



CCSESA

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

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May 16, 2016

Kristen Harper
U.S. Department of Education
550 12th Street SW Room 5109A
Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202

RE: Docket ID ED-2015-OSERS-0132

Dear Ms. Harper:

On behalf of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), a statewide association representing all California county superintendents of schools, I am writing to provide comments on the Department of Education's proposal to amend regulations under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governing the Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities program and the Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities program.

California is deeply engaged in implementing an aligned system of funding and accountability that places a major priority on equity issues. We oppose the idea of a one-size-fits-all federal approach to determining significant disproportionality. As the most racially and ethnically diverse state in the nation, California has serious concerns regarding the proposal to create a single standard methodology for calculating whether disproportionality exists within our special education population. States must be allowed the flexibility to establish methodologies and targets that align with their local structure and address their unique circumstances.

CCSESA is particularly concerned about the proposal to create a federal mandate on minimum group sizes. Creating a mandatory "n" size of 10 will lead to the over-identification of small districts and special schools that serve unique populations. According to estimates provided by the California Department of Education, setting the "n" number at 10 would result in a more than 900% increase in the number of schools identified as significantly disproportionate. This is particularly troubling when California is already investing in highly successful early intervention programs. CCSESA urges the Department to reconsider this proposal and to instead provide flexibility for states to address these issues as part of a comprehensive aligned system.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide input on these important regulations that will have a substantial impact on California's schools and students. If you have any questions regarding our concerns or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Peter Birdsall
Executive Director