



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

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January 31, 2017

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

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli:

The following is the New York State Education Department's (Department) response to the final audit report, 2016-S-10: Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Program: Monitoring of Health and Safety Requirements.

Recommendation 1: Develop requirements and issue formal guidance for school districts to follow when performing health and safety inspections of UPK facilities.

We agree with the need for a unified system to ensure that New York State UPK providers adhere to health and safety requirements. The Department has addressed Recommendation 1 by creating a Prekindergarten Health and Safety Checklist, which along with an accompanying guidance memo, was emailed to all 460 school districts operating state-funded Prekindergarten programs on October 19, 2016. The Prekindergarten Health and Safety Checklist and guidance memo can be viewed at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/>. The Prekindergarten Health and Safety Checklist and memo will be re-sent at the beginning of each subsequent school year.

Recommendation 2: Implement a structured system to monitor school districts' oversight and inspections of health and safety compliance of all UPK providers. The system should include procedures to ensure that deficiencies identified during inspections are corrected in a timely manner.

We agree with this recommendation. The Department will modify its required electronic report which school districts submit annually to include a new section in which school districts will list all prekindergarten program providers, their respective locations, and any deficiencies noted during their site visits to ensure health and safety compliance. The report will include the date(s) that deficiencies were identified and corrected, and any other subsequent actions by the district. The Department will review the report and follow-up as necessary (e.g., communication with licensor, site visit, desk audit).

Sincerely,

Sharon Cates-Williams

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Renee Rider
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