



Division for Research Policy Newsletter: October, 2025

Welcome to the October 2025 Division for Research Policy Newsletter! We hope your fall term is off to a strong start. The DR Policy Committee is here to help members navigate federal funding and policy developments that shape special education research. Each month, we'll curate need-to-know updates, a quick advocacy action, and shareable resources you can pass along to your research teams and other key stakeholders.

Research Funding & Policies Updates

IES Requests Feedback: The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has released a Request for Information (RFI) seeking input on how to strengthen its work across research, evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance. This RFI is an opportunity for special education researchers to help shape how IES and NCSEER function in the years ahead.

Key areas where IES is seeking suggestions include:

- Meeting stakeholder needs to ensure research is useful for state and local leaders, educators, parents, and researchers.
- Data and evaluation (e.g., timeliness and accessibility of products).
- Partnership (e.g., building stronger connections across federal and state agencies).
- Evidence dissemination: Improving how we share evidence and scale practices.
- Grantmaking and peer review: Modernizing processes to encourage innovation while preserving rigor.

IES is especially interested in ideas on:

1. Balancing data burden and benefit in federal collections.
2. Advancing practitioner-relevant research through targeted grantmaking.
3. Expanding reach of evidence dissemination to educators and leaders.
4. Providing more responsive technical assistance to states and districts, including capacity building for continuous improvement.

DR members are encouraged to review the full RFI and consider submitting comments by October 15th. This is a chance to advocate for greater attention to NCSEER priorities and ensure the needs of students with disabilities are central in IES's evolving mission. RFI: https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-18608.pdf?utm_campaign=pi+subscription+mailing+list&utm_medium=email&utm_source=federalregister.gov

House Bill Advances: The House Appropriations Committee advanced its FY 2026 Labor-HHS-Education bill. Encouragingly, the bill preserves all parts of IDEA, including Preschool Grants and Part D programs, thanks in part to advocacy from CEC members! However, the bill also proposes an overall cut to the U.S. Department of Education’s budget, with reductions to Title I and other programs. For researchers, the cuts could potentially constrain the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), possibly limiting the number of new grants awarded and potentially delaying future competitions. The Senate has advanced a separate bill that largely maintains funding, so final outcomes will depend on negotiations in the coming weeks between the House and Senate.

What’s Happening in Washington? CEC Webinar. Join Kuna Tavalin, CEC’s Senior Advisor for Policy and Advocacy, for a policy update on how recent developments in Washington, D.C. impact special education. From IDEA funding and federal legislation to local budget priorities and workforce challenges, we’ll cover critical issues shaping services for children and youth with disabilities. Register here: https://learn.exceptionalchildren.org/p/WHIWOct2025#tab-product_tab_overview

In Case You Missed It: Research-Relevant Articles

- OSEP Seeks Videoclips for IDEA’s 50th (Due Oct 20)
OSEP is compiling a commemorative video for IDEA’s 50th anniversary and invites the public to submit 5–10 second clips (e.g., “Happy 50th, IDEA!”). Researchers could consider a quick shout-out tying IDEA to evidence-based impact (e.g., “IDEA + rigorous research = better outcomes”). Submit [here](#)
- In ‘The Cuts,’ Emily Hanford shows how shrinking IES jeopardizes education research, stalling evidence that teachers and kids depend on. Listen to her latest podcast here: <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2025/08/21/sold-a-story-e14-the-cuts>

Policy Homework for this Month

1. In addition to contacting Congress about IDEA funding, we encourage members **to** weigh in on the future of IES by responding to the Request for Information (RFI) announcement. This is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of special education research and NCSER’s role in advancing evidence-based practices.

 **Action Step:** Review and comment on the [IES RFI announcement](#)

2. Check out CEC’s “Take Action” page for additional updates on how to advocate for research funding: <https://exceptionalchildren.org/takeaction>

Ongoing Resource Links

Want More Funding Updates? For detailed nightly updates on research funding, we recommend subscribing to [Education Research Nightly Pulse](#).

For weekly policy updates, subscribe to the [*CEC Policy Insider*](#).

[*CEC's Dive-In Podcast*](#): This podcast provides in-depth explanations of current policies and events in education

[*TED's Updated Advocacy Toolkit*](#) (Prior version: [*Policy Advocacy Toolkit*](#)): CEC's Teacher Education Division (TED) has created this fantastic toolkit with lots of resources and action steps. Dr. Kaitlyn Brennan also provides a weekly [*Washington Update*](#).

Regular updates are also available from these organizations:

- [*Disability Scoop*](#)
- [*Alliance for Learning Innovation*](#)
- [*National Center for Learning Disabilities*](#)
- [*AERA Research Funding Advocacy Efforts*](#)

If you come across a link or resource that you'd like to see included in a future newsletter, please email [*kristabel.stark@uvm.edu*](mailto:kristabel.stark@uvm.edu) or [*ciullo@txstate.edu*](mailto:ciullo@txstate.edu).

[**CLICK HERE FOR CEC POLICY & ADVOCACY Website**](#)

.....