

# Department Announces New Effort to Strengthen Accountability for Students with Disabilities

## Moving from Compliance-Focused Approach to One Driven by Results

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Today, the Department of Education announced new steps to help close the achievement gap for students with disabilities by moving away from a one-size-fits-all, compliance-focused approach to a more balanced system that looks at how well students are being educated in addition to continued efforts to protect their rights.

While the Department has effectively ensured access to educational resources for students with disabilities, not enough attention has been paid to educational outcomes, which have not sufficiently improved. This is partly due to the fact that federal policy has focused more on procedural requirements and not enough on critical indicators like increasing academic performance or graduation rates for students with disabilities.

"For too long we've been a compliance-driven bureaucracy when it comes to educating students with disabilities," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "We have to expect the very best from our students—and tell the truth about student performance—so that we can give all students the supports and services they need. The best way to do that is by focusing on results," Duncan said.

Throughout the coming year, the Department will work closely with stakeholders to develop and implement a new review system that takes a more balanced, results-driven approach to assessing how states are educating students with disabilities and better targets monitoring to where it's needed most.

Since the current process of conducting on-site state compliance reviews has not focused enough on improving student outcomes, the Department will not be carrying out the visits scheduled for the 2012-13 school year to allow it time to develop a new and more effective system. However, the Department will continue to review annual performance reports as well as monitor state supervision systems.

For more information about the work of the Department's Office of Special Education Programs, see

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/department-announces-new-effort-strengthen-accountability-students-disabilities>