



Illinois State Board of Education

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James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents and State-Approved Directors of Special Education

FROM: Ms. Heather Calomese, Executive Director of Special Education Services

RE: Updated Extension Timeline: Procedural Change in Allocating IDEA Flow-Through and Preschool Funds

DATE: January 11, 2018

BACKGROUND

In July 2018, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) announced a procedural change in how IDEA Part B funds will be distributed in Illinois. The Memo outlined why a procedural change was necessary and identified the steps that ISBE would take to support districts and cooperatives with full implementation by June 30, 2019.

After engagement with the field, ISBE announced in October 2018 that cooperatives would have the option of submitting a request for a 6-month extension. This extension would allow cooperatives to meet the new procedural guidelines by December 31, 2019.

Between October 2018 and December 2018, the internal IDEA Part B Flow-Through Project Planning Team continued to scope the project to ensure a smooth transition for both ISBE and the field.

Throughout this time period, ISBE received and heard testimony from cooperatives that formally requested a 12-month extension as opposed to a 6-month extension. During this time frame, ISBE leadership also engaged with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the United States Department of Education.

UPDATED TIMELINE: 12-Month Extension

ISBE will now allow cooperatives to apply for a 12-month extension. ISBE understands the issues the field has brought forward. In addition, the feedback we received from OSEP has assured us that we have made a reasonable decision to allow for a 12-month extension. We are currently in the final stages of finalizing the extension application.

ISBE strongly encourages the field to complete the transition by June 30, 2019, as originally requested and will continue to support entities with that process. Please be advised, however, that if

cooperatives request a full 12-month extension and do not meet the June 30, 2020 timeline, funds will automatically flow to school districts.

We know that there are several questions that are likely to be asked about this process and these timelines, and we want to be sure to attempt to answer as many of them as possible. Specifically, we acknowledge the following:

1. We are now fully staffed in the grants area with five full time grants staff. ISBE is ready to handle the volume of new grants that need to be reviewed and approved.
2. This process has evolved with the input of leaders from the field and the involvement of OSEP. When ISBE granted the 6-month extension timeline in October, that was the best possible solution at that time. As the process evolved in recent months, we continued to work with our contacts toward a better solution and ultimately landed where we are today.
3. OSEP personnel have never softened in their desire for ISBE to comply with the Hokenson letter.

Additionally, we are excited to announce the following opportunities for technical assistance in the near future:

- IAASE regional meetings
- February IAASE Conference
- Dedicated webpage for the IDEA Part B Allocation Procedural Change
- Webinars

If you have questions or comments now, please submit them to me at hcalomes@isbe.net

We hope that this information is helpful to you.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the leaders from the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) who have worked with us during the past several weeks to make this timeline possible.

In partnership,

Heather Calomese
Executive Director of Special Education
Illinois State Board of Education