

Educators for Excellence

July 29, 2026

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chairman

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders:

We write on behalf of the nearly 40,000 classroom teachers who are members of [Educators for Excellence \(E4E\)](#), a national network dedicated to building a high-quality, diverse teaching profession so every student can thrive. Thursday, the Committee will consider legislation that would stop the U.S. Department of Education from handing off the offices responsible for special education and other services for our most vulnerable students to agencies that have never run them and have none of the expertise needed to do so. Our members are the ones who show up every day for the students these programs are designed to serve, and we are asking you to support *S. 5046*.

This isn't an abstract debate about the size of a federal agency to us. It's about whether our students - including those who have disabilities, who are learning English, and who are experiencing homelessness - have one clear place responsible for making sure their rights are protected and their needs are met. Teachers shouldn't have to chase down help for our students, and students shouldn't have to wait longer because Washington can't decide who's in charge.

In findings from our latest national survey of 2,000 K-12 public school teachers, shared here in advance of public release, teachers overwhelmingly believe the federal government has an obligation to support states and districts to educate systematically underserved students:

- **89 percent of teachers said the federal government has an obligation to support students with disabilities.**
- **88 percent said the federal government has an obligation to support students experiencing homelessness.**
- **87 percent said the federal government has an obligation to support students from low-income households.**
- **Just 11 percent support plans to close or reduce the size and scope of the U.S. Department of Education.**

Schools are still working to recover instructional ground lost during the pandemic. Teachers need stability right now, not a reorganization that asks states and districts to figure out which of

four or five federal agencies to call for programs that used to have one home. That's the federal equivalent of referring a struggling student to five different specialists and hoping someone follows up.

E4E member Luisa Sparrow, a 2025 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, knows very well what will happen if responsibility for her students gets scattered across departments that have never done this work before: "I teach a 5th- and 6th-grade class for students with intellectual disabilities. Only fifty years ago, students like mine were frequently denied the opportunity to attend school because people didn't expect them to be able to learn. That changed because someone took responsibility for protecting their right to education."

For E4E member Susan Providence, a special education teacher at Capitol Hill Magnet in St. Paul, Minnesota, that responsibility can't simply move to any agency: "We tend to equate health with treating illness. My students are not sick. They learn differently. Reassigning educational oversight to Health and Human Services treats learning differences as medical conditions, and that harms the students it's meant to help."

Even well-intentioned coordination between agencies takes years to work smoothly, and in the meantime, it's students who lose services, and teachers who are left explaining the gap to families. Please support legislation to keep responsibility for these programs where our students can count on it.

Thank you for considering the voices of the educators closest to this issue.

Sincerely,
Educators for Excellence