



June 25, 2020

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Re: Docket ID [ED-2020-OSERS-0014](#)

Submitted via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

Dear Dr. Egnor:

NDSC is the country's oldest national organization for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the professionals who work with them. We provide information, advocacy and support concerning all aspects of life for individuals with Down syndrome, and work to create a national climate in which all people will recognize and embrace the value and dignity of people with Down syndrome. NDSC appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Proposed Priorities, Requirements, and Selection Criteria—Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities—The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Paperwork Reduction Planning and Implementation Program, as published in the May 29, 2020, Federal Register.

NDSC wishes to express the following concerns with the proposed priorities, requirements, and selection criteria and to share our support for the comments submitted by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Education Task Force.

The Secretary was given authority for a paperwork reduction pilot in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as reauthorized in 2004. Twice over the years since then, in 2007 and 2019, grants to allow waivers under this program have been offered to states. There has been very little interest in the program. In fact, no state has received a paperwork reduction waiver grant.

A 2016 General Accounting Office Report indicated that state and local requirements were a contributing factor to the time educators spend on paperwork, which further supports the conclusion that waivers of Federal requirements are not needed.

Therefore, our primary recommendation is that the allocated funds for this program should instead be spent to provide targeted assistance and supports/services to ensure that students with disabilities can make progress in the general education curriculum during the continued pandemic, and beyond. Students with Down syndrome will need virtual supports, including related services, if distance learning

continues. There are examples of schools/Local Education Agencies (LEAS) that were doing a good job of providing these supports, but there were also many who were struggling to meet their students' needs. In addition, if in-person classes resume in the fall, there are students who have health issues that would put them at risk if they were to come back to the classroom and they will need ways to virtually access the general education classroom (and any other educational setting) so they can continue to be educated in the least restrictive environment with their nondisabled peers.

The CCD Education Task Force comments provide additional recommendations should the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services move forward with the proposed paperwork reduction program. We support those recommendations, which are summarized below:

- The group of stakeholders consulted by the states about their grant applications needs to be expanded to include the state's Parent Training and Information Center(s) and Community Parent Resource Centers, the state's Protection and Advocacy agency, and disability advocacy organizations.
- Require planning grant applicants to provide qualitative data on the anticipated benefits of any proposed reforms.
- Require implementation grant applicants to provide quantitative data on how the evaluation plan will improve positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
- To be eligible to receive either a planning or implementation grant, or both, the state must have received a "Meets Requirements" rating in the latest annual determination regarding its implementation of IDEA as required by 34 CFR §300.603.
- Attorneys representing protection and advocacy organizations and disability organizations, as well as representatives of Parent Training and Information Center(s) and Community Parent Resource Centers should be included in the peer review teams for the applications to ensure that the rights of students with disabilities are fully protected

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.



David Tolleson
Executive Director
National Down Syndrome Congress