

June 14, 2024

Dr. Jeffrey Lawson
Superintendent
Cecil County Public Schools
201 Booth Street
Elkton, MD 21921

Dear Dr. Lawson:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) is required by the United States Department of Education (USDE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to make determinations annually regarding the performance of each Local Infants and Toddlers Program (LITP) using one of the following four determination categories: “Meets Requirements,” “Needs Assistance,” “Needs Intervention,” or “Needs Substantial Intervention” [34 CFR §§303.700 and 300.703]. The MSDE, DEI/SES uses a results-based rubric for given indicators to evaluate each local Infants and Toddlers Program’s performance in meeting the State’s identified targets. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 determinations, the Cecil County Infants and Toddlers Program has achieved the determination status of **Meets Requirements**.

Attached please find supporting documents:

- *FFY 2022 Determination Overview* (identifies the Part C Indicators used to assign a local determination on page 1 – please note that fiscal and complaints/due process hearing data continues to be used);
- *FFY 2022 Local Determination Scoring Criteria* (provides a six-year graduated results-driven accountability plan used to make a local determination by year);
- *FFY 2022 Annual Report Card on SPP/APR Part C Indicators* (provides a three-year local data analysis and required actions); and
- *DEI/SES Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision and Support* (provides the framework used by the DEI/SES to guide the level of monitoring and corresponding level of performance support provided to LITPs).

To implement a results-driven accountability system, we continue to focus on the three child outcome indicators. In 2020, a revised baseline was proposed to the USDE and new targets were established. Please see the attached *Part C Child Outcomes Baselines and Targets for Local Determinations* document. The DEI/SES has developed one set of baselines and targets that are inclusive of both children who receive services from birth to three and children who receive services through an Extended Individualized Family Service Plan. The decision to examine child outcomes as one group independent of age was unanimously supported by LITP Directors and Preschool Coordinators through a stakeholder discussion held in 2014. Please note the attached revised baseline and targets for local determinations of Maryland’s LITPs will not be included in Maryland’s Annual Performance Report to OSEP. For federal reporting, OSEP requested that Maryland report child outcomes data for children birth to three years separately from child outcomes data for children older than three so that comparisons could be made with other states that are not serving children through an IFSP after age three.

The shift to a more balanced accountability approach does not relieve the DEI/SES from ensuring compliance, correction of identified noncompliance, and the receipt of timely and accurate data. As a result of the accountability shift to an increased emphasis on results, an LITP's determination status may be impacted in the future. To support Maryland's commitment to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families, the implementation of the *DEI/SES Strategic Plan: Moving Maryland Forward* provides a statewide differentiated framework for general supervision and performance support. Based upon comprehensive data analysis (including the SPP/APR local determination status), the Cecil County Infants and Toddlers Program has been assigned the **Universal** tier for the delivery of the DEI/SES technical assistance model for results. Please see the *DEI/SES Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision* for more information.

LITPs are strongly encouraged to work closely with their Local Interagency Coordinating Council and Family Support Centers to perform an analysis of local data and infrastructure. 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 to improve the results for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families. As we continue this shift in focus to results-driven accountability, the MSDE, DEI/SES will provide State and local professional learning opportunities.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to excellence, equity, and efficiency. The MSDE is committed to supporting the efforts of the Cecil County Infants and Toddlers Program to improve results for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children 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,



Antoine L. Hickman, Ed.D.
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

Attachments

- c: Dr. Carey M. Wright, State Superintendent of Schools
- Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy State Superintendent
- Rebecca Miller, Director of Special Education
- Jennifer Ayers, Instructional Coordinator for Special Education
- DEI/SES Branch/Section Chiefs