



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Honorable Yvonne Gilchrist  
Director  
Department of Human Services  
P.O. Box 54047  
2700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20032-0247

MAR 15 2006

Dear Director Gilchrist:

Thank you for your timely submission of the District of Columbia's State Performance Plan (SPP) for review under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Section 616(b) of the Act requires States to submit, within one year after the date of enactment of the reauthorized IDEA, an SPP that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and describes how the State will improve implementation. We appreciate the District's efforts in preparing the SPP under a short timeline and in the face of many other competing priorities. In the SPPs, due by December 2, 2005, States were to include: (1) baseline data that reflect the State's efforts to implement Part C of the IDEA; (2) measurable and rigorous targets for the next six years for each of the indicators established by the Secretary in the priority areas under section 616(a) of the IDEA; and (3) activities the State will undertake to improve implementation of Part C.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is pleased to inform you that the District's SPP under Part C meets the requirements of section 616(b) to include measurable and rigorous targets and improvement activities. The District must make its SPP available through public means, including posting on the lead agency's website, distribution to the media, and distribution through public agencies. (Section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I)).

Under section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(II) of the Act, the District must annually report to OSEP on its performance under the SPP. The District's first Annual Performance Report (APR) on its progress in meeting its targets is due to OSEP by February 1, 2007. Attached to this letter you will find Table A that addresses issues identified during our review of the SPP that – while not requiring disapproval of your plan – will affect our annual determination of District performance and compliance based on data presented in the District's APR. As a result, the District needs to provide additional information as part of its February 2007 APR submission. Table B includes OSEP's analysis of your submission related to previously-identified noncompliance or other issues included in our August 29, 2005 letter that responded to the District's FFY 2003 APR, that also may require additional reporting.

OSEP's analysis regarding the District's longstanding noncompliance with the 45-day timeline for evaluations (34 CFR §§303.321(e)(2) and 303.322(e)(1)) is reported under Indicator 7 in Table B. OSEP's June 2003 letter directed the District to submit final documentation of correction of that noncompliance by June 2004. As explained in Table B, the District must provide data demonstrating compliance by June 1, 2006. Failure to provide data by that time

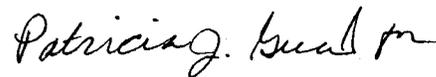
demonstrating compliance may result in the District being designated a "high risk" grantee or otherwise affect its FFY 2006 grant award.

In addition to reporting to OSEP, the District must report annually to the public on the performance of each early intervention service (EIS) program located in the District on the targets in the District's performance plan. (Section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I)). The requirement for public reporting on EIS program performance is a critical provision related to ensuring accountability and focusing on improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities. OSEP will be providing technical assistance regarding the reporting on EIS program performance at the National Accountability Conference, September 18 and 19, 2006 in Denver and through periodic technical assistance conference calls.

We hope that the District found the August 5, 2005 guidance on submission of the SPPs and the technical assistance that we provided through the August 11-12, 2005 Summer Institute, periodic conference calls, and the SPP Resources website helpful in this endeavor. If you have any feedback on our past technical assistance efforts or the needs of States for guidance, we would be happy to hear from you as we work to develop further mechanisms to support State improvement activities.

Thank you for your continued work to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. We encourage you to work closely with your State Contact as you proceed in implementing improvement activities and developing your APR. If you have any questions regarding the SPP or the APR, please contact Mary A. Williams at 202-245-7586.

Sincerely,



Troy R. Justesen  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education  
Programs

Enclosures

Table A

Table B

cc: Ellen M. Yung-Fatah  
Acting Part C Coordinator