is made with the continued understanding that this Office may, from time to time, require clarification of information within your application, if necessary. These inquiries are needed to allow us to appropriately carry out our administrative responsibilities related to Part B.

Section 606 provides that each recipient of assistance under IDEA make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in programs assisted under the IDEA. Therefore, by accepting this grant a State is expressly agreeing as a condition of IDEA funding to ensuring that positive efforts are made to employ and advance employment of qualified individuals with disabilities in programs assisted under the IDEA.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the provision of quality educational services to children with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Guard  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

- Enclosure A
- Enclosure B
- Enclosure C

cc: Ms. Bambi Lockman