

NDSC Statement Condemning the Dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education

The White House today announced that they are transferring important education programs out of the Department of Education to other federal agencies. Most Office of Elementary and Secondary Education programs (including Title formula grants and discretionary grants) along with the Office of Postsecondary Education institutional grants (including those for inclusive higher education programs) will be moved to the Department of Labor. Reliable sources indicate that there are also pending Interagency Agreements that will move the Office of Special Education Programs to the Department of Health and Human Services, send the Rehabilitation Services Administration to the Department of Labor, and transfer the Office of Civil Rights to the Department of Justice.

While these moves are being described by the Administration as “partnerships,” the Department of Education is outsourcing its responsibilities, contrary to law, and bypassing Congress. Dispersing the Department of Education’s core functions—especially those responsible for special education and civil rights—violates federal law and would cause profound harm to students with disabilities. Fragmenting these functions is contrary to Congressional intent, and it creates conflicting guidance and oversight with different agencies applying inconsistent standards, timelines, and interpretations of educational requirements. It will also weaken enforcement of students’ civil rights, reduce accountability of states and districts, and eliminate the essential integration of special education with general education, replacing a cohesive education system with a scattered patchwork of disconnected health, labor, or social services frameworks.

Education programs belong together in the Department of Education, as Congress intended, and it is critical that bipartisan Congressional oversight hearings start immediately. Students with disabilities will be particularly harmed if education programs are scattered among separate agencies that lack the authority, expertise, and procedural systems that Congress requires.

We urge advocates to contact their Members of Congress to implore them to hold bipartisan oversight hearings in the House and Senate to address the devastating consequences that these illegitimate moves will have on all students, especially students with disabilities.

Please use NDSC’s Action Alert or call the Congressional Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to the offices of your Senators and Representative.

Here is a script you can use: Hi, I am your constituent. I'm calling to urge you to support bipartisan oversight hearings on the Administration's actions to break up the Department of Education. Dispersing core education offices among other agencies erodes protections for millions of students, disrupts services, goes against Congressional intent, and dismantles the federal government's ability to ensure equal access to education nationwide. Congress needs to hold transparent, bipartisan oversight hearings to examine the real legal and practical consequences before any changes go further. Thank you.

#ProtectChildrenWithDisabilities #FiveAlarmFire #ProtectIDEA #Disability #ProtectSpecialEducation #DownSyndrome #DontTurnBackTheClock