



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

DEC 20 2000

Honorable John Edwards
301 Century Post Office Building
300 Fayetteville Street Mall
Raleigh, NC 27601
Dear Senator Edwards:

On behalf of the Assistant Secretary Judith E. Heumann, thank you for writing with regard to your constituent's concerns about the volume of paperwork which special educators must complete in order to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97). We apologize for the delay in responding to you. Because special education is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), your letter has been forwarded to us for response. Ms. Suzy Rosen Singleton of this Office spoke with Ms. Marilyn Dixon of your staff by telephone on May 16, 2000, and this letter is to summarize their telephone conversation as Ms. Dixon requested.

As you may know, the enactment of the requirements of the IDEA '97 involved extensive collaborative efforts and compromises on the part of various parties, including administrators, special educators, general educators, advocates, parents, and other stakeholders. One of the IDEA '97 goals in achieving quality programs and services for children with disabilities is to focus on teaching and learning while reducing paperwork. The IDEA '97 does not require the use of any specific forms in the school districts as long as the content included in such forms is consistent with that required by the IDEA '97. The State educational agency and/or the local educational agency may however choose to require the use of specific forms in its districts or schools. OSEP reviews the policies and procedures of the State educational agency to ensure that the State is in compliance with the IDEA '97.

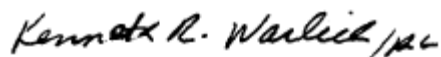
We are pleased to share that OSEP has been working with the Partnership grantees representing the various aspects of the community involved in implementing the IDEA, in order to develop guidance to the States regarding Individualized Education Program (IEP) forms. The Partnerships include the Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education (ASPIRE), the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE), the IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators (ILIAD), and the Policy Maker Partnership (PMP) for Implementing IDEA '97. State and local educational agencies can verify the appropriateness of their own forms by comparing such forms with the guidance. We have enclosed a copy of the guidance, which was promulgated in the summer of 2000.

If your constituent feels that a specific form in his or her district may not be in compliance with the IDEA '97 requirements, there is an option of resolving this disagreement through the filing of a complaint with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Once an individual files a complaint under IDEA '97, the NCDPI must investigate and resolve the complaint within 60 days after the complaint is filed. The complainant will receive a written decision addressing each allegation in the complaint. Complaints should be directed to the following address:

E. Lowell Harris, Director
Exceptional Children Division
Department of Public Instruction
301 N. Wilmington Street, Education Building #570
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
(919) 715-1565

Our office strongly supports efficient and effective implementation of IDEA '97 by administrators, educators, parents, and advocates. Should your constituent have further questions, please encourage him or her to contact Ms. Linda Whitsett, OSEP's State contact for North, Carolina, to discuss this further. Ms. Whitsett may be contacted at (202) 205-8013. Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Kenneth R. Warlick
Director
Office of Special Education
Programs

Enclosure