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March 8, 2018

Mr. Louis Taylor
Superintendent
Worcester Co. Board of Education
6270 Worcester Highway
Newark, MD 21841

Dear Mr. Louis Taylor:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) is required by the United States Department of Education (USDE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to make determinations annually regarding the performance of students with disabilities for each local preschool and special education program using one of the following four determination categories: "Meets Requirements," "Needs Assistance," "Needs Intervention," or "Needs Substantial Intervention" [34 CFR §§300.600 and 300.604]¹. The MSDE, DSE/EIS uses a results-based rubric for given indicators to evaluate the performance of each local school system in meeting the State's identified targets. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 Part B determinations, the Worcester County Board of Education has achieved the determination status of "**Meets Requirements.**"

Attached please find supporting documentation:

1. *FFY 2016 Determination Overview* (identifies the Part B Indicators used to assign a FFY 2017 local determination status on page two – please note the addition of fiscal accountability, State complaints/due process hearings, and preschool least restrictive environment data);
2. *FFY 2016 Local Determination Scoring Criteria* (provides a six-year graduated results driven accountability plan used to make a local determination by year); and
3. *FFY 2016 Annual Report Card on State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Reports (APR) Part B Indicators* (provides a three-year local data analysis and required actions for students with disabilities ages three through 21).

The MSDE, DSE/EIS is committed to maintaining a balanced focus on results and compliance to narrow the school readiness and achievement gaps. Please note in FFY 2019 the determination status for each local school system will reflect the July 1, 2018 proposed revision to Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) regarding the identification of significant disproportionality. Maryland's proposed revised definition of significant disproportionality, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), includes the three to five years of age population. Beginning in 2016, the DSE/EIS has provided guidance, technical assistance, and professional learning opportunities to support local school systems in the implementation of revised data collection processes and review of local policies, procedures, and practices. Please note that FFY 2016-17 and FFY 2017-18 data capturing suspension/expulsion (in and out of school), identification by race/ethnicity, and identification by race/ethnicity and disability will be used for the FFY 2019 local determination status.

¹ USDE, OSEP uses state National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) participation and performance data for students with disabilities to assign Maryland's special education determination status (see attached "NAEP"). DSE/EIS will be analyzing local testing protocols and decisions for the NAEP assessment.

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To support Maryland's commitment to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps for students with disabilities and their families, the implementation of the DSE/EIS five-year strategic plan provides a statewide differentiated framework for general supervision and performance support. Based upon a comprehensive data analysis (including the SPP/APR local determination status), the Worcester County Board of Education has been assigned the "**Universal**" tier for the delivery of the DSE/EIS technical assistance model for results.

Local school systems are strongly encouraged to work closely with their local Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) to analyze local data and infrastructure for the implementation of specially designed instruction. The analysis should guide the development of strategies for data-informed decision-making, increased parent partnerships, strategic collaboration, and the use of evidence-based practices with fidelity to improve the results for children and youth with disabilities and their families. As we continue this shift in focus to results-driven accountability, the MSDE, DSE/EIS will provide State and local professional learning opportunities with coaching.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to equity and efficiency for excellence. The MSDE is committed to supporting the efforts of the Worcester County Board of Education to improve results for children and youth with disabilities and their families. If you have any questions or wish to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at 410-767-0238.

Sincerely,



Marcella E. Franczkowski, M.S.
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Special Education/
Early Intervention Services

MEF/AM/cc

Attachments

c: Karen B. Salmon
Carol A. Williamson
Rae Ann Record