



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

December 19, 2023



Ms. Trinell Bowman
Associate Superintendent-Special Education
Prince George's County Public Schools
John Carroll Administration Building
1400 Nalley Terrace
Hyattsville, Maryland 20785

RE: [REDACTED]
Reference: #24-059

Dear Parties:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Intervention Special Education Services (DEI/SES), has completed the investigation of the complaint regarding special education services for the above-referenced student. This correspondence is the report of the final results of the investigation.

ALLEGATIONS:

On October 27, 2023, the MSDE received a complaint from [REDACTED] hereafter, "the complainant," on behalf of the above-referenced student. In that correspondence, the complainant alleged that the Prince George's (PGCPS) violated certain provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with respect to the above-referenced student.

MSDE investigated the allegation that the PGCPS did not follow proper procedures when responding to a request for explanation and interpretation of the student's educational records sent on July 24, 2023, in accordance with 34 CFR §300.613.

BACKGROUND:

The student is eighteen years old, is identified as a student with Autism under the IDEA, and has an IEP that requires the provision of special education and related services. The student is placed by the PGCPS at the [REDACTED], a nonpublic, separate, special education school.

FINDINGS OF FACTS:

1. On July 24, 2023, the student's mother sent correspondence to the staff at the student's school inquiring into a discrepancy in the student's behavioral documentation.
2. There is no documentation, to date, that the student's mother has received a response to her request.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS:

Based on Findings of Facts #1 and #2, MSDE finds that there is no documentation that PGCPs followed proper procedures when responding to a request for explanation and interpretation of the student's educational records sent on July 24, 2023, in accordance with 34 CFR §300.613. Accordingly, MSDE finds a violation with respect to this allegation.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS/TIMELINES:

The IDEA requires that State complaint procedures include those for effective implementation of the decisions made as a result of a State complaint investigation, including technical assistance activities, negotiations, and corrective actions to achieve compliance (34 CFR §300.152). Accordingly, MSDE requires the public agency to provide documentation of the completion of the corrective actions listed below.

MSDE has established reasonable time frames below to ensure that noncompliance is corrected in a timely manner¹. This office will follow up with the public agency to ensure that it completes the required actions consistent with the MSDE Special Education State Complaint Resolution Procedures.

If the public agency anticipates that any of the time frames below may not be met, or if either party seeks technical assistance, they should contact Ms. Diane Eisenstadt, Compliance Specialist, Family Support and Dispute Resolution Branch, MSDE, to ensure the effective implementation of the action². Ms. Eisenstadt can be reached at (410) 767-7770 or by email at diane.eisenstadt@maryland.gov.

MSDE requires the PGCPs to provide documentation by January 10, 2024, that it has provided the student's mother with a response to her July 24, 2023, request.

As of the date of this correspondence, this Letter of Findings is considered final. This office will not reconsider the conclusions reached in this Letter of Findings unless new, previously unavailable documentation is submitted and received by this office within fifteen (15) days of the date of this correspondence. The new documentation must support a written request for reconsideration, and the written request must include a compelling reason for why the documentation was not made available during the investigation. Pending this office's decision on a request for reconsideration, the public agency must implement any corrective actions within the timelines reported in this Letter of Findings.

The parties maintain the right to request mediation or to file a due process complaint, if they disagree with the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for the student, including issues subject to this State complaint investigation, consistent with the IDEA. MSDE

¹ The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) states that the public agency correct noncompliance in a timely manner, which is as soon as possible, but not later than one (1) year from the date of identification of the noncompliance. The OSEP has indicated that, in some circumstances, providing the remedy could take more than one (1) year to complete. If noncompliance is not corrected in a timely manner, MSDE is required to provide technical assistance to the public agency, and take tiered enforcement action, involving progressive steps that could result in the redirecting, targeting, or withholding of funds, as appropriate.

² MSDE will notify the public agency's Director of Special Education of any corrective action that has not been completed within the established timeframe.

[REDACTED]
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recommends that this Letter of Findings be included with any request for mediation or a due process complaint.

Sincerely,

Dr. Antoine Hickman
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

AH/gl

c: Millard House II, Superintendent, PGCP
Keith Martson, Compliance Instructional Supervisor, PGCP
Darnell Henderson, General Counsel, PGCP
Lois Jones-Smith, Special Education Compliance Liaison<PGCP
Alison Barmat, Branch Chief, Family Support and Due Process, MSDE
Dr. Paige Brandford, Chief, Specialized Instruction, MSDE
Diane Eisenstadt, Compliance Specialist, MSDE
Nicole Elliott, Section Chief, Monitoring and Accountability, MSDE