



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

Honorable Rita A. Sablan
Commissioner of Education
CNMI Public School System
P.O. Box 501370
Saipan, MP 96950

JUN - 1 2009

Dear Commissioner Sablan:

Thank you for the timely submission of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' (CNMI's) Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 Annual Performance Report (APR) and revised State Performance Plan (SPP) under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We also acknowledge the revisions to CNMI's APR received on April 7, 2009. We appreciate CNMI's efforts in preparing these documents.

The Department has determined that, under IDEA section 616(d), CNMI meets the requirements of Part B of IDEA. The Department's determination is based on the totality of CNMI's data and information including CNMI's FFY 2007 APR and revised SPP, other CNMI-reported data, and other publicly available information. See the enclosure entitled "How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616(d) of the IDEA in 2009" for further details.

Specific factors affecting the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) determination that CNMI meets requirements under IDEA section 616(d) include: (1) CNMI provided valid and reliable FFY 2007 data reflecting the measurement for each indicator; and (2) CNMI reported correction of its FFY 2006 findings of noncompliance or high levels of compliance for Indicators 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 20. We commend CNMI for its performance. Though not a basis for our determination this year (because CNMI reported correction), we are concerned with the very low level of compliance (48%) reported for Indicator 11.

The enclosed table provides OSEP's analysis of CNMI's FFY 2007 APR and revised SPP and identifies, by indicator, OSEP's review of any revisions made by CNMI to its targets, improvement activities (timelines and resources) and baseline data in CNMI's SPP. The table also identifies, by indicator, CNMI's status in meeting its targets, whether CNMI's data reflect progress or slippage, and whether CNMI corrected noncompliance and provided valid and reliable data.

As you included revisions to baseline, targets or improvement activities in your APR submission, and OSEP accepted those revisions, please ensure that you update your SPP accordingly and that the updated SPP is made available to the public.

In its October 17, 2008 Memorandum 09-02, "Reporting on Correction of Noncompliance in the Annual Performance Report Required under Sections 616 and 642 of the IDEA," OSEP provided Chief State School Officers and Lead Agency Directors with important information regarding: (1) requirements for identifying noncompliance and reporting on the correction of noncompliance in States' APRs; and (2) how OSEP will, beginning with the FFY 2008 APR, due February 1, 2010, consider the correction of noncompliance in making annual

determinations for States pursuant to section 616(d) of the IDEA. Most significantly, beginning with our 2010 determinations:

1. OSEP will no longer consider a State to be in substantial compliance relative to a compliance indicator based on evidence of correction of the previous year's noncompliance if the State's current year data for that indicator reflect a very low level of compliance (generally 75% or below); and
2. OSEP will credit a State with correction of noncompliance relative to a child-specific compliance indicator only if the State confirms that it has addressed each instance of noncompliance identified in the data for an indicator that was reported in the previous year's APR, as well as any noncompliance identified by the Department more than one year previously. The State must specifically report, for each compliance indicator, whether it has corrected all of the noncompliance identified in its data for that indicator in the prior year's APR as well as that identified by the Department more than one year previously.

It is important for each State to review the guidance in the memorandum, and to raise any questions with your OSEP State Contact. The memorandum may be found at: <http://spp-apr-calendar.rrfcnetwork.org/explorer/view/id/656>.

OSEP is committed to supporting CNMI's efforts to improve results for children and youth with disabilities and looks forward to working with CNMI over the next year. If you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance, please contact Lucille Sleger, your OSEP State Contact, at 202-245-7528.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Guard
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

cc: State Director of Special Education