



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

09/10/09

Honorable Randy Dorn  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Washington Department of Public Instruction  
P.O. Box 47200  
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Dear Superintendent Dorn:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) verification visit to the Washington Department of Public Instruction during the week of September 7, 2009. As indicated in our letter to you dated July 2, 2009, OSEP is conducting verification visits to a number of States as part of our Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS) for ensuring compliance with, and improving performance under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). CIFMS is designed to ensure compliance and improve performance with Parts B and C<sup>1</sup> of the IDEA in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1416 and 1442. Sections 616 and 642 of the IDEA require the Department to monitor States with a focus on: (1) improving early intervention and educational results and functional outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensuring that States meet the program requirements, particularly those most closely related to improving early intervention and educational results for children with disabilities.

The purpose of the verification visit is to review the State's systems for general supervision, collection of State-reported data, and fiscal management, as well as the State's systems for improving child and family outcomes and protecting child and family rights. During the verification visit, OSEP: (1) analyzed the components of the State's general supervision, data and fiscal systems to determine the extent to which they are effective in ensuring compliance and improving performance; and (2) reviewed the accuracy of the data the State submitted for selected indicators in the State's FFY 2007 Annual Performance Report (APR)/State Performance Plan (SPP).

As part of the verification visit to Washington, OSEP staff met with Dr. Douglas Gill, State Director of Special Education and State personnel responsible for implementing the general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. Prior to and during the visit, OSEP staff reviewed a number of documents, including the following: (1) Washington's Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 APR submitted to OSEP in February 2009; (2) Washington's SPP submitted to OSEP in December 2005 and updated in 2007, 2008 and 2009; (3) Washington's eligibility document submissions under Part B of the IDEA for FFY 2009; (4) Washington's Department of Education's website; and (5) other pertinent

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<sup>1</sup> During the week of September 7, 2009 OSEP also conducted its Part C verification visit to the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

information<sup>2</sup>. OSEP also collected and reviewed stakeholder input from the State's Parent Training and Information Center, PAVE, and the State Advisory Panel (SAP). PAVE submitted survey information from 476 families. Parents were asked to respond in the following areas: (1) their rights available under IDEA; (2) areas in need of improvement; (3) mediations, complaints, and due process hearings; (4) special education data; (5) State and local performance of children in special education; and (6) practices that promote improvement. The top three areas parents considered to be in need of improvement were: (1) provision of a free appropriate public education; (2) Teacher Quality; and (3) Special Education Monitoring.

OSEP developed critical elements that were used to guide its evaluation of Washington's general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. OSEP's analysis of each critical element and any required actions, if noncompliance was identified during the verification visit, are provided in the Enclosure to this letter.

OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by PAVE staff, parents and SAP members in providing feedback and input on the State's systems for special education. We look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders and actively working with the State to improve results for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families. If you have any questions or wish to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to call your OSEP State Contact, Dr. Al Jones, at 202-245-7394.

Sincerely,



Alexa Posny  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Douglas Gill

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<sup>2</sup> Documents reviewed as part of the verification process were not reviewed for legal sufficiency, but rather to inform OSEP's understanding of your State's systems.