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December 17, 2013

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

On December 3, 2004, President George W. Bush signed into law the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* (P.L. 108-446), which revised and reformed the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, or IDEA. The law included several provisions to address the significant administrative and paperwork burden associated with current federal law. Specifically, Title I, Part A, Section 609 authorized a 15 state pilot program on paperwork reduction, while Part B, Section 617 mandated the Secretary of Education to develop model forms around the Individualized Education Program (IEP), notice of procedural safeguards, and prior written notice. Combined, these two sections were intended to address the administrative and paperwork burden placed upon states, school districts, schools, administrators, educators, service providers, and parents. Unfortunately, no state has applied for the pilot program and the model forms have never been adopted in the field.

Since the 2004 reauthorization, state and local officials have continued to push for relief from the law's administrative and paperwork mandates, so educators can focus more time and resources on providing services directly to special education students. In light of these concerns, we request GAO prepare a report that addresses the following questions:

1. What specific provisions of IDEA provide the most paperwork burden for states, school districts, elementary and secondary schools, administrators, educators, service providers and parents?
2. How do the administrative and paperwork requirements that have evolved since the law's original enactment in 1975 improve educational outcomes for children with disabilities?
3. Why have the U.S. Department of Education, states, school districts, and/or schools not utilized the paperwork reduction provisions included in the 2004 reauthorization?
4. How has the growth in and use of technology affected the administrative and paperwork burden? How pervasive are "electronic" IEPs and other innovative technologies? To what extent are these technologies interoperable? What can be expected in the future from technology?

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
December 17, 2013
Page 2

5. Outside of the privacy protections afforded to students and parents under the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* and the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act*, what, if any, administrative conflicts or redundancies exist which may increase the paperwork burden for schools and providers?

Thank you for consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Mandy Schaumburg on the committee staff at 5-6558.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce



TODD ROKITA
Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and the Workforce