



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

June 29, 2017

Honorable Deirdra T. Singleton
Acting Director
South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
SCDHHS P.O. Box 8206
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Director Singleton:

I am writing to advise you of the U. S. Department of Education's (Department) 2017 determination under sections 616 and 642 of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. The Department has determined that South Carolina needs assistance in meeting the requirements of Part C of the *IDEA*. This determination is based on the totality of the State's data and information, including the Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), other State-reported data, and other publicly available information.

The Department began making determinations under Part C of the *IDEA* in 2007 and since 2007, South Carolina has received a Needs Intervention determination for all but two of the past ten years. With South Carolina's 2017 Needs Assistance determination, OSEP acknowledges the changes South Carolina has recently made including changing its State lead agency and the State's efforts to improve its results data. OSEP notes, however, that South Carolina continues to work on ensuring compliance with critical *IDEA* requirements while improving results for its infants and toddlers with disabilities. The Department will continue to work with South Carolina as it develops and implements its policies and procedures and monitors the implementation of *IDEA* in the State to ensure that South Carolina improves its compliance with, and performance under, the *IDEA* for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Your State's 2017 determination is based on the data reflected in the State's "2017 Part C Results-Driven Accountability Matrix" (RDA Matrix). The RDA Matrix is individualized for each State and consists of:

- (1) a Compliance Matrix that includes scoring on Compliance Indicators and other compliance factors;
- (2) Results Components and Appendices that include scoring on Results Elements;
- (3) a Compliance Score and a Results Score;
- (4) an RDA Percentage based on both the Compliance Score and the Results Score; and
- (5) the State's Determination.

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The RDA Matrix is further explained in a document, entitled “How the Department Made Determinations under Sections 616(d) and 642 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2017: Part C” (HTDMD).

OSEP is continuing to use both results data and compliance data in making determinations in 2017, as it did for Part C determinations in 2015 and 2016. (The specifics of the determination procedures and criteria are set forth in the HTDMD and reflected in the RDA Matrix for your State.) For 2017, the Department’s *IDEA* Part C determinations continue to include consideration of each State’s Child Outcomes data, which measures how children who receive *IDEA* Part C services are improving functioning in three outcome areas that are critical to school readiness:

- Positive social-emotional skills;
- acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication); and
- use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Specifically, the Department considered the data quality and the child performance levels in each State’s Child Outcomes FFY 2015 data.

You may access the results of OSEP’s review of your State’s SPP/APR and other relevant data by accessing the SPP/APR module using your State-specific log-on information at osep.grads360.org. When you access your State’s SPP/APR on the site, you will find, in Indicators 1 through 10, the OSEP Response to the indicator and any actions that the State is required to take. The actions that the State is required to take are in two places:

- (1) actions related to the correction of findings of noncompliance are in the “OSEP Response” section of the indicator; and
- (2) any other actions that the State is required to take are in the “Required Actions” section of the indicator.

It is important for you to review the Introduction to the SPP/APR, which may also include language in the “OSEP Response” and/or “Required Actions” sections.

You will also find all of the following important documents saved as attachments to the Progress Page:

- (1) the State’s RDA Matrix;
- (2) the HTDMD document;
- (3) a spreadsheet entitled “2017 Data Rubric Part C,” which shows how OSEP calculated the State’s “Timely and Accurate State-Reported Data” score in the Compliance Matrix;
- (4) a document entitled “Dispute Resolution 2015-16,” which includes the *IDEA* section 618 data that OSEP used to calculate the State’s “Timely State Complaint Decisions” and “Timely Due Process Hearing Decisions” scores in the Compliance Matrix; and
- (5) a Data Display, which presents certain State-reported data in a transparent, user-friendly manner and is helpful for the public in getting a broader picture of State performance in key areas.

As noted above, the State's 2017 determination is Needs Assistance. A State's 2017 RDA Determination is Needs Assistance if the RDA Percentage is at least 60% but less than 80%. A State would also be Needs Assistance if its RDA Determination percentage is 80% or above, but the Department has imposed Special Conditions on the State's last three *IDEA* Part C grant awards (for FFYs 2014, 2015, and 2016), and those Special Conditions are in effect at the time of the 2017 determination.

OSEP will continue Special Conditions on South Carolina's FFY 2017 *IDEA* Part C grant to ensure: (1) correction of noncompliance, as required by *IDEA* section 635(a)(10)(A) and 34 CFR §§303.120 and 303.700(e); (2) timely provision of *IDEA* Part C services, as required by 34 CFR §303.342(e); and (3) the timely evaluation, assessment, and initial Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP meeting within 45 days of referral, as required by 34 CFR §§303.310(a) and (b) and 303.342(a). The specific reporting requirements and other required actions will be described in OSEP's FFY 2017 *IDEA* Part C grant award documents.

OSEP is concerned about the State's failure to submit Phase III of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) by April 3, 2017, which was a factor in the State's determination. The SSIP is critical to the State's efforts to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. South Carolina's FFY 2017 *IDEA* Part C grant also includes Special Conditions to ensure submission of the first year of Phase III of the SSIP and timely submission and implementation of the second year of Phase III of the SSIP, which is due on April 2, 2018.

As a reminder, your State must report annually to the public, by posting on the State lead agency's website, on the performance of each early intervention service (EIS) program located in the State on the targets in the SPP/APR as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days after the State's submission of its FFY 2015 SPP/APR. In addition, your State must:

- (1) review EIS program performance against targets in the State's SPP/APR;
- (2) determine if each EIS program "meets the requirements" of Part C, or "needs assistance," "needs intervention," or "needs substantial intervention" in implementing Part C of the *IDEA*;
- (3) take appropriate enforcement action; and
- (4) inform each EIS program of its determination.

Further, your State must make its SPP/APR available to the public by posting it on the State lead agency's website. Within the next several days, OSEP will be finalizing a State Profile that:

- (1) will be accessible to the public;
- (2) includes the State's determination letter and SPP/APR, and all related State and OSEP attachments; and
- (3) can be accessed via a URL unique to your State, which you can use to make your SPP/APR available to the public.

We will provide you with the unique URL when it is live.

OSEP appreciates the State's efforts to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and looks forward to working with your State over the next year as we continue our important work of improving the lives of children with disabilities and their

families. Please contact your OSEP State Lead if you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ruth E. Ryder

Ruth E. Ryder
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

cc: State Part C Coordinator