



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

DEC 8, 2017

Santina Thibedeau
Administrator, Bureau of Special Education
State Director of Special Education
New Hampshire Department of Education
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Director Thibedeau,

The purpose of this letter is to briefly summarize the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) on-site visit to New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) on September 28, 2017.

As you know, 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 children 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 the 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 NHDOE its DMS notice. That notice provided a designation of universal, targeted, or intensive engagement for each of the five areas OSEP identified for DMS. The information in the notice was based on Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 data in the corresponding five areas, along with information about the factors contributing to elevated need for monitoring and support. It also included the technical assistance the State has accessed, the 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.

As part of its DMS activities, OSEP conducted a technical assistance visit with NHDOE. The State was designated as “targeted” in the area of compliance because it had reported a 54.6% compliance rate for Secondary Transition (Indicator 13) in its FFY 2014 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report. OSEP and NHDOE staff engaged in discussion related to the area of Secondary Transition to better understand steps the State is taking to improve compliance in this area.

With regard to the SSIP, NHDOE’s DMS designation was “universal.” However, at the State’s request OSEP staff devoted a part of the on-site visit to a discussion of NHDOE’s progress and future plans in implementing its SSIP. OSEP appreciates the State’s thoughtful preparation and willingness to have an open dialogue about New Hampshire’s successes and challenges. We look forward to continuing to partner with NHDOE as we enter the next fiscal year.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the provision of quality educational services to students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ruth E. Ryder
Acting Director
Office of Special Education of Programs