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

Honorable Mike Hanley
Commissioner of Education
Alaska Department of Education
and Early Development
801 W. 10th St. Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500

JUN 2 0 2011

Dear Commissioner Hanley:

Thank you for the timely submission of Alaska's Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009 Annual Performance Report (APR) and revised State Performance Plan (SPP) under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Department has determined that, under IDEA section 616(d)(2)(A)(i), Alaska meets the requirements of Part B of IDEA. The Department's determination is based on the totality of the State's data and information, including the State's FFY 2009 APR and revised SPP (including targets and improvement activities for each year through FFY 2012), other State-reported data, and other publicly available information. However, we did not consider whether a State was in compliance with the requirement in section 612(a)(18)(A) to maintain State financial support for special education and related services. This is a key component of a State's eligibility for a grant under Part B of the IDEA. However, because the statute provides a specific remedy when a State is not in compliance with this provision (and the Department is taking action consistent with the statute) and recognizing that this is the first time that a number of States have failed to meet this requirement, the Department decided not to include compliance with this provision in the determinations process this year. The Department is actively considering including a State's compliance with this requirement in the 2012 determinations. See the enclosure entitled "How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616(d) of the IDEA in 2011: Part B" for further details.

Specific factors affecting the determination made by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) that Alaska meets requirements under IDEA section 616(d) include that: (1) Alaska provided valid and reliable FFY 2009 data reflecting the measurement for each indicator; (2) Alaska reported high levels of compliance or correction for Indicators 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, and 20; and (3) Alaska reported under Indicator 15 both a high level of compliance in timely correcting FFY 2008 findings of noncompliance and that it verified the correction of FFY 2008 findings of noncompliance consistent with the guidance in OSEP Memorandum 09-02, dated October 17, 2008. We commend Alaska for its performance.

The enclosed table provides OSEP's analysis of the State's FFY 2009 APR and revised SPP and identifies, by indicator, OSEP's review of any revisions the State made to its targets, improvement activities (timelines and resources) and baseline data in the State's SPP. The table also identifies, by indicator: (1) the State's reported FFY 2009 data; (2) whether such data met the State's FFY 2009 targets and reflect progress or slippage from the prior year's data; and (3) whether the State corrected findings of noncompliance.

As you know, pursuant to IDEA section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(l) and 34 CFR §300.602(b)(1)(i)(A), your State must report annually to the public on the performance of each local educational agency (LEA) located in the State on the targets in the SPP as soon as practicable, but no later than June 1, 2011. In addition, your State must: (1) review LEA performance against targets in the State's SPP; (2) determine if each LEA "meets requirements" of Part B, or "needs assistance," "needs intervention," or "needs substantial intervention" in implementing Part B of the IDEA; (3) take appropriate enforcement action; and (4) inform each LEA of its determination. 34 CFR §300.600(a)(2) and (3). For further information regarding these requirements, see "The Right IDEA" Web site at: http://therightidea.tadnet.org/determinations. Finally, please ensure that your updated SPP is posted on the State educational agency's Web site and made available to the public, consistent with 34 CFR §300.602(b)(1)(i)(B).

OSEP is committed to supporting Alaska efforts to improve results for children and youth with disabilities and looks forward to working with your State over the next year. If you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance, please contact Hillary Tabor, your OSEP State Contact, at 202-245-7813.

Sincerely,

Melody Musgrove, Ed.D.
Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

cc: State Director of Special Education