

III.A.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:
May 6, 2015**

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-11 of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the 2015 grant application entitled "Annual State Application Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, as Amended in 2004, for Federal Fiscal Year 2015" to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and directs the Interim Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this sixth day of May, Two Thousand Fifteen.

Signed: _____
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner Designate
DATE: May 6, 2015
SUBJECT: State Plan for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 – Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) Entitlement Grants

Executive Summary

Introduction

The State Board of Education (SBE) is empowered by Section 10-11 of the Connecticut General Statutes, to receive federal funds for purposes described in Section 10-4, including fulfilling its duties as related to special education in Connecticut (CT). States, including CT, receive funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) Part B grant as a federal entitlement program to provide financial assistance for the education of children with disabilities, ages 3-21. In order for CT to remain eligible for this federal financial assistance, the state must submit an annual application for the grant. The grant application was publicized as required by the federal Office of Special Education Programs, for 60 days with a 30-calendar day comment period prior to submitting the application to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) by May 15, 2015. The grant application contains four sections describing how the state meets the eligibility requirements for the IDEA Part B grant. For FFY 2014, the state received an IDEA Part B grant in the amount of \$131,267,668. States have not received their anticipated allocation amount for FFY 2015.

History/Background

The IDEA Part B grant application contains four sections, each of which is designed to determine if a state meets the IDEA Part B eligibility requirements. The sections are identified below with brief explanations.

Section I is the Submission Statement, where the state gives the USDOE an assurance that it has in effect policies and procedures to meet all eligibility requirements of Part B of the IDEA as found in PL 108-446 of the IDEA and applicable regulations.

Section II of the grant application contains a list of assurances and certifications regarding state practices and policies, which, if the state indicates the assurances can be met, demonstrate compliance with the eligibility criteria found in the IDEA Part B. These attestations include basic requirements for (a) identification of all children who may be eligible for special education and related services; and (b) the process by which eligible children are located, identified and evaluated as well as provided services, if eligible. Included in the attestations are the following: provision of a free and appropriate public education to eligible children in the least restrictive environment; adequate and appropriate child find procedures to locate, identify and evaluate all children who may be eligible for services; development and implementation of an individualized education program for an eligible child; procedural safeguards to protect the rights of parents and children identified under the IDEA, including access to a complaint investigation system, mediation and an impartial due process hearing; maintaining the confidentiality of educational records; participation of private school students in IDEA Part B activities; state monitoring

activities; qualification of personnel; participation in state assessments; state maintenance of financial effort; examination of state data on the rate of suspensions and expulsions for children with disabilities disaggregated by race, gender and disability as compared to the rates for children who are not disabled; and policies and procedures to prevent overidentification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity, including children with disabilities within a particular impairment. The certifications include, but are not limited to, distribution of funds, provision of data to the Secretary of Education, lobbying standards and the requirement that if interagency agreements are utilized to provide service, such agreements are current.

Section III of the grant application details how the state will expend the IDEA Part B grant. The dollar figure used in the current application is the FFY 2014 figure, as the federal government has not released the FFY 2015 grant award figures to date. Once the state receives the 2015 figure, the use of funds section will be revised. The state received \$131,267,668 for FFY 2014. Of that amount, the state distributed \$115,332,960 to school districts. The state utilized \$15,934,708 for state administration and other state-level activities, which include monitoring and enforcement activities, complaint investigations, mediation and due process, support and direct service, technical assistance, personnel preparation and professional development activities.

Section IV of the grant application requires the state to identify state-imposed rules, which are not contained in the IDEA Part B. This section contains a listing of all state statutes and regulations that impact the provision of special education and related services for children with disabilities.

Currently, IDEA Part B funding is distributed as follows: each state is guaranteed base funding equal to the amount it received in FFY 1999. The remaining federal funds are made available at a level above the previous fiscal year aggregate amount as follows: 85 percent is allocated to states based on their relative share of children within the age range served by the IDEA; and 15 percent is allocated to states based on their relative share of children within that age range living in poverty.

Recommendation and Policy Implications

It is recommended that the SBE approve the Annual State Application for FFY 2015. The state has met all of the eligibility requirements for IDEA Part B and continues to ensure that services for eligible students are provided in accordance with the IDEA and state rules and regulations.

At the conclusion of the public review and comment period, all comments were analyzed and revisions were made to the document, as appropriate. The grant application will then be submitted to the Commissioner for her signature. The IDEA Part B grant application is due in Washington, D.C. by May 15, 2015.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez, Chief
Bureau of Special Education

Approved by:

Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**ABSTRACT OF STATE PLAN FOR THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT**

1. Statutory Reference and common name:

34 CFR Section 300 and 301, as amended in 2004, the Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities.

2. Period of time covered by plan:

The plan covers the activities from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2017. Funds are not released until the plan is approved.

3. Purpose of program:

The program allows the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to provide federal entitlement funding, information and technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) to assist with the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities, for children ages 3-21 (as defined by 34 CFR Sections 300.16 and 300.202). Amounts provided to the LEA must be expended in accordance with the applicable conditions as stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

4. Relationship of program to the State Board of Education (SBE) goals and objectives:

Grant application applies to the three SBE goals:

- goal one: high-quality preschool education for all students;
- goal two: high academic achievement of all students in reading, writing, mathematics and science; and
- goal three: high school reform.

5. Target population:

Approximately 65,100 children with disabilities, ages 3-21, in public schools, private schools, nonprofit schools and approved private special education programs.

6. Agencies eligible to submit application:

State Education Agency; in Connecticut this is the State Department of Education.

7. Funds disbursed:

Based on a preliminary figure of \$131,267,668, the projected disbursement includes \$115,332,960 for LEAs, \$15,934,708 for CSDE administration and other state level activities (e.g., professional development, contracts to other state agencies, etc.).

8. State matching funds:

There is a maintenance of effort requirement in which the State must not reduce the amount of state financial support for special education and related services for children with disabilities below the amount of that fiscal support for the preceding fiscal year in order to receive the IDEA funds in the subsequent year.

9. Impact on SBE state budget:

None

10. Percentage of funds for state administration:

CSDE – approximately 2.3 percent (\$2,978,026) for state administration and 9.9 percent (\$12,956,682) for other state level activities at CSDE’s discretion (e.g., professional development, contracts to other state agencies, etc.)

11. Percentage of funds to be distributed to local education agencies:

Approximately 87.8 percent (\$115,279,770)

12. Manner in which funds are to be distributed:

Payment to LEAs is made on a monthly basis upon request from the LEAs. Monthly requests exceeding one-twelfth of the total grant must be approved by the IDEA funds manager.

13. Manner in which proposed activities are to be evaluated:

Periodic monitoring and verification occurs through on-site visits to districts, document reviews and reviews of districts’ annual data submissions by the CSDE programmatic and fiscal/audit staff in order to determine the degree of local program compliance throughout the year. Each LEA submits an end-of-year financial report to the CSDE.

14. Results of evaluation of past activities under this plan:

Fiscal audits are reviewed by the CSDE Office of Internal Audit. Results are shared with the Bureau of Special Education (BSE). For those LEAs (18 based on 2012-13 data) that do not achieve “meets requirements,” extensive technical assistance and additional resources are given and there is heightened monitoring from the BSE. LEA progress toward “meets requirements” on the compliance indicators is monitored on a yearly basis. The goal is to reach 100% “meets requirements” for the compliance indicators.