



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

MAR 19 2010

Honorable Alan Levine
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
628 N. 4th Street
P.O. Box 629
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-0629

Dear Secretary Levine:

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 Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) during the week of October 26, 2009. As indicated in our letter to you dated July 2, 2009, 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, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). CIFMS is designed to ensure compliance and improve performance with Parts B and C¹ of the IDEA in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1416 and 1442. 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 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. 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 the accuracy of the data the State submitted for selected indicators in the State's Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 Annual Performance Report (APR)/State Performance Plan (SPP).

As part of the verification visit, OSEP staff met with Brenda Sharp, Part C Coordinator, 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: (1) Louisiana's FFY 2007 APR submitted to OSEP in February 2009; (2) Louisiana's SPP submitted to OSEP in December 2005 and updated in 2007, 2008 and 2009; (3) Louisiana's eligibility document submissions under Part C of the IDEA for FFY 2009; (4) OSEP's Verification Visit

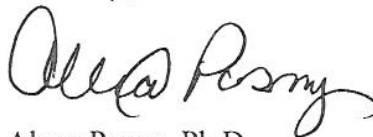
¹ During the week of October 26, 2009, OSEP also conducted its Part B verification visit to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE). OSEP is sending the Part B verification letter and enclosure to LDE under separate cover.

letter to Louisiana dated December 19, 2003; (5) DHH's website; and (6) other pertinent information². OSEP also collected and reviewed stakeholder input from the State's Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC).

OSEP applied the Part C critical elements to evaluate Louisiana's general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. OSEP's analysis of each critical element is provided in the Enclosure to this letter. As further detailed in that Enclosure, DHH must submit, within 60 days of receipt of this letter, documentation that demonstrates that it has changed its monitoring protocols to ensure the identification of all noncompliance, notwithstanding the extent of the noncompliance.

OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by SICC members and parents 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 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, Jennifer Simpson, at (202) 245-6042.

Sincerely,



Alexa Posny, Ph.D.
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Brenda Sharp

² 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 systems.