



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

JUL -2 2009

Honorable Anna Whiting Sorrell
Director of Department of Public Health and Human Services
111 N. Sander St.
P.O. Box 4210
Helena, Montana 59604-4210

Dear Director Whiting Sorrell:

As part of its Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS), the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is conducting verification visits to a number of States. We will be visiting Montana to conduct a verification visit during the week of August 31, 2009. CIFMS is designed to ensure compliance and improve performance with Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1416 and 1442. IDEA, as reauthorized in 2004, requires the Department to monitor States with a focus on: (1) improving 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 educational results for children with disabilities.

The purpose of the verification visits is to evaluate how States use general supervision, State-reported data collection, and fiscal management systems to assess and improve State performance, child and family outcomes, and the protection of child and family rights. During the verification visits, OSEP will analyze the components of the State's general supervision, data, and fiscal management systems in order to determine the extent to which they are effective in ensuring compliance and improving performance. OSEP has developed critical elements that will guide the verification visit activities, along with a process to solicit stakeholder input to help assess the effectiveness of the State's systems. I am enclosing a copy of the critical elements, as they may be helpful for you as you work with OSEP in the verification process. As part of the verification visit, OSEP staff would like to meet with State staff involved in, and responsible for, the oversight of general supervision activities, including data and fiscal management.

At the State's discretion, Regional Resource Centers or other Technical Assistance providers (e.g., the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center) that have been, or will be, assisting the State with monitoring, State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) development, or improvement planning activities can be included in the verification visit.

Following the on-site verification visit, OSEP will provide the State with a letter that describes the analysis of the State's general supervision, data collection, and fiscal management systems, any findings from the visit, and the next steps. If the analysis of the data indicates noncompliance or potential noncompliance, OSEP will describe the noncompliance or potential noncompliance in the letter and require the State to take appropriate action.

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If you have any questions regarding OSEP's verification visit, please contact Bob MacGillivray, OSEP's Part C State Contact at 202-245-7433. OSEP staff will call Erica Swanson to confirm final arrangements for the verification visit.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued work to improve results for children with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia J. Guard".

Patricia J. Guard
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Erica Swanson

Verification Visit Critical Elements
Part C Final 7/2/2009

Critical Element	Part C
General Supervision	
GS 1	Does the State have a general supervision system that is reasonably designed to identify noncompliance in a timely manner using its different components?
GS 2	Does the State have a general supervision system that is reasonably designed to ensure correction of identified noncompliance in a timely manner?
GS 3	Does the State have procedures and practices that are reasonably designed to implement the dispute resolution requirements of IDEA?
GS 4	Does the State have procedures and practices that are reasonably designed to improve early intervention results and functional outcomes for all infants and toddlers with disabilities?
GS 5	Does the State have procedures and practices that are reasonably designed to implement selected grant application requirements, i.e., monitoring and enforcement, CSPD, and interagency agreements, contracts or other arrangements?
Data	
DS 1	Does the State have a data system that is reasonably designed to collect and report valid and reliable data and information to the Department and the public in a timely manner?
DS 2	Does the State have procedures that are reasonably designed to verify that the data collected and reported reflect actual practice and performance?
DS 3	Does the State compile and integrate data across systems and use the data to inform and focus its improvement activities?
Fiscal	
FS 1	Does the State have procedures that are reasonably designed to ensure the timely obligation and liquidation of IDEA funds?
FS 2	Does the State have procedures that are reasonably designed to ensure appropriate use of IDEA funds at the State level?