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

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R.I.D.E./Student, Community And Academic Supports

Honorable Debora A. Gist
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Dear Commissioner Gist:

We have approved your State's application for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 funds under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Part B). Our approval is based on review of the application submitted by the Rhode Island Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), on May 12, 2014, including assurances provided in Section II and incorporated by reference to this letter as noted in Enclosure A.

OSEP's March 26, 2014 memo to the State noted that RIDE did not satisfy the applicable IDEA public participation requirements of section 612(a)(19) and 34 CFR §300.165 to conduct public hearings for amendments to the Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of Children with Disabilities that was amended on September 9, 2013 and became effective on October 9, 2013. Specifically, the State revised §§300.154(d), 300.516(b) and 300.532(c) of its regulations. Public comments were accepted from July 17, 2013 through August 17, 2013. The State's website indicated that public hearings were held on April 15, 2014 and April 17, 2014 in regards to the September 9, 2013 amendments and therefore, the State has met the requirements as listed above.

Please note that as part of your application for FFY 2014, your State has made an assurance, pursuant to 34 CFR §80.11(c), that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations in effect during the FFY 2014 grant period. Any changes made by the State, after OSEP approval, to information that is a part of a State's application, must meet the public participation requirements in 34 CFR §300.165.

Enclosed are the State's FFY 2014 grant awards for funds currently available under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 -- P.L. 113-76 for the IDEA Part B Section 611 (Grants to States) and Section 619 (Preschool Grants) programs. These funds are available for obligation by States from July 1, 2014, through September 30, 2016, in accordance with 34 CFR §76.709.

The amount in your award for Section 619 represents the full amount of funds to which you are entitled. However, the amount shown in your award for the Section 611 program is only part of the total funds that will be awarded to you for FFY 2014. Of the $11,472,848,000 appropriated

for Section 611 in FFY 2014, $2,189,465,000 is available for awards on July 1, 2014, and $9,283,383,000 will be available for awards on October 1, 2014. Under the Section 611 formula, in a year in which the amount available for allocations to States increases from the prior year, subject to certain maximum and minimum funding requirements, State allocations are based on the amount that each State received from FFY 1999 funds, the general population in the age range for which each state ensures a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities, and the number of children living in poverty in the age range for which each State ensures FAPE to all children with disabilities.[1]

For FFY 2014, the appropriation for the Preschool Grants program is $353,238,000. Under the Section 619 formula in a year in which the amount available for allocations to States increases from the prior year and is less than the amount allocated to the States for FFY 1997, State allocations are based on the amount that each State received under Section 619 for FFY 1997, ratably reduced, subject to the requirement that no State's allocation shall be less than its section 619 allocation for the preceding fiscal year.

Enclosure B provides a short description of how Section 611 funds were allocated and how those funds can be used. In addition, Table I in Enclosure B shows funding levels for distribution of Section 611 funds and the parameters for within-State allocations.

Enclosure C provides a short description of how Section 619 funds were allocated and how those funds can be used. In addition, Table II in Enclosure C shows State-by-State funding levels for distribution of Section 619 funds.

Section 611(e)(1)(C) of the IDEA provides that "[p]rior to expenditure of funds under this paragraph [section 611(e)(1) concerning funds for State administration], the State shall certify to the Secretary that the arrangements to establish responsibility for services pursuant to section 612(a)(12)(A) are current." We read this provision to mean that if a State does not have interagency agreements or other arrangements in place to establish responsibility for the provision of services, the State may not expend funds available to the State under Section 611(e)(1) [State administration funds] until the State has these agreements or arrangements in place.

Under section 608(a)(2) of the IDEA, each State that receives funds under IDEA Part B is required to inform in writing local educational agencies located in the State of any State-imposed rule, regulation, or policy that is not required by IDEA or Federal regulations. A State may use the same list of State-imposed rules, regulations, and policies that it was required to submit to the Department in Section IV of its IDEA Part B application for this purpose.

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[1] The amount that a State's allocation may increase from one year to the next is capped at the amount the State receive in the prior year multiplied by the sum of 1.5 percent and the percentage increase in the total amount appropriated for Part B of IDEA from the prior year. Additionally, the maximum amount that a State may receive in any fiscal year is calculated by multiplying the number of children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 served during the 2004-2005 academic year in that State by 40 percent of the annual per pupil expenditure (APPE), adjusted by the rate of annual change in the sum of 85 percent of the children aged 3 through 21 for whom that State ensures FAPE and 15 percent of the children living in poverty. Because there are multiple caps, in any year the "effective cap" on a State's allocation is the lowest cap for that State.

The enclosed grant awards of FFY 2014 funds are made with the continued understanding that this Office may, from time to time, require clarification of information within your application, if necessary. These inquiries may be necessary to allow us to appropriately carry out our administrative responsibilities related to IDEA Part B.

In Section V of its IDEA Part B application, pursuant to the authority in IDEA section 618(a)(3), the State was required to submit data on the total amount of State financial support made available for special education and related services for children with disabilities in State fiscal year (SFY) 2012 and SFY 2013. If OSEP receives information through audits, fiscal monitoring or other means that raises questions about the data your State has provided in Section V, OSEP will follow-up with your State.

As a reminder, all prime recipients of IDEA (Part B or Part C) funds, must report subaward information as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA), as amended in 2008. First-tier subaward information must be reported by the end of the following month from when the award was made or obligated. FFATA guidance is found at http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/rms-web-conferences.html. Please contact your State's Fiscal Accountability Facilitator if you have further questions.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the provision of quality educational services to children with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Melody Musgrove, Ed.D.
Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

Enclosure A
Enclosure B
Enclosure C

cc: State Director of Special Education