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**IMMEDIATE ACTION
REQUESTED**
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April 8, 1996

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Testify at the public hearing on special education monitoring that is nearest to you OR send in your written comments to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs.

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in Washington is responsible for ensuring that Texas is in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Every five years, OSEP comes to Texas to monitor the Texas Education Agency. A team will be in Texas to conduct a series of public hearings the week of April 22. The same team will return in September for the actual monitoring visit.

OSEP will be looking at Texas' implementation of both Part B (special education) and Part H (early childhood intervention). You can comment on either program, or both. The information they get during the hearings or through letters will help them identify what issues parents are most concerned about when they come again in September to visit school districts.

Please try to attend one of the public hearings. If you cannot, you are encouraged to submit written comments to the team. Written comments should go to :

*Tues 23
At Work*

Ms. Debra Sturdivant or (Part B)
Dr. Bobbi Stettner-Eaton (Part H)
OSEP
Department of Education
330 C Street, S..W.
Switzer Building
Washington, D.C. 20202-2722

A copy of the hearing schedule is enclosed. If you received a notice directly from OSEP, you may have the wrong date for the Houston hearing, The correct date is April 25.

For additional information, call the Office of Special Education at TEA (512)-463-9414 or Early Childhood Intervention (512)-502-4900.

OSEP PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

| DATE/TIME | LOCATION |
|---|---|
| <p>Monday,</p> <p>April 22, 1996</p> <p>6:30 - 9:30 p.m.</p> | <p>Austin</p> <p>William B. Travis Building Room 1-111 1701 North Congress Avenue</p> |
| <p>Tuesday,</p> <p>April 23, 1996</p> <p>6:30 - 9:30 p.m.</p> | <p>Fort Worth</p> <p>Education Service Center Region XI Conference Rooms 1 - 3 3001 N. Freeway</p> |
| <p>Wednesday,</p> <p>April 24, 1996</p> <p>6:30 - 9:30 p.m.</p> | <p>Harlingen</p> <p>City of Harlingen Casa del Sol 221 E. Madison</p> |
| <p>Wednesday,</p> <p>April 24, 1996</p> <p>6:30 - 9:30 p.m.</p> | <p>Lubbock</p> <p>Education Service Center Region SVII Room 229 1111 West Loop 289</p> |
| <p>Thursday,</p> <p>April 25, 1996</p> <p>6:30 - 9:30 p.m.</p> | <p>El Paso</p> <p>Education Service Center Region XIX Room - Horizon 6611 Boeing Drive</p> |
| <p>Thursday,</p> <p>April 25, 1996</p> <p>6:30 - 9:30 p.m.</p> | <p>Houston</p> <p>Education Service Center Region IV Professional Development Center Room 101 7145 W. Tidwell</p> |

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMMENTS

The following list can be used to help you organize your written or oral comments for the OSEP monitoring team. If you make oral comments, please also provide them with a written copy.

Part B: Special Education

REMEMBER THAT OSEP IS HERE TO MONITOR THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY, NOT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT. THEREFORE, YOUR EXPERIENCES AND COMMENTS ARE MOST HELPFUL IF YOU CAN RELATE THEM TO THE ROLE OF THE TEA IN ASSURING THAT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TEXAS RECEIVE A FREE AND APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Assessment: Was your child's first assessment completed in 60 calendar days as required? If you obtained an independent evaluation, were the results considered by the ARD team? Was your child assessed for his need for assistive technology? Were the results of the evaluation explained to you?

Least Restrictive Environment: Was the first placement considered for your child one in a regular classroom with the provision of supplementary aids and services? Does your child attend the school he would attend if he did not have a disability? Were his needs rather than his disability the basis of the placement? Does your child have regular meaningful opportunities to be with students his age who do not have disabilities? Are there adequate training opportunities for school personnel to learn to work with students with disabilities in integrated settings?

Transition: If your child is 16 years old, does he have an individual transition plan (ITP)? Did representatives of agencies other than the school district attend the ITP meeting? Do parents in your district know about transition planning? If so, where did they get the information? Do

you believe the school district is preparing your child to work and live as independently as possible?

Related Services: Is your child receiving needed related services? Are students required to attend particular campuses in order to receive related services? Has your district cut back on related services because of funding? Has your child been evaluated for assistive technology and, if needed, is it being provided?

Discipline: Has your child been repeatedly suspended or expelled? If needed, is a behavior management plan a part of your child's IEP? Has your child been disciplined without consideration of whether the behavior was related to the disability? Has your child ever been put on a homebound program for disciplinary reasons? Does your district's alternative education program implement the IEPs of special education students? What impact have the new state laws on discipline had on students with disabilities in your district?

Personnel: To your knowledge, is instruction to students with disabilities provided by certified personnel or do aides "teach" some classrooms? Does your district have the personnel to implement IEPs? Are regular education teachers given the training and support they need to successfully teach students with disabilities?

Procedural Safeguards: Have your rights and those of your child been adequately explained to you? Do you get adequate notice of meetings? Have you been able to see and get copies of your child's school records if requested? Do you think the state's new parental rights booklet is adequate?

Individual Education Plans (IEP): Is your child's IEP truly an individualized plan? Is your child's IEP based as much as possible on the general education curriculum for students her age? Are required modifications implemented? Do you believe your input was adequately incorporated into your child's IEP? Does the IEP list the modifications your child needs to take statewide tests or was she automatically exempted from participation because she receives special education?

Does your district provide IEPs in Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents?

TEA Complaint Process: Have you called either the TEA hotline or made a written complaint to TEA? If so, was the matter resolved to your satisfaction? Was the complaint resolved within required timelines?

TEA Monitoring: To your knowledge, have the findings of TEA monitoring visits made a difference in the education provided to your child and others? Did you know in advance when TEA would be monitoring your district and were you given an opportunity to give input? Are the results of monitoring visits communicated to parents and others?

Part H (Early Childhood Intervention services for children with developmental delays from birth through age two)

This is the first time OSEP has monitored for compliance with the requirements of Part H of the IDEA. If your child is currently receiving (or recently received) ECI services, OSEP would like to hear your experiences. Following are some issues you might want to consider in making your comments:

...How did you find out about ECI services?

...Were you an active part of your child's evaluation?

...Is/was your child provided the services the evaluation showed she needs?

...Is/was your child's individual plan (IFSP) based on the needs of your child and your family rather than determined by the services the local program offers?

...Did ECI staff help your child smoothly transition from ECI to another program at age 3?

...Were you told that ECI can provide services in settings such as

community child care programs?

...Have you ever made a complaint about your local program to the state office in Austin? If so, were you satisfied with the results?

...Has your local ECI program been monitored by the state office? If so, do you know the results?

Keep up the good work!

Denise Brady