June 7, 2010

Mr. Ron Huberman
Chief Executive Officer
City of Chicago School District 299
125 South Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60603-5200

Dear Mr. Huberman:

I am writing this letter to offer some clarification for the expectations for the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP). TAOEP is described in the School Code of Illinois at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/010500050K2-3.66.htm. As stated in the School Code, TAOEP is established to offer modified instructional programs or other services designed to prevent students from dropping out of school. Chicago Public Schools receives 26.8 percent of the TAOEP budget line as part of the block grant. Historically CPS uses these funds for other services rather than modified instruction (optional education). The expectation for expenditure of these funds is to provide direct attendance and truancy intervention services to students.

Some of the common truancy best practice interventions to help reduce the dropout rate are listed below. Other TAOEP projects do not offer all of these services rather they offer the services that have high impact for the student population receiving services in each program.

**Academic Services**
- Academic Instruction
- Academic Counseling
- GED Instruction
- Enrolled in Community College Courses
- Enrolled in Evening School Classes
- Enrolled in Summer School Classes
- Tutoring
- Credit Recovery Program
Non-Academic Services
- Court-Related Services
- Day Care Services
- Health-Related Service
- Home Visits
- Life Skills Training
- Mentoring
- Parenting Classes for Students
- Personal Counseling
- Referral for Social/Academic Services
- Monitoring
- Support Services for Parents/Families
- Transportation

Career Related
- Career Service
- Work Experience

Many projects decide which type students (truant, chronic truant, potential dropout or retrieved dropout), grades and schools to serve because TAOEP funding is not enough to serve all students with attendance issues with all services.

Each year TAOEP projects submit end of year student statistical data. Information on CPS students, services provided, class promotion, credits earned and pre and post attendance has been inconsistent or sometimes unavailable in the past. Since over 50 percent of the students reported as receiving TAOEP services are CPS students, it would be beneficial to have accurate reporting of the students that receive CPS TAOEP funded services.

I hope this helps to clarify the expectations of expenditure of TAOEP funds awarded to Chicago Public Schools. Should you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the program person, Sally Veach, at sveach@isbe.net or 217-524-4832.

Sincerely,

Monique Chism, Ph.D.
Division Administrator
Innovation and Improvement

cc: Kimberlyn McNutt
June 7, 2010

Kimberlyn McNutt
Chicago Public Schools
Fifth Floor Attendance and Truancy Department
125 South Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60603

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Sincerely,

Monique Chism, Ph.D.
Division Administrator
Innovation and Improvement
Kimberlyn,

I couldn’t find Cynthia’s e-mail address so please forward this to her.

Below is the narrative the TAOEP RFP about the Individualized Optional Education Plan. It really summarized the portion of the Administrative Code well but if you wish to read the Code for yourself the citing is 23 Ill. Adm Code CH I, Section 205.35 b. Please let me know if you have any questions about this.

An Individualized Optional Education Plan (IOEP), which is a written document that outlines an individual’s academic, vocational and/or life skill needs, as well as goals and objectives and various educational and social experiences needed to reach those goals and objectives. The development of this plan must involve school officials, the student, and the student’s parents or legal guardians, if the student is less than 18 years old. The IOEP for each student must include:
1. Learning objectives or individual outcomes, such as increased school attendance, course credit, graduation, gains in achievement level, or employment;
2. The basis upon which the student is referred to the program;
3. The educational, social and/or career development services that will be provided to achieve the learning objectives or individual outcomes identified for that student;
4. Assessment procedures to determine the degree to which the student is achieving his or her learning objectives or individual outcomes;
5. A time period sufficient to allow the student to achieve those objectives or outcomes; and
6. A statement that the student, parent, or guardian has the ultimate choice of whether to accept the IOEP that is offered or to return to or remain in the regular education program of the school district attended.

I thought the call was productive this morning. Thanks to all for taking the time to participate.

Sally Veach
Principal Consultant
Innovation & Improvement Division
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
217-524-4832