



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

Honorable Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street, 7th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595

FEB - 9 2011

Dear Superintendent Grasmick:

This letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) verification visit to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) during the week of November 29, 2010. As indicated in our letter to you dated July 22, 2010, OSEP is conducting verification visits to a number of States as part of our Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS) for ensuring compliance with, and improving performance under Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Section 616 of the IDEA requires the Department to monitor States with a focus on: (1) improving early intervention and educational results and functional outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensuring that States meet the program requirements, particularly those most closely related to improving early intervention and educational results for children and youth with disabilities.

The purpose of the verification visit is to review the State's systems for general supervision, collection of State-reported data, and fiscal management, as well as the State's systems for improving child and family outcomes and protecting child and family rights. OSEP developed critical elements that were used to guide its evaluation of Maryland's general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. The Enclosures to this letter describe the scope of OSEP's review of the State's systems and briefly outline relevant statutory and regulatory requirements for each critical element. Generally, the Enclosures to this letter do not include descriptions of the State's systems because this information is available on the State's Web site in the State's State Performance Plan.

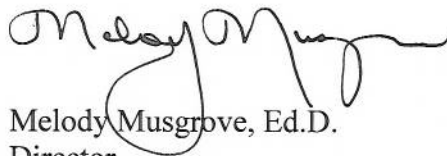
OSEP's analysis of each critical element and any required actions, if noncompliance was identified during the verification visit, are provided in the Enclosures to this letter. OSEP found noncompliance, and has required corrective action in the area of appropriate use of IDEA Part B funds, specifically, having State policy and procedures in place to ensure that the methods used by the State to calculate and determine whether LEAs meet the excess cost requirement in accordance with Part B of the IDEA, 34 CFR §§300.16 and 300.202.

OSEP would like to recognize an improvement initiative being implemented in the State that is designed to improve results for infants and toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. MSDE has developed a comprehensive electronic data system containing verification and data-driven tools designed to inform and assist State and local personnel and families about individual child and programmatic decision-making. The system contains demographic information at the child level, Individualized Family Service Plans, Individualized Education

Programs, and data on Maryland's early childhood functional outcomes system and trend data to track improved results for children and youth. The electronic data system was designed with a rigorous capacity to detect and prevent threats to data validity, and, because the online system is Web based, the data may be entered anytime or any place and provides program staff at the State and local levels with the most up-to-date data for decision-making at the individual child level.

Additionally, OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by your State staff and others, including staff from The Parent's Place of Maryland, parents of infants and toddlers, and parents of children and youth with disabilities in providing feedback and input on the State's systems for special education. We look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders and actively working with the State to improve results 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 Part B State Contact, Dwight Thomas, at 202-245-6238 or your OSEP Part C State Contact, Sheryl Parkhurst, at 202-245-7472.

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: Carol Ann Heath-Baglin, Ed.D.
State Director of Special Education