



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY  
12234

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
Office of Performance Improvement and Management Services  
O: 518.473-4706  
F: 518.474-5392

March 21, 2017

Hon. Thomas P. DiNapoli  
New York State Comptroller  
110 State Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 170 of the Executive Law, the following are actions that the State Education Department (Department) has taken, or will be taking, to implement the recommendations contained in the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) Final Audit Report (2016-S-47) Compliance with the Reimbursable Cost Manual: Benchmark Family Services, Inc. (BFS).

**Recommendation 1:** Review the disallowances identified by our audit and, if warranted, make the necessary adjustments to the costs reported on BFS's CFR and to BFS's tuition reimbursement rates.

The Department is currently in the process of reviewing the Consolidated Fiscal Report (CFR) and OSC audit work papers and will make necessary adjustments and recover any overpayments as appropriate by recalculating tuition rates.

**Recommendation 2:** Remind BFS officials of the pertinent SED requirements that relate to the deficiencies we identified.

The Department will continue to provide technical assistance whenever requested and will strongly recommend the BFS officials take advantage of our availability to help them better understand the standards for reimbursement as presented in Regulation and the Reimbursable Cost Manual (RCM). Furthermore, CFR training is available online on the Department's webpage. The Department recommends that all individuals signing the CFR certification statements, namely Executive Directors and Certified Public Accountants, complete this training. This training is a requirement for preschool special education providers upon approval and re-approval. The Department intends to require that this training be mandatory for all providers.

Furthermore, the Department has requested that BFS identify the actions it has taken to cure and correct the deficiencies and/or violations identified in the audit. BFS's submission to the Department must be certified by its Chief Executive Officer, with an attestation from each director, officer, trustee, and shareholder, and must contain all

relevant information describing how policies, procedures and practices have been revised to address the specific findings of the audit, and how systemic changes to the internal controls and financial oversight have been implemented.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Suzanne Bolling, Director of Special Education Fiscal Services at 518-474-3227.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Cates-Williams". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sharon Cates-Williams

c: Christopher Suriano  
Suzanne Bolling