



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

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District Makes Significant Progress in Serving Children with Disabilities Under Part B of IDEA

WASHINGTON, DC – State Superintendent of Education Hanseul Kang announced today that the US Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has determined that the District of Columbia has made significant progress related to its ability to serve children ages 3-21 with qualifying disabilities under Part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), while continuing to meet requirements related to serving infants and toddlers with qualifying disabilities under Part C of IDEA.

As part of IDEA, states are provided with annual performance determinations based on OSEP’s review of reported data. Each year’s determination is primarily based on data reported during the previous federal fiscal year (FFY), which spans July 1-June 30. While the determinations are based on the totality of the state’s data, it is important to note the District’s FFY 2015 annual performance reports (APRs), which are based on the 2015-16 school year, serve as the foundation for the determination process.

Under IDEA, states can receive one of four determinations: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention, or needs substantial intervention.

In a June 28, 2017 letter to OSSE regarding the District’s annual Part B IDEA determination, OSEP noted that OSSE received a determination level of “needs assistance,” a marked improvement from last year’s determination of “needs intervention.” This change in determination moves the District from the “needs intervention” category for the first time in DC’s history receiving Part B determinations under IDEA.

In its Part B determination letter to OSSE, OSEP noted efforts made by OSSE leadership and staff to improve the state’s compliance with critical IDEA requirements and to improve results for DC’s children and youth with disabilities. DC’s performance in specific categories of compliance has shifted significantly. For example, in the 2008-09 school year, initial evaluations were being completed timely only at a rate of 68 percent. In OSSE’s most recent reporting

period, 93 percent of children were timely provided an initial evaluation. Similarly, in the 2008-09 school year, only 8 percent of infants and toddlers served in early intervention were timely transitioned to Part B. The District is currently transitioning children timely at a rate of 98 percent.

“This change in our Part B IDEA determination is the result of many years of thoughtful and diligent work by OSSE staff, in partnership with our city’s schools and sister agencies, as we work to turn around special education service delivery in DC,” said State Superintendent Kang. “We know we still have much more work to do, and we continue to maintain a singular focus on ensuring that our children with disabilities are well served. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that the city provides high-quality programming for all infants, toddlers, children, and youth with developmental delays and disabilities, so that they can access an excellent education that prepares them for a full and productive life.”

To learn more about OSEP’s 2017 determination letters for all states and jurisdictions, see: <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/ideafactsheet-determinations-2017.pdf>.