



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

Honorable Melody Schopp
Secretary of Education
South Dakota Department of Education
800 Governors Drive
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2294

JAN 30 2012

Dear Secretary Schopp:

This letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) Continuous Improvement Visit (CIV) to the South Dakota Department of Education during the week of September 12-16, 2011. As indicated in our letter to you 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 CIVs are 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, as well as the State's systems for improving child and family outcomes. OSEP developed critical elements that were used to guide its evaluation of South Dakota'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 visit will also be addressed in that separate letter.

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 its 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, South Dakota also focused on improving educational results and functional outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Prior to the visit, South Dakota participated in a process with OSEP to concentrate its efforts on Post-School Outcomes. With OSEP's participation, South Dakota stakeholders, which included participants from South Dakota Parent Connection, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, Black Hills State University, South Dakota Department of Transportation, South Dakota Protection and Advocacy, South Dakota Department of Labor, Principals, Teachers, and Transition Specialists, participated in a

¹ During the week of September 12-16, 2011, OSEP also conducted its Part C CIV to the South Dakota Department of Education. OSEP is issuing the results of that visit under separate cover.

facilitated process to examine the data, as well as current and past efforts to improve results in the Post-School Outcomes area, and formulate strategies that South Dakota will employ to improve results for children with disabilities related to Post-School Outcomes. South Dakota is developing a plan that includes specific benchmarks for improvement, as well as, timelines, resources, and measurements for the South Dakota Department of Education to improve results. The South Dakota Department of Education will publish this plan with updates on the State's Web site at www.doe.sd.gov.

OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by your State staff and others, including staff from the South Dakota Parent Connection, State Advisory Panel, the State's Protection and Advocacy Agency, 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, James A. Williams, at 202-245-7574.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melody Musgrove', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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

Enclosure

cc: Ann Larsen

State Director of Special Education