



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Honorable John Auerbach  
Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

FEB 13 2009

Dear Commissioner Auerbach:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the results of the Part C verification visit by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) during the week of October 27, 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 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 with disabilities.

The purpose of OSEP's 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 for protecting child and family rights. During the verification visit, OSEP: (1) analyzed the components of the State's general supervision, data and fiscal systems to determine the extent to which they are effective in ensuring compliance and improving performance; and (2) reviewed the data DPH submitted for selected indicators as part of the Massachusetts Part C FFY 2006 Annual Performance Report (APR)/State Performance Plan (SPP).

As part of the verification visit to Massachusetts, OSEP staff met with Ron Benham, Part C Coordinator for Massachusetts, other State personnel responsible for implementing the general supervision, data or fiscal systems, and local agency staff. Prior to and during the visit, OSEP staff reviewed a number of documents, including the following: (1) the Massachusetts Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006 APR submitted to OSEP in February 2008; (2) the Massachusetts SPP submitted to OSEP in December 2005 and updated in 2007 and 2008; (3) the Massachusetts eligibility document submissions under Part C of the IDEA for FFY 2008; (4) OSEP's Verification Visit letter to Massachusetts dated October 27, 2003; (5) the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's website; and (6) other pertinent

information.<sup>1</sup>

OSEP applied the Part C critical elements to evaluate DPH'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.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by Massachusetts personnel during our visit. We look forward to collaborating with Massachusetts as it continues 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, Brenda Wilkins, at 202-245-6920.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Guard  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education Programs

cc: Ron Benham, Part C Coordinator

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<sup>1</sup> 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.