



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

Honorable Stefan Pryor
Commissioner
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1630

MAR - 7 2012

Dear Commissioner Pryor:

This letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) Continuous Improvement Visit (CIV) to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) during the week of November 7, 2011. As indicated in our letter to Acting Commissioner Coleman dated March 29, 2011, the visit consisted of two components: (1) the verification of State systems for implementing key requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and (2) a collaborative focus on improving results.¹ The CIV is designed to ensure compliance and improve performance with Part B of the IDEA in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1416.

The purpose of the verification component of the visit is to review the State's systems for general supervision and fiscal management. OSEP developed critical elements that were used to guide its evaluation of Connecticut's general supervision (including data) and fiscal systems. The Enclosure to this letter describes the scope of OSEP's review of the State's systems for general supervision and briefly outlines relevant statutory and regulatory requirements for each critical element.

OSEP is currently in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of States' systems for implementing the fiscal requirements of the IDEA and related statutes and regulations, through the CIVs and other mechanisms, including the desk audits that OSEP's Recovery Act Facilitators are conducting with all States. In order to provide each State with an integrated response based on its review of States' fiscal systems, OSEP will respond to the State separately to address fiscal issues and has not included a fiscal section in the Enclosure. The fiscal information gathered during the verification component of the CIV will also be addressed in that separate letter.

OSEP found noncompliance, and has required corrective action in the following area: timely correction of noncompliance by local educational agencies (LEAs), as required by IDEA sections 612(a)(11) and 616, 34 CFR §§300.149 and 300.600, 20 U.S.C. 1232d(b)(3)(E) and OSEP Memorandum 09-02, dated October 17, 2008 (OSEP Memo 09-02). Generally, the Enclosure to this letter does not include descriptions of the State's systems because this information is available on the State's Web site in Connecticut's State Performance Plan. OSEP's analysis of each critical element and any required actions, if noncompliance was identified during the visit, are provided in the Enclosure to this letter.

During the CIV, Connecticut also focused on improving educational results and functional outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Prior to the visit, Connecticut participated in a process with OSEP to concentrate its efforts on improving outcomes for students with

¹ During the week of November 7, 2011, OSEP also conducted its Part C CIV to the Connecticut Birth to Three System.

disabilities. With OSEP's participation, Connecticut and stakeholders, which included participants from LEAs, parent representatives, advocates, State Education Resource Center staff, State education staff, and staff from other State agencies, went through a facilitated process to examine the data, as well as current and past efforts to improve results in the area of low graduation rates for African-American and Hispanic students with disabilities, and formulate strategies that Connecticut will employ to improve results for children with disabilities in its selected area. Connecticut has developed a plan that includes specific benchmarks for improvement, as well as timelines, resources, and measurements for the State to improve results. The State will publish this plan with updates on the State's Web site at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp>.

OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by your State staff and others, including staff from the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, State Advisory Committee, Connecticut Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, Connecticut Special Education Resource Center, and parents of children and youth with disabilities in providing feedback and input on the State's systems for providing educational services to children and youth with disabilities. We look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders and actively working with the State to improve results and compliance for children and youth 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. Richard Steffan, at 202-245-6759.

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

cc: Anne Louise Thompson
State Director of Special Education