



COLORADO
Department of Education

Exceptional Student Services Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202-5149

June 1, 2018

Dear Special Education Directors:

I hope this letter finds you well as you complete another successful school year. I would like to bring a couple of items to your attention as CDE finalizes the 2018-19 IDEA allocations for our Administrative Units (AUs) and State Operated Programs (SOPs). Colorado's Part B federal allocation for School Year (SY) 2018/19 is \$167,500,962, which reflects an increase of \$3,870,166 over SY 2017/18.

For the SY 2018/19, we will flow out the standard formula allocation of \$149,211,966 plus an additional \$5,000,000 to our AUs and SOPs, for a total of \$154,211,966. The additional \$5,000,000 will be coming out of the SY 2018/19 funds, so AUs and SOPs will have the full 27 months to allocate and spend the supplemental funds. This increase in IDEA funding provides the opportunity for AUs who have a determination of *Meets Requirements* to reduce their Maintenance of Effort (MOE) under CFR 300.205(a). There are, however, exceptions for AUs participating in voluntary Comprehensive Early Intervention Services (CEIS) activities. We will be providing more information regarding this in upcoming webinars in the near future. Finally, for the first time in several years the IDEA State Preschool allocation showed a slight increase in funding. The increase, although minimal, will be reflected in the FY 2018-19 IDEA Preschool allocations.

Moving forward, CDE intends to provide an additional two to five million dollars in IDEA Part B funds on an annual basis to our AUs and SOPs. Of course, funding at this increased level will be dependent upon our State's annual allocation or any unforeseen circumstances which may limit our ability to allocate additional funds. AUs/SOPs should use these funds to create improved and sustainable outcomes for students with disabilities.

Secondly, recent guidance from OSEP in how states utilize IDEA federal funds, specifically with participant support costs, will require changes to procedures at the state level. Participant support costs are defined in the Uniform Grant Guidance (200.75) as direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees), in connection with conferences or training projects. Below are changes that are to be implemented July 1, 2018 based on the recent guidance provided by OSEP.



- CDE is required to obtain OSEP approval to cover participant support costs with our state level set-aside funds. The ESSU is currently in the process of seeking that approval. Dependent upon whether OSEP approves the requests, local AUs/SOPs may bear the burden of covering costs for certain items (i.e., travel costs and meals associated with trainings, advisory committees, and professional development opportunities). CDE will notify special education directors of OSEP's decision as soon as it is received.
- In addition, AUs and SOPs will be required to follow the same requirements regarding the prior approval of participant support costs at the local level. The ESSU is currently in the process of developing procedures by which AUs and SOPs may gain approval through CDE. The ESSU will be providing additional guidance in the near future regarding this requirement.
- Our financial support to regional special education director meetings will continue; however, the support will be in the form of prior ESSU-approved resources (e.g., books, trainers, other materials). We would recommend that resources focus on improving outcomes for students with disabilities, such as those measured by the compliance indicators and results elements which are part of the AU determination. CDE will no longer provide funding for venues or meals for regional directors meetings due to the uncertainty of OSEP approval.

Thank you for all that you do for students with disabilities in Colorado. Your passion and dedication make a difference, and I am proud to be a part of this group of professionals. Please do not hesitate to contact the ESSU if you have any questions

Sincerely,

Paul Foster

Paul Foster, Ed.D.
Executive Director