



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

June 16, 2026

Dear Stakeholder,

Over the past six months, Secretary McMahon and leadership in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) have held listening sessions with parents, educators, state early intervention and special education directors, and other advocates to gather input regarding the current status of special education and how the federal government can better improve outcomes for all individuals with disabilities.

As the Secretary works to return education to the States, she has been clear: We will scale back micromanagement where it hinders success, but the Department is committed to bolstering efficacy of federal oversight where it is essential. With this in mind, and after careful consideration, OSERS will be partnering with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support the administration of programs for infants, toddlers, children, students and individuals with disabilities. Likewise, the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will partner with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to strengthen enforcement of federal civil rights laws.

By closely partnering with HHS, which oversees programs for millions of individuals with disabilities, we will align federal services to improve academic outcomes, strengthen access to programs and information, and support people with disabilities so they can gain the self-sufficiency, life tools, and meaningful employment that they need to succeed in their lives.

OCR's partnership with DOJ will provide more formidable, responsive, and coordinated enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws. ED and DOJ will combine their expertise and capacities to bolster evaluation, investigation, resolution of complaints, and, above all, enforce critical protections for all students.

The government's obligation to enforce federal rights and protections, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and federal civil rights laws predates the existence of the Department of Education and these protections will continue to exist long after. No partnership can alter OSERS' or OCR's legal responsibilities, or the rights individuals are afforded under federal law.

OSERS and OCR will maintain their independent statutory functions without interruption, and will continue to partner together, just as they always have, to vigorously enforce the law to ensure states and schools are in compliance.

Not only will federal funds still flow to states, but the Trump Administration proposed to Congress an increase in special education funding. President Trump's Fiscal Year 2027 budget includes a request for a historic increase of more than half a billion dollars above the previous appropriation Congress made for special education services and proposals to reduce paperwork burdens so special education teachers can spend more time serving students. And just last month, we announced a new \$144 million boost for states and local agencies for IDEA programs.

We wanted to share this information directly with you and affirm our commitment to partnering with you to improve educational and workforce outcomes for all individuals with disabilities and to enforce federal civil rights protections for children with disabilities.



Kimberly M. Richey
Assistant Secretary for
Civil Rights



Kelly S. Rogers
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Special Education and Rehabilitative Services