



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

JAN 13 2010

Honorable Robert Hofmann
Secretary of Vermont Agency for Human Services
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-2901

Dear Secretary Hofmann:

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 Vermont Agency of Human Services during the week of August 31, 2009.¹ 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 C of the 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 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 the extent to which they are effective in ensuring compliance and improving performance; and (2) reviewed the accuracy of the 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 Vermont, OSEP staff met with Terri Edgerton, Part C Coordinator, and State personnel responsible for implementing the general supervision, data and fiscal systems. Prior to and during the visit, OSEP staff reviewed a number of documents, including the following: (1) Vermont's Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 APR submitted to OSEP in February 2009; (2) Vermont's SPP submitted to OSEP in December 2005 and updated in 2007, 2008 and 2009; (3) Vermont's grant Application for Part C of the IDEA for FFY 2008; (4) OSEP's Verification Visit letter to Vermont dated November 2, 2004; (5) Vermont Agency of Human Service's website; and (6) other pertinent information.² OSEP also collected and reviewed stakeholder input from the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) which also included parent input.

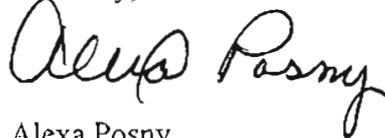
¹ During the week of August 31, 2009, OSEP also conducted its Part B verification visit to the State Department of Education and OSEP will be issuing a letter describing the results of that visit under separate cover.

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.

OSEP applied the critical elements to evaluate Vermont'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. As further detailed in that Enclosure, OSEP found noncompliance, and has required corrective action in the following areas: (1) collecting and reporting data in a valid and reliable manner; (2) correction of the outstanding finding of noncompliance from FFY 2005; and (3) the identification of all noncompliance without establishing as absolute a 90% threshold for identifying noncompliance.

OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by SICC members and parents in providing feedback and input on the State's systems for early intervention. 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, Ginger Sheppard, at 202-245-7353.

Sincerely,



Alexa Posny
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Part C Coordinator
Vermont Commissioner of Education