



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

JUN 29 2001

Mr. Paul Flinter, Chief  
Bureau of Early Childhood Education  
and Social Services  
Connecticut Department of Education  
25 Industrial Park Road  
Middletown, CT 06457

Dear Mr. Flinter:

This letter is being sent at your request regarding Connecticut's plan to use Preschool Grant State set-aside funds under section 619(f) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for the Connecticut Literacy Caravan project. Specifically, you requested that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) review a proposed contract between the Connecticut Department of Education (CDE) and the Weston Woods Institute, Inc. to determine if funding the Literacy Caravan was an allowable use of Preschool Grant State set-aside funds. The Connecticut Literacy Caravan supports preschool paraprofessionals in fostering literacy and promoting early reading in preschool settings.

The Office of Special Education Programs reviewed the proposed contract and other information submitted from your Office, held a conference call with you and other interested parties at the CDE, as well as reviewed follow-up information sent to OSEP after the conference call.

Our review focused on the statutory language at 20 U.S.C. 1419(f)(5) which states, "Each State shall use any funds it retains under subsection (d) and does not use for administration under subsection (e)--"... "(5) to supplement other funds used to develop and implement a Statewide coordinated services system designed to improve results for children and families, including children with disabilities and their families, but not to exceed one percent of the amount received by the State under this section for a fiscal year."

We first looked at how the section 619 funds used for the Literacy Caravan project would be supplemented with other funds. Connecticut submitted sufficient information in its April 24, 2001, package of information to OSEP that other sources of funds will contribute to the Literacy Caravan project, as follows: (1) Weston Woods Institute will supply a mobile educational unit with a driver. The vehicle is valued at \$45,000 and the driver's compensation is estimated at \$8,000 for the period of the contract; (2) Scholastic Inc. will outfit and supply the mobile educational unit. The estimated value as of April 24, 2001 is \$10,000; (3) William Caspar Graustein Memorial foundation has contributed \$5,000 to assist the project's cost related to supply, personnel or vehicle; and (4) Monaco LLC has donated miscellaneous items such as card pocket packs, hang up bookracks and carry all bags with a value of \$275.

OSEP next looked at how the Literacy Caravan project fits into a Statewide coordinated services system designed to improve results for children and families, including children with disabilities and their families. Connecticut submitted sufficient information to show that the Literacy Caravan project fits into Connecticut Charts-A-Course (a Statewide system of continuous training for early childhood teachers and care givers). The Training Approval Board of Connecticut Charts-A-Course has approved the Literacy Caravan training. In addition, the Literacy Caravan pilot project is a piece of the Connecticut School Readiness and Child Day Care grant program (a state-funded initiative to develop a network of school readiness programs).

During the conference call, we discussed whether the Literacy Caravan could be funded under section 619(f)(1)-(4). As we stated, State set-aside funds under paragraphs (f)(1)-(4) must be used for services and activities designed for children with disabilities. Therefore, the Literacy Caravan project could only be supported by section 619(f) funds used according to the provisions in section 619(f)(5). The total amount of funds used under section 619(f)(5) may not exceed one percent (1%) of the amount received under section 619 for a fiscal year.

Please note that this letter does not constitute an endorsement of the Weston Woods Institute project. Rather, this letter is to state that, based on the information provided to this office by Connecticut, it does not appear that funding of the Literacy Caravan project would be inconsistent with the use of funds under section 619(f)(5).

If you have additional questions on this matter, please contact Nancy Treusch at (202) 205-9097 or nancy.treusch@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Guard  
Acting Director  
Office of Special Education  
Programs

cc: George Coleman  
Maria Synodi  
George Dowaliby