



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

December 12, 2000

(Address blacked out)

Dear (Name blacked out):

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Riley which was referred to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs for response. In your correspondence you expressed concern regarding the paperwork requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Department is constantly reviewing its regulations to ensure that paperwork burdens on States and local school districts are minimized. State educational agencies also periodically review their State requirements relating to the implementation of IDEA for this purpose. You may wish to contact the Florida Department of Education (FLDE) at the address and telephone number below about its efforts at minimizing the paperwork burden.

Ms. Shan Goff
Bureau of Instructional Support
and Community Services
Florida Department of Education
Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 614
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
Telephone: (904) 488-1570

The IDEA Amendments of 1997 actually reduces paperwork in a number of ways. One of the principle goals of the regulations is "focusing resources on teaching and learning, while reducing paperwork requirements that do not assist in improving educational results." In particular, IDEA contains a number of provisions that reduce unnecessary paperwork and direct resources to teaching and learning by: (1) permitting initial evaluations and reevaluations to be based on existing evaluation data and reports; (2) not requiring that eligibility be re-established through additional assessments when a triennial evaluation is conducted if the group of qualified professionals and the parent reviewing the data agree that the child continues to be a child with disability, and the parent does not request additional assessments; (3) eliminating unnecessary paperwork requirements that discourage the use of IDEA funds for teachers and other personnel who provide special education and related services in regular classrooms, while ensuring that the needs of children with disabilities in those classrooms are met; and (4) providing policies and procedures that demonstrate that Part B of IDEA eligibility conditions are met and thereafter amending them if changes are necessary. It is anticipated that through measures such as the above, school personnel including special education

Page 2

teachers, should be relieved of unnecessary paperwork and have more time to devote to providing instructional and support services to students with disabilities.

We appreciate your suggestions for improving the educational system for students with disabilities. You may wish to contact local and State officials at FLDE for consideration in this regard. In the meantime, if you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Sheila Friedman, the OSEP State contact for Florida, at (202) 205-9055. For your information, we are enclosing materials about the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

Thank you for all you do to improve the lives of students with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth R. Warlick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Kenneth R. Warlick
Director
Office of Special Education
Programs

Enclosures