



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

DEC 28, 2016

Honorable Tony Smith
Superintendent
Illinois State Board of Education
100 N. 1st Street

Springfield, IL 62777

Dear Superintendent Smith:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a summary of the monitoring and support activities conducted by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) during August 29-31, 2016. In 2016, OSEP began providing differentiated monitoring and support (DMS) to States as part of its Results Driven Accountability System (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.

With the DMS process, OSEP conducts an organizational assessment (OA) of risk factors to identify States' progress in meeting performance standards and compliance with the legal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 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 (DMS) for the fiscal year. The 2016 DMS areas were: 1) results; 2) compliance; 3) dispute resolution (FFY 2015 Special Focus Area); and 4) fiscal.

On April 26, 2016, OSEP sent Mr. David Andel, ISBE's former director of special education, the DMS notice for Illinois. That notice provided a designation of universal, targeted, or intensive engagement in each of four areas: results, compliance, dispute resolution, and fiscal. The information in the notice was based on FFY 2013 data in the four areas, along with information about the factors contributing to elevated needs, the support your State has accessed, your State's capacity to improve results and compliance, and additional contextual information. 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 preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Attached is a summary, by area, of the engagement provided by OSEP during the visit. If OSEP identified findings of noncompliance with IDEA requirements, you will find specific instructions, within the attachments for each DMS area, regarding corrective actions the State must take to address the noncompliance. If you have any questions, please contact Koko Austin, your OSEP State Lead at 202-245-6720.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ruth E. Ryder
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

cc: State Director of Special Education

Enclosure