MEMORANDUM

To: Elaine Arbour, Superintendent  
From: Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D., Secretary of Education  
CC: Janet Cole, Special Education Administrator, Richard Paulson, Business Manager  
Re: Rivendell Interstate SD - Notification of Special Education High Spending status; Guidelines and Due Date for High Spending Remediation Plan  
Date: February 8, 2018

This is to notify you that the Rivendell Interstate SD is considered a high spending school district for FY2017 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017). The high spending status is based on cost information from the FY2017 Special Education Expenditure Report (posted on the Agency of Education Web site) and the school district’s ADM for the 2016-2017 school year. High spending is defined as exceeding the statewide average cost per ADM by 20% or more. Based on the information reported to the Agency, Rivendell Interstate SD’s special education formula eligible cost per ADM was $4,670.11 which is 23.46% over the statewide average cost per ADM of $3,782.63.

Under 16 V.S.A. §2974, high spending special education districts may submit an explanation for their high special education spending to the Agency to request a waiver. The due date for waiver applications is March 1, 2018. If the Agency determines the high spending by the school district as justified, the school district will not be required to prepare a remediation plan. If the Secretary determines the explanation does not satisfactorily justify the high spending, the district will be required to develop, with the assistance of the Agency, a remediation plan.

If the district was high spending in prior years and received a waiver, the district must submit a letter of explanation clarifying that the circumstances that qualified for a waiver still exist.

If the district was high spending in 2014-2015 or 2015-2016 and submitted a plan, a progress report is required.

Here are the guidelines for the letter of explanation/waiver request for high spending:

1. The letter of explanation provides justification of costs associated with a specific student or students. The letter of explanation/waiver request should include state student identification numbers, not the students’ name(s), services provided, cost of services provided and placement information.

2. For assistance in preparing a letter of explanation/waiver request, feel free to contact Matt Bradstreet at (802) 479-1137 or Matthew.Bradstreet@vermont.gov.
3. The waiver request should be submitted to Matt Bradstreet, Vermont Agency of Education, 219 North Main Street, Suite 402, Barre, VT 05641 and received no later than March 1, 2018. Email submissions are acceptable.

4. Districts will be informed by April 1, 2018 whether their explanation has been accepted and their waiver granted.

Unless a waiver is granted, all high spending districts must develop a remediation plan to reduce spending. This plan should be developed in consultation with the director of special education. The remediation plan should include the following:

1. **A problem statement** that clarifies what is driving costs for the district. Please note that State Placed Student services are directly reimbursed by the Agency, and that these expenses are not included in the determination of High Spending Districts.

2. **Data** that supports the problem statement and demonstrates the district has analyzed spending and other data to determine specific strategies to reduce spending.

3. **Multi-year goals** (i.e. 2017-2018 and 2018-2019) and **strategies** to achieve the goals for lowering spending to below the high spending threshold.

4. **Benchmarks** to track implementation of the strategies.

5. The plan should be submitted to Matt Bradstreet, Vermont Agency of Education, 219 North Main Street, Suite 402, Barre, VT 05641 and received no later than May 1, 2018. Email submissions are acceptable.

For additional information or clarification, feel free to contact Matt Bradstreet at (802) 479-1137 or Matthew.Bradstreet@vermont.gov.

Thank you,

Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education