



February 5, 2026

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6300

House Education and the Workforce Committee
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

To Chairmen Cassidy and Walberg and Ranking Members Sanders and Scott —

The undersigned members of the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD) and our allies urge the Senate HELP Committee and the House Education & Workforce Committees to preserve and protect the U.S. Department of Education, including the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and its component Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and Office of Special Education (OSEP).

Our 40 organizations write on behalf of the youth and adults with disabilities served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as those eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The Department of Education's attempts to restructure through interagency agreements (IAA)—whether actions to date with the Department of Labor or those expected with the Department of Health and Human Services or other agencies—are of grave concern and **have not been approved by Congress**. These actions create downstream harms on the K12 education and the workforce readiness of students and adults with disabilities.

CPSD and our allies ask the following of both Committees:

1. Conduct a bipartisan oversight hearing of the Executive Branch as soon as possible, prior to the markup of any education bills;
2. Prevent additional IAAs that further dismantle the Department of Education.

Founded in 2007, the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD) is an advocacy coalition of organizations including and representing people with disabilities, with a particular focus on those with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD), their families, the professionals who support them, and disability service agencies. We have come together to advocate for comprehensive, innovative public policy reform that eliminates barriers to employment and financial security and promotes opportunities for people with IDD to be able to lead independent, self-determined lives in the community.

Any attempts to move special education and VR to other departments would conflict with specific requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act, which designate the Secretary of Education as the *only agency head responsible* for ensuring states and agencies meet the conditions and requirements under these laws.

The Department of Education was established by law in the Department of Education Organization Act in 1979. What the administration is attempting to do contradicts that law, as well as contradicts the requirements in IDEA and the laws establishing the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The

Department of Education is statutorily required to provide fiscal oversight, monitoring, compliance, provision of technical assistance, grants, and more to states.¹ And as noted, changes in these responsibilities have not been approved by Congress.

The administration's planned actions for OSERS threaten both IDEA and VR, therefore threatening the futures of people with disabilities. IDEA's guarantee of free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment provides students with disabilities the services and supports needed to achieve their goals in life. IDEA also gives families the right to meaningfully participate in educational decisions about their child with a disability. In conjunction, RSA's VR programs enable eligible disabled high school students and eligible disabled young adults to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS) through their state VR agency, which can collaborate with students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Pre-ETS includes but isn't limited to counseling on postsecondary education opportunities and workplace readiness training for competitive integrated employment (CIE). All of this is at risk if the Department of Education is dismantled.

Existing and expected efforts by the Department to shift its responsibilities to other agencies warrant Congressional oversight. We urge the Senate HELP Committee and the House Education & Workforce Committee to conduct bipartisan hearings prior to any markups. The public deserves to learn how the Secretary plans to fulfill the Department's full obligations under IDEA, the Rehabilitation Act, and other authorized disability laws.

Should you have questions, please contact CPSP's co-chairs Nina Stoller (Nstoller@autisticadvocacy.org) and Stephanie Flynt McEben (Stephanie.McEben@ndrn.org).

Sincerely,

Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSP)

- Applied Self-Direction
- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
- Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
- Autism Society of America
- Center for Public Representation
- National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)
- National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
- National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)
- TASH

Partnered Allies

- Access Ready
- AFT, AFL-CIO
- American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
- American Foundation for the Blind
- American Therapeutic Recreation Association
- Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network (AWN)
- CHARGE Syndrome Foundation
- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
- Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
- Coalition on Human Needs (CHN)

¹ The Department of Education plays an important role in ensuring states fulfill the 15% pre-ETS set aside allocation in WIOA's 2014 reauthorization.

CommunicationFIRST
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)
Deaf Equality
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Easterseals, Inc.
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Family Network on Disabilities
Feminist Majority
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
National Education Association (NEA)
National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
TDIforAccess
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Center for Enriched Living
The Center for Learner Equity
The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
Usher Syndrome Coalition