



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

Honorable Gary Alexander  
Director  
Rhode Island Department of Human Services  
Louis Pasteur Building  
600 New London Ave.  
Cranston, RI 02920

JAN 15 2009

Dear Director Alexander:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) verification visit to the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (RIDHS) during the week of September 15, 2008. As indicated in my letter to you of 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 results for infants, toddlers and children with disabilities.

The purpose of the verification visit is to review the effectiveness of 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. During the verification visit OSEP: (1) analyzed the components of the State's general supervision, data and fiscal systems to determine whether they are reasonably designed to ensure compliance and improve 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 Rhode Island, OSEP staff met with Brenda DuHamel, Part C Coordinator and State personnel responsible for implementing the general supervision, data or fiscal systems. OSEP also participated in a joint meeting with Part C staff and representatives of the Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE) Division for Diverse Learners to discuss issues regarding the transition of children with disabilities from Part C to Part B. Prior to and during the visit, OSEP staff reviewed a number of documents, including the following: (1) Rhode Island's Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006 APR submitted to OSEP in February 2008; (2) Rhode Island's SPP submitted to OSEP in December 2005 and updated in 2007 and 2008; (3) Rhode Island's eligibility document submissions under Part C of the IDEA for FFY 2008; (4) OSEP's Verification Visit letter

to Rhode Island dated January 14, 2005; (5) the RIDHS website; and (6) other pertinent information.<sup>1</sup>

OSEP developed critical elements that were used to guide its evaluation of Rhode Island's general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. OSEP's analysis of each critical element is set out in the enclosure to this letter. If OSEP identified noncompliance during the verification visit, the enclosure also includes an explanation of the noncompliance with applicable Part C requirements and the required actions that OSEP has determined the State must take to address the noncompliance. As further detailed in the Enclosure to this letter, the State must submit in the FFY 2008 APR, due February 1, 2010, under Indicator 9, data demonstrating that the State timely corrected noncompliance identified in FFY 2007 in accordance with IDEA section 635(a)(10)(A) and 34 CFR §303.501(b). In addition, with the State's FFY 2009 Part C Application, RIDHS must provide updated compliance data demonstrating correction of the noncompliance related to the 45-day timeline identified in Trudeau in FFYs 2004 and 2005.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by your staff during our visit. We look forward to collaborating with the State as you continue to work to improve results for infants, toddlers and children 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, Ginger Sheppard at 202-245-7353.

Sincerely,



William W. Knudsen

Acting Director

Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Brenda DuHamel, Part C Coordinator

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<sup>1</sup> This information was reviewed not for legal sufficiency but to provide background information for the verification visit.