



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

October 17, 2018

Honorable Duane Mayes  
Director  
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services  
Division of Senior and Disabilities Services  
550 West 8th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Director Mayes:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a summary of the results of the monitoring and support activities conducted by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Infant Learning Program (ILP), during a virtual monitoring activity on March 19, 21 and 26, 2018<sup>1</sup>.

Participants from DHSS included:

- Deb Etheridge, Deputy Director
- Maureen Harwood, Part C Coordinator
- Shilan Wooten, Data Manager

In 2016, OSEP began providing differentiated monitoring and support (DMS) to States as part of its Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework. Under RDA, OSEP made a shift from monitoring based solely on compliance to monitoring and support focused on both compliance and improving results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. OSEP differentiates its approach for each State based on the State's unique strengths, progress, challenges, and needs.

As part of the DMS process, OSEP conducts an organizational assessment (OA) of risk factors to identify States' progress in meeting performance standards and complying with the requirements of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing regulations, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. OSEP uses the information from the OA and an Engagement Decision Tree to make designations of universal, targeted, or intensive monitoring and support that a State will receive for the fiscal year. The 2016-2017 DMS areas were: 1) results; 2) compliance; 3) State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP); 4) child find; and 5) fiscal.

On October 31, 2016, OSEP sent Alaska's IDEA Part C DMS notice to Maureen Harwood. That notice provided a designation of universal, targeted, or intensive engagement for each of the five

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<sup>1</sup> OSEP originally scheduled the virtual monitoring activity for the Spring of 2017. However, staff from DHSS, ILP requested an extension because of significant personnel changes that had taken place. OSEP agreed, and provided technical assistance to ILP staff in the interim.

areas OSEP identified for DMS. The information in the notice was based on Federal Fiscal Year 2014 data in the corresponding five areas, along with information about the factors contributing to elevated need for monitoring and support, the support the State has accessed, the State's capacity to improve results and compliance, and additional contextual information. The notice also identified the monitoring and support activities that would be carried out to address the factors contributing to the elevated need for monitoring and support in each of the areas that were designated for intensive engagement. We have attached a copy of the DMS notice for your convenience.

As part of its DMS activities, OSEP conducted virtual fiscal monitoring with DHSS. During this activity, OSEP addressed implementation of the State's System of Payments policy. Attached is a summary of the results of OSEP's monitoring. If OSEP identified findings of noncompliance with IDEA requirements, you will find specific information, within the attachment including the corrective actions DHSS must take to address the noncompliance.

We appreciate your efforts to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Miley, your OSEP State Lead, at 202-245-6049.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ruth E. Ryder  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education Programs

cc: Deb Etheridge, Deputy Director  
Maureen Harwood, Part C Coordinator  
Shilan Wooten, Data Manager

Attachments