

CASE Update

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Federal Government Shutdown

What you need to know...

- Funding has flowed for this school year
- **IDEA remains fully intact**—no amendments have been made to the law
- Districts remain obligated to provide **FAPE** and ensure **LRE** for all eligible students
- **Students continue to receive the services and supports outlined in their IEPs**
- **No new information has been released by MDE** regarding changes at the state level
- **Staffing in D.C. is skeletal**, making it difficult to obtain timely federal guidance
- **MASE and CASE are monitoring and advocating** for clarity and will share updates as credible information becomes available



In the news...





Will other action happen?

Perhaps...

- Washington Post article-10/21/2025:

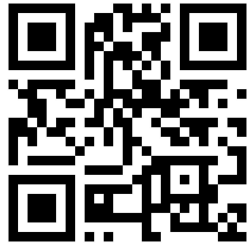


- What hasn't changed is the fact that **IDEA remains fully in tact** and so does our obligation to the students that we serve.
- One of our greatest roles as leaders in special education is to **be fierce advocates for students with disabilities.**



Federal Offices 101

Role of Federal Government



What is OSEP and why is it important?



What is the Office of Civil Rights?



What is the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and why is it important?





From MDE: Supporting Minnesota's Students with Disabilities Through Federal Transitions

Dear Special Education Directors,

I'm reaching out as a follow-up to a recent message sent to all Superintendents and Charter Directors from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Please see the message titled ***Tracking Federal Investments in Your Community*** (included below) for additional context.

As the State Director of Special Education, I want to also take a moment to specifically address recent federal reductions in force (RIFs) within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).



From MDE: Supporting Minnesota's Students with Disabilities Through Federal Transitions

The MDE Division of Special Education recognizes the uncertainty these developments may create for both state and local leaders. We want to acknowledge the concerns that accompany national-level changes, while also offering clarity and reassurance regarding Minnesota's commitment and ongoing responsibilities to children and youth with disabilities.

Importantly, there have been **no changes** to the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** or its implementing regulations. Both State and Local Educational Agencies remain legally required to fully implement all IDEA mandates. This includes:



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- Providing each eligible student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment
- Conducting timely and appropriate evaluations
- Ensuring procedural safeguards
- Upholding all assurances tied to the receipt of federal special education funds

While there may be administrative changes at the federal level, the **rights of students with disabilities—and the responsibilities of states and districts under IDEA—remain firmly in place.**



From MDE: Supporting Minnesota's Students with Disabilities Through Federal Transitions

The MDE Division of Special Education is actively monitoring federal developments and is working closely with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and other national partners to stay informed and responsive. Our goal is to ensure you have the **information, technical assistance, and support** needed to maintain compliance and continuity throughout this time of transition.

We deeply appreciate the dedication of Minnesota's special education leaders and staff who continue to serve students and families with unwavering commitment and professionalism. Please know that MDE remains steadfast in our shared mission: to ensure every student with a disability in Minnesota receives the services and supports they need to learn, grow, and thrive.



From MDE: Supporting Minnesota's Students with Disabilities Through Federal Transitions

Thank you for your continued leadership and partnership.

With appreciation,

Sonia R. Smith, J.D.

Director of Special Education



From MDE: Tracking Federal Investments in Your Community

We know many school communities are watching federal government budget negotiations closely to understand what developments mean for your districts, your staff, and your students. To help bring clarity, MDE has launched a new [“Tracking Federal Education Investments in Your Community”](#) microsite, which shows how federal dollars support every public school district across our state. This one-stop-shop includes:

- Downloadable one-page summaries for your individual districts outlining how much federal support your school district receives and how those investments fund essential student programs like special education and nutrition.
- MDE’s federal impact story portal, where Minnesotans can share how federal cuts and uncertainty are affecting students and schools.
- Commissioner Jett’s recent letters and statements responding to federal actions that impact education in Minnesota.

As the federal government shutdown continues into its third week, this information may be useful in communicating with your school community and partners.

We’re also monitoring the recent Reduction in Force (RIF) at the U.S. Department of Education, which has affected key offices that serve states and school systems. We are concerned by information indicating the RIF impacted the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the Office for Civil Rights, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and others, and are aware that a federal court has questioned the legality of RIFs during this shutdown. These layoffs are troubling and add to the uncertainty at the federal level.

We want to be clear that federal law still applies. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, federal Civil Rights laws, and more, still govern the longstanding protections and supports students and schools depend on every day.

MDE remains here to provide information, support, and connection as we navigate these changes together. In Minnesota, our commitment hasn’t changed: ensuring every student, of every background and ability, has access to a world-class education. Thank you for everything you do for your students and communities.



What you need to do...

- Go to the **CASE Action Center**
- Using your **personal device** [phone or computer] take action





Shared Principles & Commitment to the Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities



- I. Public education is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy
- II. Free, quality public education must be available to every child and youth regardless of a family's situation.
- III. All participants (parents and school personnel) should be full and meaningful partners in the education of children and youth with disabilities.
- IV. The federal government plays a crucial role in supplementing state funding and in shaping special education policy that ensures equitable access to quality education for students with disabilities. Under federal law, states retain substantial responsibility for the education of children and youth with disabilities.



Shared Principles & Commitment to the Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities



- V. The rights of children and youth with disabilities to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is essential to their accessing a meaningful and equitable education and must be maintained and protected through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- VI. Federal funding under IDEA should be provided at the 40% per pupil expenditure level originally promised by the U.S. Congress to assure states have the capacity to provide needed services and specially designed instruction to students with disabilities.
- VII. The U.S. Department of Education should remain an independent agency that is fully staffed and funded to oversee federal laws including IDEA and Section 504.



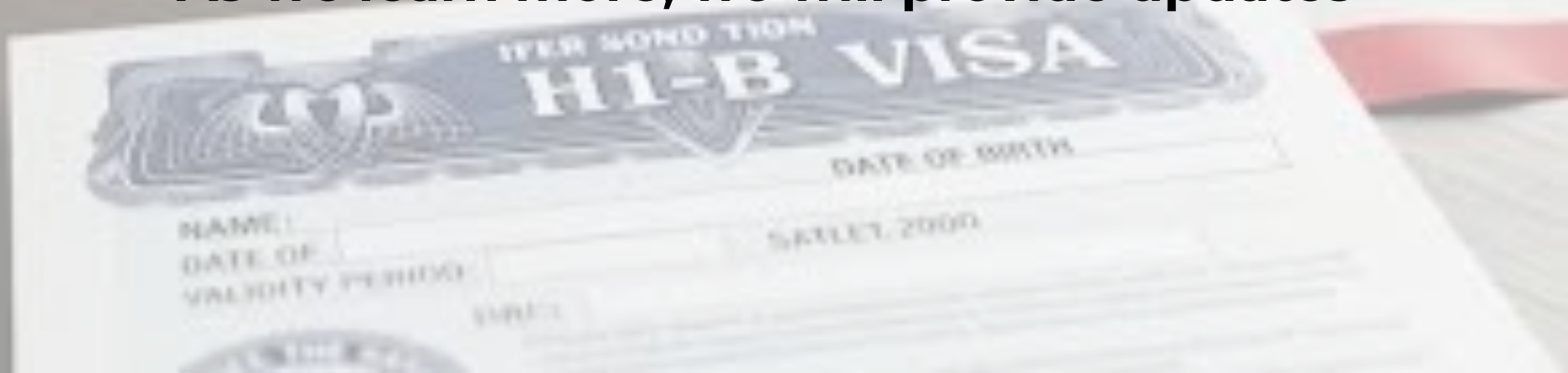
Shared Principles & Commitment to the Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities





H1B Visas

- There is work at the federal level to exempt employers in education from the H1B fee
- As we learn more, we will provide updates





50 YEARS OF IDEA

60 Minutes with Myrna



CASE Collective



Questions?

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