



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

JULY 3, 2018

Honorable Diane Douglas
Superintendent for Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Superintendent Douglas:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you a summary of the results of the monitoring and support activities conducted by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) during an on-site visit monitoring activity, the week of September 12–14, 2017 to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Participants during the visit included staff from the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) office and the Grants Management office.

In 2016, OSEP began providing differentiated monitoring and support (DMS) to States as part of its Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework. Under RDA, OSEP made a shift from monitoring based solely on compliance to monitoring and support focused on both compliance and improving results for students with disabilities. OSEP differentiates its approach for each State based on the State's unique strengths, progress, challenges, and needs.

As part of the DMS process, OSEP conducts an organizational assessment (OA) of risk factors to identify States' progress in meeting performance standards and complying with the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing regulations, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. OSEP uses the information from the OA and an Engagement Decision Tree to make designations of universal, targeted, or intensive monitoring and support that a State will receive for the fiscal year. For 2016–2017, OSEP identified five areas for DMS: 1) results; 2) compliance; 3) State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP); (4) correctional education; and 5) fiscal.

On October 20, 2016, OSEP issued ADE's DMS notice. That notice provided a designation of universal, targeted, or intensive engagement for each of five areas OSEP identified for DMS. The information in the notice was based on FFY 2014 data in the corresponding five areas, along with information about the factors contributing to elevated need for monitoring and support, the support the State has accessed, the State's capacity to improve results and compliance, and additional contextual information. The notice also identified the monitoring and support activities that would be carried out to address the factors contributing to the elevated need for monitoring and support in each of the areas that were designated for intensive engagement. We have attached a copy of the DMS notice for your convenience.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparedness for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

As part of the its DMS activities with Arizona, including the on-site monitoring and support visit, OSEP discussed issues related to the SSIP and fiscal areas. Attached is a summary of the results of the specific areas that were the subject of OSEP's monitoring and support activities. If OSEP identified findings of noncompliance with IDEA requirements, you will find specific information, within the attachment for the specific DMS area, regarding the corrective actions ADE must take to address the noncompliance. Specifically regarding the SSIP, OSEP notes that in April 2018 ADE submitted the SSIP Phase III Year 2. Feedback on the latest submission will be provided over the summer.

We appreciate your efforts to improve results for children with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Heck, your OSEP State Lead, at 202-245-6465.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ruth E. Ryder

Acting Director

Office of Special Education Programs

cc: Alissa Trollinger, Part B ESS Director

Attachments:

- DMS Notice
- SSIP summary of support activity
- Fiscal monitoring documents:
 - LEA Allocations narrative
 - Subrecipient Monitoring FMI
 - Fiscal monitoring letter and FMI (May 5, 2016)