



 Office of the
 State Superintendent of Education

MARCH 23, 2012

Dear Local Educational Agency Leaders,

As many of you are aware, OSSE has been engaged in the process of developing a plan that ensures sustainable management of the process and related data system for complying with Hearing Officer Determinations (HODs) and Settlement Agreement (SAs), in compliance with requirements related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the 2006 Blackman Jones Consent Decree.

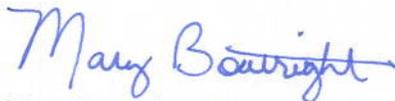
Additionally, the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has placed special conditions on the District's grant award due to longstanding noncompliance on key indicators. Specifically, the District of Columbia continues to have children who have incomplete and overdue initial placements, reevaluations, and outstanding obligations resulting from Hearing Officer Determinations (HODs) or Settlement Agreements (SAs). The District has been required to report regularly on its rate of reduction of the number of cases that are overdue in each of these categories (also known as 'backlog' cases), and the District is expected to completely eliminate this backlog.

In order to resolve outstanding cases related to HODs and SAs, data must be entered into the Blackman Jones Database (BJDB) by your LEA's BJDB designated user. To that end, OSSE issued State-level guidelines for HOD/SA implementation that went into effect September 1, 2011.

An updated version of the State-level guidelines for HOD/SA implementation is attached here to ensure compliance and alignment with LEA program requirements. These guidelines, which were developed with input from LEAs, apply to all open HODs and SAs. The guidelines are designed to standardize requirements and clarify the way in which implementation of required actions for each component of an HOD/SA will be measured.

If you have any questions about the guidelines or related matters, please contact Victoria Glick at victoria.glick@dc.gov or 202-724-7860.

Sincerely,



Mary Boatright, Esq.
Director of Monitoring & Compliance

Cc: Amy Maisterra, Assistant Superintendent for Specialized Education