



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

JUN 28 2012

Honorable Mary Currier, M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Officer
Mississippi State Department of Health
P.O. Box 1700
570 East Woodrow Wilson Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1700

Dear Dr. Currier:

Thank you for the timely submission of Mississippi's Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 Annual Performance Report (APR) and revised State Performance Plan (SPP) under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Department has determined that, under IDEA sections 616(d)(2)(A)(iii) and 642, Mississippi needs intervention in implementing the requirements of Part C of IDEA. The Department's determination is based on the totality of the State's data and information including the State's FFY 2010 APR and revised SPP, other State-reported data, information obtained through verification visits and/or continuous improvement visits and the State's submissions under the Special Conditions on the State's FFY 2011 Part C grant, and other publicly available information. See the enclosure entitled "How the Department Made Determinations under Sections 616(d) and 642 of the IDEA in 2012: Part C" for further details.

The State's determination for the FFY 2009 APR was also needs intervention. The State should review IDEA section 616(e)(2) regarding the potential impact of the Department's determination should the State be determined to need intervention in implementing the requirements of IDEA Part C for three consecutive years.

The specific factor affecting the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) determination of needs intervention for Mississippi was that Mississippi has been subject to Departmental enforcement for multiple years for failing to comply with a key IDEA requirement, the noncompliance in this area is longstanding, and the data Mississippi reported under its FFY 2011 special conditions demonstrate continued noncompliance with this requirement. The requirement is to ensure the timely provision of early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, as required by 34 CFR §§303.340(c), 303.342(e) and 303.344(f)(1).

OSEP considered the length of time and magnitude of Mississippi's failure to meet the timely service provision requirement. OSEP has imposed special conditions on Mississippi's Part C grant award since FFY 2006 due to the State's failure to ensure the timely provision of services. Mississippi's FFY 2011 IDEA Part C grant included special conditions to ensure compliance with this requirement, and required two progress reports: one by February 1, 2012 and the final report by May 1, 2012. The State's FFY 2010 APR data for timely service provision reflect 87% compliance. In its May 2012 FFY 2011 Special Conditions progress

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report, the State's data for the period January 1, 2012 through April 15, 2012, indicated 84% compliance with the timely service provision requirements for nine health districts.

This longstanding noncompliance continues to raise concerns about Mississippi's ability to provide needed services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. For this reason, OSEP has determined that Mississippi needs intervention in implementing the requirements of Part C of the IDEA. We hope that Mississippi will be able to meet requirements with its 2013 IDEA determination and its FFY 2011 APR.

The enclosed table provides OSEP's analysis of the State's FFY 2010 APR and revised SPP and identifies, by indicator, OSEP's review of any revisions made by the State to its targets, improvement activities (timelines and resources) and baseline data in the State's SPP. The table also identifies, by indicator: (1) the State's reported FFY 2010 data; (2) whether such data met the State's FFY 2010 targets and reflect progress or slippage from the prior year's data; (3) if applicable, that the State's data are not valid and reliable; and (4) whether the State corrected findings of noncompliance.

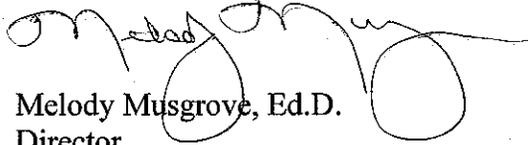
Your State may want to consider taking advantage of available sources of technical assistance. A list of sources of technical assistance related to the SPP/APR indicators is available by clicking on the "Technical Assistance Related to Determinations" box on the opening page of "The Right IDEA" Web site at: <http://therightidea.tadnet.org/technicalassistance>. You will be directed to a list of indicators. Click on specific indicators for a list of centers, documents, Web seminars and other sources of relevant technical assistance for that indicator.

As you know, pursuant to IDEA sections 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I) and 642, your State must report annually to the public on the performance of each early intervention services program (EIS program) located in the State on the targets in the SPP. Pursuant to 34 CFR §303.702(b)(1)(A) in the final Part C regulations published on September 28, 2011, beginning with its reporting on the FFY 2011 performance of EIS programs in 2013, the State must report to the public by June 1. OSEP encourages the State to complete its reporting on the FFY 2010 performance of EIS programs as soon as practicable, if it has not already done so. In addition, your State must: (1) review EIS program performance against targets in the State's SPP; (2) determine if each EIS program "meets requirements" of IDEA Part C, or "needs assistance," "needs intervention," or "needs substantial intervention" in implementing Part C of the IDEA; (3) take appropriate enforcement action; and (4) inform each EIS program of its determination. For further information regarding these requirements, see "The Right IDEA" Web site at: <http://therightidea.tadnet.org/determinations>. Finally, please ensure that your updated SPP is posted on the State lead agency's Web site and made available to the public, consistent with IDEA sections 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I) and 642.

Pursuant to sections 616(d)(2)(B) and 642 of the IDEA, a State that is determined to need intervention or need substantial intervention, and does not agree with this determination, may request an opportunity to meet with the Assistant Secretary to demonstrate why the Department should change the State's determination. To request a hearing, submit a letter to Dr. Alexa Posny, Assistant Secretary, United States Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202 within 15 days of the date of this letter. The letter must include the basis for your request for a change in the State's determination.

OSEP is committed to supporting Mississippi's efforts to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and looks forward to working with your State over the next year. If you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance, please contact Kate Moran, your OSEP State Contact, at 202-245-7315.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melody Musgrove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

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

Enclosures

cc: Part C Coordinator