

U.S. Department of Education

OMBUDSMAN UPDATE

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From the Desk of the Office of Non-Public Education Director

Dear Colleague:

I hope your new year is off to a good start and that 2020 will be fruitful. The Office of Non-Public Education (ONPE) is gearing up for a productive year and one that continues our ongoing collaboration with you. In addition to providing support and technical assistance as you monitor and enforce the equitable services provisions of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, ONPE seeks your input and partnership on some key initiatives highlighted below.

In the early spring, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) plans to publish a DRAFT of the *Title VIII, Part F, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act: Equitable Services for Eligible Private School Children, Teachers, and Other Educational Personnel Updated Non-Regulatory Guidance* for public comment. ONPE will notify you upon publication of the draft for public comment and also announce this draft publication via the [ONPE listserv](#) and [ED Review](#) for all external stakeholders.

ONPE listened carefully to your feedback at the Ombudsman Update Live conference last September, and we are working with the [State Support Network](#) (Network), in partnership with the ESEA Collaborative of State Ombudsmen (Collaborative), to provide technical assistance that supports the work of the Collaborative. We encourage you to take part in these upcoming activities that will include designated periods of time and virtual platform breakout spaces for peer sharing. We welcome ombudsmen to take a leadership role and provide their technical expertise.

The Department appreciates the time and effort on the part of several ombudsmen for assisting with the creation of a public-facing educational resource on promising practices. We value their time, thought leadership, and partnership to spotlight practices in the Department's efforts to ensure the effective provision of ESEA equitable services. Be on the lookout for the publication later this year.

ONPE stands ready to support you and foster a robust collaborative relationship in 2020!

Sincerely,

Maureen Dowling

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ONPE

Technical Assistance and Peer-to-Peer Support

State Support Network

ONPE is pleased to continue its partnership with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) in 2020 to provide support to ESEA state ombudsmen through the Network—a technical assistance initiative of OESE designed to support state and district school improvement efforts.

Ombudsman Community of Practice (CoP)

ONPE is offering a second CoP through the Network to enhance ombudsmen’s knowledge of relevant statutes, regulations, guidance and promising practices related to equitable services and the role of ESEA state ombudsmen. This CoP will be open to all ombudsmen. To plan and facilitate the CoP, the Network is coordinating closely with leadership from the ombudsman-led Collaborative. The goal of this coordination is to ensure that the CoP complements the activities of the Collaborative. Each CoP virtual meeting will include peer panels and presentations that build upon a topic or content from the Collaborative meeting immediately prior to the CoP session, followed by private breakout activities during which participants may engage around the topic through the lens of their local context and needs.

Ombudsman Hub (Hub)

The Hub is the online platform that accompanies the CoP to facilitate online collaboration and communication. The Network deployed new functionality in the Hub to allow ombudsmen to contribute to Hub conversations from within their own emails. If you haven’t done so already, check out [this discussion](#) in the Hub for instructions and tips to ensure that you receive Hub email notifications. Feel free to contact [Marshal Conley](#) with questions and requests for support.

Promising Practices Resource

ONPE is collaborating with OESE and the Network to identify and elevate promising practices in the field around key topics related to the provision of equitable services. Throughout the winter, the Network will interview targeted states about specific promising practices. The information gathered through these interviews will be used to develop a public-facing resource that will be published later this year.

For more information on the CoP, please feel free to email Network CoP leaders [Marshal Conley](#) and [Traci Karageorge](#).

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From the Field

Ombudsmen to Present at the National Association of State ESEA Administrators Conference

Ombudsmen from Arizona, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas will be presenting on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at the upcoming [National Association of ESEA Administrators](#) conference. The session will feature a discussion of job duties and responsibilities as well as frequent equitable services topics and will include a panel discussion to answer questions related to the implementation of equitable services in their respective states.

Updates From the ESEA Collaborative of State Ombudsmen

The Collaborative is a state-led initiative spearheaded by a steering committee of state ombudsmen for all ESEA state ombudsmen.

Webinars

Please be on the lookout for monthly invitations to participate in Collaborative webinars. Ombudsmen are welcome to submit discussion topic recommendations and to volunteer to facilitate webinars.

Steering Committee

The following individuals serve on the Collaborative steering committee:

[LaNetra Guess](#), Texas Education Agency
[Bryan Lieb](#), Mississippi Department of Education
[Shaun Owen](#), Georgia Department of Education

Contact for Information

For information on participating in and recommending topics for upcoming webinars, please email [Shaun Owen](#).

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Resources and Tools You Can Use

[U.S. Department of Education ESSA Webpage](#)
[Office of Non-Public Education ESSA Webpage](#)

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We Want to Hear from You!

If you have something to share, let us know! We welcome the opportunity to spotlight ombudsmen. Please tell us how we can showcase the work you are doing and how we can support you. Topics that we would like to highlight include methods to establish productive relationships between the ombudsman and private school officials; notable, replicable practices; and challenges faced and overcome. We also invite you to share information about technical assistance opportunities that could be of value to the ombudsman community for inclusion in the next newsletter. All submissions should be sent to ONPE@ed.gov. **To receive future editions of the *Ombudsman Update*, please subscribe [here](#).**

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Disclaimer

U.S. Department of Education—*Ombudsman Update*

The *Ombudsman Update* is the U.S. Department of Education's effort to communicate with ombudsmen on matters relating to equitable services under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. This newsletter contains links to other websites and news articles. These links represent just a few examples of the many education reference materials currently available to ombudsmen and the public. The opinions expressed in any articles or webpages do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. The inclusion of resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any organization or business listed herein. This newsletter provides a platform for ombudsmen to share lessons learned. However, it does not request information per the *Federal Paperwork Reduction Act*.