

# GETTING TO RESULTS-DRIVEN ACCOUNTABILITY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS—4-5-12

### **1. What is OSEP proposing related to its accountability work for 2012-13?**

OSEP is committed to improving educational and early intervention results for America's infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. The current system emphasizes procedural compliance over student learning outcomes, and we believe a more balanced approach is needed to effectively impact educational results. There is no data to support that an emphasis on compliance monitoring improves results, so OSEP will spend the coming year engaging staff and stakeholders in a careful assessment and revision, as necessary, of the critical components of OSEP's accountability work in order to focus on student outcomes and support State improvement efforts.

### **2. Why is OSEP taking these steps at this time?**

OSEP has been taking incremental steps in preparation for transitioning to a results-focused system. We have completed two complete rounds of verification visits to States, and spent nine years working with States to improve their general supervision systems, including data timeliness and quality. The Department of Education has numerous initiatives designed to promote and support meaningful reforms that protect and raise expectations for all students, including students with disabilities. As part of a comprehensive system of accountability and technical assistance, OSEP can leverage more resources across the Department to result in improved learning outcomes for children with disabilities and their families.

### **3. What will be different for States this year?**

OSEP will not be conducting the on-site monitoring visits scheduled for the 2012-2013 school year. OSEP will fulfill its statutory responsibility to monitor States' performance through reviews of APRs and monitoring of compliance with fiscal requirements. Technical assistance will be provided to support States in improving their fiscal and compliance management systems.

### **4. Is OSEP required to monitor States?**

Yes. The IDEA at section 616(a) requires the Department to monitor through review of SPP/APRs and through oversight of States' general supervision. OSEP will continue to review APRs, which will be due Feb 1, 2013. In addition, OSEP will review and provide TA to States regarding their fiscal management systems while other components of OSEP's monitoring system are being reviewed and revised as necessary. There is no statutory requirement that OSEP conduct on-site monitoring visits.

### **5. Will OSEP make State determinations in 2012?**

Yes. OSEP will issue determination letters in June 2012, using similar criteria to those used in previous years. Any changes to the criteria used for status determinations in 2013 will be made public in June 2012.

**6. Will States be required to submit the SPP/APR in 2013?**

Yes. The IDEA at section 616 requires States to report annually to the Department, and further requires the Department to make determinations annually.

**7. Will the changes to SPP/APR Part B indicators that were published in the Federal Register under the Paperwork Reduction Act be implemented?**

Yes. These changes will be implemented for the Part B APR submission due February 1, 2013. Any additional changes recommended by stakeholder workgroups and proposed by OSEP would be published for public comment.

**8. Will States with corrective action plans and/or Results Improvement Plans be required to complete that work?**

Yes. States will be required to complete any existing corrective action plans. In addition, if noncompliance is identified during 2012-13, corrective action plans will be required. OSEP expects that States with Results Improvement Plans from the fall 2011 CIVs will include improvement activities in their 2012 or 2013 APR.

**9. How will the rights of children and families be protected while site visits are not being conducted?**

States will continue to carry out their general supervisory responsibilities to ensure that children with disabilities are receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment and early intervention services in natural environments. As always, parents have the right to file complaints, request mediation, or request a due process hearing if they disagree with the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of FAPE or of early intervention services to their children. In addition, OSEP will continue to work with States on completing corrective actions. OSEP-funded Parent Centers will continue to be available to support families and OSEP Customer Service Specialists are also available to provide information to families to assist them in understanding their rights and options for dispute resolution.

**10. How can stakeholders get information and “weigh in” during the decision-making process**

OSEP will be engaging multiple strategies to involve stakeholders in the conceptualization and development processes. Coordinated work sessions will provide opportunities for discussion and feedback. A communications strategy will be implemented to deliver regular updates to all stakeholders.