



Division of Research Policy Committee Newsletter: October 2026

Hello everyone! Welcome back to the CEC-DR Policy Newsletter. In this monthly newsletter, we briefly recap key policy news that may impact special education researchers. Please reach out to Kristabel (Kristabel.Stark@uvm.edu) and/or Steve (Ciullo@txstate.edu) if you have any content you'd like to add to next month's newsletter!

Two Research-Relevant Policy Updates

Settlement Regarding Agency Staffing Cuts

Federal worker unions recently announced a settlement with the administration in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Under the agreement, agencies will no longer be allowed to lay off employees during a shutdown. In addition, they will change their shutdown plans to no longer authorize reductions in force and give 30 days' notice if they intend to pursue RIFs during a future shutdown. Last October, during a federal government shutdown, nearly all staff at the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Service were fired- it would now be unlawful to do so under a shutdown. Staffing cuts at federal agencies impact all major functions of implementing IDES, including timely review and administration of research grants, so this is good news for researchers and the special education field!

CEC Urges Department to Preserve the Stability of Grants and Grantmaking

CEC recently submitted comments on proposed revisions to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), arguing that the proposal would give the Department of Education (ED) too much discretion over federal grants. CEC warns that fully funding multiyear grants upfront could substantially reduce the number of future awards, particularly for IDEA Part D personnel-preparation programs, while favoring applicants with lower indirect costs could prioritize less costly but weaker proposals. CEC also opposes allowing ED to terminate grants for reasons unrelated to grantee performance, citing past disruptions to services for students with disabilities, educator and mental-health workforce pipelines, and partnerships with state and local agencies. Read the CEC response [here](#).

Additional News & Updates

This is our first policy newsletter of the 2026-2027 academic year! Check out additional policy updates shared by CEC's Kuna Tavalin in her weekly *Policy Insider* blog during September, including information about the [Bipartisan Bill to Protect ED Offices](#), the [Resignation of the Head of OSERS](#), and the release of [2023-2024 Civil Rights Data from OCR](#).

In addition, check out the following research-relevant headlines:

- **[IES Resumes FY 2027 Research Grants](#)**

IES is competing [five grant competitions](#) due October 1; additional competitions should be launched within the next few weeks.

- **[NSF Launches Open Knowledge Network](#)**

NSF launched a network that is intended to make federal and public data more connected and machine-readable, addressing issues with siloed and inaccessible datasets.

- **[Head Start Deregulation Comments Due October 6](#)**

Read this overview of the potential impact of the administration's current effort to deregulate Head Start and consider writing public comments (due 10/6/26).

- **[Ed Week's "Education on the Ballot" Voting Map](#)**

Check out this voting map that shows where measures are on the ballot that would significantly impact public schools!

Shout-out to CEC-DR Graduate Students!

Are you a graduate student interested in learning more about policy and advocacy? Would you like to share resources/ get more involved? Are there specific tools/trainings/resources that would be helpful to you? Please reach out to Ayo Aborishade (ayodele.aborishade@unlv.edu), a graduate student member of CEC-DR who is working on organizing a collaborative grad student initiative.

Thank you CEC-DR members for your continued advocacy efforts!