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E 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No.: ED-2026-IES-3268]

Request for Information

AGENCY: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Department of Education (ED).

ACTION: Request for Information.

SUMMARY: The National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE), a center within the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), is charged (20 U.S.C. 9561(b)(2)) with evaluating how effectively States and local agencies implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and a free appropriate public education to children and youth with disabilities. In carrying out these activities, NCEE, in collaboration with the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), has identified six aspects of IDEA implementation for consideration of evaluation: access; appropriate services and educational outcomes; procedural safeguards; statewide systems, accountability, and flexibility; fiscal and resource effectiveness; and national activities. Through this request for information (RFI), NCEE seeks public input to identify key questions for future evaluation studies.

DATES: We must receive your comments by December 11, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be submitted via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at regulations.gov. However, if you require accommodation or cannot otherwise submit your comments via regulations.gov, please contact the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT. The Department will not accept comments by email

or by fax. To ensure that the Department does not receive duplicate copies, please submit your comments only once. Additionally, please include the Docket ID at the top of your comments.

Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to www.regulations.gov to submit your comments electronically. Information on using Regulations.gov, including instructions for accessing agency documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket, is available on the site under the "FAQ" tab.

Privacy Note: The Department's policy for comments received from members of the public is to make these submissions available for public viewing in their entirety on the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. Therefore, commenters should be careful to include in their comments only information that they wish to make publicly available. We encourage, but do not require, that each respondent include their name, title, institution or affiliation, and the name, title, mailing and email addresses, and telephone number of a contact person for the institution or affiliation, if any.

This is a request for information only. This RFI is not a request for proposals (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP. This RFI does not commit the Department to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Further, we are not seeking proposals for evaluation and will not accept unsolicited proposals. The Department will not pay for any information or administrative costs that you may incur in responding to this RFI. The documents and information submitted in response to this RFI will not be returned. We will review every comment, and the comments in response to this RFI will be publicly available on the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. Please note that IES will not directly respond to comments provided on this RFI.

Accessible Format: By request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may

include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. You may access the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David J. Cantrell, Senior Advisor, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S Department of Education, D Street Room 10.8.0E, 400 Maryland Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20024. Telephone: (202) 245-6425. You may also email your questions to David.Cantrell@ed.gov, but as described above, comments must be submitted via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at regulations.gov. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 664(a)(1) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1464(a)(1)) provides that the Secretary of the Department of Education shall delegate to the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) responsibility for conducting studies and evaluations for the implementation of IDEA, including the effectiveness of State and local efforts to provide –

(A) A free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities; and

(B) Early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities, and infants and toddlers who would be at risk of having substantial developmental delays if early intervention services were not provided to the infants and toddlers.

Section 175(b)(3) of the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) as amended (20 U.S.C. 9567(b)(3)) describes the mission of the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), a center within IES. NCSER is directed to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the IDEA, in coordination with IES's National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). Section 171 (b)(2) of ESRA (20 U.S.C. 9561(b)(2)) describes the mission of the NCEE. That mission includes conducting evaluations of Federal Education programs administered by the Secretary, such as the IDEA, and support synthesis and wide dissemination of results of evaluation, research and products developed.

To guide that work, NCEE, in collaboration with NCSER, proposes to support the evaluation of State and local efforts to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and FAPE to children and youth with disabilities, in areas including:

(1) Access;

(2) Appropriate services and educational outcomes;

(3) Procedural safeguards;

(4) Statewide systems, accountability and flexibility;

(5) Fiscal and resource effectiveness; and

(6) National activities authorized under IDEA Part D.

Through this RFI, we seek public comment and input on the highest priority research questions in the areas above. We encourage the public, particularly those who are aware of key research

questions in any of the above areas, to address any or all of the following questions in their comments:

(1) Among the six areas, what are the most pressing topics to evaluate now, and why?

(2) Within the topics identified in response to question (1), what are the research questions that NCEE should prioritize over the next 5 years?

(3) How would proposed research questions support IES's statutory responsibilities vis-à-vis the evaluation of IDEA as described in the supplementary information section of this document?

(4) How might current or future National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) activities support the evaluation of one or more of the areas and their associated research questions?

(5) Which topics might be explored using existing data or data that is already routinely collected, and which could only be addressed via a new collection? If new data are needed, are they best collected as part of existing administrative collections, a new cross-sectional or longitudinal study, or another means?

(6) How might data collection and dissemination be optimized for future Super Intelligence or SI (formerly referred to as Artificial Intelligence or AI) applications and uses?

(7) What products or insights could be shared with practitioners and policymakers as a result of research questions explored by NCEE? What methods and channels for dissemination are most likely to be effective?

(8) Are there any topics not covered by the areas above that should be evaluated?

Matthew Soldner,

Acting Director,

Institute of Education Sciences.

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