



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**JACK O'CONNELL**  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

March 23, 2009

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

### **NOTICE OF SUSPENSION OF ALL NON-MANDATED ONSITE MONITORING VISITS**

As I announced in my State of Education Address on February 3, 2009, the California Department of Education (CDE) is suspending all non-mandated **onsite** Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) visits for at least one year. This includes the CPM non-mandated onsite visits for local educational agencies (LEAs) that had been scheduled between February 3, 2009, and June 30, 2009. During these challenging times, I want districts and schools to be able to focus their energy on improving student achievement and not on preparing for program audits.

This focus on student achievement is further supported by unprecedented flexibility for categorical programs as a result of the 2009 Budget Act. For LEAs that exercise this flexibility at a public hearing, the categorical programs included "shall be deemed to be in compliance with the program and funding requirements contained in statutory, regulatory, and provisional language" (Senate Bill 4, Third Extraordinary Session, Chapter 12, Statutes of 2009, Section 15). You can find additional budget details in my February 25, 2009, letter to County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators regarding Action on 2008 and 2009 Budget Acts on the CDE Letters Year 2009 Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr09ltr.asp>.

However, the CDE remains responsible for providing continual oversight of federally funded categorical programs and state programs not included in the flexibility option. It is possible through these continuing monitoring efforts, that an on-site visit (on a case-by-case basis), using the CPM process, may be necessary to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. In addition to onsite visits, the CDE provides this oversight using multiple methods, including:

- Collecting, analyzing and monitoring student and fiscal data
- Collecting, analyzing and monitoring categorical program student performance data
- Providing Audit Guidelines for use by independent auditors

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- Providing onsite and LEA self-monitoring instruments for categorical programs
- Requiring self-monitoring by each funded LEA

Monitoring required outside the CPM process for specific programs, including Child Development, Educational Equity, and Special Education, will continue during the remainder of the current year. The CDE program offices responsible for any of these mandated reviews will contact your LEA to notify you if you have been selected and will schedule the review directly with your LEA.

During this CPM onsite visit suspension period, LEAs that are participating in the pilot of our on-line reporting system are asked to continue to upload documents to that system. In addition, all LEAs should continue to maintain appropriate records.

I have directed my staff to use the time and resources they will save from not conducting onsite reviews to conduct a top-to-bottom review of our compliance monitoring system. I want to see a redesigned system that focuses the greatest attention on those schools that need the most assistance. As a result, this new system should be based on student achievement results. The outcome of this work will frame the future of our monitoring system.

If you have any questions regarding the suspension of all non-mandated onsite monitoring visits, please contact Patrick McMenamin, Manager, Categorical Program Monitoring Office, at 916-319-0935 or by e-mail at [pmcmenam@cde.ca.gov](mailto:pmcmenam@cde.ca.gov). If you have any questions regarding my February 25, 2009, letter, or the state education budget, please contact Carol Bingham, Director, Fiscal Policy Division, at 916-324-4728 or by e-mail at [cbingham@cde.ca.gov](mailto:cbingham@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



JACK O'CONNELL

JO:fb

cc: Categorical Program Monitoring Local Educational Agency Contacts  
Categorical Program Directors  
California County Superintendents Educational Services Association Members