



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Honorable Joseph Chiaro, M.D.
Deputy Secretary of Children's Medical Services
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1707

MAR 5 2009

Dear Deputy Secretary Chiaro:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) verification visit to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), Children's Medical Services, Early Steps State Office (ES) during the week of November 17, 2008. As indicated in my letter to you, dated August 7, 2008, OSEP is conducting verification visits to a number of States as part of our Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS). CIFMS is designed to ensure compliance and improve performance with Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Sections 616 and 642 of the IDEA require the Department to monitor States with a focus on: (1) improving early intervention results and functional outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities; and (2) ensuring that States meet the program requirements, particularly those most closely related to improving early intervention results for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

The purpose of the verification visit was to review FDOH's systems for general supervision, collection of State-reported data, and fiscal management, as well as FDOH's systems for improving child and family outcomes and protecting child and family rights. During the verification visit, OSEP: (1) analyzed the components of the State's general supervision, data and fiscal systems for ensuring compliance and improving performance; and (2) reviewed data the State submitted for selected indicators in the State's FFY 2006 Annual Performance Report (APR)/State Performance Plan (SPP).

As part of the verification visit to Florida, OSEP staff met with Janice Kane, Bureau Chief and State personnel responsible for implementing the general supervision, data or fiscal systems. Prior to and during the visit, OSEP staff reviewed a number of documents, including the following: (1) FDOH's SPP submitted to OSEP on December 2, 2005; (2) FDOH's FFY 2006 APR submitted to OSEP on February 1, 2008; (3) FDOH's Application for Part C of the IDEA FFY 2008 funds; (4) OSEP's Verification Visit letter to FDOH dated January 20, 2004; (5) FDOH's website; and (6) other pertinent information.¹

OSEP applied the critical elements to evaluate FDOH's general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. OSEP's analysis of each critical element and any required actions, if noncompliance was identified during the verification visit, are provided in the Enclosure to this letter.

¹ Documents reviewed as part of the verification process were not reviewed for legal sufficiency, but rather to inform OSEP's understanding of your State's system.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by FDOH personnel during our visit. We look forward to collaborating with the State as you continue to work to improve results for infants and toddlers 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, Hillary Tabor, at 202-245-7813.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia J. Guard". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Patricia J. Guard
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Janice Kane
Bureau Chief, Early Steps